

Alchemical Writings

The Emerald Tablet

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The Emerald Tablet (*Tabula Smaragdina*)

- 1) It is true without untruth, certain and most true:*
- 2) that which is below is like that which is on high, and that which is on high is like that which is below; by these things are made the miracles of one thing.*
- 3) And as all things are, and come from One, by the mediation of One, So all things are born from this unique thing by adaption.*
- 4) The Sun is the father and the Moon the mother.*
- 5) The wind carries it in its stomach. The earth is its nourisher and its receptacle.*
- 6 The Father of all the Theleme of the universal world is here.*
- 6a) Its force, or power, remains entire,*
- 7) if it is converted into earth.*
- 7a) You separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently with great industry.*

- 8) *It climbs from the earth and descends from the sky, and receives the force of things superior and things inferior.*
- 9) *You will have by this way, the glory of the world and all obscurity will flee from you.*
- 10) *It is the power strong with all power, for it will defeat every subtle thing and penetrate every solid thing*
- 11a) *In this way the world was created.*
- 12) *From it are born wonderful adaptations, of which the way here is given.*
- 13) *That is why I have been called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the universal philosophy.*
- 14) *This, that I have called the solar Work, is complete.*

Paracelsus

(The "Swiss Hermes")

ALCHEMY: THE ART OF TRANSFORMATION

Let it be for you a great and high mystery in the light of nature that a thing can completely lose and forfeit its form and shape, only to arise subsequently out of nothing and become something whose potency and virtue is far nobler than what it was in the beginning.

Nothing has been created as *ultima materia*--in its final state. Everything is first created in its *prima materia*--its original stuff; whereupon Vulcan [*or transmuting fire*] comes, and by the art of alchemy develops it in its final substance. . . . For alchemy means: to carry to its end something that has not yet been completed. To obtain the lead from the ore and to transform it into what it is made for. . . . *Accordingly, you should understand that alchemy is nothing but the art which makes the impure into the pure through fire. . . . It can separate the useful from the useless, and transmute it into its final substance and its ultimate essence.*

The transmutation of metals is a great mystery of nature. However laborious and difficult this task may be, whatever impediments and obstacles may lie in the way of its accomplishment, this transmutation does not go counter to nature, nor is it incompatible with the order of God, as is falsely asserted by many persons. But the base impure five metals--that is, copper [*or Venus*], tin [*or Jupiter*], lead [*or Saturn*], iron [*or Mars*], and quicksilver [*or Mercury*]--cannot be transmuted into nobler, pure, and perfect metals--namely, into gold [*or the Sun*] and silver [*or the Moon*]--without a *tinctura*, or without the philosopher's stone.

Since ancient times philosophy has striven to separate the good from the evil, and the pure from the impure; this is the same as saying that all things die and that only the soul [*of them*] lives eternal. The soul endures while the body decays, and you may recall that correspondingly a seed must rot away if it is to bear fruit. *But what does it mean, to rot? It means only this--that the body decays while its essence, the good, the soul, subsists. This should be known about decaying.* And once we have understood this, we possess the pearl which contains all the virtues.

Decay is the beginning of all birth. . . . It transforms shape and essence, the forces and virtues of nature. Just as the decay of all foods in the stomach transforms them and makes them into a pulp, so it happens outside the stomach. . . . Decay is the midwife of very great things! It causes many things to rot, that a noble fruit may be born; for it is the reversal, the death and destruction of the original essence of all natural things. It brings about the birth and rebirth of

forms a thousand times improved. . . . And this is the highest and greatest mysterium of God, the deepest mystery and miracle that he has revealed to mortal man.

THE HIDDEN SIDE OF REALITY

In nature we find a light that illumines us more than the sun and the moon. For it is so ordered that we see but half of man and all the other creatures, and therefore must explore them further . . . Nor should we become drowned in our daily work, for whosoever seeks . . . shall find . . . And if we follow the light of nature, we learn that there exists another half of man, and that man does not consist of blood and flesh alone . . . but also of a body that cannot be discerned by our crude eyesight.

The moon emits light, yet by this light colors are not discernible; but as soon as the sun rises, all the colors can be distinguished. Similarly nature has a light that shines like the sun; and as the light of the sun exceeds the light of the moon, so the light of nature far exceeds the power of the eyes. In its light all things invisible become visible; remember always that the one light outshines the other.

Know that our world and everything we see in its compass and everything we can touch constitute only one half of the cosmos. The world we do not see is equal to ours in weight and measure, in nature and properties. From this it follows that there exists another half of man in which this invisible world operates. If we know of the two worlds, we realize that both halves are needed to constitute the whole man; for they are like two men united in one body.

The sun can shine through a glass, and fire can radiate warmth through the walls of the stove, although the sun does not pass through the glass and the fire does not go through the stove. In the same way, the human body can act at a distance while remaining at rest in one place, like the sun, which shines through the glass and yet does not pass through it. Hence nothing must be attributed to the body itself but only to the forces that flow from it--just as the smell of an animal is suffused while the animal's body may be at rest.

Nature emits a light, and by its radiance she can be known. But in man there is still another light apart from that which is innate in nature. It is the light through which man experiences, learns, and fathoms the supernatural. Those who seek in the light of nature speak from the knowledge of nature; but those who seek in the light of man speak from the knowledge of super-nature. For man is more than nature; **he is nature, but he is also a spirit, he is also an angel, and he has the properties of all three.** *If he walks in nature, he serves nature; if he walks in the spirit, he serves the spirit; if he walks with the angel, he serves the angel. The first is given to the body, the others are given to the soul, and are its jewel.*

THE MATRIX OR MOTHER-SPACE

When the world was still nothing but water, and the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters, the world emerged from the water; water was the matrix of the world and of all its creatures. And all this became the matrix of man; **in it God created man in order to give His Spirit a dwelling place in flesh.**

The matrix is invisible and no one can see its primal substance; for who can see that which was before him? All of us come from the matrix, but no one has ever seen it because it existed before man. And even though man comes from it, and men are born from it again and again, no one has seen it. The world was born from the matrix, as was man and all other living creatures: all this has come out of the matrix. . . . Before heaven and earth were created, the Spirit of God brooded upon the water and was carried by it. This water was the matrix; for it was in the water that heaven and earth were created, and in no other matrix. By it the Spirit of God was borne, that is to say, that Spirit which lives in man, and which is lacking in other creatures. **For the sake of this Spirit man has been created; the Spirit of God lives in man so that God need not live alone. Therefore the Spirit of God comes to dwell in man, and is of God and returns to God.**

The world is as God created it. In the beginning He made it into a body, which consists of four elements. He founded this primordial body on the trinity of mercury, sulfur and salt, and these are the three substances of which the complete body consists. For they form everything that lies in the four elements, they bear in them all the forces and faculties of perishable things. In them there are day and night, warmth and coldness, stone and fruit, and everything else, still unformed. In a piece of wood . . . there lie concealed the forms of animals, the forms of plants of every description, the forms of all instruments; and he who can carve them out finds them. Accordingly, the first body, the Yliaster [*Ylem or Hylem or Hyle is the initial substance of the universe-the first matter or Primum*

Materia], was nothing but a clod, which contained all the chaos, all the waters, all minerals, all herbs, all stones, all gems. Only the supreme Master could release them and form them with tender solicitude, so that other things could be created from the rest.

EVERYTHING THAT IS WITHIN CAN BE KNOWN BY WHAT IS WITHOUT

It is not God's will that all He has created for the benefit of man and has given him as his own should remain hidden. . . . And even if He did conceal some things, He left nothing unmarked, but provided all things with outward, visible marks, with special traits--just as a man who has buried a treasure marks the spot in order that he may find it again.

