

# **Alchemia**

This is a long page, but the three texts below are well worth the read, I have some ending comments that I wish to share. These examples are of the Beginning stages of our Art. The first is a famous tract entitled the Secret Book.

Written in the sixteenth century by someone named Artephius, who claims that at the time of his little tract he had lived about a thousand years (do remember that the Stone does not give eternal physical life, for one must pass through the three stages of life at some point, but cleanses the body of disease and fortifies it so one might live much longer than expected). This secret book is one of the most revealing texts explaining the entire process and the first process both at the same time. It is clear, concise and to the point. Note however that there is apparently no order or explanations as to which stage and substance he is writing about. It is left entirely up to the "clever young Philosopher" to discover. As we Philosophers progress and read more and more of the great texts, it becomes clearer and more precise (all of the true texts agreeing with one another albeit with different analogies and allegories). One begins to see themes suddenly arising apparently out of nowhere, a burst of new enlightenment arises and what was hidden before, becomes clear. The second text was written by John Pontanus who also claimed to find the Stone, and his text is to the point of one substance: the Sophic Fire or Secret fire. This is the one substance that has been ignored by most of the other philosophers. I say ignored because they

would say something about it (and do describe it much as these two texts) in the middle of explaining something completely different; as if it were a matter of little or no importance.

Before we begin, there are a few questions that I think we need to ponder about pertaining to Alchemy and its practices. Here are some that I've had: Why can't Nature attain perfection on her own, why do we need to help Her through our Art? At what point do plants and minerals (animals for that matter) die after removing them from the ground or mine? What is the Seed of gold and how do we get it? Why would one even want to live for so long, is it a noble thing or is it selfishness in fear of death or other shady reasons? How can we as Alchemists help our fellow creatures (animals, vegetables and minerals) continue and grow in their own paths. How intimate can I know the three cycles of Nature and how far can I delve into the "layers" of the Three. Do the four Elements exist conceptually or do they have a true vibratory existence that we can perceive, if not with scientific equipment at least with our physical, mental or spiritual faculties? Will I ever know Nature well enough to bring about the completion of some if not all of the Works of the Masters? Why am I even doing this and are my actions true and follow according to my perceptions and observations of Nature? So I think one last thought and ponder upon the depths of reality and perception...

***"In order to manifest anything, we must first know intimately and exactly what it is that we wish to manifest."***

## **The Secret Book**

Antimony is a mineral participating of saturnine parts, and has in all respects the nature thereof. This saturnine antimony agrees with sol, and contains in itself argent vive, in which no metal is swallowed up, except gold, and gold is truly swallowed up by this antimonial argent vive.

Without this argent vive, no metal whatsoever can be whitened; it whitens laton, i.e. gold; reduces a perfect body into its prima materia, or first matter, viz. into sulphur and argent vive, of a white colour, outshining a looking glass. It dissolves, I say the perfect body, which is so in its own nature; for this water is friendly and agreeable with the metals, whitening sol, because it contains in itself white or pure argent vive. And from both these you may draw a great Arcanum, viz. A water of saturnine antimony, mercurial and white; to the end that it may whiten sol, not burning, but dissolving, and afterwards congealing to the consistence or likeness of white cream. Therefore, saith the philosopher, this water makes the body to be volatile; because after it has dissolved in it, and in frigidated, it ascends above and swims upon the surface of the water.

Take saith he, crude leaf gold, calcined with mercury, and put it into our vinegar, made of saturnine antimony, mercurial, and Sal ammoniac, in a broad glass vessel, four inches high or more. Put it into a gentle heat, and in a short time you will see elevated a liquor, as it were oil swimming atop, much like a scum. Gather this with a spoon or feather dipping it in; and in doing so often times a day until nothing more arises; evaporate the water with a gentle heat, i.e. the superfluous humidity of the vinegre, and there will remain the quintessence, potestates or powers of gold in the form of a white oil incombustible. In this oil, philosophers have placed their greatest secrets; it is exceeding sweet and of great virtue for easing the pains of wounds. The whole, then, of this antimonial secret is, that we know how to extract or draw forth argent vive, out of the body of Magnesia, not burning, and this is antimony, and a mercurial sublimate. That is, you must extract a living and incombustible water, and then congeal, or coagulate it with the perfect body of sol, i.e. fine gold, without alloy; which is done by dissolving it into a mature white substance the consistency of cream and made thoroughly white. But first this sol by putrefaction and resolution in this water, looses all its light and brightness, and will grow dark and black. Afterwards, it will ascend above the water, and by little and little will swim upon it in a substance of a white colour. And this is the whitening of red laton to sublimate it philosophically, and to reduce it into its first matter; viz. into a white incombustible sulphur and a fixed argent vive. Thus the perfect body of sol, resumes life in this water; it is revived, inspired, grows, and is multiplied in its kind, as all other things are.

For in this water, it so happens, that the body is compounded of two bodies, viz. sol and Luna; is puffed up, swells, putrefies, is raised up, and does increase by the receiving from the animated nature and substance. Our water, or vinegar as aforementioned, is the vinegar of the mountains, i.e. of sol and Luna; and therefore it is mixed with gold and silver, and sticks close to them perpetually; and the body receives from this water a white tincture, and shines with inestimable brightness. Who so knows how to convert, or change the body into a medicinal white gold, may easily, by the same white gold, change all imperfect metals into the best or finest silver. And this white gold is called by the philosophers "luna alba philosophorum, argentum vivum, album fixum, aurum alchymiae, fumus albus" and therefore without this our antimonial vinegar the stone of the philosophers cannot be made. The reason, is because in our vinegar there is a double substance of argentum vivum, the one from antimony, and the other from mercury sublimated, it does give a double weight and substance of fixed argent vive, and also augments therein the native colour, weight, substance and tincture thereof.

Our dissolving water therefore carries with it a great tincture and a great melting or dissolving. When it feels the heat of the vulgar fire (if there being in it the pure and fine bodies of sol or Luna), it immediately melts them, and converts them into its white substance such as itself, and gives to the body colour, weight, and tincture. In it also is a power of liquefying or melting all things that can be melted

or dissolved; it is a water ponderous, viscous, precious, and worthy to be esteemed, resolving all crude bodies into their prima materia, or first matter, viz. earth and a viscous powder (that is into sulphur, and argentum vivum). If therefore you put into this water, leaves, filings, or calx of any metal, and set it in a gentle heat for a time, the whole will be dissolved, and converted into a viscous water, or white oil (as said before). Thus it mollifies the body, and prepares for liquefaction; yea, it makes all things fusible, viz. stones and metals, and after gives them spirit and life.

And it dissolves all things with an admirable solution, transmuting the perfect body into a fusible medicine, melting, or liquefying, moreover fixing, and augmenting the weight and colour. Work therefore with it, and you shall obtain from it what you desire, for it is the spirit and soul of sol and Luna; it is the oil, the dissolving water, the fountain, the Balneum Marie, the preternatural fire, the moist fire, the secret hidden and invisible fire. It is also the most acrid vinegar, concerning which an ancient philosopher saith, I besought the Lord, and he showed me a pure, clear water which I know to be the pure vinegar; Altering, penetrating, and digesting. I say penetrating vinegar, and the moving instrument for putrefying, resolving and reducing gold or silver into their prima materia or first matter. And it is the only agent in the universe, which in this art is able to reincrudate metallic bodies with the conservation of their species. It is therefore the only apt and natural medium, by which we ought to resolve the perfect bodies of sol and Luna, by a wonderful and solemn dissolution, with the conservation of the species, and without any destruction, unless it be to a

new, more noble, and better form or generation, viz. into the perfect philosopher's stone, which is their wonderful secret or Arcanum. Now this water is a certain middle substance, clear as fine silver, which ought to receive the tinctures of sol and Luna, so they may be congealed, and changed into a white and living earth. For this water needs the perfect bodies, that with them after the dissolution, it may be congealed, fixed, and coagulated into a white earth. But if this solution is also their coagulation (for they have one and the same operation), because one is not dissolved, the other is congealed. There is no other water that can dissolve the bodies, but that which abides with them in the matter and the form. It therefore cannot be permanent unless it is of the nature of the other bodies, viz. sol and Luna, that they may be made one. When you see the water coagulate itself with the bodies that be dissolved therein, be assured that your knowledge, way of working and the work itself are true and philosophic, and that you have done rightly according to Art. Thus you see that nature has to be amended by its own like nature; that is, gold and silver are to be exalted in our water, as our also with these bodies; which water is called the medium of the soul, without which nothing has to be done in this art. It is a vegetable, mineral and animal fire (thus the three kingdoms of the world being analogous and the same thing) that conserves the fixed spirits of sol and Luna, but destroys and conquers their bodies; for it overturns, and changes bodies and metallic forms, making them to be no bodies but a fixed spirit. And it turns them into a humid substance, soft and fluid, which hath ingression and power to enter into imperfect bodies. It

mixes with them in their smallest parts, tinges and makes them perfect; which they could not do, while they remained in their metallic forms or bodies that are dry and hard, and therefore have no entrance into other things to tinge and make perfect what was before imperfect. It is necessary therefore to convert the bodies of metals into a fluid substance; for that every tincture will tinge a thousand times more in a soft and liquid substance, than when it is in a dry one, as is plainly apparent in saffron.

Therefore the transmutation of imperfect metals is impossible to be done by perfect bodies while they are dry and hard; for which cause sake they must be brought back into their first matter, which is soft and fluid.

It appears therefore that the moisture must be reverted that the hidden treasure may be revealed. And this is called the reincrudation of bodies, which is the decocting and softening them, till they lose their hard and dry substance or form; because that which is dry cannot enter nor can tinge anything except its own body nor can it be tinged except it be tinged already; because, as I said before, a thick dry earthy matter does not penetrate nor tinge, and therefore, because it cannot enter or penetrate, it can make no alteration in the matter to be altered. For this reason gold colours not, until its internal or hidden spirit is drawn forth out of its bowels by this, our white water, and that it may be made an altogether spiritual substance, a white vapour, a white spirit, and a wonderful soul. It behooves us therefore by this our water to attenuate, alter and soften the perfect bodies, to wit sol

and Luna, that so they may be mixed with other perfect bodies. If we had no other benefit by this our antimonial water, than that it rendered bodies soft, more subtle, and fluid, according to its own nature, it would be sufficient. But more than that, it brings back bodies to their original of sulphur and mercury, that of them we may afterwards in a little time, in less than an hour's time, do that above ground which nature was a thousand years doing underground in the bowels of the earth, which is a work almost miraculous. And therefore our ultimate, or highest secret is, by this our water, to make bodies volatile, spiritual, and a tincture, or tinging water, which may have ingress or entrance into bodies, for it makes bodies to be merely spirit, because it reduces hard and dry bodies, and prepares them for fusion, melting and dissolving; that is, it converts them into a permanent or fixed water. And so it makes of bodies a most precious and desirable oil that is the true tincture, and the permanent fixed white water, by nature hot and moist, or rather temperate, subtle, fusible as wax, which does penetrate, sink, tinge, and make perfect the work. And this our water immediately dissolves bodies (as sol and Luna) and makes them into an incombustible oil, which then may be mixed with other imperfect bodies. It also converts other bodies into the nature of a fusible salt that the philosophers call "Sal alebrot philosophorum." A salt more noble than any other salt, being in its own nature fixed and not subject to vanish in the fire. It is an oil indeed by nature hot, subtle, penetrating, sinking through and entering into other bodies, it is called the perfect or great elixir, and the hidden secret of the wise searchers of nature. He

therefore that knows this salt of sol and Luna, and its generation and perfection, and afterwards how to commix it, and make it homogenous with other perfect bodies, he in truth knows one of the greatest secrets of nature, and the only way that leads to perfection. These bodies thus dissolved by our water are called argent vive, which isn't without its sulphur, nor sulphur without the fixedness of sol and Luna; because sol and Luna are the particular means, or medium in the form through which nature passes in the perfecting or completing thereof. And this argent vive is called our esteemed and valuable salt, being animated and pregnant, and our fire, for it is nothing but fire; yet not fire, but sulphur; and not sulphur only, but also quicksilver drawn from sol and Luna by our water, and reduced to a stone of great price. That is to say it is a matter or substance of sol and Luna, or silver and gold, altered from vileness to nobility. Now you must note that this white sulphur is the father and mother of the metals; it is our mercury, and the mineral of gold; also the soul, and the ferment; yea, the mineral virtue, and the living body. That is, our sulphur, and our quick silver; or sulphur of sulphur, quicksilver of quicksilver, and mercury of mercury. The property therefore of our water is, that it melts or dissolves gold and silver, and increases their native tincture or color. For it changes their bodies from being corporeal, into a spirituality; and it is in this water which turns the bodies, or corporeal substance into a white vapor, which is a soul which is whiteness itself, subtle, hot and full of fire. This water also called the tinging or blood-color-making stone, being the virtue of the spiritual tincture, without which nothing can be done; and is the subject of all things that

can be melted, and of liquefaction itself, which agrees perfectly and unites closely with sol and Luna from which it can never be separated. For it joins in affinity to the gold and silver, but more immediately to the gold than to the silver, which you are to take special notice of, is also called the medium of conjoining the tinctures of sol and Luna with the inferior or imperfect metals; for it turns the bodies into the true tincture, to tinge the said imperfect metals, also it is the water that whiteneth, as it is whiteness itself, which quickeneth, as it is a soul; and therefore as the philosopher saith, quickly entereth into its body. For it is a living water which comes to moisten the earth, that it may spring out, and in its due season bring forth much fruit. For all things springing from the earth, are endued through dew and moisture. The earth therefore springs not forth without watering and moisture; it is the water proceeding from May dew that cleanseth the body; and like rain it penetrates them, and makes one body of two bodies. This aqua vita or water of life, being rightly ordered and disposed with the body, it whitens it, and converts or changes it into its white color, for this water is a white vapor, and therefore the body is whitened with it. It behooves you therefore to whiten the body, and open its unfoldings, for between these two, that is between the body and the water, there is desire and friendship, like as between male and female, because of the propinquity and likeness of their natures. Now this our second and living water is called "Azoth," the water washing the laton viz. the body compounded of sol and Luna by our first water; it is also called the soul of the dissolved bodies, which souls we have even now tied together, for the use of the wise

philosopher. How precious then, and how great a thing is this water; for without it, the work could never be done or perfected; it is also called the "vase naturae", the belly, the womb, the receptacle of the tincture, the earth, the nurse. It is the royal fountain in which the king and queen bathe themselves; and the mother must be put into and sealed up within the belly of her infant. And that is sol himself, who proceeded from her, and whom she brought forth; and therefore they have loved one another as mother and son, and are conjoined together, because they come from one and the same root, and are of the same substance and nature. And because this water is the water of the vegetable life, it causes the dead body to vegetate, increase and spring forth, and to rise from death to life, by being dissolved first and then sublimed. And in doing this the body is converted into a spirit, and the spirit afterwards into a body; and then is made the amity, the peace, the concord, and the union of contraries, to wit, between the body and the spirit, which reciprocally, or mutually change their natures which they receive, and communicate one to another through their most minute parts, so that that which is hot is mixed with that which is cold, the dry with the moist, and the hard with the soft; by which means, there is a mixture made of contrary natures, viz. of cold and hot, and moist with dry, even most admirable unity between enemies. Our dissolution then of bodies, which is made such in this first water, is nothing else, but a destroying or overcoming of the moist with the dry, for the moist is coagulated with the dry. For the moisture is contained under, terminated with, and coagulated in the dry body, to wit, in that which is earthy.

Let therefore the hard and the dry bodies be put into our first water in the vessel, which close well, and let them there abide till they be dissolved, and ascend to the top. They may then be called a new body, the white gold made by art, the white stone, the white sulphur, not inflammable, the paradisiacal stone, viz. the stone transmuting imperfect metals into white silver. Then we have also the body, soul and spirit altogether; of which spirit and soul it is said, that they cannot be extracted from the perfect bodies, but by the help or conjunction of our dissolving water. Because it is certain that the things fixed cannot be lifted up, or made to ascend, but by the conjunction or help of that which is volatile. The spirit, therefore, by help of the water and the soul, is drawn forth from the bodies themselves, and the body is thereby made spiritual; for that at the same instant of time, the spirit, with the soul of the bodies, ascends on high to the superior part, which is the perfection of the stone and is called sublimation. This sublimation is made by things acid, spiritual, volatile, and which are in their own nature sulphureous and viscous, which dissolves bodies and makes them to ascend, and be changed into air and spirit. And in this sublimation, a certain part of our said first water ascends with the bodies, joining itself with them, ascending and subliming into one neutral and complex substance, which contains the nature of the two, viz., the nature of the two bodies and the water.

And therefore it is called the corporeal and spiritual Compositum, corjufle, cambar, ethelia, zandarith, duenech the good. Properly it is called the permanent or fixed water only, because it flies not in the fire. But it perpetually

adheres to the commixed or compound bodies, that's, the sol and luna, and communicates to them the living tincture, incombustible and most fixed, much more noble and precious than the former which these bodies had. Because from henceforth this tincture runs like oil, running through and penetrating bodies, and giving to them its wonderful fixity; this tincture is the spirit, and the spirit is the soul, and the soul is the body. For in this operation, the body is made a spirit of a most subtle nature; and again, the spirit is corporative and changed into the nature of the body, with the bodies, whereby our stone consists of a body, a soul, and a spirit. O God, how through nature, doth thou change a body into a spirit: which could not be done, if the spirit were not incorporated with the bodies, and the bodies made volatile with the spirit, and afterwards permanent and fixed.