We men discover everything that lies hidden in the mountains by external signs and correspondences, and thus also do we find all the properties of herbs and everything that is in the stones. There is nothing in the depths of the seas, nothing on the heights of the firmament, that man is unable to discover. No mountain, no cliff, is so vast as to hide or conceal what is in it from the eyes of man; it is revealed to him by corresponding signs. . . . For each fruit is a sign, and through it we discover what is contained in that from which it stems. Similarly there is nothing in man that is not marked in his exterior, so that by the exterior one may discover what is in the individual who bears the sign. . . . There are **four ways** by which the nature of man and of all living things can be discovered. . . . **First**, *chiromancy*; it concerns the extreme parts of man's limbs, namely the hands and feet. . . . **Second**, *physiognomics*; it concerns the face and the whole head. . . . **Third**, the *substantina*, which refers to the whole shape of the body. . . . And **fourth**, the *customs and usages*, that is to say, manners and gestures in which man appears and shows himself. . . . These four belong together; they provide us with a complete knowledge of the hidden, inward man, and of all things that grow in nature. . . . Nature is the sculptor: she endows everything with the form which is also the essence, and thus the form reveals the essence.

There is nothing that nature has not signed in such a way that man may discover its essence. . . . The stars have their orbits by which they are known. The same is true of man. As you can see, each herb is given the form that befits its nature; similarly, man is endowed with a form corresponding to his inner nature. And just as the form shows what a given herb is, so the human shape is a sign which indicates what a given man is. This does not refer to the name, sex, or similar characteristics, but to the qualities inherent in the man. The art of signs teaches us to give each man his true name in accordance with his innate nature. A wolf must not be called a sheep, a dove must not be called a fox; each being should be given the name that belongs to its essence. . . . Since nothing is so secret or hidden that it cannot be revealed, everything depends on the discovery of those things which manifest the hidden. . . . The nature of each man's soul accords with the design of his lineaments and arteries. The same is true of the face, which is shaped and formed according to the content of his mind and soul, and the same is again true of the proportions of the human body. For the sculptor of Nature is so artful that he does not mold the soul to fit the form, but the form to fit the soul; in other words, the shape of a man is formed in accordance with the manner of his heart. . . . Artists who make sculptures proceed no differently. . . . And the more accomplished an artist would be, the more necessary it is that he master the art of signs. . . . No artist can paint or carve, no one can produce an accomplished work, without such knowledge. . . . Only he who has some knowledge of this can be a finished artist.

When a carpenter builds a house, it first lives in him as an idea; and the house is built according to this idea. Therefore, from the form of the house, one can make inferences about the carpenter's ideas and images. What Nature has in mind. . . . no one can know until it has acquired form and shape. . . . Now note well that virtue forms the shape of a man, just as the carpenter's ideas become visible in his house; and a man's body takes shape in accordance with the nature of his soul. . . . Nature acts no differently. She gives man an outward appearance that is in keeping with his inner constitution. . . . And each man's soul can be recognized, just as the carpenter can be known by his house.

THE GREATER WORLD AND THE LESSER WORLD

The world is as God created it. In the beginning he made it into a body, which consists of four elements. He founded this primordial body on the trinity of mercury, sulfur, and salt, and these are the three substances of which the complete body consists. For they form everything that lies in the four elements, they bear in them all the forces and faculties of perishable things. In them there are day and night, warmth and coldness, stone and fruit, and everything else, still unformed. In a piece of wood. . . . there lie concealed the forms of animals, the forms of plants of every description, the forms of all instruments; and he who can carve them out finds them. Accordingly, the first body, the *Yliaster*, was nothing but a clod, which contained all the chaos, all the waters, all minerals, all herbs, all stones, all gems. Only the supreme Master could release them and form them with tender solicitude, so that other things could be created from the rest.

. . . Matter was at the beginning of all things, and only after it had been created was it endowed with the spirit of life so that this spirit might unfold in and through the bodies as God had willed. And thus the days of the creation and the order of all creatures were fulfilled. Only then was man created in the likeness of God, and endowed with His spirit.

Man was not born out of a nothingness, but was made from a substance. . . . The Scriptures state that God took the *limus terrae*, the primordial stuff of the earth, and formed man out of this mass. Furthermore they state that man is ashes and powder, dust and earth; and this proves sufficiently that he is made of this primordial substance. . . . But *limus terrae* is also the Great World, and thus man was created from heaven and earth. *Limus terrae* is an extract of the firmament, of the universe of stars, and at the same time of all the elements. . . .

The *limbus* is the primordial stuff of man. . . . What the *limbus* is the man is too. He who knows the nature of the *limbus* knows also what man is. . . . Now, the *limbus* is heaven and earth, the upper and lower sphere of the cosmos, the four elements, and everything they comprise; therefore it is just to identify it with the microcosm, for it too is the whole world.

Heaven encompasses both spheres--the upper and the lower--to the end that nothing mortal and nothing transient may reach beyond them into that realm which lies outside the heaven that we see. . . . For mortal and immortal things must not touch each other, and must not dwell together. Therefore, the Great World, the macrocosm, is closed in itself in such a way that nothing can leave it, but that everything that is of it and within it remains complete and undivided. Such is the Great World. Next to it subsists the Little World, that is to say, man. He is enclosed in a skin, to the end that his blood, his flesh, and everything he is as a man may not become mixed with that Great World. . . . For one would destroy the other. Therefore man has a skin; it delimits the shape of the human body, and through it he can distinguish the two worlds from each other--the Great World and the Little World, the macrocosm and man--and can keep separate that which must not mingle. Thus the Great World remains completely undisturbed in its husk. . . . and similarly man in his house, that is to say, his skin. Nothing can penetrate into him, and nothing that is in him can issue outside of him, but everything remains in its place.

THE TWO HEAVENS IN MAN

There are two heavens in men; the one is Luna Cebrium, but in the heart of man is the true Microcosmic heaven. Yea, the heart of man is the true heaven of an immortal being, out of which the soul has never yet come, which new Olympus and heaven the Christ Spirit has chosen for His dwelling place in man.

THE ARCANA

Only what is incorporeal and immortal, what is endowed with eternal life, what stands above all natural things and remains unfathomable to man, can rightly be called an arcanum. . . . Like the divine curative powers, it has power to change us, to renew us, and to restore us. . . . And although the arcana are not external and although they do not constitute a symphony to the divine essence, they must be considered heavenly as compared with us mortals, for they can preserve our bodies and by their influences achieve marvels in us that reason cannot fathom. . . . The arcanum is the entire virtue of a thing, multiplied a thousandfold. . . . Up until the present epoch, which is still young, *only four arcana have come to our knowledge*. . . . The **first arcanum** is the *prima materia*, the **second** the *lapis philosophorum*, the **third** the *mercurius vitae*, and the **last** the *tinctura*. . . . The *prima materia* can consume a man's old age and confer a new youth upon him--thus a young herb from a new summer and a new year. . . . The second arcanum, the *lapis philosophorum*, purifies the whole body and cleanses it of all its filth by developing fresh young energies. . . . *Mercurius vitae*, the third arcanum, has a purifying action; like a halcyon, which puts on new feathers after molting, it can remove the impurities from man--down to the nails and the skin--and make him grow anew. Thus it renovates the old body. . . . *Tinctura*, the last arcanum, is like the *rebis*--the bisexual creature--which transmutes silver and the other metals into gold; it "tinges," i.e., it transforms the body, removing its harmful parts, its crudity, its incompleteness, and transforms everything into a pure, noble, and indestructible being.

Here on earth the celestial fire is a cold, rigid, and frozen fire. And this fire is the body of gold. Therefore all we can do with it by means of our own fire is to dissolve it and make it fluid, just as the sun thaws snow and ice and makes them liquid. In other words, fire has not the power to burn fire, for gold itself is nothing but fire. In heaven it is dissolved, but on earth it is solidified. . . . God and nature do nothing in vain, or without a purpose. The place of all

things indestructible is not subject to time, it has no beginning or end, it is everywhere. Those things are efficacious when all hope has been given up, and they may accomplish miraculously what is considered impossible, what looks hopeless, absurd, or even desperate.

But to write more about this mystery is forbidden and further revelation is the prerogative of the divine power. For this art is truly a gift of God. Wherefore not everyone can understand it. For this reason God bestows it upon whom He pleases, and it cannot be wrested from Him by force; for it is His will that He alone shall be honored in it and that through it His name be praised for ever and ever.