For this cause sake, they have passed over into one another, and by the influence of wisdom, are converted into one another. Oh Wisdom: how thou makest the most fixed gold to be volatile and fugitive, yeah, though by nature it is the most fixed of all things in the world. It is necessary therefore, to dissolve and liquefy these bodies by our water, and to make them a permanent or fixed water, a pure, golden water leaving in the bottom the gross, earthy, superfluous and dry matter. And in this subliming, making thin and pure, the fire ought to be gentle; but if in this subliming with soft fire, the bodies be not purified, and the gross and earthy parts thereof be not separated from the impurities of the dead, you shall not be able to perfect the work. For thou needest nothing but the

thin and subtile part of the dissolved bodies, which our water will give thee, if thou proceedest with a slow or gentle fire, by separating the things heterogene from the things homogene. This compositum then has its mundification or cleaning, by our moist fire, which by dissolving and subliming that which is pure and white, it cast forth its feces or filth like a voluntary vomit, for in such a dissolution and natural sublimation or lifting up, there is a loosening or untying of the elements, and a cleansing and separating of the pure from the impure so that the pure and white substance ascends upwards and the impure and earthy remains fixed in the bottom of the water and vessel. This must be taken away and removed, because it is of no value, taking only the middle white substance, flowing and melted or dissolved, rejecting the feculent earth, which remains below in the bottom. These feces were separated partly by the water, and are the dross and terra damnata, which is of no value, nor can do any such service as the clear, white, pure and clear matter, which is wholly and only to be taken and made use of. And against this capharean rock, the ship of knowledge, or art of the young philosopher is often, as it happened also to me sometimes, dashed together in pieces, or destroyed, because the philosophers for the most part speak by the contraries. That is to say that nothing must be removed or taken away, except the moisture, which is the blackness which they speak and write only to the unwary; who without a master, unrelenting reading, or humble supplications to God Almighty, would ravish away the golden fleece. It is therefore to be observed, that this separation, division,

and sublimation, is without a doubt the key to the whole work. After the putrefaction, then, and dissolution of these bodies, our bodies also ascend to the top, even to the surface of the dissolving water, in a whiteness of color, which whiteness is life. And in this whiteness, the antimonial and mercurial soul, is by natural compact infused into, and joined with the spirits of sol and Luna, which separate the pure from the impure. That is, by lifting up, by little and little, the part of the body, from the feces and impurity, until all the pure parts are separated and ascended. And in this work is our natural and philosophical sublimation work completed. Now in this whiteness is the soul infused into the body, to wit, the mineral virtue, which is more subtle than fire, being indeed the true quintessence and life, which desires or hungers to be born again, and to put off the defilements and be spoiled of its gross and earthy feces, which it has taken from its monstrous womb, and corrupt place of its original. And in this our philosophical sublimation, not in the impure, corrupt, vulgar mercury, which has no qualities or properties like to those, with which our mercury, drawn from its vitriolic caverns is adorned. But let us return to our sublimation. It is most certain therefore in this art, that this soul extracted from the bodies, cannot be made to ascend, but by adding to it a volatile matter, which is of its own kind. By which the bodies will be made volatile and spiritual, lifting themselves up, subtilizing and subliming themselves, contrary to their own proper nature, which is corporeal, heavy and ponderous. And by this means they are unbodied, or made no bodies, to wit, incorporeal, and a quintessence of the nature of a spirit, which is called,

"avis hermetis", and "mercurius extractus", drawn from a red subject or matter. And so the terrene or earthy parts remain below, or rather the grosser parts of the bodies, which can by no industry or ingenuity of man be brought to a perfect dissolution. And this white vapor, this white gold, to wit, this quintessence, is called also the compound magnesia, which like a man does contain, or like a man is composed of a body, soul and spirit. Now the body is the fixed solar earth, exceeding the subtlest of matters, which by the help of our divine water is with difficulty lifted up or separated. The soul is the tincture of sol and Luna, proceeding from the conjunction, or communication of these two, to wit, the bodies of sol and Luna, and our water, and the spirit is the mineral power, or virtue of the bodies, and also out of the bodies like as the tinctures or colors in dying cloth are by the water put upon, and diffused in and through the cloth. And this mercurial spirit is the chain or band of the solar soul; and the solar body is that body which contains the spirit and soul, having the power of fixing in itself, being joined with Luna. The spirit therefore penetrates, the body fixes, and the soul joins together, tinges and whitens. From these three bodies united together is our stone made: to wit, sol, Luna and mercury. Therefore with this our golden water, a natural substance is extracted, exceeding all natural substances.

And so, except the bodies be broken and destroyed, imbibed, made subtle and fine, thriftily, and diligently managed, till they are abstracted from, or lose their grossness or solid substance, and be changed into a subtle spirit, all our labor will be in vain. And unless the

bodies be made no bodies or incorporeal, that is converted into the philosophers mercury, there is no rule of art yet found out to work by. The reason is, because it is impossible to draw out of the bodies all that most thin and subtle spirit, which has in itself the tincture, except it first be resolved in our water. Dissolve then the bodies in this our golden water, and boil them until all the tincture is brought forth by the water, in a white color and a white oil; and when you see this whiteness upon the water, then know that the bodies are melted, liquefied or dissolved. Continue then this boiling, till the dark, black, and white cloud is brought forth, which they have conceived. Put therefore the perfect bodies of metals, to wit, sol and Luna, into our water in a vessel, hermetically sealed, upon a gentle fire, and digest continually, till they are perfectly resolved into a most precious oil. Saith Adfar, digest with a gentle fire, as it were for the hatching of chickens, so long till the bodies are dissolved, and their perfectly conjoined tincture is extracted, mark this well. But it is not extracted all at once, but it is drawn-out by little and little, day by day, and hour-by-hour, till after a long time, the solution is completed, and that which is dissolved always swims atop. And while this dissolution is in hand, let the fire be gentle and continual, till the bodies are dissolved into a viscous and most subtle water, and the whole tincture be educed, in color first black, which is the sign of a true dissolution. Then continue the digestion, till it become a white fixed water, for being digested in balneo, it will afterwards become clear, and in the end become like common argent vive, ascending by the spirit above the first water. When there you see bodies dissolved in the first viscous water,

know then, that they are turned into a vapor, and the soul is separated from the dead body, and by sublimation, turned into the order of spirits. Whence both of them, with a part of our water, are made spirits flying up in the air; and there the compounded body, made of the male and female, viz. of sol and Luna, and of that most subtle nature, cleansed by sublimation, teeth life, and is made spiritual by its own humidity. That is by its own water; like the air sustains a man, whereby from thenceforth it is multiplied, and increases in its own kind, as do all other things.

In such an ascension therefore, and philosophical sublimation, all are joined one with another, and the new body subtilized, or made living by the spirit, miraculously liveth or springs like a vegetable. Wherefore, unless the bodies be attenuated, or made thin, by the fire and water, till they ascend in a spirit, and are made or do become like water and vapor or mercury, you labor wholly in vain. But when they arise or ascend, they are born or brought forth in the air or spirit, and in the same they are changed, and made life with life, so as they can never be separated, but are as water mixed with water. And therefore, it is wisely said, that the stone is born of the spirit, because it is altogether spiritual. For the vulture himself flying without wings cries upon the top of the mountain, saying, I am the white brought forth from the black, and the red brought forth from the white, the citrine son of the red; I speak the truth and lie not. It sufficeth thee then to put the bodies in the vessel, and into the water once and for all, and to close the vessel well, until a true separation is made. This

the obscure artist calls conjunction, sublimation, assation, extraction, putrefaction, ligation, desponsation, subtilization, generation. Now the whole magistracy may be perfected, work, as in the generation of man, and of every vegetable; put the seed once into the womb, and shut it up well.

Thus you may see that you need not many things, and that this our work requires no great charges, for that there is but one stone, there is but one medicine, one vessel, one order of working, and one successive disposition to the white and to the red. And although we say in many places, take this, and take that, yet we understand, that it behooves us to take but one thing, and put it once into the vessel, until the work be perfected. But these things are so set down by obscure philosophers to deceive the unwary, as we have before spoken; for is not this "ars cabalistica" or a secret and a hidden art? And believest thou O fool that we plainly teach this secret of secrets, taking our words according to their literal signification? Truly, I tell thee, that as for myself, I am no ways self seeking, or envious as others are; but he that takes the words of the other philosophers according to their common signification, he even already, having lost Ariadne's clue of thread, wanders in the midst of the labyrinth, multiplies errors, and casts away his money for naught. And I, Artephius, after I became an adept, and had attained to the true and complete wisdom, by studying the books of the most faithful Hermes, the speaker of truth, was sometimes obscure also as others were. But when I had for the space of a thousand years, or thereabouts, which

has now passed over my head, since the time I was born to this day, through the alone goodness of God by the use of this wonderful quintessence. When I say for so very long a time, I found no man had found out or obtained this hermetic secret, because of the obscurity of the philosophers words. Being moved with a generous mind, and the integrity of a good man, I have determined in these latter days of my life, to declare all things truly and sincerely, that you may not want anything for the perfecting of this stone of the philosophers. Excepting one certain thing, which is not lawful for me to discover to any, because it is either revealed or made known by God himself, or taught by some master, which he that can bend himself to the search thereof, by the help of a little experience, may easily learn in this book. In this book I have therefore written the naked truth, though clothed or disguised with few colors; yet so that every good and wise man may happily have those desirable apples of the Hesperides from this our philosophers tree. Wherefore praises be given to the most high God, who has poured into our soul of his goodness; and through a good old age, even an almost infinite number of years, has truly filled our hearts with his love, in which, methinks, I embrace, cherish, and truly love all mankind together.

But to return to our business: Truly our work is perfectly performed; for that which the heat of sun is a hundred years in doing, for the generation of one metal in the bowels of the earth; our secret fire, that is, our fiery and sulphureous water, which is called Balneum Mariae, doth as I have often seen in a very short time. Now this

operation or work is a thing of no great labor to him who knows and understands it; nor is the matter so dear, considering how small a quantity does suffice, that it may cause any man to withdraw his hand from it. It is indeed, a work so short and easy, that it may well be called woman's work, and the play of children. Go to it then, put up thy supplications to God. Be diligent in searching the books of the learned in this science; for one book openeth another; think and meditate of these things profoundly. Avoid all things which vanish in or will not endure the fire, because from these adjustable, perishing or consuming things, you can never attain to the perfect matter, which is only found in the digesting of your water, extracted from sol and luna.

For by this water, color, and ponderosity or weight, are infinitely given to the matter; and this water is a white vapor, which like a soul flows through the perfect bodies, taking wholly from them their blackness, and impurities, uniting the two bodies in one, and increasing their water.

Nor is there any other thing than Azoth, to wit, this our water, which can take from the perfect bodies of sol and luna, their natural color, making the red body white, according to the disposition thereof. Now let us speak of the fire. Our fire is mineral, equal, continuous; it fumes not, unless it be too much stirred up, participates of sulphur, and mistaken from other things than from the matter; it overturns all things, dissolves, congeals, and calcines, and is to be found out by art, or after an artificial manner. It is a compendious thing, got without cost or charge, or at least without any great purchase; it is humid, vaporous, digestive, altering, penetrating, subtle, spiritous, not violent, incombustible, circumspective, continent, and one

only thing. It is also a fountain of living water, which circumvolveth and contains the place, in which the king and queen bathe themselves; through the whole work this moist fire is sufficient; in the beginning, middle and end, because in it, the whole of the art does consist. This is the natural fire, which is yet against nature, not natural and which burns not; lastly, this fire is hot, cold, dry, moist; meditate on these things and proceed directly without anything of a foreign nature. If you understand not these fires, give ear to what I have yet to say, never as yet written in any book, but drawn from the more abstruse and occult riddles of the ancients.

We have properly three fires, without which our art cannot be perfected; and whosoever works without them takes a great deal of labor in vain. The first fire is that of the lamp, which is continuous, humid, vaporous, spiritous, and found out by art. This lamp ought to be proportioned to the enclosure; wherein you must use great judgement, which none can attain to, but he that can bend to the search thereof. For if this fire of the lamp be not measured, or duly proportioned or fitted to the furnace, it will be, that either for the want of heat you will not see the expected signs, in their limited times, whereby you will lose your hopes and expectation by a too long delay; or else, by reason of too much heat, you will burn the "flores auri", the golden flowers, and so foolishly bewail your lost expense. The second fire is ignis cinerum, an ash heat, in which the vessel hermetically sealed is recluded, or buried; or rather it is that most sweet and gentle heat, which proceeding from the temperate vapors of the lamp, does equally

surround your vessel. This fire is not violent or forcing, except it be too much excited or stirred up; it is a fire digestive; alterative, and taken from another body than the matter; being but one only, moist also, and not natural.

The third fire, is the natural fire of water, which is also called the fire against nature, because it is water; and yet nevertheless, it makes a mere spirit of gold, which common fire is not able to do. This fire is mineral, equal, and participates of sulphur; it overturns or destroys, congeals, dissolves, and calcines; it is penetrating, subtle, incombustible and not burning, and is the fountain of living water, wherein the king and queen bathe themselves, whose help we stand in need of through the whole work, through the beginning, middle, and end. But the other two above mentioned, we have not always occasion for, but only at sometimes. In reading therefore the books of the philosophers, conjoin these three fires in your judgment, and without doubt, you will understand whatever they have written of them. Now as to the colors, that which does not make black cannot make white, because blackness is the beginning of whiteness, and a sign of putrefaction and alteration, and that the body is now penetrated and mortified. From the putrefaction therefore in this water, there first appears blackness, like unto broth wherein some bloody thing is boiled. Secondly, the black earth by continual digestion is whitened, because the soul of the two bodies swims above upon the water, like white cream; and in this only whiteness, all the spirits are so united, that they can never fly one from another. And therefore the laton must be whitened, and its leaves unfolded, i.e., its body broken or opened, lest we labor in vain; for this

whiteness is the perfect stone for the white work, and a body ennobled to that end. It is a tincture of a most exuberant glory, and shining brightness, which never departs from the body it is once joined with. Therefore you must note here, that the spirits are not fixed but in the white color, which is nobler than the other colors, and is more vehemently to be desired, for that as it were the complement or perfection of the whole work. For our earth putrefies and becomes black, then it is putrefied in lifting up or separation; afterwards being dried, its blackness goes away from it, and then it is whitened, and the feminine dominion of the darkness and humidity perishes; then also the white vapor penetrates through the new body, and the spirits are bound up or fixed in the dryness. And that which is corrupting, deformed and black through the moisture, vanishes away; so the new body rises again clear, pure, white and immortal, obtaining the victory over all its enemies. And as heat working upon that which is moist, causeth or generates blackness, which is the prime or first color, so always by decoction more and more heat working upon that which is dry begets whiteness, which is the second color; and then working upon that which is purely and perfectly dry, it produces citrinity and redness, thus much for colors. We must know therefore, that thing which has its head red and white, but its feet white and afterwards red; and its eyes beforehand black, that this thing, I say, is the only matter of our magistry. Dissolve then sol and luna in our dissolving water, which is familiar and friendly, and next in nature to them; and is also sweet and pleasant to them, and as it were a womb, a mother, an original, the beginning and the end of their life. That is

the reason why they are meliorated or amended in this water, because like nature, rejoices in like nature, and like nature retains like nature, being joined the one to the other, in a true marriage, by which they are made one nature, one new body, raised again from the dead, and immortal. Thus it behooves you to join consanguinity, or sameness of kind, by which these natures, will meet and follow one another, purify themselves and generate, and make one another rejoice; for that like nature now is disposed by like nature, even that which is nearest, and most friendly to it. Our water then is the most beautiful, lovely, and clear fountain, prepared only for the king, and queen whom it knows very well, and they it. For it attracts them to itself, and they abide therein for two or three days, to wit, two or three months, to wash themselves therewith, whereby they are made young again and beautiful. And because sol and luna have their original from this water their mother; it is necessary therefore that they enter into it again, to wit, into their mothers womb, that they may be regenerated and born again, and made more healthy, more noble and more strong.

If therefore these do not die and be converted to water, they remain alone or as they were and without fruit; but if they die, and are resolved in our water, they bring forth fruit of a hundred fold; and from that very place in which they seem to perish, from thence shall they appear to be that which they were not before. Let therefore the spirit of our living water be, with all care and industry, fixed with sol and luna; for they being converted into the nature of water become dead, and appear like to the dead; from thence

afterwards being revived, they increase and multiply, even as do all sorts of vegetable substances; it suffices then to dispose the matter sufficiently without, because that within, it sufficiently disposes itself for the perfection of its work. For it has in itself a certain and inherent motion, according to the true way and method, and a much better order than it is possible for any man to invent or think of. For this cause it is that you need only prepare the matter, nature herself will perfect it; and if she be not hindered by some contrary thing, she will not overpass her own certain motion, neither in conceiving or generating, nor in bringing forth. Wherefore, after the preparation of the matter, beware only lest by too much heat or fire, you inflame the bath, or make it too hot. Secondly, take heed lest the spirit should exhale, lest it hurt the operator, to wit, lest it destroy the work, and induce many infirmities, as trouble, sadness, vexation, and discontent. From these things which have been spoken, this axiom is manifest, to wit, that he can never know the necessary course of nature, in the making or generating of metals, who is ignorant of the way of destroying them. You must therefore join them together that are of one consanguinity or kindred; for like natures do find out and join with their like natures, and by putrefying themselves, and mix together and mortify themselves. It is needful therefore to know this corruption and generation, and the natures themselves do embrace one another, and are brought to a fixity in a slow and gentle fire; how like natures rejoices with like natures; and how they retain one another and are converted into a white consistency. This white substance, if you will make it red, you must continually decoct it in a dry fire till it be

rubified, or become red a blood, which is nothing but water, fire, and true tincture. And so by a continual dry fire, the whiteness is changed, removed, perfected, made citrine, and still digested till it become to a true red and fixed color. And consequently by how much more it is heightened in color, and made a true tincture of perfect redness. Wherefore with a dry fire, and a dry calcination, without any moisture, you must decoct this compositum, till it is invested with a most perfect red color, and then it will be the true and perfect elixir. Now if afterwards you would multiply your tincture, you must again resolve that red, in new and fresh dissolving water, and then by decoctions first whiten, and then rubify it again, by the degrees of fire, reiterating the first method of operating in this work. Dissolve, coagulate, and reiterate the closing up, the opening and multiplying in quantity and quality at your own pleasure. For by a new corruption and generation, there is introduced a new motion. Thus we can never find an end if we do always work by reiterating the same thing over and over again, viz. by solution and coagulation, by the help of our dissolving water, by which we dissolve and congeal, as we have formerly said, in the beginning of the work. Thus also is the virtue thereof increased, and multiplied both in quantity and quality; so that if after the first course of the operation you obtain a hundred fold; by the second fold you will have a thousand fold; and by the third; ten thousand fold increase. And by pursuing your work, your projection will come to infinity, tinging truly and perfectly, and fixing the greatest quantity how much so ever. Thus by a thing of small and easy price, you have both color, goodness, and weight.

Our fire then and azoth are sufficient for you: decoct, reiterate, dissolve, congeal, and continue this course, according as you please, multiplying it as you think good, until your medicine is made fusible as wax, and has attained the quantity and goodness or fixity and color you desire. This then is the compleating of the whole work of our second stone (observe it well) that you take the perfect body, and put it into our water in a glass vesica or body well closed, lest the air get in or the enclosed humidity get out. Keep it in digestion in a gentle heat, as it were of a balneum, and assiduously continue the operation or work upon the fire, till the decoction and digestion is perfect.

And keep it in this digestion of a gentle heat, until it be purified and resolved into blackness, and be drawn up and sublimed by the water, and is thereby cleaned from all blackness and impurity, that it may be white and subtle.

Until it comes to the ultimate or highest purity of sublimation, and utmost volatility, and be made white both within and without: for the vulture flying in the air without wings, cries out that it might get up upon the mountain, that is upon the waters, upon which the "spiritus albus" or spirit of whiteness is born. Continue still a fitting fire, and that spirit, which is the subtle being of the body, and of the mercury will ascend upon the top of the water, which quintessence is more white than the driven snow.

Continue yet still, and towards the end, increase the fire, till the whole spiritual substance ascends to the top. And

know well, that whatsoever is clear, white, pure and spiritual, ascends in the air to the top of the water in the substance of a white vapor, which the philosophers call

their virgin milk. It ought to be, therefore, as one of the Sybills said, that the son of the virgin be exalted from the earth, and that the white quintessence after its rising out of the dead earth, be raised up towards heaven; the gross and thick remaining in the bottom, of the vessel and the water. Afterwards, you will find in the bottom the black feces, scorched and burnt, which separate from the spirit and quintessence of whiteness, and cast them away. Then will the argent vive fall down from our air and spirit, upon the new earth, which is called argent vive sublimed by the air or spirit, whereof is made a viscous water, pure and white. This water is the true tincture separated from all its black feces, and our brass or latten is prepared with our water, purified and brought to a white color, which white color is not obtained but by decoction and coagulation of the water.

Decoct, therefore, continually; wash away the blackness from the latten, not with your hands, but with the stone, or the fire, or our second mercurial water, which is the true tincture. This separation of the pure from the impure is not done with hands, but nature herself does it, and brings it to perfection by a circular operation. It appears then, that this composition is not a work of hands, but a change of the natures; because nature dissolves and joins itself, sublimes and lifts itself up, and grows white, being separated from the feces. And in such a sublimation the more subtle, pure, and essential parts are conjoined; for that with the fiery nature or property lifts up the subtle parts, it separates always the more pure, leaving the grosser at the bottom. Wherefore your fire ought to be

gentle and a continual vapor, with which you sublime, that the matter may be filled with spirit from the air, and live. For naturally all things take life from the inbreathing of the air; and so also our magistry receives in the vapor or spirit, by the sublimation of the water. Our brass or latten then, is to be made to ascend by the degrees of fire, but of its own accord, freely, and without violence; except the body therefore be by the fire and water broken, or dissolved, and attenuated, until it ascends as a spirit, or climbs like argent vive, or rather as the white soul, separated from the body, and by sublimation diluted or brought into a spirit, nothing is or can be done. But when it ascends on high, it is born in the air or spirit, and is changed into spirit; and becomes life with life, being only spiritual and incorruptible. And by such an operation it is that the body is made spirit, of a subtle nature, and the spirit is incorporated with the body, and made one with it; and by such a sublimation, conjunction, and raising up, the whole, both body and spirit are made white. This philosophical and natural sublimation therefore is necessary which makes peace between, or fixes the body and spirit, which is impossible to be done otherwise, than in the separation of these parts. Therefore it behooves you to sublime both, that the pure may ascend, and the impure may descend, or be left at the bottom, in the perplexity of a troubled sea. And for this reason it must be continually decocted, that it may be brought to a subtle property, and the body may assume, and draw to itself the white mercurial soul, which it naturally holds, and suffers not to be separated from it, because it is like to it in the nearness of the first pure and simple nature. From these things it is necessary, to make

a separation by decoction, till no more remains of the purity of the soul, which is not ascended and exalted to the higher part, whereby they will both be reduced to an equality of properties, and a simple pure whiteness. The vulture flying through the air, and the toad creeping upon the ground, are the emblems of our magistracy.

When therefore gently and with much care, you separate the earth from the water, that is from the fire, and the thin from the thick, then that which is pure will separate itself from the earth, and ascend to the upper part, as it were into heaven, and the impure will descend beneath, as to the earth. And the more subtile part in the superior place will take upon it the nature of a spirit, and that in the lower place, the nature of an earthy body. Wherefore, let the white property with the more subtile part of the body, be by this operation, made to ascend leaving the feces behind, which is done in a short time. For the soul is aided by her associate and fellow, and perfected by it. My mother, saith the body, has begotten me, and by me she herself is begotten; now after I have taken from her, her flying she after an admirable manner becomes kind and nourishing, and cherishing the son whom she has begotten till he come to a ripe or perfect age. Hear now this secret: keep the body in our mercurial water, till it ascends with the white soul, and the earthy part descends to the bottom, which is called the residing earth. Then you shall see the water coagulate itself with the body, and be assured the art is true because the body coagulates the moisture into dryness, like as the rennet of a lamb or calf turns milk into cheese. In the same manner the spirit penetrates the

body, and is perfectly commixed with it in its smallest atoms, and the body draws to itself his moisture, to wit, its white soul, like as the loadstone draws iron. This is because of the nearness and likeness of its nature; and then one contains the other. And this is the sublimation and coagulation, which retaineth every volatile thing, making it fixed forever. This compositum then is not a mechanical thing, or a work of the hands, but as I said, a changing of natures; and a wonderful connection of their cold with hot, and the moist with the dry; the hot is mixed with the cold, and the dry with the moist: By this means is made the mixture and conjunction of body and spirit, which is called a conversion of contrary spirits and natures, because by such a dissolution and sublimation, the spirit is converted into a body and body in a spirit. So that the natures being mixed together, and reduced into one, do change one another: and as the body corporifies the spirit, or changes it into a body, so also does the spirit convert the body into a tinging and white spirit. Wherefore as the last time I say, decoct the body in our white water, viz. mercury, till it is dissolved into blackness, and then by continual decoction, let it be deprived of the same blackness, and the body so dissolved, will at length ascend or rise with a white soul. And then the one will be mixed with the other, and so embrace one another that it shall not be possible any more to separate them, but the spirit, with a real agreement, will be unified with the body, and make one permanent or fixed substance. And this is the solution of the body, and coagulation of the spirit, which have one and the same operation. Who therefore knows how to conjoin the principles, or direct the work, to

impregnate, to mortify, to putrefy, to generate, to quicken the species, to make white, to cleanse the culture from its blackness and darkness, till he is purged by the fire and tinged, and purified from all his spots, shall be the possessor of a treasure so great that even kings themselves shall venerate him. Wherefore, let our body remain in the water till it is dissolved into a subtle powder in the bottom of the vessel and the water, which is called the black ashes; this is the corruption of the body which is called by the philosophers or wise men, "Saturnus plumbum philosophorum", and pulvis discontinuatus, viz. saturn, latten or brass, the lead of the philosophers the disguised powder. And in this putrefaction and resolution of the body, three signs appear, viz., a black color, a discontinuity of parts, and a stinking smell, not much unlike to the smell of a vault where dead bodies are buried.

These ashes then are those of which the philosophers have spoken so much which remained in the lower part of the vessel, which we ought not to undervalue or despise; in them is the royal diadem, and the black and unclean argent vive, which ought to be cleansed from its blackness, by a continual digestion in our water, till it be elevated above in a white color, which is called the gander, and the bird of Hermes. Therefore he who maketh the red earth black, and then renders it white, has obtained the magistracy; he who kills the living, and revives the dead. Therefore make the black white, and the white black, and you perfect the work. And when you see the true whiteness appear, which shineth like a bright sword,

or polished silver, know that in that whiteness there is redness hidden. But then beware that you take not that whiteness out of the vessel, but only digest it to the end, that with heat and dryness, it may assume a citron color, and a most beautiful redness. Which when you see, render praises and thanksgiving to the most great and good God, who gives wisdom and riches to whomsoever He pleases, and takes them away according to the wickedness of a person. To Him, I say, the most wise and almighty God, be glory for ages and ages Amen.

## The Sophic Fire

I, John Pontanus, who have travelled into various realms and domains on my quest to know of a certainty what is the Philosophers Stone, journeying through all parts of the world, found but false Philosophers and deceivers. Studying still, none the less, in the books of the Wise, and my doubts increasing, I discovered the truth: and yet, notwithstanding I had knowledge of the material, I erred two hundred times before finding the operation and practice of that true material. I commenced first my operations with putrefactions of the Body of this material over a period of nine months but this came to naught. I placed it in the bain-marie for lengthy periods, erring just the same. I took and placed it in the calcinating fire for three months and proceeded awry. All sorts and kinds of distillation and sublimation spoken of, or apparently spoken of by the Philosophers - Geber, Archelaus, and

almost any other - have I attempted and tried, and found equally nothing. In brief, I tried to come at and perfect in every way conceivable the subject of all the Art of Alchemy, be this by manure, bathing, ashes, or the thousand other sorts of fire mentioned by the Philosophers in their works, but nothing did I discover of worth. It was for this reason that I set myself to study the books of the Philosophers for three years continual, studying among others those of Hermes, whose brief words contain the whole magistry of the Stone; though he speaks quite obscurely of things above and below, of Heaven and of the Earth. All one's application and care must then be only to know the correct practice in the first, second and third Works. It is not at all the fire of the bath, dung or ashes, nor any of the other fires of which the Philosophers sing or describe for us in their books. What, then is this fire which perfects and achieves the entire Work, from beginning to end? Certainly all Philosophers have hidden it; but for myself, touched by a moment of pity, I would declare it and the achievement of the whole Work. The Philosophers one is unique, and one, but hidden and veiled in a multiplicity of different names, and before knowing it you will have seen much struggle: only with difficulty will you come to know it by your own genius. It is watery, airy, fiery and earthy, phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine and melancholy. It is a sulphur and equally Quick Silver. It has several superfluities which I assure you by the living God, transform themselves into one unique Essence, if only there be our fire. And whoever - believing such to be necessary - would subtract anything from the subject, knows of a certainty nothing of Philosophy. For the

superfluous, unclean, foul, scurvy, miry and, in general, entire substance of the subject, is perfected into one fixed spiritual body, by means of our fire. Which has never been revealed by the Wise, thus making it that but few succeed in this Art; imagining that some foul and unworthy thing must be separated out. Now must one make appear, and draw out the properties of our fire; if it agree with our material in the way of which I have spoken, that is to say, if it be transmuted with the material. This fire burns the material not at all, nor separates anything from it, nor divides nor puts apart the parts pure and impure, as is told by all Philosophers, but converts the whole subject into purity. It does not sublime as Geber or Arnold and all others who have spoken of sublimation and distillation sublime. And it makes and perfects itself in little time. This fire is mineral, equal and continual, and never evaporates unless over excited; it has certain of the characteristics of sulphur, is taken and originates elsewhere than in the material. It ruptures, dissolves, and congeals all things, and similarly congeals and calcinates; it is difficult to find by industry or by Art. This fire is the epitome and abridgement of the Work in its entirety, taking no other thing else, or very little, and this same fire introduces itself and is of mediocre heat; for with this little fire the whole Work is perfect, and all due and necessary sublimation achieved together. Those who read Geber and all other Philosophers shall never come to an understanding of it though they live one hundred million years; for this fire may not be discovered but by the sole and profound meditation of the mind, following which one will understand the books, and not otherwise. Error in this Art,

consists only in the acquisition of this fire, which converts the material into the Stone of the Wise. Study, then, this fire, for had I myself found it at the first, I should not have erred two hundred times upon the veritable material. By which am I no longer surprised if so many come not to the accomplishment of the Work. They err, have erred and will ever err, in that the Philosophers have placed their veritable agent in but one, single thing, which Artephius named, but speaking only for himself. Had I not read Artephius, nor penetrated and understood, never would I have arrived at the accomplishment of the Work. Here, then, the practice: take the material with all dilligence, grind and pulverise it physically and place it in the fire, that is within the oven; but the degree and proportion of the fire must also be known. To wit, that the external fire excite only the material; and in a little time this fire, without that one put a hand to it in any manner, will assuredly realise the Work in its entirety. For it will purify, corrupt, engender and bring to perfection the whole work, making appear the three principal colours, the black, white and red. And by our fire the medicine will multiply, not only in quantity but also in virtue, if joined with the material in its raw state. Search, therefore, this fire with all strength of your mind, and you shall reach the goal you have set yourself; for it is this that brings to completion all the stages of the Work, and is the key of all the Philosophers, which they have never revealed in their books. If you think well and deep upon this above-mentioned fire, you will know it. Not otherwise. Thus, moved by a moment of pity, I have written this; but, and that I satisfy myself, as I made mention above, the fire is in no wise transmuted with the

material. I wished to speak this and to warn well the prudent concerning these things, that they spend not in vain their money, but know in advance what it is that they seek and, by this means, arrive at the truth of the Art; not otherwise. God keep thee.

The mineral Fire; and the Great Elixir,  
known as  
The Philosophers Stone.

I John Pontanus have traveled over many regions, that I might learn something that was certain concerning the philosopher's stone and, compassing almost the whole world, met with none but impostors, false deceivers, and no philosophers: But studying always, doubting much, and casting every way, at length I found the truth: But when I knew the matter, I erred two hundred times before I found the true matter, with the operation, and practice upon it. First, I fell to putrefy the matter nine months together, and found nothing: I put it in St. Mary's Bath for a certain time, and erred in that, as before. Then for three months I put it to a fire of Calcination, and wrought amiss: all manner of Distillations, and Sublimations, such as the Philosophers, as Geber, Archelaus, and almost all the rest, say, or seem to say, should be used. I practiced and found nothing still. Then again I tried to perfect the subject of the whole alchymical art, all the ways that can be imagined; by baths, by dungs, by ashes, and a multiplicity of other fires, which are yet found in the philosophers books; and yet for all that I found no good. Wherefore, for three years continued, I studied the philosophers books, but chiefly the works of Hermes alone, whose shorter words comprehend

the whole stone. Although he speaks obscurely of the Superior, and Inferior, of the Heaven, and of the Earth. The first instrument therefore that brings the matter to its Esse in the first, second and third work, is not the fire of the bath, nor of dung, nor ashes, nor of the other heats which the philosophers have in their books. What therefore is that fire that perfects the whole work from the beginning to the end? Certainly the philosophers have always concealed it; but I being moved with piety, and kindness to men, will declare it to you, together with the complement of the whole work. It is then the philosophers stone, but is called by various names, and thou shalt find it hard to know: For it is watery, airy, fiery and earthy. Phlegmatic, choleric and melancholy. It is sulphureous, and is likewise argent vive: and has many superfluities in it: all which, by the living God, are turned into a true essence, our fire mediating: And he that separates any thing from the subject thinking that necessary, knows nothing in philosophy; because whatever is superfluous, unclean, foul or feculent, finally the whole substance of the subject is perfected to a spiritual body fixed, by mediation of our fire. And this the philosophers never revealed, and therefore few come at the art, thinking there is some such superfluous nature to be removed. And now we are to draw out the properties of our fire, and try, whether according to the manner that I have said, it be so fitted to our matter, that it may be transmuted by it, since that fire burns not the matter, separates nothing from it, parts not the pure from the impure (as all philosophers say) but turns the whole subject to purity: It does not sublime as Geber make his sublimations and as Arnoldus, and others

speaking of sublimation and distillation, such as are perfected in a short time. It is mineral, it is equal, it is continual, it vapours not away unless it be stirred up too much; it also partakes of sulphur, and is taken from somewhere else than from the matter; it pulls down all, dissolves and congeals, and calcines: the invention of it is artificial: it is a compendium without cost, or with very little; and that fire is of a moderate ignition, because with a remiss fire the whole work is perfected, and all the right sublimations made. Whosoever should read Geber, and all the rest, if they should live an hundred thousand years, would not be able to comprehend it, because that fire is found only by profound imagination; and then it may be comprehended in the books, and not before. The error therefore of this art, is, not to find the Fire, which turns the whole matter into the true Stone of the Philosophers. Take it then for thy study; for if I had found this fire at first, I had not erred two hundred times in my practice upon the matter: wherefore I wonder not, that so many, and great wits, have not come at the work. They err, have erred, and will err still, because the Philosophers have not set down the proper agent; one only excepted, Artephius by name, but he speaks for himself; and if I had not read Artephius and heard him what he said, I had never attained the perfect work. But this is the practice. Take it, bruise it, and bring it down diligently by natural contrition, and put it to the fire, and know the proportion of your fire, namely that it is to be no stronger than only to excite the matter, and in a short time even that fire without any opposition of hands, will certainly complete the whole work. For it will putrefy, corrupt, generate, and perfect, and make it to appear in

their times the three principal colours, black, white and red. And by mediation of our fire, the medicine will be multiplied if it be joined with crude matter, not only in quantity, but also in virtue. Therefore with all thy power look after thy fire, and thou mayst prosper in thy work, because it does the whole work, and is the key of the philosophers. But thou shalt come to know it by a right, profound thinking upon the properties of the fire set down before, and no otherways. This I writ out of piety, and that I may satisfy thee finally; The fire is not transmuted with the matter, because it is not of the matter, as I told you before. This much I had in mind to say, and admonish the prudent, that they spend not their money to no purpose, but that they should know what they are to look for, and so they may attain to the truth and no other way.