MAN: THE DIVINE BOOK

The book in which the letters of the mysteries are written visibly, discernibly, tangibly, and legibly, so that everything one desires to know can best be found in this self-same book, inscribed by the finger of God; the book compared with which, if it is properly read, all other books are nothing but dead letters--know that this book is the book of man, and should not be sought anywhere but in man alone. Man is the book in which all the mysteries are recorded; but this book is interpreted by God.

If you would gain understanding of the whole treasury that the letters enclose, possess, and encompass, you must gain it from far off, namely, from Him who taught man how to compose the letters. . . . For it is not on paper that you will find the power to understand, but in Him who put the words on paper.

Man is born of the earth, therefore he also has in him the nature of the earth. But later, in his new birth, he is of God and in this form receives divine nature. Just as man in nature is illumined by the sidereal light that he may know nature, so he is illumined by the Holy Ghost that he may know God in His essence. For no one can know God unless he is of divine nature, and no one can know nature unless he is of nature. Everyone is bound to that in which he originates and to which he must at some time return.

The light of nature is a steward of the Holy Light. What harm comes to the natural tongue because the fiery tongue has spoken? Or how does the fiery tongue offend against the natural one? It is the same as with a man and a woman, who both give birth to a child; without both this could not be. Similarly, both lights were given man, to dwell within him.

How marvelously man is made and formed if one penetrates into his true nature . . . and it is a great thing--consider for once, that there is nothing in heaven or in earth that is not also in man. . . . In him is God who is also in Heaven; and all the forces of Heaven operate likewise in man. Where else can Heaven be rediscovered if not in man? Since it acts from us, it must also be in us. Therefore it knows our prayer even before we have uttered it, for it is closer to our hearts than to our words. . . . God made his Heaven in man beautiful and great, noble and good; for God is in His Heaven, i.e., in man. For He Himself says that He is in us, and that we are His temple.

Thoughts are free and subject to no rule. On them rests the freedom of man, and they tower above the light of nature. For thoughts give birth to a creative force that is neither elemental or sidereal. . . . Thoughts create a new heaven, a new firmament, and a new source of energy, from which new arts flow. . . . When a man undertakes to create something, he establishes a new heaven, as it were, and from it the work that he desires to create flows into him. . . . For such is the immensity of man that he is greater than heaven and earth.

THE BOOK OF NATURE

He who would read and understand the Book of Nature must walk its pages with his feet.

THE INNER STARS OF MAN

The inner stars of man are, in their properties, kind, and in nature, by their course and position, like his outer stars, and different only in form and in material. For as regards their nature, it is the same in the ether and in the microcosm, man. . . . Just as the sun shines through a glass--as though divested of body and substance--so the stars penetrate one another in the body. . . . For the sun and the moon and all planets, as well as all the stars and the whole chaos, are in man. . . . The body attracts heaven . . . and this takes place in accordance with the great divine order. Man consists of the four elements, not only--as some hold--because he has four tempers, but also because he partakes of the nature, essence, and properties of these elements. In him there lies the "young heaven," that is to say, all the planets are part of man's structure and they are the children of the "great heaven" which is their father. For

man was created from heaven and earth, and is therefore like them!

Consider how great and noble man was created, and what greatness must be attributed to his structure! No brain can fully encompass the structure of man's body and the extent of his virtues; he can be understood only as an image of the macrocosm, of the Great Creature. Only then does it become manifest what is in him. For what is outside is also inside; and what is not outside man is not inside. *The outer and the inner are one thing, one constellation, one influence, one concordance, one duration . . . one fruit.* For this is the *limbus*, the primordial matter which contains all creatures in germ, just as man is contained in the *limbus* of his parents. The *limbus* of Adam was heaven and earth, water and air; and thus man remains like the *limbus*, he too contains heaven and earth, water and air; indeed, he is nothing but these.

THE PRESERVATION OF A THING

In order that a thing may be preserved and defended from injury, it is necessary that first of all its enemy should be known, so that it may be shielded therefrom, and that it may not be hurt and corrupted by it, in its substance, virtue, force, or in any other way suffer loss. A good deal depends upon this, then, that the enemy of all natural things be recognized; for who can guard himself against loss and adverse chance if he is ignorant of his enemy? Surely, no one. It is therefore necessary that such enemy should be known. There are many enemies; and it is just as necessary to know the bad as the good. Who, in fact, can know the good without a knowledge of the evil? No one. No one who has never been sick knows how great a treasure health is. Who knows what joy is, that was never sad or sorrowful? And who knows rightly about what God is, who knows nothing about the devil? Wherefore since God has made known to us the enemy of our soul, that is, the devil, He also points out to us the enemy of our life, that is, death, which is the enemy of our body, of our health, the enemy of medicine, and of all natural things. He has made known this enemy to us and also how and by what means we must escape him. For as there is no disease against which there has not been created and discovered a medicine which cures and drives it away, so *there is always one thing placed over against another*--one water over against another, one stone over against another, one mineral over against another, one poison over against another, one metal over against another--and the same in many other matters, all of which it is not necessary to recount here.

The difference between the two medical arts--the heavenly and the worldly--consists in this: the adepts and non-adepts of worldly medicine are subject to the order and forces of nature, while those of heavenly medicine can dispense with herbs and the stars. . . . All active virtues come from the word of God, and His words have such power that all nature with its forces cannot accomplish as much as a single one of His words. This divine power is the heavenly medicine; it accomplishes what no natural force can accomplish. . . . There is no field on earth in which heavenly medicine grows or lies hidden, other than the resurrected flesh or the "new body" of man; only in the "new body" have all its words force and efficacy here on earth. This heavenly medicine works according to the will of the man of the "new birth"; in him lie all the active virtues. For it does not operate in the mortal body, but only in the eternal body.

DEATH AND THE ESSENCE OF ALCHEMY

The office of Vulcan is the separation of the good from the bad. So the Art of Vulcan, which is Alchemy, is like unto death, by which the eternal and the temporal are divided one from another. So this art may be called the death of things.

Thomas Vaughan (Eugenius Philalethes)

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 sow--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.

THE INVISIBLE MAGICAL MOUNTAIN (From Lumen de Lumine)

There is a mountain situated in the midst of the earth, or center of the world, which is both small and great. It is soft, also above measure hard and stony. It is far off, and near at hand, but by the providence of God, invisible. In it are hidden most ample treasures, which the world is not able to value. This mountain by envy of the devil, who always opposeth the glory of God and the happiness of man, is compassed about with very cruel beasts and ravening birds, which make the way thither both difficult and dangerous; and therefore hitherto, because the time is not yet come, the way thither could not be sought after nor found out. But now at last the way is to be found by those that are worthy, but not withstanding by every man's self-labor and endeavors.

To this mountain you shall go in a certain night (when it comes) most long and most dark, and see that you prepare yourselves by prayer. Insist upon the way that leads to the mountain, but ask not of any man where the way lies: only follow your Guide, who will offer himself to you, and will meet you in the way but you shall not know him.

This Guide will bring you to the mountain at midnight, when all things are silent and dark. It is necessary that you arm yourselves with a resolute heroic courage, lest you fear those things that will happen, and soon fall back. You need no sword, nor any other bodily weapons, only call upon God sincerely and heartily.

When you have discovered the mountain, the first miracle that will appear is this: a most vehement and very great wind, that will shake the mountain and shatter the rocks to pieces. You shall be encountered also by lions and dragons and other terrible beasts, but fear not any of these things. Be resolute and take heed that you return not, for your Guide who brought you thither will not suffer any evil to befall you. As for the treasure, it is not yet discovered but it is very near. After this wind will come an earthquake, that will overthrow those things which the wind hath left and make all flat. But be sure that you fall not off.

The earthquake being past, there shall follow a fire, that will consume the earthly rubbish, and discover the treasure, but as yet you cannot see it. After all these things and near the daybreak there shall be a great calm, and you shall see the Day-Star arise and the dawning will appear, and you shall perceive a great treasure. The chiefest thing in it, and the most perfect, is a certain exalted tincture, with which the world (if it served God and were worthy of such gifts) might be tinged and turned into most pure gold.