### Some thoughts on the texts above.

It would appear that we are to look for something that is not of the substance(s) that we are processing or working upon. The Secret Fire is some substance that reduces solid things, or things heavy, to their first fluid substance. Its properties seem to be many at first glance, but there is a certain theme of descriptions throughout that have a coherency and similarity in the description of the Secret Fire. First of all, it is a liquid or fluid substance. It is clear "bright" looks like water and is referred to as a "Saturnine water", or Heavy Water. This is what is used to elicit Our Mercury from the two bodies. This is the preliminary step that needs to be taken before we even begin the true Work. This substance then appears to be a "compendium"

that can be had for very little expense, is difficult to prepare and is the most closely guarded secret that the Alchemists have.

*Taking into consideration other texts as well, let us begin to formulate a theory of the preparation and, hopefully, the realization or fruition of finding this elusive and hidden material.*

*"...How many times have I made the pilgrimage to the top of this tower to solve the woes of the world. I laugh at myself sometimes, how ridiculous I say to myself, obsessing over something that I know little to nothing of. Then again I have learned so much from Our Mother in these few years of this short lifetime. Aahh so much to learn about the Stone. One might call that a grand conundrum. It takes years to find the stone, if one even finds it at all, and many die in pursuit of it, passing on to a different vibration never to have the thing that prolongs the life that passed. What is so common and so simple to create so difficult to discover? I may never know. I will write this here in hope that someone happens upon this little diary and see something that I have blatantly neglected, but this is the procedure as far as I have taken it...*

*There are so many descriptions that pertain to the starting materials and the solvent that dissolves the matter at hand. This solvent is clear, bright, shining and "outshines the looking glass". It is heavy, ponderous and bears its own salt. By this I mean the body is removed from the "clear water, shining like the sea because it is the water of the sea of knowledge" and calcine all impurities from the body, in order to make it spiritual when*

*the water is returned to the body in a philosophic way. I shall grind it therefore and make of it a fine powder calcined white so all superfluous and extraneous matter that cannot withstand the fire, for nothing but perfection withstands the fire, raising the matter to a finer state. Next I will pour the water that I extracted the body out of on top of the calcined matter and distill it once again. The water is two things: the body contained within the liquid. Each distillation cleanses the matter even more, and another calcination to either white or red is deemed appropriate at this time. It is the repetition of wet and dry that "unlocks" the spirit contained within the matter and the whole becomes three things: the body, the spirit and the water. All three when intrinsically bound together by our Art produce One thing, and that is the Secret Fire so sought after...*

*I like to make stories about how one would think so many years ago and take them to the Dreamtime and give them a test. I literally become an ancient Alchemist many years ago learning from others in the pursuit of my matter's completion. I sit by a river and contemplate the Dance of the Wooded River. I play my pipes in mournful celebration of the beauty that surrounds me, I walk upon the moist mossy trail that ambles cross the winding river and thank the Great Spirit for the many blessings that have been bestowed upon me since birth. Once again I would like to suggest to you to find a place that you can go to at least once a month to contemplate the many facets of our Mother and her Ways. Become "mysitcal" if that is your heart's desires. I prefer to call it "Spititual" but again it is all*

up to you. You only get out of Alchemy what you put into it.

*Blessings, Pan.*

## **The Crowning of Nature**

This work is a good example of the allegorical side of Alchemy. It is deliberately esoteric because it explains the entire process of all three Works simultaneously with a large or primary focus on the second or Spiritual path. This one is loaded with gems, helps broaden one's fundamental viewpoints upon that which we perceive and the actions that we do. As an aside, all of the texts herein are edited in order to clarify (such as periods instead of semicolons and other such trivial semantic revisions. Note also that I have none of the pictures that go along with this Work, and I hope to place them here soon (they are well worth the wait).

### *Introduction*

*The influence of the heavens by the will and command of God, descends from above and mixes with the virtues and properties of the Stars, and likewise in this manner is the first production of our seed. You must not take it out of any combustible for it fights with it without being prejudiced, but is known out of a metallic root ordained by the Creator only for the generation of metals. You must look for it in the seed of its proper nature from which nature may produce it. Bernard Trevisan's books are writ true, right and once by circumstances to amuse souls. The Elements are Water, Air, Earth, and Fire, which must be so applied*

*and governed until such time they produce a soul. We gather the four elements by a concordance of the Seven Planets. All our work is to Congeal and Dissolve the body, and Congeal the Spirit. God being before all things, when He was alone created one Substance, which He called the first matter and of that substance he created the Elements, and from them created all things. Our Stone is the Quintessence of the Four Elements, separated from them and reduced into a fifth Essence, being extracted out of the body of the first matter. Nature created by God prepared with human artifice, then by the Conjunction and union of the said elements after their perfect rectification, reduces them into a fifth, a glorious fifth Essence or Spirit called Quintessence, appearing in a glorified body which is found in one only thing created by God. Wheresoever is found a metallic Spirit, a metallic Soul and a body metallic, there is also found infallibly Quicksilver, Sulphur and Salt, in which certainly will make a perfect metallic body. We gather it from the most perfect Creature upon which the Sun ever set his eyes. St Dunstan's work, De Occulta Philosophia E: G: I: A, calls it the food of Angels, the heavenly Viaticum, the Bread of Life, and it is undoubtedly next under God, the true Alchochodon or giver of years, and he does not so much admire the question whether any man can die that uses it, as to think why the possessors of it should desire to live, who have these manifestations of Glory and eternity represented to their fleshly eyes. Our Stone is made or composed of Two, Three, Four, and Fire: of Five, that is the quintessence, of Four which are the Four Elements, of Three which is of three Principle natural things, of Two which signifies*

double mercury, and of One which is the first principle of all things, which was produced clean and pure from the Creation of the world, fiat - be it made. There are Creatures created more noble than Gold and we must look [for] it where truth will find it, which so hath put in nature, and man cannot know it by sight, except he see the whole work. Adam our first father was in his inward parts, or internal man, made according to the similitude of God of the same substance and matter which the Angels were made, though men (that the world hold great Doctors) say and tell it for truth that God made man out of a piece of mud, clay, or dust of the Earth, which is false, it was no such matter, but a quintessential Matter, which is called Earth but is no earth. Adam before his all had a far different body than what he had after, and so far different that if we should behold him as he was in his Innocency, we should admire the glory of him, and tremble at the sight, as at the sight of an Angel and such a body as our blessed Saviour brought from heaven with him, such a body shall we arise with, and with such bodies shall our souls be endued with flesh and blood. Otherwise Man would not differ from Angels, for this flesh and blood is put upon us by the Holy Ghost, that is by regeneration. I forebear to speak more of these mysteries known to few. But he that liveth to be blessed with this Art, shall glorify his Creator. Man the Microcosm or Little World, from the Stars received Spirit, from the Great World his body, and from God immediately his soul, so here is an illumination of the Blessed Trinity. Now let us say something of the production of the Great World out of nothing, when there were neither time or place, and God created a certain

*Chaos Invisible which the Philosophers call Hyle, the most remote matter. Out of this He made an extract or Second Matter Chaos, which the Philosophers know not by speculation, but since that matter was and is visible and tangible, in which were and are all the seeds and forms of all creatures Superior and Inferior, that ever were made. From this God divided the four Elements, in a word did make all things Celestial and Terrestrial, the Angels, Sun, Moon, and Stars. The knowledge and practice of the Philosophers upon this Chaos brought them to the knowledge of all wisdom, and from thence brought next to God, seek thou and find all wisdom, and indeed Angelical wisdom is attained by it. Incredulity is given to the world as a punishment. He that knoweth not what he seeketh, shall not know what he shall find.*

### *Concerning the Ancient Chaos*

*Chaos is the first beginning of the first created from an Uncreated Being, this God omnipotent created in the beginning, but before the work of the days it was without shape and also confused. But afterwards all the most sound Philosophers nominated that Essence, the Mother and the first matter of the world, for Hilon, and Nature, in whose bosom innumerable forms lay hid, which the Omnipotent Builder, that great Spagirus, appointed in his time to break forth, for he had first included a spirit in that Undigested Matter, Chaos, who some hath affirmed ought to be called the Soul of the World, some the Form of Forms, others the Proximate Instrument of the Creator. By the benefit of this spirit so included, there is at length by the most free will of God, providing for and overlooking all*

*things, a separation is made of the waters from the waters, by which they were divided. But it is very remarkable, that at the separation of the Chaos, there was a just division, no deperdition, but every particle of the same being full of spirit and life, they are fit for that to which they were ordained, waxing strong and vegetating. Hence the admirable strength of things, may by the sons of men be drawn forth and become a true metamorphosis, if they artificially search and handle them according to the nature of the Chemical Art, for the true Philosophers have considered of no other Mystery than Nature itself, and a possibility of Nature, which Natural simplicity may indeed suffice those that rely on it, for Nature doth work most of all from its aptness of its own virtue and beginning, as it doth demonstrate, only needing a little help of Art. With the Cabalists this Chaos is twofold, to wit, Intelligibles and Visibles, the one proceeding from the immediate decree of God, the other is reported or declared to proceed immediately from the execution of the same decree. Know further, that the point you see in the White, is put for the centre of the Earth, the whiteness doth signify the Earth itself, the crooked line signifies the flowing water, which in its own place would cover the Earth, but by the decree of the most bountiful Creator, it encompasses some part only. The white circle beset with little black spots, signifies the Air, as the sevenfold little points of a golden color denotes the Fire. These things being thus expounded and declared, the next consideration shall be of the seven Planets punctually compassing the Chaos.*

## **Saturn, the Chemical Subject in the Root of Art**

*The first of these is Saturn, and therefore is placed in the ascendant, but he contains all the other planets, as the others do the rest, but in a diverse order. From hence it is known that all things are in all things, according to the true philosophical intention. But Saturn himself is feminine and melancholy, Jupiter feminine and phlegmatic and sanguine, Mars masculine and sanguine, Mercury feminine and phlegmatic, lastly the Moon feminine and melancholy. Saturn is the first of the planets far exceeding all his brethren in essence, order and dignity. He is accounted the primary son of Nature, the root of metals known to few. Hence saith the Clangor, the colouring spirit is the philosopher's Mercury with its Red or White Sulphur being naturally mixed with it in the mine and bowels of the Earth, also indifferently prepared, the judgement of the artificer being left until the perfect consummation, as it is in the metaphor of Bellinus concerning the Sun, that which is the spirit is called Saturn, in plain words tincturing and dividing all metallic bodies especially gold with a true and radical dissolution. As is manifest by Bellinus' words in the Rosary "Know, saith he, that my father the Sun hath given me power above all power and hath clothed me with a garment of glory, and all the world seeks me and runs after me, for I am that excellent one who exalts and debases all things, and none of my servants except one can overcome me, to whom is given that which is contrary to me, and he destroys me, though not my nature, and that is Saturn who separates all my members. Afterwards I*

turn to my Mother who congregates all my divided and separated members". Trevisan affirms the same thing, that no other argent vive can be extracted out of any other body, except out of the Red Servant, which is called by Bellinus, the contrary Servant. But it is called a Servant (to wit) the Servant of Nature, because it serves in the generation of Metals in her Minerals, and because it serves in Chemistry to generate that heavenly and also specified stone. It is called Red, because in this last preparation he goes into red dust. But it is termed to be contrary to the Sun, because he doth radically dissolve him and bring him into his first matter. But lest thou should err, my Son, these things are not to be understood of Saturn belonging to metals or mineral Mercury, but concerning the metalline Sun and Moon which are contained in our lead, (to wit) in potential and not visible. Pythagoras says that every secret is in lead. That I may at length conclude in one word this golden chapter, I do plainly with a constant protestation affirm the more sound Philosophers to have nominated it the Star of the Sun, the Ens of the Moon (Sun and Mercury). Know further, that although the subject of health and riches be the same, and that we will handle them both in these commentaries, yet professedly as to the sons of learning and men of understanding it may appear in this place, we will especially treat of the matter of Medicine, for it is our chief intention. But as yet you see Saturn in the ascendant, and all the planets accompanying him, but having the Sun and Moon under his feet, by which is signified that Saturn himself only doth contain in himself those two tinctures, sought by so many and found or known to few. But that a

*little solar star appears in the Moon, and a little lunar star in the Sun, doth not want a Mystery, for the Sun and Moon came forth of the one and same root, as may in a short space be occularly demonstrated by an ingenious Artificer, by the little white drops which afterwards become red is signified abundance of Tincture, lying hid especially in the body of Saturn. By the mountain out of which a flourishing tree doth appear, is very fitly signified that Saturn is not gotten elsewhere than in hilly places.*

## *Distillation*

*After the subject was known, the first intention of the philosophers that water should be got which they had noted with many names amongst which that sharp vinegar so much spoken of by them is one. But the second is dissolving Mercury. The third is Marsh water. Dissolving Mercury is defined by a natural dissolution, and is defined by them to be that by whence metals are dissolved by a natural dissolution, and their spirits are brought from power into Action. But before they can be brought to act, Nature ought necessarily to be stirred up, but if the dissolving Mercury should be dry there would be no irritation of Nature, and so by consequence in vain would the solution be hoped for. There are therefore some which have endeavoured to have that dissolving Mercury, or this water of those marshes, by Distillation, and it was effected. Therefore Distillation with them is the elevation of the watery vapours in the vessel, for in that are two parts of the Stone (to wit), the Superior and the Inferior. They will have the Superior part to be attenuated by Distillation,*

especially again when the Earth drieth and fasteneth, the Water makes clean and washeth, but the Air and Fire maketh to color. Arnoldus says, it is necessary that there be much Water and much Air, because the multitude of the tincture will be so much as the multitude of the Air, but the Water is purging and the efficient cause of the clearness of the whole body and Medicine. Hence it is that frequent Distillation is called the most true Ablution of the Elements. It is therefore necessary that the Stone be divided by the Four Elements and that by Distillation. First, by a light fire equally tempered and continued, water is to be gotten. Then the fire is to be made a little more vigorous and stronger, until the fire be received mixed with the fire. That which remains burned in the bottom is the dry earth where the crystalline Salt of the Stone lieth hid. Moreover, by the inferior circle, the furnace is signified. By that Red as yet beneath, the fire is signified. By the superior circle, the vessel in which the matter is put. By the cloud is signified the smoke which seems to rise like a cloud as you are distilling. Preparation To prepare in this art is nothing else than to take away superfluities and supply deficiencies, because light things cannot be fixed without the company of weighty, and weighty things cannot be exalted without the consortship of light things. Neither can the hot without the consortship of the cold, the cold of the hot, the moist of the dry, the dry of the moist, the hard of the soft, the soft without the addition of the hard, be or prepared. But when they are by course fitly espoused, there is generated from them a tempered substance, which the violence of the Fire cannot overcome, nor the putrefaction of the Earth vitiate, neither

*the limosity of the Water condensate, nor any contract, adumbrate, or overshadow. We must know further that the preparation of the aforesaid matter is perfected by the removing of the superfluous part and the addition of the absent, by the exercise of the Four Regimens. The first of them is a reduction to the nature of the Fire. The second is a resolution into Water, and the third is a levigation into Air, and the fourth is a pressing down to the Earth or fixing. The first is by Calcining. The second is by Loosening. The third is by distilling through a still. The fourth is by Coagulating or Congealing with a light fire. And so the whole preparation is perfected, to which purpose the Hermite did also intimate in his Smaragdine Table, saying, "it ascends from the Earth to Heaven and descends again from Heaven to Earth". And that this doctrine concerning the preparation of the Stone might be better understood, Geber testifieth most openly concerning this. Saith he, "Our art doth not consist in the plurality of things for it is one matter (to wit) of metals in which consisteth our Mystery, to which we have not added any strange thing, neither do we diminish unless that in the preparation we remove superfluity". But the other things pertaining to this Chaos are clearly enough unfolded by the second Chapter, but here it remaineth in the Water.*

## **Division**

*Division in this art is the separation of the parts of the composition that they may be the better at length united. In which sense composition is contrary to Division, which*