This tincture being used, as your Guide shall teach you, will make you young when you are old, and you shall perceive no disease in any part of your bodies. By means of this tincture also you shall find pearls of that excellency which cannot be imagined. But do not you arrogate anything to yourselves because of your present power, but be contented with that which your Guide shall communicate to you. Praise God perpetually for this his Gift, and have a special care that you use it not for worldly pride, but employ it in such works which are contrary to the world. Use it rightly and enjoy it so, as if you had it not. Live a temperate life, and beware of all sin, otherwise your Guide will forsake you, and you shall be deprived of this happiness. For know this of a truth, whosoever abuseth this tincture and lives not exemplarily, purely, and devoutly before men he shall lose this benefit, and scarce any hope will there be left ever to recover it afterwards.

Eyrenæus

IN "THE REGIMEN OF SOL"

In the beginning of our work, through the cooperation of heat, both internal and external, and the moisture of the matter concurring, our Body gives a Blackness unto pitch, which for the most part happens at forty, or at most, in fifty days. [*This may refer to years of age.*]

This color discovers plainly that the two natures are united [*this is the division of attention in self-observation that does the work and generates the heat*] and if they are united, they will certainly operate one upon the other, and alter and change each other from thing to thing, and from state to state, until all come to one nature and Substance Regenerate, which is a **new Heavenly Body**.

But before there can be this renovation, the old man must necessarily be destroyed, that is, thy first Body must rot and be corrupted, and lose its form, that it may have it repaid with a new form, which is a thousand times more noble.

Remember, then, this alchemical maxim, namely, that 'a sad, cloudy morning begins a fair day and a cheerful noontide.' Thus [as the Psalmist proclaimed] 'they who sow in tears shall reap in joy' [Ps. 126:5].

[So, there is no "free lunch"-we have to pay our tuition!]

IN "AN OPEN ENTRANCE TO THE CLOSED PALACE OF THE KING"

(Excerpts from "Concerning the Difficulties and Length of the First Operation" and "On the Sulfur that is in the Mercury of the Sages")

It is a marvelous fact that our Mercury contains active Sulfur, 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 Sulfur. This Sulfur is the inward fire that causes the putrefaction of the Composite Sun. This sulfurous fire is the spiritual seed that our Virgin (still remaining immaculate) has conceived . . . All their efforts to prepare and 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 Sulfur in a pure state, and found it cunningly concealed in the House of the Ram. This Sulfur 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 by the doves of Venus.

[The above passage--typical of the old alchemical writings--may be interpreted thusly: The House of the Ram is Aries, which sign of the Zodiac is ruled by Mars, which in turn rules the metal iron. Saturn rules the metal lead, symbolic of our lower nature with all of its different features that the anonymous writer (possibly Eugenius or Iraenius Philalethes) calls "the offspring of Saturn." Venus signifies the loving gentleness and moderating influence of the Higher "Christ" Nature. So here we have the methodology for accomplishing the Black Stone that will vanquish and transmute our Dweller or Sin-Body: We must enlist our Martian energy or moving spirit--the "purified metallic Sulfur"--by separating it from any connection with the Personality or lower nature, so that our "unripe Mercury" becomes the voice of pure conscience, moderated by a loving spirit of gentleness and patience. Our Mars becomes the warrior of the Higher Ego, and as the Christ Spirit, speaking through the man Jesus, said:

"I come not to bring peace, but a sword"; and, "A man's foes will be those of his own household."

This will be our St. George who will slay the dragon of our lower nature--the Dweller on the Threshold. This warrior, the dynamo of our microcosmic solar system, will be motivated by an iron will and persistence, softened by a spirit of loving gentleness and patience.

As an aside, it is truly remarkable that, chemically, iron is one of the only metals that do not form an amalgam with mercury (platinum is one of the few others). It is not dissolved by the mercury, and in turn does not cause the mercury to solidify. The two elements coexist without changing one another. So, too, our Martian iron will and persistence moderated with gentleness works synergistically with our Mercurial conscience, neither one interfering with the work of the other, but rather, each enhancing the activity of the other.]

COMMENTS ON LETTING CONSCIENCE ACT WITH GENTLENESS IN THE WORK OF SPIRITUAL REGENERATION

Count Bernard of Traviso

They who defile the work with salts, vitriols, aquaforts and corrosives, do destroy it, and change it into some other thing than is the nature of quicksilver [*Philosophic Mercury or conscience*]. For that seed which nature by its sagacity composed, they endeavor to perfect it by violence, which undoubtedly is destructive to it, so far as it is useful and effective in our work.

Ethan Allen Hitchcock

Don't act upon the conscience through any of the passions, hope, fear, or any other passion, to improve man, but as far as possible, allay these or neutralize them, so as to open the way for conscience to act freely, and according to its own essential heavenly nature. **This will do the whole work without any laying on of hands.**

***A MORE EXTENSIVE PRESENTATION OF EYRÆNIUS
IN
"THE REGIMEN OF SOL" CONCERNING THE LATTER
STAGES
OF THE WORK OF SPIRITUAL ALCHEMY WITH
COMMENTS
BY ETHAN ALLEN HITCHCOCK (In "Alchemy and the
Alchemists")***

Now art thou drawing near to the close of thy work, and hast almost made an end of this business; all appears now like unto pure *gold*; and the *Virgin's Milk*, with which thou imbibest this matter is very citrine. [1 Cor. iii. 2. The conscience is very sound and healthy.]

Now to God, the giver of all good, you must render immortal thanks, who hath brought this work on so far; and beg earnestly of him, that thy counsel mayest hereafter be so governed, that thou mayest not endeavor to hasten thy work; so as to lose all, now it is so near to perfection: consider that thou hast waited now about seven months, and it would be a mad thing to annihilate all in one hour: therefore be thou very wary; yea, so much the more by how much thou art nearer to perfection.

But if thou do proceed warily in this Regimen, thou shalt meet with these notable things [experiences, symbolized, of an entrance into the higher Light or Life]: first, thou shalt observe a certain citrine sweat to stand upon thy Body; and after that citrine vapor, then shall thy Body below be tintured of a *violet* color, with an obscure *purple* intermixed. [I must explain, that, when these works were written, physicians were in the habit of judging of the condition of their patients by the appearance of a certain water, and that a citrine color indicated a healthy condition,--here intended to signify the moral condition of the matter of the Stone:--the violet is the symbol of Love, and the purple of Immortality,--which are beginning to dawn upon the man in this stage of the work:-- but to proceed.] After fourteen or fifteen days' expectation in this Regimen of Sol, thou shalt see the greatest part of thy matter humid [submissively yielding,--not by any force of will, but by a much more irresistible constraint, acting yet sweetly and not violently], and although it be very ponderous [self-willed], yet it will ascend in the Belly of the Wind. ["But when they arise or ascend," says Arterpius, referring to the Soul and Body of the

one man, " they are born or brought forth in the Air or Spirit, and in the same they are changed, and made Life with Life, so that they can never be separated, but are as water mixed with water. And therefore it is wisely said, that *the Stone is born of the Spirit*, because it is altogether spiritual. [But to return to *Eyrenæus*.]

At length, about the twenty-sixth day of this Regimen, it will begin to dry; and then it will liquefy and recongeal, and will grow liquid again an hundred times in a day [fluctuate between hopes and fears, assurances and doubts;--some of the writers say that, in this stage of the work, the *matter* will put on all the colors in the world, &c.], until at the last it will begin to turn into grains; and sometimes it will seem as if it were all *discontinuous* in grain, and then it will grow into *one mass* again: and thus it will put on innumerable forms in one day; and this will continue for the space of about two weeks.

At the last, by the will of God, *a Light shall be sent upon thy matter, which thou canst not imagine.*

Then expect a sudden end, which within three days thou shalt see; for thy matter shall *convert* itself into grains, as fine as the atoms of Sol, and the color will be the highest Red imaginable, which for its transcendent redness will show Blackish,--like unto the purest blood when it is congealed.

But thou must not believe that any such thing can be an exact parallel of our Elixir, for it is a MARVELOUS CREATURE, not having its compare in the whole universe, nor anything exactly like it.