*indeed is the beginning and life of the thing, for unless there were a Composition, the thing would not be produced into a being. Hence the cunning Son of Jazichus, the spirit will not remain in the body, neither will it be in it nor tarry any longer, until the body be subtilated, attenuated as the Spirit is. And when it is so attenuated and subtilated and does go out of his density and thickness to thinness, and from his grossness and corporeality to spirituality, then the spirit will be mingled with and drunk up in them, and so they are both become one and the same and will not be separated, as neither water mixed with water cannot be discerned, so although the Philosopher's Stone be divided into two principles (to wit) into the superior part which ascendeth, and into the inferior part which remaineth in bottom fixed, yet notwithstanding these two parts doth concord in virtue. Therefore the materials are to be weighed and converted and divided because they are changed from a thing into a thing, as the seed of a man in the womb is in a natural preparation turned from thing to thing, until there be found a perfect man, from which was his root and beginning. Moreover, by the Solar and Lunar stars is signified the water already gotten out of the body of Saturn. By the Sun and Moon the body of Saturn wherein the Salt yet remaineth. By the red understand the fire, by mediation whereof the aforesaid water was drawn forth.*

## **Acuation**

*Acuation is that by which the Stone is amended by the extraction of his proper earth, that is of the Salt, and by the*

*mixing of the same with Sulphur and his proper Mercury. Hence Gratianus, of every thing there may be made ashes, and of that Salt there is water, and of that water there is Mercury, and of that Mercury by diverse operations there is made Sun. He therefore that knows the Salt and its solution, knows the hidden secrets of the ancient wise men. Whosoever, therefore will alter spirits and bodies and change them from their nature, it behoveth that he first reduce them to the nature of Salts and Alums otherwise he will do nothing, then let him lave or wash those, that Sal may go forth fusible. You ought as Arnold saith to praise God, from whence also another Philosopher, put therefore thy mind on the Salt, the chief and most hidden Mystery of all the Philosophers Moreover, by the lunar star is signified the White Salt of Saturn already gotten. By the circles, the furnace and vessels. By the compassing red, the fire, and that of Calcination, because Saturn is not gotten but first by calcining.*

## *The Green Lion*

*The Green Lion is that Philosophical Mercury so often spoken of in his first beginning, or flourishing, easily avoiding the fire, because it is not fixed, but being fixed it desires it, and expects it and rejoiceth in it. It is of a Cold and Airy nature, and out of it (as it is in the Rosary), God created all mines. Let it not therefore seem strange to anyone because it reduceth into and doth radically dissolve all metals into their first matter, when as out of him are all things, and in whose bosom are all the planets,*

they lie hid and are contained. Seeing therefore that some of them affecteth a sublime work to him and is a profitable spirit, and there is no thing in the world besides him, neither is there that may stand in his place, and is only profusive in the body that wants him (hence Rosary). But the ancient and wise Philosophers have engendered the manner of wit (knowing) until it be a little done that he might expect the fire. It doth not cease to go above the reluctancy of the fire and is nourished with it, so that when any fixation is fastened unto him, there proceeds wonderful things and changes, because when he is changed he changeth, and his entrance appears in his sound and splendour. When therefore it is coloured it coloureth, when it is loosed it looseth, and it doth make itself white in the twinkling of an eye, and it becomes red in succession, and it is a congregating water, milk, and strong urine, softening oil, and the father of all wonderful things. It is smoke and a cloud, and the fugitive servant accidental Mercury eating the Sun, who hath preferred himself before Gold and hath overcome, for it is generated, risen and produced out of him. But lest thou should err, my son, know that those which understood of Mercury in the body of Philosophical Saturn and metalline, to be true. Moreover the Lion is said to be green in the threefold aspect. First in respect of his attractive power, for here the Central Sun is like to the Celestial Sun and make the world flourishing and green. Secondly, it is called the green Lion, because as yet the Gold is incomplete nor fixed in any body, and therefore is called living Gold. Thirdly, it is called a Lion by reason of its very great strength, reference being had to the Animal Lion, for as all

*beasts obey the lion, so all metallic bodies do give place to this living Gold.*

## **Conjunction**

*Conjunction in this art is a natural act of two vapours of the body and spirit, in one and the same genus but in a diverse species of actors and sufferers [actives and passives]. But lest thou should err, my Son, thou must now that the spirit is twofold (to wit) Tinctural and Preparing. The Preparing spirit dissolveth brass and extracteth it out of the body of the lodestone, and reduceth it again into the body itself. But the Tinctural spirit is beyond the body, and it is a body itself of a watery nature, but in the Elixir the tinctural spirit being masculine is the body, the woman the spirit. Hence saith Arnold, the spirit is not altered from the body so that it should lose its spiritual virtue, but every body is altered and coloured by the spirit. Join therefore, my Son, (as it is in the Rosary thy Gabricius more beloved to thee than all thy sons, with his sister Beya, who is a cold girl, sweet and tender. Hence it is rightly gathered, that unless there should be such a copulation, there would never be a Conception, Raising, Pregnation, or Birth. This therefore, is the direction of this disposition, which is especially assimilated to the creation of Man. ut by the circles is signified the vessels and furnace. By the Green Lion as it were but half into the vessel, is signified that one part ought to be put in after another and not altogether, as first Mercury then Salt or Oil, and these things are to be put in by little and little, after they are purified.*

## *The Animal, Vegetable and Mineral Stone*

*We find the Philosophers Stone to be variously defined with Philosophers in general, amongst which definitions we will at length rehearse one or other of them. Therefore, the Stone, as Clangor hath it, is a body composed out of the first essence of metals, which first essence is indeed termed other where Argentvive reduced from the power of them into acting by the art of chemistry, the mystery of all beginnings. Again the Philosopher's Stone is metallic matter converting the substance and forms of imperfect metals. That this conversion is not done but by its like is long ago agreed upon by all Philosophers. It is therefore necessary that the Stone be got out of a metallic matter (to wit) our Mercury in which is all that which is so sought for by the wise men, and lieth hid in our Mercury, although this Mercury may be termed threefold. From whence three principle Stones are known by philosophers, (to wit) the Mineral of the Wise men, or the Mineral, Animal, and Vegetable Stone of them, threefold in name, one in being. Whereupon saith one of the Ancients, there are three Stones and three Salts of which the whole magistry consisteth, (to wit) Mineral, Animal, and Vegetable (Mercury is mineral; the Moon is plant, because she receiveth into herself two colours, white and red ; and the Sun is animal because he receiveth three, (to wit) constriction, white and red). But by the tree upon the mountain on the left hand flourishing and bearing fruit, is signified his vegetability, as by the leg of a man raised out, his animality. By the third mountain upon which also a*

*flourishing tree grows out, two things are signified. First, that Saturn is hid only in hilly places and it behoveth that he should be digged out of the Earth, which may be understood to be noted by the circle, from whence especially his minerality appears.*

## *Calcination*

*Calcination, as subtle witted Geber will, is the turning of a thing into dust by the fire, and by the privation of its humidity, consolidating other parts. According to others, this Calcination is the last purgation of the Stone, the restoring of its colour, the conserving of its innate Humour, and the induction of Solution. And it is fourfold, for it is either by the desiccation of the moistness of Nature, or by reduction into the bottom of the furnace by fire, and then it is called Alcoole or a subtle powder, or by the amalgamation of familiar metals with quicksilver, by mixing metals with six parts of Mercury, or by strong waters, the spirits of the Salts of black vitriol, of sulphur and the like. However it be, we use Calcination to mundify the part fixed, and the Earthly part of the Stone. For every calcined thing is in its kind fixed. And so the Sun and Moon are calcined with the first water philosophically, that the bodies may be opened and become spongy and subtle, that the second water may the better go in to work its work, which is to exalt the Earth into Mirable Salt by its only attractive virtue. Which second water is fire, not natural, by whose virtue the completement of this art is done. Moreover, by the Sun here joined with the Moon, understand the body of Saturn even now to be calcined*

*with the Philosophical water. By the bird flying from above, that in Calcination the spirit of Saturn goes downwards and remains together with the body, as in Sublimation it always goes upward, as is to be seen in the next chapter. But by the bird or spirit flying upwards, understand dusky clouds ascending frequent indeed but moderately.*

## **Sublimation**

*Sublimation according to some is when that which is extracted into the sublime part of the vessel is stirred up and doth subsist there. According to Geber, it is the elevation of a dry thing by the fire, with the adherency of its vessel. Either definition is honest. We must know further, that the philosophers for four reasons made sublimation. First, that the body should be made a spirit of a subtle matter. Secondly, that the Mercury might incorporate itself with the body and become one with it. And thirdly, that the whole may become White, then Red and clean, and especially that the innate humidity of the Stone might be restored, which he had at the first lost in the bottom, and may be moved forwards and made fit for a sudden liquefaction, because the medicine ought to be a simple dust of a most subtle and pure substance, adhering out of its nature to the Argent vive or a most easy liquefaction, and hidden or secret subtilation of an easy ingression, after the manner of water, and fixed on the reluctancy of the fire, before the flight of Mercury.*

## **Solution**

*This Solution is the reduction of a dry thing into water. By*

*this Solution metallic bodies are reduced into their first form, that is into their next matter, to wit, Mercury and Sulphur from whence they took their beginning. Some of the Philosophers do put the matter of Solution to be twofold, to wit, by hot mud and fervent water, but others do contend that there is but only one Solution necessary in this art, which only hath and is to be done out of and with itself, and it is raw and clear without violence. Hence saith the Philosopher - a raw solution is better than a sodden one, a moist than a dry, a voluntary than a violent, a temperate than a swift, a fragrant than a stinking, a clean one than a thick, a black one than a red one, and therefore in every Solution we must secretly beware of the vitrification of the matter by the odours and vapours of imperfect bodies, that the force of that generative form may not be choked up with corrosives. Therefore, saith the Philosopher "help Solution by the Moon and coagulation by the Sun".*

## *Putrefaction*

*Putrefaction according to some is the resolution of that which is mingled into the hot and moist by a natural putrefaction. According to others, Putrefaction, which is also termed conception or espousing in the putrefaction which is in the bottom of the glass, is the conception of the proper and natural callidity in every moisture, under the conservation of it from another moisture going about in the glass. Yet notwithstanding, Putrefaction is necessary in this work because there is never anything born, increasing, nor animated, except after Putrefaction*

*because if it were not putrefied, it could not be poured forth nor loosed, and if it were not loosed, it will be brought to nothing. But thou must know this, My Son, that the Putrefaction of the Philosophers is not sordid nor unclean, but it is a mixing of the water with the Earth, and the Earth with the water, by little and little, until the whole body is become one. Hence Morien "in the Putrefaction of our brass, the spirits are united with the body and are dried up in it. For unless the water should be dried up with or by the Earth, the colours would not appear". For Putrefaction is nothing else but a mortification of the moist with the dry, between whose mortification there doth appear blackness in regard of the domination of the obscure woman. Yet the process or force of itself, to wit, of the Philosopher's Stone, is first Black, because unless it were first Black it would not be White, nor Red, because that redness is composed of Black and White. The Philosophers have called this blackness, Silver, the black Lead, the head of the Crow, and from whence it is said in Turba, "when thou shalt see blackness to come to that water, know then the body is melted".*

## *Conception*

*Thou must know, my Son, that whilst the Earth in the aforesaid blackness doth begin to retain with it some of the Argent vive, then it is termed Conception, and then the male acteth towards the female, to wit, Argent vive, with or into the Earth, and this is the reason why the Philosophers say that our Mystery is nothing else but the male and female and their conjunction. For the water beareth sway*

over the Argent vive, and the Earth increaseth, multiplieth, and augmenteth. Hence again Philosophers say, "Conception and Dispousation are to digest it in the putrefaction in the bottom of the vessel, and the generation of the genitors in the air and head of the vessel, to wit, the still". For the body does nothing except it putrefy and it cannot putrefy except with Mercury. Therefore the Philosophers, "for with one part of the body are six and thirty parts of the water to be taken, and let putrefaction be made with moist gentle fire of hot and moist dung, and in no ways with others, so that nothing may ascend. Because if any thing should ascend a separation would partly be made, which ought not to be done, until the male and female are perfectly joined together, and one received the other, the sign whereof is the superficies in the nature of perfect solution".

### *Impregnation*

We must know that when the Earth is a little made white, there it is termed Pregnation, because then the Earth is Impregnated. For when the Earth is joined with an imperfect body, it is called Our Earth, because the Earth is the Mother of all the elements, when the Earth begins to retain with it somewhat of Arsenic, or Our Salt, or Argent vive, for then it is called a Conception, because the male acteth towards the female, because the Mystery of the Philosophers is nothing else but the male and female and their conjunction. Water coming to them, that is Arsenic or Our Salt, which increases much in the Earth and is augmented and comes out when the Earth is dealbated,

*then it is called a Pregnation, because the Earth having conceived goes away pregnant. Moreover, that here and in the former Chapter, the little star formed of seven fold little pricks, becometh Red but not fully, it signifies that the matter of the Stone now shut up in the Philosophical phial, hath in some part suffered putrefaction, but it is far from a plenary mundification, which is made in the bottom of the vessel. For it ought to purge further, as is demonstrated by the thirteenth Chapter. But whereas the Red and White is not compounded of Red and White, but of Black and White, there is no doubt but by the help of the Governor of all things, it will in short space come into perfect whiteness. But that the little star is not deprived of his blackness, appeareth by the black complements sticking to the little points and planets.*

## **Generation**

*Matter and form are only contained (as saith the Philosophers) by the Generation of Nature, but they understand by the matter and form, the Agent and Patient, thin and thick, Sulphur and Mercury, male and female, and by consequence know Generation. He therefore that doth know how to choose matter well disposed and very ready to suffer, and strong to act, this man shall bring forth the more excellent and strong effect, but that the generation of the elixir might be the better done, let the artist diligently consider what things are requisite for Nature in the generation of metals, and what of art is to the generating of the Stone, that a collection being made between these thing he may have, from whence he may judge, whether it*

*be possible to generate the stone. Thou must know, therefore, my Son, lest thou should err, that there are four things that are altogether requisite or necessary to Nature in the Generation of metals. First, to have composing principles, one whereof hath itself as the Matter, the other is the form of composing. Secondly, to have that due weight of the principles. Thirdly, a fit place is altogether required, that is a solid place, for unless the place where Nature mingleth were according to the two principles solid, the Vapours which are also termed Spirit would exhale, and the solidity of the place doth condensate or thicken those spirits already mixed, from whence it is they begin to act and suffer one towards the other, by subtilizing and separating impurities. The fourth thing requisite in the generation of metals is heat tempered, by which metals are in the end excluded and exhaled into the air. All these things required are necessary in the art to generate the Stone, all which the artist by imitating Nature in all things, except in her weight, shall easily conceive that the Stone may be gotten. But let him take the weight from Nature necessarily as it shall be meet. Moreover, of the diverse and intermingled colours appearing here and elsewhere, you may see from day to day in the glass vessel, whereof it is sufficient to have put you in mind, in this place.*

## *Fermentation*

*Fermentation with the Philosophers is the incorporation of the Animal part, the restoration of the vapour, the inspiration of the odour, the supplying of the beings, and it is double White and Red, whose ferment is the Sun, the*

*Sun of the Sun, the Moon of the Moon. That is, the Sun is ferment to the Gold, or Red Elixir, and the Moon is ferment to the Silver, or White elixir. But as substantial bodies, and fixed upon the fire, cannot manifest their qualities, neither do live or are lifted up of themselves, unless by the benefit of spirituality, they are first purified and vivificated, so neither can spiritual accident manifest their permanent virtue, except they are united and perpetuated with fixed bodies. For then and not before, the body inbreatheth the spirit, teaching him by vigorating, to reluct, strive or struggle against the fire, and the spirit embraceth the body teaching him to pierce through gross bodies, actually to subtilize thick ones, and to generally cure all infirmities and diseases. But the intention of Fermentation is that the thing to be fermented should be prepared, washed, calcined, and dissolved, that it may the better be joined with the subtle work or body, that is to say, White ferment with White, and Red with Red. Yet these things not hindering, my Son, you are to know that Fermentation doth not change the powder of the Stone into any form but his own, but it giveth savor, odour, and strength to transmute other bodies to his own nature. But by the Toad, here understand the sphere of Saturn swelling with tincture, or his heaven to be great and impregnate therewith, and by and by ready to bring forth, which by the ejection of the four elements appeareth most plainly in the next Chapter, in the conversion of whom one after another, until they are inseparably fixed, dependeth the chief completement of this work.*

## *The Separation of the Elements*

*We being about to speak concerning the generation of the elements and their conjunction, by reason that one of them cannot be understood without the other, we shall handle them both together in this and the subsequent Chapter. Therefore the separation of the elements in this art is nothing else than to separate or segregate heterogeneous (which are accidents from homogeneous (which are of the Essence of the Stone), that at length the mixture of the elements might be most pure and perfect.*

*But the conjunction of the elements is to keep up homogeneous things, that is, those that are of the nature of the Radical Moisture. Hence Raymond "have patience in dealbation or whitening, because here lieth much tardity". Thou must know further, my Son, that the separation of the elements with the Philosophers is termed the conversion of them, as if to convert the elements was to make a thin body of a gross one, that is, of the body a spirit, and afterwards of the moist a dry, of water earth, and the elements are converted one into the other. But the Philosophers do prescribe such a manner of converting the body into the spirit. The earth is resolved into water, and water into air, the air into fire, but the spirit is turned into the body. This way the fire is coagulated and it becomes air, but the air is coagulated and becomes water, but the water is coagulated and becomes earth. From whence saith Assidnus "behold elements hath met together in one nature, who when they are so impelled (that is coagulated) become friends, but when they wax thin they become enemies. Therefore convert the*

*elements and thou shalt find what thou seeketh". It behovest thee, therefore, first of all to mortify and exalt the Stone, that is, the body, soul and spirit, seeing that no one gains any thing in this art except he mortifieth, but mortification is by the separation of the elements, by which the effect of every element is shown. Therefore if thou wilt make the elixir, it will be necessary that thou break this Stone into his elements, which is signified by the parts of the year, and then conjoin the elements by fire, Mercury mediating, which is the Philosopher's chiefest secret, and then this Mystery is completed, for all the art is placed in conjoining and loosing. But these separations are done as seest, my Son, Mercury mediating, for it first looseth the body and makes separation which in the meantime are conjoined by Salt and Mercury. But here we must diligently note it is first of all Mercury, in the beginning of the work is called water, then the blackness appearing earth, then being sublimated air, and being made red is called fire.*

## *The Conjunction of the Elements*

*Then being sublimated with some luminary body it is termed Salt. Then being added to the whole composed matter it is called the Spirit. And so the Earth, with Water, Air and Fire, is a body, the Salt is the life, the last watering of the only Mercury, the spirit. It is therefore evident that the Stone consisteth of four elements, to wit, Water, Air, Fire and Earth. For in the Stone there are the Soul, the Body and Spirit, and yet but one Stone, as it is above said, behoving to loose and coagulate him again, then all the operations are contained under the Solution until the*

*Albifaction it is sodden again, and becomes a Stone again when it is coagulated. Afterwards it is loosed again and then the solution is reiterated, until the Stone comes out like wax.*

## *Ortus*

*Ortus in this art is termed to be conjunction of the second salt or ferment, with the imperfect body prepared. Hence Morien "we must know that the knowledge of our Mystery is likened to the creation of Man. For first there is conjunction, then conception, then pregnation, then Ortus or a springing or rising, a bringing forth, then Nutrition". I would therefore have thee understand this one thing, because our seed is Argent vive. When the Earth is joined to an imperfect body, which is termed Our Earth, because the Earth is the Mother of all the elements, and they call it Copulation. But when the Earth begins to retain with it something of the Argent vive, then it is termed Conception, when the male acteth towards the female. But when the Earth is made white then it is called Pregnation, because it is then pregnant, and then the ferment is joined with the imperfect body until they become one in species and aspect, and then it is termed Ortus, because our Stone is then born, which is called a King by the Philosophers. Whereupon it is said amongst them "Honour your King coming from the Fire. Crown him with a Diadem, and bring him up even to perfect age, whose Father is the Sun, his true Mother the Moon".*

## *Unnatural Fire or Fermentation*

*With the philosopher are four fires recorded, to wit, Natural, Unnatural, against Nature, and Elementary, and these fires may better be known by their complexion and compositions. For out of Mercury dissolving and conjoined in the body, there becomes another Mercury, which is called Adrop, Thick Water, Our Water, the Second Water, which is Fire, Strong Fire, Unnatural Fire. For those two, to wit, Spirit and Body, being fit and joined together according to their due proportion, out of them this second Mercury, which we have described is made, and this is that Mercury of which it is written, that in it is whatsoever wise men seek, for the body, the soul and the Tincture are drawn from this Mercury. But the second Mercury is moist in the vapour, not oily but gummy, of a property indifferent, subtle, easily lying the sharpness of the fire, and vanishing away in it, possessing both body and spirit in loosing remaining water in itself. Moreover by Fermentation in this place, understand the second fermentation, because the Stone, especially the Inferior part thereof, should as yet be better prepared, washed, calcined, and dissolved, that it may yet unto a more higher and nobler degree of perfection, whereby it may the better be joined with any subtle work or body. The little star with sevenfold little pricks appearing a colour somewhat duskish, signifies that the star, although it has suffered many alterations and hath his elements indifferently mixed, yet is far from being sufficiently mundified, seeing as yet it wanteth much purgation, as by the same blackness which it hath in putrefaction, appearing in the next Chapter. By the bird flying from above, understand the Spirit descending, the Stone putrefying temperately, and by little and little.*

## *Purgation*

*Moreover by the domination of the Woman who is of the Mercurial and Lunar humidity, the blackness doth as yet appear, but here it is a little diminished in quantity as in the following Chapters you may see, for by little and little it is changed from colour to colour until the blackness doth altogether vanish away, and the Stone becomes endued with the greatest whiteness, which is a sign of perfection. By the bird flying from above, understand as you were admonished in the former Chapter.*

## *Exaltation*

*Therefore, Exaltation is an ingenious nobiliating of the magnet or lodestone being dealbated, which is chiefly by the augmentation of the spirit, the sublimation of the Earth, the promotion of the liquefaction by the exaltation of the rectified elements, and by a lively constituting of the Fifth Essence out of them. From whom, saith the Philosophers, "when thou hast had the Water out of the Air, the Air out of the Fire, and the Fire out of the Earth, then thou mayest know that then the Stone hath lost the Water which he had at first out of the Air, after his resolution into it. For the Air and Water are contiguous elements, more light in mixing and better in operation of fire". When the cold hath overcome the hot, the Air is turned into Water, but when the hot hath overcome the cold, the Water is turned into Air, but thou must have the Air out of the Fire by his Solution. Moreover now you see the four elements wonderfully altered, exalted and almost fixed. By the azure colour understand the Earth turned into Air, by the green*

*colour the Air turned into Water, by the yellow colour Water turned into Fire, lastly by the colour somewhat brown understand the Fire to be turned into Earth. By which wonderful alteration is further signified that the Stone now draweth nigh to Fixation. By the Pelican penetrating and wounding her own breast, from which rivers of blood do seem to flow, understand that this is spoken of the Pelican by a similitude which is called the Blood of Love, for as she doth impart her blood to her young ones, so the Stone being brought to a Quintessence by conversion into the four elements, is ready to impart his tincture to the imperfect wanting it. Lastly in that you have in the following figure the bird of Hermes sleeping in the midst and applying himself to perpetual rest, understand the discords and hatred of enemies, that is, of the elements, are laid aside, lulled asleep by their long alterations and conversions, laid before our eyes in the former Chapters. But from the fire from above temperately cherishing the Matter the artificer buildeth the reason of making his Athanor.*

### *Quinta Essentia*

*Let putrefaction and much conversion be upon him until it being well purged by sublimation he be made white. For as Marcus saith "when he has drunk his burning Mercury he passeth away and remaineth in the shadows of purgatory with many nights, but conceiveth in baths, and brought forth in the Air, then waxeth Red, goes upon the Water, and is white upon the tops, and is become White, light and airy, which first was ponderous, dry and obscure fire. For the Sun being Exalted the air waxeth hot and*

*drieth". But take this concerning the fifth essence in this work and Mastery, is the mixing of all the four elements, and the reduction of them into one pure substance. If therefore thou wilt see the Stone, to wit, the fifth substance by the four elements, thou must know that if every one of them do not partake of the fifth nature, the Stone cannot be united nor conjoined with a dry body.*

## *Fixation*

*Fixation in this art is when the body receives a tinctural or colouring spirit and takes away his volatility or flying, which is by frequent iteration, until it becomes ashes of everlasting duration, and the whole remains in the fire. We must know further that fixation is always in the white, though not every fixation. We must know moreover, that out of the perfection of fixation, the fire becomes cold, by whose benefit alone the Stone comes out fixed. When the hidden Mystery of him is made manifest, his colour is Citrine or Red, but after his first fixation in the white, there follows no error in the whole Mystery, although you proceed to the Crowning of Nature by often passing the Philosophical Wheel, and by bettering your blessed Stone by many reiterated solutions and coagulations. Lastly, by the white circle is signified the white stone, now fixed by the red fire, whose punishment now it suffereth and feareth not, and by the vessel, which is within of an azure colour, is signified the Ethereal spirit of the Stone, which by the benefit of a cold fire doth animate the Stone.*

## *Projection*

*Projection in this art is the reduction of the fixed earth Multiplicative, or a formal substance firmly coloured, upon much of convenient matter, to the desired joy of the Artist. But because it is not well perceived, cast one pound upon a thousand, but before this moist medicine may go out, the Philosophers have noted some necessity of Ceration. Hence speaketh Anonimus "it is better to project, now thou dost cast upon fundaments, and fundaments upon. My word, I will love thee, O Lord. I will have thee attend, the which reason is in Saffron. If the Saffron should be projected dry it would colour but little, but if being loosed it be joined with a little liquor, and that little into much, it would colour infinitely. Thou shalt therefore make thy Projection so. First multiply 10 into 10 and then there will be 100, and 100 into 100 and they will be 10000, and so into infinity". But this cannot be done without Ceration, which the Wise have so defined "Ceration is the fitting of a hard and not fusible Medicine to Liquefaction by a frequent Imbibition". Hence Morien in the Rosary "the whole Mystery is nothing else than an extraction of Water out of the Earth, and a casting of Water on the Earth, until both it and the Earth putrefy, and become clean, seeing as yet the Earth to be mingled with the Water, and the Water or temperate decoction to be a little diminished, the other to increase". They all say that this was perfect Ceration, from whence they have also said further, that the Earth, when the Water is Cered, drunk up and dried with the tempered decoction of the Sun, that is, the heat, and is turned into Earth, that therein is the whole matter. For his force, as that divine Hermes speaketh, is entire if it were turned into Earth. But enough and more than enough has*

*been said of the taking away of the Leprousy of Metals. Of the curing of Man's body and continual health, understand these things from a few days to a longer time. For a month every day let there be taken of this blessed powder, the quantity of a grain of mustard seed, in white wine or in any other liquor, early in the morning. It is sudorific or causing sweat, if anything be, to be sent forth by the pores. It is laxative, if anything be, to be evacuated by stool. It is diuretic, if anything be, to be driven forth by the passage of urine. But it is never vomative, as that is altogether contrary to nature. Moreover, that I may briefly conclude, all this powder is like Ethereal fire, pleasantly consumes all the hurtful superfluities in Man's body, raising it up, rectifying, and bringing it to a just temperature and equality. Furthermore, it not only rectifieth Man's body but also reneweth the whole man, by the use thereof continued for a few weeks. Lastly, none of the three principles, to wit, of Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, can in the least exalt itself. But presently, by one little grain, taken as aforesaid, the disease is rooted out, and a man is continued safe and sound without diseases, until the time appointed of God. Therefore to the most Mighty God be Praise, Honour and Glory, for ever and ever..*

## *Multiplication*

*In the last Chapter it is made known what it is in general, but not how many fold, but it is by two ways, to wit, quality and quantity But because the Wise have left us a perfect and known complete method concerning this doctrine of Imbibition, and of their ways of operation which follow plainly and fully the Crowning of Nature, I shall altogether give over speaking of them. I shall add this, instead of the Crown concerning the ruling of Saturn, let a mineral be taken of the same, existing in his first being. Let it putrefy in the belly of a horse, according to the Philosophical month, to wit, 40 days. After putrefaction, by the benefit of Distillation, let the Vinegar so often spoken of, be extracted, to radically dissolve all the metals of the Philosophers. Let that blessed produced vinegar be put upon other Saturn, who from whence may go forth into transparent redness dissolved. Let the redness be extracted and putrefied anew, for the space of a Philosophical month in a horses belly. Then in a strong vessel let it be first urged with a gentle*

*fire, afterwards a strong fire being used, the Red Oil will go forth like blood, through a 1000 small veins. Let the dead head be reduced into Alcohol, or subtle powder, calcined, and with phlegm reserved for this use, let it be drunk up and digested and evaporated. Thou shalt have then this natural Salt which if thou wilt mingle with the predicated oil and do urge back again, the red oil will go out transparent, colouring the heavenly Stone, when it hath been coloured by himself and the specified Salt or Ferment. This is truth.*

## The Hermetic Arcanum

The secret work of the hermetic philosophy Wherein the secrets of nature and art concerning the matter of the philosophers' stone and the manner of working are explained in an authentic and orderly manner. The work of an anonymous author, penes nos unda tagi.

1. The beginning of this Divine Science is the fear of the Lord and its end is charity and love toward our Neighbour; the all-satisfying Golden Crop is properly devoted to the rearing and endowing of temples and hospices; for whatsoever the Almighty freely bestows on us, we should properly offer again to him. So also Countries grievously oppressed may be set free; prisoners unduly held captive may be released, and souls almost starved may be relieved.

2. The light of this knowledge is the gift of God, which by His will He bestows upon whom He pleases Let none therefore set himself to the study hereof, until having cleared and purified his heart, he devote himself wholly unto God, and be emptied of all affection and desire unto the impure things of this world.

3. The Science of producing Nature's grand Secret, is a perfect knowledge of universal Nature and of Art concerning the Realm of Metals; the Practice thereof is conversant with finding the principles of Metals by Analysis, and after they have been made much more perfect to conjoin them otherwise than they have been

before, that from thence may result a catholic Medicine, most powerful to perfect imperfect Metals, and for restoring sick and decayed bodies, of any sort soever.

4. Those that hold public Honours and Offices or be always busied with private and necessary occupations, let them not strive to attain unto the acme of this Philosophy; for it requires the whole mans, and being found, it possesses him, and he being possessed, it debars him from all other long and serious employments, for he will esteem other things as strange, and of no value unto him.

5. Let him that is desirous of this Knowledge, clear his mind from all evil passions, especially pride, which is an abomination to Heaven, and is as the gate of Hell; let him be frequent in prayer and charitable; have little to do with the world: abstain from company keeping; enjoy constant tranquillity; that the Mind may be able to reason more freely in private and be highly lifted up; for unless it be kindled with a beam of Divine Light, it will not be able to penetrate these hidden mysteries of Truth.

6. The Alchemists who have given their minds to their well-nigh innumerable Sublimations, Distillations, Solutions, Congelations, to manifold Extraction of Spirits and Tinctures, and other Operations more subtle than profitable, and so have distracted themselves by a variety of errors, as so many tormentors, will never be inclined again by their own Genius to the plain way of Nature and light of Truth; from whence their industrious subtlety hath twined them, and by twining and turnings, as by the Lybian Quicksands, hath drowned their entangled Wits: the only hope of safety for them remain in finding out a faithful Guide and Master, who may make the Sun clear and

conspicuous unto them and free themselves from darkness.

7. A studious Tyro of a quick wit, constant mind, inflamed with the study of Philosophy, very skillful in natural Philosophy, of a pure heart, complete in manners, mightily devoted to God, though ignorant of practical Chemistry, may with confidence enter into the highway of Nature and peruse the Books of the best Philosophers; let him seek out an ingenious and sedulous Companion for himself, and not despair of obtaining his desire.

8. Let a Student of these secrets carefully beware of reading or keeping company with false Philosophers; for nothing is more dangerous to a learner of any Science, than the company of an unskilled or deceitful man by whom erroneous principles are stamped as true, whereby a simple and credulous mind is seasoned with false Doctrine.

9. Let a Lover of truth make use of few authors, but of the best note and experience truth; let him suspect things that are quickly understood, especially in Mystical Names and Secret Operations; for truth lies hid in obscurity; for Philosophers never write more deceitfully - than when plainly, nor ever more truly - than when obscurely.

10. As for the Authors of primary note, who have discoursed both acutely and truly of the secrets of Nature and hidden Philosophy, Hermes and Morienus Romanus amongst the Ancients are in my judgment of the highest esteem; amongst the Moderns, Count Trevisan, and Raimundus Lullius are in greatest reverence with me; for what that most acute Doctor hath omitted, none almost hath spoken; let a student therefore peruse his works, yea

let him often read over his Former Testament, and Codicil, and accept them as a Legacy of very great worth. To these two volumes let him add both his volumes of Practice, out of which works all things desirable may be collected, especially the truth of the First Matter, of the degrees of Fire, and the Regimen of the Whole, wherein the final Work is finished, and those things which our Ancestors so carefully laboured to keep secret. The occult causes of things, and the secret motions of nature are demonstrated nowhere more clearly and faithfully.

Concerning the first and mystical Water of the Philosophers he hath set down few things, yet very pithily.

11. As for that Clear Water sought for by many, found by so few, yet obvious and profitable unto all, which is the Basis of the Philosophers' Work, a noble Pole, not more famous for his learning than subtlety of wit, who wrote anonymously, but whose name notwithstanding a double Anagram hath betrayed, hath in his *Novum Lumen Chymicum*, *Parabola* and *Aenigma*, as also in his Tract on Sulphur, spoken largely and freely enough; yea he hath expressed all things concerning it so plainly, that nothing can be more satisfactory to him that desires knowledge.

12. Philosophers do usually express themselves more pithily in types and enigmatic figures (as by a mute kind of speech) than by words; see for example, Senior's Table, the Allegorical Pictures of Rosarius, the Pictures of Abraham Judaeus in Flamel, and the drawings of Flamel himself; of the later sort, the rare Emblems of the most learned Michael Maierus wherein the mysteries of the Ancients are so fully opened, and as new Perspectives they present antiquated truth, and though designed

remote from our age yet are near unto our eyes, and are perfectly to be perceived by us.

13. Whosoever affirms that the Philosophers' grand Secret is beyond the powers of Nature and Art, he is blind because he ignores the forces of Sol and Luna.

14. As for the matter of their hidden Stone, Philosophers have written diversely; so that very many disagreeing in Words, do nevertheless very well agree in the Thing; nor doth their different speech argue the science ambiguous or false, since the same thing may be expressed with many tongues, by divers expressions, and by a different character, and also one and many things may be spoken of after diverse manners.

15. Let the studious Reader have a care of the manifold significations of words, for by deceitful windings, and doubtful, yea contrary speeches (as it should seem), Philosophers wrote their mysteries, with a desire of veiling and hiding, yet not of sophisticating or destroying the truth; and though their writings abound with ambiguous and equivocal words; yet about none do they more contend than in hiding their Golden Branch.

Which all the groves with shadows overcast, and gloomy valleys hide.