[Descriptions similar to this may be found in all of the writings of the Alchemists in best repute among themselves. The author of the above wrote a Commentary upon Sir Geo. Ripley's *Compound of Alchemy*, expressly, as he tells us, that the reader might have the testimony of two combined. In this Commentary I find the following passages:--]

In the Beginning, therefore, of our Work, through the co-operation of heat [nature], both internal and external, and the moisture of the *Matter* concurring, our Body gives a Blackness like unto pitch, which for the most part happens at forty, or at most in fifty days.

This color discovers plainly that the two natures are united. [By these *two* natures, the reader surely understands by this time, are meant what are called by innumerable names, Sol and Luna, gold and silver, Heaven and Earth, Phæbus and Daphne, superior and inferior, Soul and Body, &c., &c.] And if they are united, they will certainly operate one upon the other, and alter and change each other from thing to thing, and from state to state, until all come to one Nature and Substance Regenerate, which is a new Heavenly Body.

But before there can be this renovation, the Old Man must necessarily be destroyed, [need I refer to Eph. iv. 22-24, and Col. iii. 9, 10] that is, thy first Body must rot and be corrupted, and lose its form, that it may have it repaid with a new form, which is a thousand times more noble. So then our Work is not a forced nor an apparent, but a natural and radical operation, in which our Natures are altered perfectly, in so much that the one and the other, having fully lost what they were before, yet without change of kind [without an absolute change of substance] they become a third thing, homogeneal to both the former.

Thus they who sow in tears shall reap in joy; and he who goeth forth mourning, and carrying precious seed, shall return with an abundance of increase, with their hands filled with sheaves, and their mouths with the praises of the Lord. Thus the chosen or redeemed of the Lord shall return with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sighing and sorrows shall fly away.

Remember, then, this alchemic maxim, namely, *that a sad, cloudy morning begins a fair day and a cheerful noontide*; for our Work is properly to be compared to a day, in which the morning is dark and cloudy, so that the sun appears not. After that, the sky is overclouded, and the air cold with northerly winds, and much rain falls, which endures

for its season; but after that the sun breaks out, and shines more and more, till all becomes dry; and then at noonday not a cloud appears, but all is clear from one end of the heaven to the other.

[Here the author introduces cautions against haste and over-anxiety, advising patience, and proceeds:--]

Then shalt thou have leisure to contemplate these wonders of the Most High, and if they do not ravish and astonish thee in beholding them, *it is because God hath not intended this science to thee in Mercy, but in Judgment*. . . . Remember, then, when thou shalt see the renewing of these Natures, that with humble heart and bended knees thou praise and extol and magnify that gracious God, who hath been nigh unto thee, and heard thee, and directed shine operations, and enlightened thy judgment; for certainly flesh and blood never taught thee this, but it was the free gift of that God who giveth to whom he pleaseth. . . . This is the highest perfection to which any sublunary Body can be brought, by which we know that God is One, for God is perfection:--to which, whenever any creature arrives in its kind [according to its nature], it rejoiceth in Unity, in which there is no division nor alterity, but peace and rest without contention. . . .

This is the last and noblest conjunction, in which all the mysteries of this microcosm have their consummation. This is by the wise called their Tetraptive conjunction, wherein the Quadrangle is reduced to a Circle, in the which there is neither beginning nor end. He that hath arrived here, may sit down at banquet with the Sun and Moon. This is the so highly commended *Stone* of the wise, which is without all fear of corruption. . . .

And this work is done without any laying on of hands, and very quickly, when the matters are prepared and made it for it. This work is therefore called a Divine Work.

[In the Commentary upon the Fifth Gate of Ripley, the author, taking up the work in its more advanced state, says:--]

Thy Earth [meaning *Thyself*, addressing the Seeker] then being renewed, behold how it is decked with an admirable *green* color, which is then named the Philosopher's Vineyard. This *greenness*, after the perfect *whiteness*, is to thee a token that thy *matter* [thyself again] hath re-attained, through the will and power of the Almighty, a new Vegetative Life: observe then how this Philosophical Vine [thyself still] cloth seem to flower, and to bring forth tender green clusters; know then that thou art now preparing for a rich vintage. [Col. i. 10.]

Thy Stone [thyself] hath already passed through many hazards, and yet the danger is not quite over, although it be not great; for thy former experience may now guide thee, if rash joy do not make thee mad.

Consider now that thou art in process to a new Work; and though in perfect *whiteness* thy Stone was incombustible, yet in continuing it on the Fire without moving, it is now become tender again: therefore, though it be not in so great a danger of Fire now as heretofore, yet immoderacy may and will certainly spoil all, and undo thy hopes: govern [thyself understood] with prudence, therefore, while these colors shall come and go, and be not either over-hasty, nor despondent, but wait the end with patience.

For in a short time thou shalt find that this *green* will be overcome with AZURE, and that by the pale wan color, which will at length come to a Citrine; which Citrine shall endure for the space of forty-six days.

Then shall *the Heavenly Fire descend, and illuminate the Earth* [thyself] *with* inconceivable glory; the Crown of thy Labors shall be brought unto thee, when our *Sol* shall sit in the South, shining with redness incomparable.

This is our true Light, our Earth glorified: rejoice now, for our King hath passed from death to Life, and possesseth the keys of both death and hell, and over him nothing now hath power. [Rev. i. 18.]

As then it is with those who are redeemed, their Old Man is crucified, wherein is sorrow, anguish, grief, heartbreaking, and many tears; after which the New Man is restored, wherein is joy, shouting, clapping of hands, singing, and the like; for the ransomed of the Lord shall return with songs, and everlasting joy shall be on their heads: even so is it after a sort [the author means, precisely after this sort] in our operations; for first of all our Old Body dieth and rots, and is, as it were, corrupted, engendering most venomous exhalations, which is, as it were, the Purgatory of this Old Body, in which its corruption is overcome by a long and gentle decoction. And when it is once purged, and made clean and pure, then are the elements joined, and make one perfect, perpetual, indissoluble Unity; so that from henceforth there is nothing but concord and amity to be found in all our habitations.

This is a noble step, from Hell to Heaven; from the bottom of the grave to the top of Power and Glory; from obscurity in Blackness, to resplendent whiteness; from the height of Venosity, to the height of Medicine. O Nature! how cost thou alter things into things, casting down the high and mighty, and again exalting them from lowliness and humility! O Death! how art thou vanquished when thy prisoners are taken from thee, and carried to a state and place of immortality! This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. [Ps. cxviii. 23.]

[The author then proceeds to illustrate the necessity of alternate action upon natural Bodies, before they can be prepared for a change of nature: they must be exposed to "heat" and "cold," must be "dried" and "watered" (prospered and saddened), in order to be made pliable and yielding, &c., &c., all of which must be done with one Fire, which he immediately calls the "*Spirit* proper to it," and then tells us that the wise men have called it their *Venus*, or *Goddess of Love*, and says:]

Proceed, therefore, not as a fool, but as a wise man; make the water of thy Compound [thine own spirit] to arise and circulate, so long and often that the Soul, that is to say, the most subtle virtue of the Body, arise with it, circulating with the Spirit in manner of a Fiery Form, by which both the Spirit and Body are enforced to change their color and complexion: for it is this Soul of the *dissolved* Bodies, which is the subject of wonders; it is the Life, and therefore quickens the dead; it is the Vegetative Soul, and therefore it makes the dead and sealed Bodies, which in their own nature are barren, to fructify and bring forth. . . . If thou hast attended well to what hath been told thee in these five Gates, thou art secure; make sure of thy true Matter, which is no small thing to know, and though we have named it, yet we have done it so cunningly, that, if thou wilt be heedless, thou mayest sooner stumble at our books than at any thou ever didst read in thy life. Meddle with nothing out of kind [out of species or nature], whether Salts [generally called corrosives] or Sulphur, or whatever is of like composition; and whatever is alien from the perfect metals [foreign to our nature] *is reprobate in our mastery*. Be not deceived either with receipts or Discourse, for we verily do not intend to deceive thee; but if you will be deceived, be deceived.

[These writers have a favorite saying that *receipts are deceits*, and yet their books are filled with them; but their receipts deceive no one who proceeds so far in the knowledge of their Art as to understand that it is not a work of the hands, but one of thought and meditation, with which the life must be kept in unison; for it is the destruction of the whole work not to have the thought and deed keep company, insuring in the end a perfect union of the intellect and will; for Sol and Luna must be indissolubly joined, and when this is done by nature, no Art can separate them.]

An Anonymous Writer (*Possibly Eyrenæus or Eugenius Philalethes [Thomas Vaughan]*)

AN OPEN ENTRANCE TO THE CLOSED PALACE OF THE KING

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.

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 otherwise persons entertain chimerical dreams, Nature herself is most wonderfully simple. Gold, then, is the one true principle of purification. But our gold is twofold; one kind is mature and fixed, the yellow Latten, and its heart or center 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 odor of the Saturnian liquid, its blood growing together with the Saturnian sap into one body which is yet neither a body (since it is all volatile) nor a spirit (since in fire it resembles melted metal). It may thus be very properly described as chaos, or the mother of all metals. From this chaos I can extract everything--even the Sun and Moon--without the transmutatory Elixir. It is called our Arsenic, our Air, our Moon, our Magnet, and our Chalybs: these names representing the different stages of its development, even unto the manifestation of the kingly diadem, which is cast out of the menstruum of our harlot. Learn, then, who are the friends of Cadmus; who is the serpent that devoured them; what the hollow oak to which Cadmus spitted the serpent. Learn who are the doves of Diana, that overcome the green lion by gentleness: even the Babylonian dragon, which kills everything with its venom. Learn, also, what are the winged shoes of Mercury, and who are those nymphs whom he charms by means of his incantations.

CHAPTER III.

Concerning the Chalybs of the Sages.

Our Chalybs is the true key of our Art, without which the Torch could in no wise be kindled, and as the true magi have delivered many things concerning it, so among vulgar alchemists there is great contention as to its nature. It is the ore of gold, the purest of all spirits; a secret, infernal, and yet most volatile fire, the wonder of the world, the result of heavenly virtues in the lower world--for which reason the Almighty has assigned to it a most glorious and rare heavenly conjunction, even that notable sign whose nativity is declared in the East. This star was seen by the wise men of old, and straightway they knew that a Great King was born in the world. When you see its constellation, follow it to the cradle, and there you will behold a beautiful Infant. Remove the impurities, look upon the face of the King's Son; open your treasury, give to him gold, and after his death he will bestow on you his flesh and blood, the highest Medicine in the three monarchies of the earth.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Magnet of the Sages.

As steel is attracted towards the magnet. and the magnet turns towards the steel, so also our Magnet attracts our Chalybs. Thus, as Chalybs is the ore of gold, so our Magnet is the true ore of our Chalybs. The hidden center of our Magnet abounds in Salt, which Salt is the menstruum in the Sphere of the Moon, and can calcine gold. This center turns towards the Pole with an archetic appetite, in which the virtue of the Chalybs is exalted into degrees. In the Pole is the heart of Mercury, the true fire (in which is the rest of its Master), sailing through this great sea that it may arrive at both the Indies, and direct its course by the aspect of the North Star, which our Magnet will manifest.

CHAPTER V.

Of the Chaos of the Sages.

Let the student incline his ear to the united verdict of the Sages, who describe this work as analogous to the Creation Of the World. In the Beginning God created Heaven and Earth; and the Earth was without form and void, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. These words are sufficient for the student of our Art. The Heaven must be united to the Earth on the couch of friendship, so shall he reign in glory for ever. The Earth is the heavy body, the womb of the minerals, which it cherishes in itself, although it brings to light trees and animals. The Heaven is the place where the great Lights revolve, and through the air transmit their influences to the lower world. But in the beginning all was one confused chaos. *Our Chaos* is, as it were, a mineral earth (by virtue of its coagulation), and yet also volatile air--in the *center* of which is the Heaven of the Sages, the Astral Center, 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 center. If through the removal of this impediment, they were enabled to mingle, their union would be indissoluble. Therefore the external vapours and burning sulphur do stiffly adhere to our chaos, and unable to resist its tyranny, the pure flies away from the fire in the form of a dry powder. This then should be your great object. The arid earth must be irrigated, and its pores softened with water of its own kind; then this thief with all the workers of iniquity will be cast out, the water will be purged of its leprous stain by the addition of true Sulphur, and you will have the Spring whose waters are sacred to the maiden Queen Diana. This thief is armed with all the malignity of arsenic, and is feared and eschewed by the winged youth. Though the (Central Water be his Spouse, yet the youth cannot come to her, until Diana with the wings of her doves purges the poisonous air, and opens a passage to the bridal chamber. Then the youth enters easily through the pores, presently shaking the waters above, and stirring up a rude and ruddy cloud. Do thou, O Diana, bring in the water over him, even unto the brightness of the Moon! So the darkness on the face of the abyss will be dispersed by the spirit moving in the waters. Thus, at the bidding of God, light will appear on the Seventh Day, and then this sophic creating of Mercury shall be completed, from which time, until the revolution of the year, you may wait for the birth of the marvelous 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 betaken 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 marvelous 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 unmaturing gold, and by proper digestion is changed into that metal. If joined to perfect gold, it is not coagulated, but dissolves the corporal gold, and remains with it, being dissolved, under one form, although before the perfect union death must precede, that so they may be united after death, not simply in a perfect unity, but in a thousand times more than perfect perfection.

CHAPTER XI.

Concerning the Discovery of the Perfect Magistry.

There are those who think that this Art was first discovered by Solomon, or rather imparted to him by Divine Revelation. But though there is no reason for doubting that so wise and profoundly learned a sovereign was acquainted with our Art, yet we happen to know that he was not the first to acquire the knowledge. It was possessed by Hermes, the Egyptian, and some other Sages before him; and we may suppose that they first sought a simple exaltation of imperfect metals into regal perfection, and that it was at first their endeavour to develop Mercury, which is most like to gold in its weight and properties, into perfect gold. This, however, no degree of ingenuity could effect by any fire, and the truth gradually broke on their minds that an internal heat was required as well as an external one. So they rejected aqua fortis and all corrosive solvents, after long experiments with the same--also all salts, except that kind which is the first substance of all salts, which dissolves all metals and coagulates Mercury, but not without violence, whence that kind of agent is again separated entire, both in weight and virtue, from the things it is applied to. They saw that the digestion of Mercury was prevented by certain aqueous crudities and earthy dross; and that the *radical* nature of these impurities rendered their elimination impossible, except by the complete inversion of the whole compound. They knew that Mercury would become fixed if it could be freed from their defiling presence--as it contains fermenting sulphur, which is only hindered by these impurities from coagulating the whole mercurial body. At length they discovered that Mercury, in the bowels of the earth, was intended to become a metal, and that the process of development was only stopped by the impurities with which it had become tainted. They found that that which should be active in the Mercury was passive; and that its infirmity could not be remedied by any means, except the introduction of some kindred principle from without. Such a principle they discovered in metallic sulphur, which stirred up the passive sulphur in the Mercury, and by allying itself with it, expelled the aforesaid impurities. But in seeking to accomplish this practically, they were met by another great difficulty. In order that this sulphur might be effectual in purifying the Mercury, it was indispensable that it should itself be pure. All their efforts to purify it, however, were doomed to failure. At length they bethought them that it might possibly be found somewhere in Nature in a purified condition--and their search was crowned with success. They sought active sulphur in a pure state, and found it cunningly concealed in the House of the Ram. This sulphur mingled most eagerly with the offspring of Saturn, and the desired effect was speedily produced--after the malignant venom of the "air" of Mercury had been tempered (as already set forth at some length) by the Doves of Venus. Then life was joined to life by means of the liquid; the dry was moistened; the passive was stirred into action by the active; the dead was revived by the living. The heavens were indeed temporarily clouded over, but after a copious downpour of rain, serenity was restored. Mercury emerged in a hermaphroditic state. Then they placed it in the fire; in no long time they succeeded in coagulating it, and in its coagulation they found the Sun and the Moon in a most pure state. Then they considered that, before its coagulation, this Mercury was not a metal, since, on being volatilised, it left no residue at the bottom of the distilling vessel; hence they called it unmaturing gold and their living (or quick) silver. It also occurred to them that if gold were sown, as it were, in the soil of its own first substance, its excellence would probably be enhanced; and when they placed gold therein, the fixed was volatilised, the hard softened, the coagulated dissolved, to the amazement of Nature herself. For this reason they wedded these two to each other, put them in a still over the fire, and for many days regulated the heat in accordance with the requirements of Nature. Thus the dead was revived, the body

decayed, and a glorified spirit rose from the grave; the soul was exalted into the Quintessence,-- the Universal Medicine for animals, vegetables, and minerals.