Nor does it yield to any Force, but readily and willingly will follow him, who

Knows Dame Venus Birds and him to whom of Doves a lucky pair Sent from above shall hover about his Ear.

16. Whosoever seeks the Art of perfecting and multiplying imperfect Metals, beyond the nature of Metals, goes in error, for from Metals the Metals are to be derived; even as from Man, Mankind; and from an Ox only, is that

species to be obtained.

17. Metals, we must confess, cannot be multiplied by the instinct and labour of Nature only; yet we may affirm that the multiplying virtue is hid in their depths, and manifested itself by the help of Art: In this Work, Nature stands in need of the aid of Art; and both do make a perfect whole.

18. Perfect Bodies as Sol and Luna are endued with a perfect seed; and therefore under the hard crust of the perfect Metals the Perfect Seed lies hid; and he that knows how to take it out by the Philosophers' Solution, hath entered upon the royal highway; for-  
In Gold the seeds of Gold do lie, though buried in Obscurity.

19. Most Philosophers have affirmed that their Kingly Work is wholly composed of Sol and Luna; others have thought good to add Mercury to Sol; some have chosen Sulphur and Mercury; others have attributed no small part in so great a Work to Salt mingled with the other two. The very same men have professed that this Clear Stone is made of one thing only, sometimes of two, or of three, at other times of four, and of five; and yet though writing so variously upon the same subject, they do nevertheless agree in sense and meaning.

20. Now that (abandoning all blinds) we may write candidly and truly, we hold that this entire Work is perfected by two Bodies only; to wit, by Sol and Luna rightly prepared, for this is the mere generation which is by nature, with the help of Art, wherein the union of male and female doth take place, and from thence an offspring far more noble than the parents is brought forth.

21. Now those Bodies must be taken, which are of an

unspotted and noncorrupt virginity; such as have life and spirit in them; not extinct as those that are handled by the vulgar; for who can expect life from dead things; and those are called impure which have suffered combination; those dead and extinct which (by the enforcement of the chief Tyrant of the world) have poured out their soul with their blood by Martyrdom; flee then a fratricide from which the most imminent danger in the whole Work is threatened.

22. Now Sol is Masculine for as much as he sends forth active and energizing seed, Luna is Feminine or Negative and she is called the Matrix of Nature, because she receives the sperm, and fosters it by monthly provision, yet doth Luna not altogether want in positive or active virtue.

23. By the name of Luna Philosophers understand not the vulgar Moon, which also may be positive in its operation, and in combining acts a positive part. Let none therefore presume to try the unnatural combination of two positives, neither let him conceive any hope of issue from such association; but he shall join Gabritius to Beia, and offer sister to brother in firm union, that from thence he may receive Sol's noble Son.

24. They that hold Sulphur and Mercury to be the First Matter of the Stone, by the name of Sulphur they understand Sol; by Mercury the Philosophic Luna; so (without dissimulation) good Lullius advises his friend, that he attempt not to work without Mercury and Luna for Silver; nor without Mercury and Sol for Gold.

25. Let none therefore be deceived by adding a third to two: for Love admits not a third; and wedlock is terminated in the number of two; love further extended is not

matrimony.

26. Nevertheless Spiritual love pollutes not any virgin; Beia might therefore without fault (before her betrothal to Gabritius) have felt spiritual love, to the end that she might thereby be made more cheerful, more pure and fitter for union.

27. Procreation is the end of lawful Wedlock. Now that the progeny may be born more vigorous and active, let both the combatants be cleansed from every ill and spot, before they are united in marriage. Let nothing superfluous cleave unto them, because from pure seed comes a purified generation, and so the chaste wedlock of Sol and Luna shall be finished when they shall enter into combination, and be conjoined, and Luna shall receive a soul from her husband by this union; from this conjunction a most potent King shall arise, whose father will be Sol and his mother Luna.

28. He that seeks for a physical tincture without Sol and Luna, loses both his cost and pains: for Sol afforded a most plentiful tincture of redness, and Luna of whiteness, for these two only are called perfect; because they are filled with the substance of purest Sulphur, perfectly clarified by the skill of nature. Let thy Mercury therefore receive a tincture from one or other of these luminaries for anything must of necessity possess a tincture before it can tinge other bodies.

29. Perfect metals contain in themselves two things that they are able to communicate to the imperfect metals. Tincture and Power of fixation; for pure metals, because they are dyed and fixed with pure Sulphur to wit both white and red, do therefore perfectly tincture and fix, if they be

fitly prepared with their proper Sulphur and Arsenic: otherwise they have not strength for multiplying their tincture.

30. Mercury is alone among the imperfect metals, fit to receive the tincture of Sol and Luna in the work of the Philosophers' Stone, and being itself full of tincture can tinge other metals in abundance; yet ought it (before that) to be full of invisible Sulphur, that it may be the more coloured with the visible tincture of perfect bodies, and so repay with sufficient Usury.

31. Now the whole tribe of Philosophers do much assert and work mightily to extract Tincture out of gold: for they believe that Tincture can be separated from Sol, and being separated increases in virtue but: Vain hope, at last the hungry Plough-man cheats

With empty husks, instead of lusty meats. For it is impossible that Sol's Tincture can at all be severed from his natural body, since there can be no elementary body made up by nature more perfect than gold, the perfection whereof proceeds from the strong and inseparable union of pure colouring Sulphur with Mercury; both of them being admirably pre-disposed thereunto by Nature; whose true separation nature denies unto Art. But if any liquor remaining were extracted (by the violence of fire or waters) from the Sun, it is to be reputed a part of the body made liquid or dissolved by force. For the tincture follows its body, and is never separated from it. That is a delusion of this Art, which is unknown to many Artificers themselves.

32. Nevertheless it may be granted, that Tincture may be separable from its body, yet (we must confess) it cannot

be separated without the corruption of the tincture: as when Artists offer violence to the gold destroying by fire, or use Aqua fortis, thus rather corroding than dissolving. The body therefore if despoiled of its Tincture and Golden Fleece, must needs grow base and as an unprofitable heap turn to the damage of its Artificer, and the Tincture thus corrupted can only have a weaker operation.

33. Let Alchemists in the next place cast their Tincture into Mercury, or into any other imperfect body, and as strongly conjoin both of them as their Art will permit; yet shall they fail of their hopes in two ways. First, because the Tincture will neither penetrate nor colour beyond Nature's weight and strength; and therefore no gain will accrue from thence to recompense the expense and countervail the loss of the body spoiled, and thus of no value; so: What is the poor mortal's wages, when his toil Produces only loss of pain and oil. Lastly, that debased Tincture applied to another body will not give that perfect fixation and permanency required to endure a strong trial, and resist searching Saturn.

34. Let them therefore that are desirous of Alchemy, and have hitherto followed impostors and mountebanks, found a retreat, spare no time nor cost, and give their minds to a work truly Philosophical, lest the Phrygians be wise too late, and at length be compelled to cry out with the prophet, "Strangers have devoured his strength."

35. In the Philosophers' work more time and toil than cost is expended: for he that hath convenient matter need be at little expense; besides, those that hunt after great store of money, and place their chief end in wealth, they trust more to their riches than their own art. Let, therefore, the too

credulous tyro beware of pilfering pickpockets, for while they promise golden mountains, they lay in wait for gold, they demand bright gold (viz., money beforehand), because they walk in evil and darkness.

36. As those that sail between Scylla and Charybdis are in danger from both sides: unto no less hazard are they subject who pursuing the prize of the Golden fleece are carried between the uncertain Rocks of the Sulphur and Mercury of the Philosophers. The more acute students by their constant reading of grave and credible Authors, and by the radiant sunlight, have attained unto the knowledge of Sulphur but are at a stand at the entrance of their search for the Philosophers' Mercury; for Writers have twisted it with so many windings and meanderings, involved it with so many equivocal names, that it may be sooner met with by the force of the Seeker's intuition, than be found by reason or toil.

37. That Philosophers might the deeper hide their Mercury in darkness, they have made it manifold, and placed their Mercury (yet diversely) in every part and in the forefront of their work, nor will he attain unto a perfect knowledge thereof, who shall be ignorant of any Part of the Work.

38. Philosophers have acknowledged their Mercury to be threefold; to wit, after the absolute preparation of the First degree, the Philosophical sublimation, for then they call it "Their Mercury," and "Mercury Sublimated."

39. Again, in the Second preparation, that which by Authors is styled the First (because they omit the First) Sol being now made crude again, and resolved into his first matter, is called the Mercury of such like bodies, or the Philosophers' Mercury; then the matter is called Rebis,

Chaos, or the Whole World, wherein are all things necessary to the Work, because that only is sufficient to perfect the Stone.

40. Thirdly, the Philosophers do sometimes call Perfect Elixir and Colouring Medicine - Their Mercury, though improperly; for the name of Mercury doth only properly agree with that which is volatile; besides that which is sublimated in every region of the work, they call Mercury: but Elixir - that which is most fixed cannot have the simple name of Mercury; and therefore they have styled it "Their Mercury" to differentiate it from that which is volatile. A straight may is only laid down for some to find out and discern so many Mercurys of the Philosophers, for those only: Whom just and mighty Jove

Advances by the strength of love; Or such who brave heroic fire, Makes from dull Earth to Heaven aspire.

41. The Elixir is called the Philosophers' Mercury for the likeness and great conformity it hath with heavenly Mercury; for to this, being devoid of elementary qualities, heaven is believed to be most propitious; and that changeable Proteus puts on and increases the genius and nature of other Planets, by reason of opposition, conjunction, and aspect. In like manner this uncertain Elixir works, for being restricted to no proper quality, it embraces the quality and disposition of the thing wherewith it is mixed, and wonderfully multiplies the virtues and qualities thereof.

42. In the Philosophical sublimation or first preparation of Mercury, Herculean labour must be undergone by the workman; for Jason had in vain attempted his expedition to Colchos without Alcides. One from on high a Golden

Fleece displays which shows the Entrance, another says how hard a task you'll find. For the entrance is warded by horned beasts which drive away those that approach rashly thereunto, to their great hurt; only the ensigns of Diana and the Doves of Venus are able to assuage their fierceness, if the fates favour the attempt.

43. The Natural quality of Philosophical Earth and the tillage thereof, seems to be touched upon by the poet in this verse:

Let sturdy oxen when the year begins  
Plough up the fertile soil,  
for Zephyrus then destroys the sodden clods.

44. He that calls the Philosophers' Luna or their Mercury, the common Mercury, doth wittingly deceive, or is deceived himself; so the writings of Geber teach us, that the Philosophers' Mercury is Argent vive, yet not of the common sort, but extracted out of it by the Philosophers' skill.

45. The Philosophers' Mercury is not Argent vive in its proper nature, nor in its whole substance, but is only the middle and pure substance thereof, which thence hath taken its origin and has been made by it. This opinion of the grand Philosophers is founded on experience.

46. The Philosophers' Mercury hath divers names, sometimes it is called Earth; sometimes Water, when viewed from a diverse aspect because it naturally arises from them both. The earth is subtle, white and sulphurous, in which the elements are fixed and the philosophical gold is sown; the water is the water of life, burning, permanent, most clear, called the water of gold and silver; but this Mercury, because it hath in it Sulphur of its own, which is

multiplied by art, deserves to be called the Sulphur of Argent vive. Last of all, the most precious substance is Venus, the ancient Hermaphrodite, glorious in its double sex.

47. This Argent vive is partly natural, partly unnatural; its intrinsic and occult part hath its root in nature, and this cannot be drawn forth unless it is by some precedent cleansing, and industrious sublimation; its extrinsic part is preternatural and accidental. Separate, therefore, the clean from the unclean, the substance from the accidents, and make that which is hid, manifest, by the course of nature; otherwise you make no further progress, for this is the foundation of the whole work and of nature.

48. That dry and most precious liquor doth constitute the radical moisture of metals wherefore by some of the ancients it is called Glass; for glass is extracted out of the radical moisture closely inherent in ashes which offer resistance, except to the hottest flame notwithstanding our inmost or central Mercury discovers itself by the most gentle and kindly (though a little more tedious) fire of nature.

49. Some have sought for the latent Philosophical earth by Calcination, others by Sublimation; many among glass, and some few between vitriol and salt, even as among their natural vessels; others enjoin you to sublime it out of lime and glass. But we have learned of the Prophet that "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth, and the Earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the Deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the Waters, and God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light; and God saw the Light that it was

good, and he divided the light from the darkness, etc." Joseph's blessing spoken of by the same Prophet will be sufficient to a wise man. "Blessed of the Lord be his Land, for the Apples of Heaven, for the dew, and for the Deep that lives Beneath: for the Apples of fruit both of sun and moon, for the top of the ancient mountains, for the Apples of the everlasting hills, etc.," pray the Lord from the bottom of thy heart (my son) that he would bestow upon Thee a portion of this blessed earth.

50. Argent vive is so defiled by original sin, that it flows with a double infection; the first it hath contracted from the polluted Earth, which hath mixed itself therewith in the generation of Argent vive, and by congelation hath cleaved thereunto; the second borders upon the dropsy and is the corruption of intercutal Water, proceeding from thick and impure water; mixed with the clear, which nature was not able to squeeze out and separate by constriction; but because it is extrinsic; it flies off with a gentle heat.

The Mercury's leprosy infesting the body, is not of its root and substance, but accidental, and therefore separable from it; the earthly part is wiped off by a warm wet Bath and the Laver of nature; the watery part is taken away by a dry bath with that gentle fire suitable to generation. And thus by a threefold washing and cleansing the Dragon puts off his old scales and ugly skin is renewed in beauty.

51. The Philosophical sublimation of Mercury is completed by two processes; namely by removing things superfluous from it, and by introducing things which are wanting. In superfluities are the external accidents, which in the dark sphere of Saturn do make cloudy glittering Jupiter.

Separate therefore the leaden colour of Saturn which

cometh up out of the Water until Jupiter's purple Star smile upon thee. Add hereunto the Sulphur of nature, whose grain and Ferment it hath in itself, so much as suffices it; but see that it be sufficient for other things also. Multiply therefore that invisible Sulphur of the Philosophers until the Virgin's milk comes forth: and so the First Gate is opened unto thee.

52. The entrance of the Philosophers' garden is kept by the Hesperian Dragon, which being put aside, a Fountain of the dearest water proceeding from a sevenfold spring flows forth on every side of the entrance of the garden; wherein make the Dragon drink thrice the magical number of Seven, until having drunk he put off his hideous garments; then may the divine powers of light-bringing Venus and horned Diana, be propitious unto thee.

53. Three kinds of most beautiful flowers are to be sought, and may be found in this Garden of the wise: Damask-coloured Violets, the milk-white Lily, and the purple and immortal flower of love, the Amaranth. Not far from that fountain at the entrance, fresh Violets do first salute thee, which being watered by streams from the great golden river, they put on the most delicate colour of the dark Sapphire; then Sol will give thee a sign. Thou shalt not sever such precious flowers from their roots until thou make the Stone; for the fresh ones cropped off have more juice and tincture; and then pick them carefully with a gentle and discreet hand; if the Fates frown not, this will easily follow, and one White flower being plucked, the other Golden one will not be wanting; let the Lily and the Amaranth succeed with still greater care and longer labour.

54. Philosophers have their sea also, wherein small fishes plump and shining with silver scales are generated; which he that shall entangle, and take by a fine and small net shall be accounted a most expert fisherman.

55. The Philosophers' Stone is found in the oldest mountains, and flows from everlasting brooks; those mountains are of silver, and the brooks are even of gold: from thence gold and silver and all the treasures of Kings are produced.

56. Whosoever is minded to obtain the Philosophers' Stone, let him resolve to take a long peregrination, for it is necessary that he go to see both the Indies, that from thence he may bring the most precious gems and the purest gold.

57. Philosophers extract their stone out of seven stones, the two chief whereof are of a diverse nature and efficacy; the one infuses invisible Sulphur, the other spiritual Mercury; that one induces heat and dryness, and this one cold and moisture: thus by their help, the strength of the elements is multiplied in the Stone; the former is found in the Eastern coast, the latter in the Western: both of them have the power of colouring and multiplying, and unless the Stone shall take its first Tincture from them it will neither colour nor multiply.

58. Recipe then the Winged Virgin very well washed and cleansed, impregnated by the spiritual seed of the first male, and fecundated in the permanent glory of her untouched virginity, she will be discovered by her cheeks dyed with a blushing colour; join her to the second, by whose seed she shall conceive again and shall in time bring forth a reverend off-spring of double sex, from

whence an immortal Race of most potent Kings shall gloriously arise.

59. Keep up and couple the Eagle and Lion well cleansed in their transparent cloister, the entry door being shut and watched lest their breath go out, or the air without do secretly get in. The Eagle shall snap up and devour the Lion in this combination; afterwards being affected with a long sleep, and a dropsy occasioned by a foul stomach, she shall be changed by a wonderful metamorphosis into a coal black Crow, which shall begin to fly with wings stretched out, and by its flight shall bring down water from the clouds, until being often moistened, he put off his wings of his own accord, and falling down again he be changed into a most White Swan. Those that are ignorant of the causes of things may wonder with astonishment when they consider that the world is nothing but a continual Metamorphosis; they may marvel that the seeds of things perfectly digested should end in greatest whiteness. Let the Philosopher imitate Nature in his work.

60. Nature proceeds thus in making and perfecting her works, that from an inchoate generation it may bring a thing by divers means, as it were by degrees, to the ultimate term of perfection: she therefore attains her end by little and little, not by leaps; confining and including her work between two extremes; distinct and severed as by spaces. The practice of Philosophy, which is the imitator of Nature, ought not to decline from the way and example of Nature in its working and direction to find out its happy stone, for whatsoever is without the bounds of Nature is either in error or is near one.