CHAPTER XII.

The Generic Method of Making the Perfect Magistry.

The greatest secret of our operation is no other than a cohobation of the nature of one thing above the other, until the most digested virtue be extracted out of the digested body of the crude one. But there are hereto requisite: Firstly, an exact measurement and preparation of the ingredients required; secondly, an exact fulfillment of all external conditions; thirdly a proper regulation of the fire; fourthly, a good knowledge of the natural properties of the substances; and fifthly, patience, in order that the work may not be marred by overgreat haste. Of all these points we will now speak in their proper order.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of the Use of Mature Sulphur in the Work of the Elixir.

We have spoken of the need of Mercury, and have described its properties more plainly and straightforwardly than has ever been done before. God knows that we do not grudge the knowledge of this Art to our brother men; and we are not afraid that it can ever become the property of any unworthy person. So long as the secret is possessed by a comparatively small number of philosophers, their lot is anything but a bright and happy one; surrounded as we are on every side by the cruel greed and the prying suspicion of the multitude, we are doomed, like Cain, to wander over the earth homeless and friendless. Not for us are 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 pure silver for sale. He subjected it to the usual tests, and he 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 theirs 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 shown that gold and Mercury are the only substances required. We have shown that this gold is to be understood, not metaphorically, but in a truly philosophical sense. We have also declared our Mercury to be true quicksilver, without any ambiguity of acceptance. The latter, we have told you, must be made by art, and be a key to the former. We have made everything as clear as noonday; and our teaching is based, not on hearsay, or on the writings of others, but on our own personal and oft repeated experience. The things we faithfully declare are what we have both seen and known. We have made and do possess the Stone--the great Elixir. Moreover, we do not grudge you this knowledge, but wish you to attain it out of this Book. We have spoken out more plainly than any of our predecessors; and our Receipt, apart from the fact that we have not called things by their proper names, is perfectly trustworthy. It remains for us to give you some practical tests by which the goodness or unsuitableness of your Mercury may be known, and some directions for amending its defects. When you have living Mercury and gold, there remains to be

accomplished, first, the purging of the Mercury and the gold, then their espousal, and finally the regulation of the fire.

CHAPTER XV.

Of the Incidental Purging of Mercury and Gold.

Perfect gold is found in the bowels of the earth in little pieces, or in sand. If you can meet with this unmixed gold, it is pure enough; if not, purge it with antimony or royal cement, or boil it with aqua fortis, the gold being first granulated. Then smelt it, remove the impure sediment, and it is ready. But Mercury needs inward and essential purging, which radical cleansing is brought about by the addition of true Sulphur, little by little, according to the number of the Eagles. Then it also needs an incidental purgation for the purpose of removing from its surface the impurities which have, by the essential purgation, been ejected from the center. 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 distill 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 distill 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 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 fulfills the above conditions, it is good. Then take spirit of vinegar, and dissolve in it a third part of salt of ammonia, put the amalgam into this liquid, let the whole boil for a quarter-of-an-hour in a long necked glass vessel; then take the mixture out of the glass vessel, pour off the liquid, heat the mortar, and pound the amalgam (as above) vigorously, and wash away all blackness with hot water. Put it again into the liquid, let it boil up once more in the glass vessel, pound it as before, and wash it. Repeat this process until the blackness is entirely purged out. The amalgam will then be as brilliant and white as the purest silver. Once

more regulate the temperature of the amalgam according to the rules given above; your labour will be richly rewarded. If the amalgam be not quite soft enough, add a little Mercury. Then boil it in pure water, and free it from all saltiness and acidity. Pour off the water, and dry the amalgam. Make quite sure that it is thoroughly dried, by waving it to and fro on the point of a knife over a sheet of white paper.

CHAPTER XVII.

Concerning the Size, Form, Material, and Mode of Securing the Vessel.

Let your glass distilling vessel be round or oval; large enough to hold neither more nor much less than an ounce of distilled water in the body thereof. Let the height of the vessel's neck be about one palm, hand-breath, or span, and let the glass be clear and thick (the thicker the better, so long as it is clear and clean, and permits you to distinguish what is going on within)--but the thickness should be uniform. The substance which will go into this vessel consists of 1/2 oz. of gold, and one oz. of mercury; and if you have to add 1/3 oz. of mercury, the whole compound will still be less than 2 oz. The glass should be strong in order to prevent the vapours which arise from our embryo bursting the vessel. Let the mouth of the vessel be very carefully and effectually secured by means of a thick layer of sealing-wax. The utensils and the materials required are not then very expensive--and if you use my thick distilling-vessel you will avoid loss by breakage. The other instruments that are requisite are not dear. I know that many will take exception to this statement; they will say that the pursuit of our Art is a matter of all but ruinous expense. But my answer consists in a simple question: What is the object of our Art? Is it not to make the Philosopher's Stone--to find the liquid in which gold melts like ice in tepid water? And do those good people who are so eager in their search after "Mercury of the Sun," and "Mercury of the Moon," and who pay so high a price for their materials, ever succeed in this object? They cannot answer this question in the affirmative. One florin will buy enough of the substance of our water to quicken two pounds of mercury, and make it the true Mercury of the Sages. But, of course, glass vessels, coals, earthen vessels, a furnace, iron vessels, and other instruments, cannot be bought for nothing. Without a perfect body, our ore, viz., gold, there can be no Tincture; and our Stone is at first vile, immature, and volatile, but when complete it is perfect, precious, and fixed. These two aspects of our Stone are the body, gold, and the spirit, or quicksilver.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Of the Furnace, or Athanor of the Sages.

I have spoken about Mercury, Sulphur, the vessel, their treatment, etc., etc.; and, of course, all these things are to be understood with a grain of salt. You must understand that in the preceding chapters I have spoken metaphorically; if you take my words in a literal sense, you will reap no harvest except your outlay. For instance, when I name the principal substances Mercury and gold--I do not mean common gold in the state in which it is sold at the goldsmiths--but it must be prepared by means of our Art. You *may* find our gold in common gold and silver; but it is easier to make the Stone than to get its first-substance out of common gold. "Our gold" is the Chaos whose soul has not been taken away by fire. The soul of common gold has retired before the fiery tyranny of Vulcan into the inmost citadel. If you seek our gold in a substance intermediate between perfection and imperfection, you will find it; but otherwise, you must unbar the gates of common gold by the first preparatory process (chap. 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 fireplace 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 fulfills 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 (chap. xvi), place them over the fire, and there keep them at the boiling point, till they sweat, and their sweat circulates. At the end of 90 days you will find that the Mercury has separated and reunited all the elements of the common gold. Boil the mixture 50 days longer, and you will discover that our Mercury has changed the common gold into "our gold," which is the Medicine of the first order. It is already our Sulphur, but it has not yet the power of tinging. This method has been followed by many Sages, but it is exceedingly slow and tedious, and is only for the rich of the earth. Moreover, when you have got this Sulphur do not think that you possess the Stone, but only its true Matter, which you may seek in an imperfect thing, and find it within a week, by our easy yet rare way, reserved of God for His poor, contemned, and abject saints. Hereof I have now determined to write much, although in the beginning of this Book I decreed to bury it in silence. This is the one great sophism of all adepts; some speak of this common gold and silver, and say the truth, and others say that we cannot use it, and they too, say the truth. But in the presence of God. I will call all our adepts to account and charge them with jealous surliness. I, too, had determined to tread the same path, but God's hand confounded my scheme. I say then, that both ways are true, and come to the same thing in the end--but there is a vast difference at the beginning. Our whole Art consists in the right preparation of our Mercury and our gold. Our Mercury is our way, and without it nothing is effected. Our gold is not common gold, but it may be found in it; and if you operate on our Mercury with common gold (regulating the fire in the right way), you will after 150 days have our gold, since our gold is obtained from our Mercury.

Hence if common gold have all its atoms thoroughly severed by means of our Mercury, and then reunited by the same agency, the whole mixture will, under the influence of fire, become our gold. But, if, without this preparatory purging, you were to use common gold with our Mercury for the purpose of preparing the Stone, you would be sadly mistaken; and this is the great Labyrinth in which most beginners go astray, because the Sages in writing of these ways as two ways, purposely obscure the fact that they are only *one* way (though of course the one is more direct than the other). The gold of the Sages may then be prepared out of our common gold and our Mercury, from which there may afterwards be obtained by repeated liquefactions, Sulphur and Quicksilver which is incombustible, and tinges all things else. In this sense, our Stone is to be found in all metals and minerals, since our gold may be got from them all--but most easily, of course, from gold and silver. Some have found it in tin, some in lead, but most of those who have pursued the more tedious method, have found it in gold. Of course, if our gold be prepared in the way I have described, out of common gold (in the course of 150 days), instead of being found ready made, it will not be so effectual, and the preparation of the Stone will take 1-1/2 years instead of 7 months. I know both ways, and prefer the shorter one; but I have described the longer one as well in order that I may not draw down upon myself the scathing wrath of the "Sages." The great difficulty which discourages all beginners is not of Nature's making: the Sages have created it by speaking of the longer operation when they mean the shorter one, and *vice 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 unraveling 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 willful 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 over Saturn, or lead, is a much nobler substance than gold. It is the living earth in which the soul of gold is joined to Mercury, that they may bring forth Adam and his wife Eve. Wherefore, since the highest has so lowered itself as to become the lowest, we may expect that its blood may be the means of redeeming all its brethren. The Tomb in which our King is buried, is that which we call Saturn, and it is the key of the work of transmutation; happy is he who can salute this planet, and call it by its right name. It is a boon which is obtained by the blessing of God alone; it is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth; but God bestoweth it on whom He will.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of the different Regimens of this Work.

Let me assure you that in our whole work there is nothing hidden but the regimen, of which it was truly said by the Sage that whoever knows it perfectly will be honoured by princes and potentates. I tell you plainly that if this one point were clearly set forth, our Art would become mere women's work and child's play: there would be nothing in it but a simple process of "cooking." Hence it has always been most carefully concealed by the Sages. But I have determined to write in a more sympathetic and kindly spirit: know then that our regimen throughout consists in coction and digestion, but that it implies a good many other processes, which those jealous Sages have made to appear different by describing them under different names. But we intend to speak more openly in regard to this subject.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the First Regimen, which is that of Mercury.

This first regimen has been studiously kept secret by all the Sages. They have spoken of the second regimen, or that of Saturn, as if it were the first, and have thus left the student without guidance in those operations which precede the appearance of that intense blackness. Count Bernard, of Trevisa, says, in his Parable, that when the King has come to the Fountain, he takes off the golden garment, gives it to Saturn, and enters the bath alone, afterwards receiving from Saturn a robe of black silk. But he does not tell us how long it takes to put off that golden robe; and thus, like all his brethren, leaves the poor beginner to grope in the dark during 40 or 50 days. From the point where the stage of blackness is reached to the end of the work their directions are more full and intelligible. It is in regard to these first 40 days that the student requires additional light. This period represents the regimen of Mercury (of the Sages), which is alone active during the whole time, the *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 show 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 showed 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, till rest gradually penetrates the pores of the body, which are thereby more and more softened, till the soul of the gold is enabled gently to pass out. Through the mediation of the soul the body is reconciled and united to the spirit, and their union is signalized by the appearance of the black colour. The whole operation lasts about 40-50 days, and is called the Regimen of Mercury, because the body is passive throughout, and the spirit, or Mercury, brings about all the changes of colour, which begin to appear about the 20th day, and gradually intensify till all be at last completed in black of the deepest dye; which the 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 center to the heavens, then descend to the center from the heavens, and take to itself the power of things above and things below.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of the Regimen of Jupiter.

Black Saturn is succeeded by Jupiter, who exhibits divers colours. For after the putrefaction and conception, which has taken place at the bottom of the vessel, there is once more a change of colours and a circulating sublimation. This *Reign*, or Regimen, lasts only three weeks. During this period you see all conceivable colours concerning which no definite account can be given. The "showers" that fall will become more numerous as the close of this reign approaches, and its termination is signalized by the appearance of a snowy white streaky deposit on the sides of the

vessel. Rejoice, then, for you have successfully accomplished the regimen of Jupiter. What you must be particularly careful about in this operation, is to prevent the young ones of the Crow from going back to the nest when they have once left it; secondly, to let your earth get neither too dry by an immoderate sublimation of the moisture, nor yet to swamp and smother it with the moisture. These ends will be attained by the proper regulation of the outward heat.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of the Regimen of the Moon.

When the Reign of Jupiter comes to an end (towards the close of the fourth month) you will see the sign of the waxing moon (Crescent) and know that the whole Reign of Jupiter was devoted to the purification of the Laton. The mundifying spirit is very pure and brilliant, but the body that has to be cleansed is intensely black. While it passes from blackness to whiteness, a great variety of colours are observed; nor is it at once perfectly white; at first it is simply white--afterwards it is of a dazzling, snowy splendour. Under this Reign the whole mass presents the appearance of liquid quicksilver. This is called the sealing of the mother in the belly of the infant whom she bears; and its intermediate colours are more white than black, just as in the Reign of Jupiter they were more black than white. The Reign of the Moon lasts just three weeks; but before its close, the substance exhibits a great variety of forms; it will become liquid, and again coagulate a hundred times a day; sometimes it will present the appearance of fishes' eyes, and then again of tiny silver trees, with twigs and leaves. Whenever you look at it you will have cause for astonishment, particularly when you see it all divided into beautiful but very minute grains of silver, like the rays of the Sun. This is the White Tincture, glorious to behold, but nothing in respect of what it may become.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of the Regimen of Venus.

The substance, if left in the same vessel, will once more become volatile and (though already perfect in its way) will undergo another change. But if you take it out of the vessel, and after allowing it to cool, put it into another, you will not be able to make anything of it. In this Reign you should also give careful attention to your fire. For the perfect Stone is fusible; and if the fire be too powerful the substance will become glazed, and unsusceptible of any further change. This "vitrification" of the substance may happen at any time from the middle of the Reign of the Moon to the tenth day of the Reign of Venus, and should be carefully guarded against. The heat should be gentle, so as to melt the compound very slowly and gradually; it will then raise bubbles, and receive a spirit that will rise upward, carrying the Stone with it, and imparting to it new colours, especially a copper-green colour, which endures for some time, and does not quite disappear till the twentieth day; the next change is to blue and livid, and at the close of this Reign the colour is a pale purple. Do not irritate the spirit too much--it is more corporeal than before, and if you sublime it to the top of the vessel, it will hardly return. The same caution should be observed in the Reign of the Moon, when the substance begins to thicken. The law is one of mildness, and not of violence, lest everything should rise to the *top* of the vessel, and be consumed or vitrified to the ruin of the whole work. When you see the green colour, know that the substance now contains the germ of its highest life. Do not turn the greenness into blackness by immoderate heat. This Reign is maintained for forty days.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Of the Regimen of Mars.

When the Regimen of Venus is over, and therein has appeared the philosophical tree, with all its branches and leaves, the Reign of Mars begins with a light yellow, or dirty brown colour, but at last exhibits the transitory hues of the Rainbow, and the Peacock's Tail. At this stage the compound is drier, and often shows 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 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 tingeing 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 marvelous. 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 work 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 .**