61. The extremes of the Stone are natural Argent vive and

perfect Elixir: the middle parts which lie between, by help whereof the work goes on, are of three sorts; for they either belong unto matter, or operations, or demonstrative signs: the whole work is perfected by these extremes and means.

62. The material means of the Stone are of divers kinds, for some are extracted out of others successively: The first are Mercury Philosophically sublimated, and perfect metals, which although they be extreme in the work of nature, yet in the Philosophical work they supply the place of means: of the former the seconds are produced; namely the four elements, which again are circulated and fixed: of the seconds, the third is produced, to wit, Sulphur, the multiplication hereof doth terminate the first work: the fourth and last means are leaven or ointments weighed with the mixture of the things aforesaid, successively produced in the work of the Elixir. By the right ordering of the things aforesaid, the perfect Elixir is finished, which is the last term of the whole work, wherein the Philosophers' Stone rests as in its centre, the multiplication whereof is nothing else than a short repetition of the previous operations.

63. The operative means (which are also called the Keys of the Work) are four: the first is Solution or Liquefaction; the second is Ablution; the third Reduction; the fourth Fixation. By Liquefaction bodies return into their first form, things concocted are made raw again and the combination between the positive and negative is effected, from whence the Crow is generated lastly the Stone is divided into four confused elements, which happen by the retrogradation of the Luminaries. The Ablution teaches

how to make the Crow white, and to create the Jupiter of Saturn, which is done by the conversion of the Body into Spirit. The Office of Reduction is to restore the soul to the stone exanimated, and to nourish it with dew and spiritual milk, until it shall attain unto perfect strength. In both these latter operations the Dragon rages against himself, and by devouring his tail, doth wholly exhaust himself, and at length is turned into the Stone. Lastly, the operation of the Fixation fixes both the White and the Red Sulphurs upon their fixed body, by the mediation of the spiritual tincture; it decocts the Leaven or Ferment by degrees ripens things unripe, and sweetens the bitter. In fine by penetrating and tincturing the flowing Elixir it generates, perfects, and lastly, raises it up to the height of sublimity.

64. The Means or demonstrative signs are Colours successively and orderly affecting the matter and its affections and demonstrative passions, whereof there are three special ones (as critical) to be noted; to these some add a Fourth. The first is black, which is called the Crow's head, because of its extreme blackness whose crepusculun shows the beginning of the action of the fire of nature and solution, and the blackest midnight shows the perfection of liquefaction, and confusion of the elements. Then the grain putrefies and is corrupted, that it may be the more apt for generation. The white colour succeeds the black wherein is given the perfection of the first degree, and of the White Sulphur. This is called the blessed stone; this Earth is white and foliated, wherein Philosophers do sow their gold. The third is Orange colour, which is produced in the passage of the white to the red, as the middle and being mixed of both is as the

dawn with his saffron hair, a forerunner of the Sun. The fourth colour is Ruddy and Sanguine, which is extracted from the white fire only. Now because whiteness is easily altered by another colour before day it quickly fails of its candor. But the deep redness of the Sun perfects the work of Sulphur, which is called the Sperm of the male, the fire of the Stone, the King's Crown, and the Son of Sol, wherein the first labour of the workman rests.

65. Besides these decretory signs which firmly inhere in the matter, and show its essential mutations, almost infinite colours appear, and show themselves in vapors, as the Rainbow in the clouds, which quickly pass away and are expelled by those that succeed, more affecting the air than the earth: the operator must have a gentle care of them, because they are not permanent, and proceed not from the intrinsic disposition of the matter, but from the fire painting and fashioning everything after its pleasure, or casually by heat in slight moisture.

66. Of the strange colours, some appearing out of time, give an ill omen to the work: such as the blackness renewed; for the Crow's young ones having once left their nest are never to be suffered to return. Too hasty Redness; for this once, and in the end only, gives a certain hope of the harvest; if therefore the matter become red too soon it is an argument of the greatest aridity, not without great danger, which can only be averted by Heaven alone forthwith bestowing a shower upon it.

67. The Stone is exalted by successive digestions, as by degrees, and at length attains to perfection. Now four Digestions agreeable to the four above said Operations or Governments do complete the whole work, the author

whereof is the fire, which makes the difference between them.

68. The first digestion is the solution of the Body, whereby comes the first conjunction of male and female, the commixtion of both seeds, putrefaction, the resolution of the elements into homogeneous water, the eclipse of the Sun and Moon in the head of the Dragon, and lastly it brings back the whole World into its ancient Chaos, and dark abyss. This first digestion is as in the stomach, of a melon colour and weak, more fit for corruption than generation.

69. In the second digestion the Spirit of the Lord walked upon the waters; the light begins to appear, and a separation of waters from the waters occurs; Sol and Luna are renewed; the elements are extracted out of the chaos, that being perfectly mixed in Spirit they may constitute a new world; a new Heaven and new Earth are made; and lastly all bodies become spiritual. The Crow's young ones changing their feathers begin to pass into Doves; the Eagle and Lion embrace one another in an eternal League of amity. And this generation of the World is made by the fiery Spirit descending in the form of Water, and wiping away Original sin; for the Philosophers' Water is Fire, which is moved by the exciting heat of a Bath. But see that the separation of Waters be done in Weight and Measure, lest those things that remain under Heaven be drowned under the Earth, or those things that are snatched up above the Heaven, be too much destitute of aridity. Here let slight moisture leave a barren Soil.

70. The third digestion of the newly generated Earth drinks up the dewy Milk, and all the spiritual virtues of the

quintessence, and fastens the quickening Soul to the body by the Spirit's mediation. Then the Earth lays up a great Treasure in itself, and is made like the coruscating Moon, afterwards like to the ruddy Sun; the former is called the Earth of the Moon, the latter the Earth of the Sun; for both of them are beget of the copulation of them both; neither of them any longer fear the pains of the Fire, because both want all spots; for they have been often cleansed from sin by fire, and have suffered great Martyrdom, until all the Elements are turned downward.

71. The Fourth digestion consummates all the Mysteries of the World, and the Earth being turned into most excellent leaven, it leavens all imperfect bodies because it hath before passed into the heavenly nature of quintessence. The virtue thereof flowing from the Spirit of the Universe is a present Panacea and universal medicine for all the diseases of all creatures. The digestions of the first work being repeated will open to thee the Philosophers secret Furnace (a liquid I believe). Be right in thy works, that thou may find God favorable otherwise the plowing of the Earth will be in vain; nor will the expected Harvest ever requite the greedy husbandman.

72. The whole Progress of the Philosophers' work is nothing but Solution and Congelation; the Solution of the body, and Congelation of the Spirit; nevertheless there is but one operation of both: the fixed and volatile are perfectly mixed and united in the Spirit! Which cannot be done unless the fixed body is first made soluble and volatile. By reduction is the volatile body fixed into a permanent body, and volatile nature doth at last change into a fixed one, as the fixed nature had before passed

into volatile. Now so long as the Natures were confused in the Spirit, that mixed spirit keeps a middle Nature between Body and Spirit, Fixed and Volatile.

73. The generation of the Stone is made after the pattern of the Creation of the World; for it is necessary, that it have its Chaos and First matter, wherein the confused Elements do fluctuate, until they be separated by the fiery Spirit; they being separated, the Light Elements are carried upwards, and the heavy ones downwards: the light arising, darkness retreats: the waters are gathered into one place and the dry land appears. At length the two great Luminaries arise, and mineral, vegetable and animal are produced in the Philosophers' Earth.

74. God created Adam out of the mud of the Earth, wherein were inherent the virtues of all the Elements, of the Earth and Water especially, which do more constitute the sensible and corporeal heap: Into this Mass God breathed the breath of Life, and enlivened it with the Sun of the Holy Spirit. He gave Eve for a Wife to Adam, and blessing them he gave unto them a Precept and the Faculty of multiplication. The generation of the Philosophers Stone, is not unlike the Creation of Adam, for the Mud was made of a terrestrial and ponderous Body dissolved by Water, which deserved the excellent name of Terra Adamica, wherein all the virtues and qualities of the Elements are placed. At length the heavenly Soul is infused there into by the medium of the Quintessence and Solar influx, and by the Benediction and Dew of Heaven; the virtue of multiplying ad infinitum by the intervening copulation of both sexes is given it.

75. The chief secret of this work consists in the manner of

working, which is wholly employed about the Elements: for the matter of the Stone passes from one Nature into another, the Elements are successively extracted, and by turns obtain dominion; everything is agitated by the circles of humidum and siccum, until all things be turned downwards, and there rest.

76. In the work of the Stone the other Elements are circulated in the figure of Water, for the Earth is resolved into Water, wherein are the rest of the Elements; the Water is Sublimated into Vapour, Vapour retreats into Water, and so by an unwearied circle, is the Water moved, until it abide fixed downwards; now that being fixed, all the elements are fixed. Thus into it they are resolved, by it they are extracted, with it they live and die; the Earth is the Tomb, and last end of all.

77. The order of Nature requires that every generation begin from humidity and in humidity. In the Philosophers' Work, Nature is to be reduced into order, that so the matter of the Stone, which is terrestrial, compact and dry, in the first place may be dissolved and flow into the Element of Water next unto it, and then Saturn will be generated of Sol.

78. The Air succeeds the Water, drawn about by seven circles or revolutions, which is wheeled about with so many circles and reductions, until it be fixed downwards, and Saturn being expelled, Jupiter may receive the Scepter and Government of the Kingdom, by whose coming the Philosophers' Infant is formed, nourished in the womb, and at length is born; resembling the splendor of Luna in her beautiful and Serene countenance.

79. The Fire executes the courses of the Nature of the

Elements, extreme Fire assisting it; of the hidden is made the manifest; the Saffron dyes the Lily; Redness possesses the cheeks of the blushing Child now made stronger. A Crown is prepared for him against the time of his Reign. This is the consummation of the first work, and the perfect rotation of the Elements the sign whereof is, when they are all terminated in Siccum, and the body void of Spirit lies down, wanting pulse, and motion; and thus all the Elements are finally resolved into Earth.

80. Fire placed in the Stone is Nature's Prince, Sol's Son and Vicar, moving and digesting matter and perfecting all things therein, if it shall attain its liberty, for it lies weak under a hard bark; procure therefore its freedom that it may succor thee freely; but beware that thou urge it not above measure, for being impatient of tyranny it may become a fugitive, no hope of return being left unto thee; call it back therefore by courteous words, and keep it prudently.

81. The first mover of nature is External Fire, the Moderator of Internal Fire, and of the whole Work; Let the Philosopher therefore very well understand the government thereof, and observe its degrees and points; for from thence the welfare or ruin of the work depends. Thus Art helps Nature, and the Philosopher is the Minister of both.

82. By these two Instruments of Art and Nature the Stone lifts itself up from Earth to Heaven with great ingenuity, and slides from Heaven to Earth, because the Earth is its Nurse, and being carried in the womb of the wind, it receives the force of the Superiors and Inferiors.

83. The Circulation of the Elements is performed by a

double Whorl, by the greater or extended and the less or contracted. The Whorl extended fixes all the Elements of the Earth, and its circle is not finished unless the work of Sulphur is perfected. The revolution of the minor Whorl is terminated by the extraction and preparation of every Element. Now in this Whorl there are three Circles placed, which always and variously move the Matter, by an Erratic and Intricate Motion, and do often (seven times at least) drive about every Element, in order succeeding one another, and so agreeable, that if one shall be wanting the labour of the rest is made void. These Circulations are Nature's Instruments, whereby the Elements are prepared. Let the Philosopher therefore consider the progress of Nature in the Physical Tract, more fully described for this very end.

84. Every Circle hath its proper Motion, for all the Motions of the Circles are conversant about the subject of Humidum and Siccum, and are so concatenated that they produce the one operation, and one only consent of Nature: two of them are opposite, both in respect of their causes and the effects; for one moves upwards, drying by heat; another downwards, moistening by cold; a third carrying the form of rest and sleep by digesting, induces the cessation of both in greatest moderation.

85. Of the three Circles, the first is Evacuation, the labour of which is in extracting the superfluous Humidum and also in separating the pure, clean and subtle, from the gross and terrestrial dregs. Now the greatest danger is found in the motion of this Circle, because it hath to do with things Spiritual and makes Nature plentiful.

86. Two things are chiefly to be taken heed of in moving

this Circle; first, that it be not moved too intensely; the other, that it be not moved for too long a time. Motion accelerated raises confusion in the matter, so that the gross, impure and undigested part may fly out together with the pure and subtle, and the Body undissolved be mixed with the Spirit, together with that which is dissolved. With this precipitated motion the Heavenly and Terrestrial Natures are confounded, and the Spirit of the Quintessence, corrupted by the admixture of Earth is made dull and invalid. By too long a motion the Earth is too much evacuated of its Spirit, and is made so languishing, dry and destitute of Spirit, that it cannot easily be restored and recalled to its Temperament. Either error burns up the Tincture, or turns it into flight.

87. The Second Circle is Restoration; whose office is to restore strength to the gasping and debilitated body by Potion. The former Circle was the Organ of sweat and labour, but this of restoration and consolation. The action of this is employed in the grinding and mollifying the Earth (Potter-like), that it may be the better mixed.

88. The motion of this Circle must be lighter than that of the former, especially in the beginning of its Revolution, lest the Crow's young ones drown in their nest by a large flood, and the growing world be drowned by a deluge. This is the Weigher and Assayer of Measures, for it distributes Water by Geometrical Precepts. There is usually no greater Secret found in the whole practice of the Work than the firm and justly weighed Motion of this Circle; for it informs the Philosophers' infant and inspires Soul and Life into him.

89. The Laws of this Circle's motions are, that it run about

gently: and by little and little, and sparingly let forth itself, lest that by making haste it fail from its measure, and the Fire inherent be overwhelmed with the Waters, the Architect of the Work grow dull, or also be extinguished: that meat and drink be administered by turns, to the end there may be a better Digestion made, and the best temperament of Humidum, and Siccum; for the indissoluble colligation of them both is the End and Scope of the Work. Furthermore see, that you add so much by Watering, as shall be found wanting in assaying, that Restoration may restore so much of the lost strength by corroborating, as Evacuation hath taken away by debilitating.

90. Digestion, the last Circle, acts with silent and insensible Motion; and therefore it is said by Philosophers, that it is made in a secret furnace; it decocts the Nutriment received, and converts it into the Homogeneous parts of the body. Moreover, it is called Putrefaction; because as meat is corrupted in the Stomach before it passes into Blood and similar parts; so this operation breaks the Aliment with a concocting and Stomach heat and in a manner makes it to putrefy that it may be the better Fixed, and changed from a Mercurial into a Sulphurous Nature. Again, it is called Inhumation, because by it the Spirit is inhumated, as a dead man buried in the ground. But because it goes most slowly, it therefore needs a longer time. The two former Circles do labour especially in dissolving, this in congealing although all of them work in both ways.

91. The Laws of this Circle are, that it be moved by the Feverish and most gentle heat of Dung, lest that the things

volatile fly out, and the Spirit be troubled at the time of its strictest Conjunction with the Body, for then the business is perfected in the greatest tranquility and ease; therefore we must especially beware lest the Earth be moved by any Winds or Showers. Lastly, as this third Circle may always succeed the second straightway and in due order, as the second the first: so by interrupted works and by course those three erratic Circles do complete one entire circulation, which often reiterated doth at length turn all things into Earth, and makes similarity between opposites. 92. Nature uses Fire, so also doth Art after its example, as an Instrument and Mallet in cutting out its works. In both operations therefore Fire is Master and Perfecter.

Wherefore the knowledge of Fire is most necessary for a Philosopher, without which as another Ixion (condemned to labour in vain) he shall turn about the Whorl of Nature to no purpose.

93. The name Fire is Equivocal amongst Philosophers; for sometimes it is used by Metonymy for heat and so there be as many fires as heats. In the Generation of Metals and Vegetables Nature acknowledges a Three-fold Fire; to wit, Celestial, Terrestrial and Innate. The First flows from Sol as its Fountain into the Bosom of the Earth; it stirs up Fumes, or Mercurial and Sulphurous vapours, of which the Metals are created, and mixes itself amongst them; it stirs up that torpid fire which is placed in the seeds of Vegetables, and adds fresh sparks unto it, as a spur to vegetation. The Second lurks in the bowels of the Earth, by the Impulse and action whereof the Subterraneous vapours are driven upwards as through pores and pipes, and thrusts outwards from the Centre towards the surface

of the Earth, both for the composition of Metals, where the Earth swells up, as also for the production of Vegetables, by putrefying their seeds, by softening and preparing them for generation. The third Fire, viz., Innate is also indeed Solar; it is generated of a vapid smoke of Metals, and also being infused with the monthly provision grows together with the humid matter, and is retained as in a Prison; or more truly, as form is conjoined with the mixed body; it firmly inherits in the seeds of Vegetables, until being solicited by the point of its Father's rays it be called out, then Motion intrinsically moves and informs the matter, and becomes the Molder and Dispenser of the whole Mixture. In the generation of Animals, Celestial Fire doth insensibly co-operate with the Animal, for it is the first Agent in Nature; for the heat of the female answers to Terrestrial Fire; when the Seed putrefies, this warmth prepares it. For truly the Fire is implanted in the Seed; then the Son of Sol disposes of the matter, and being disposed, he forms it.

94. Philosophers have observed a three-fold Fire in the matter of their work, Natural, Unnatural, and Contra-Natural. The Natural they call the Fiery Celestial Spirit Innate, kept in the profundity of matter, and most strictly bound unto it, which by the sluggish strength of metal grows dull, until being stirred up and freed by the Philosophers' discretion and external heat, it shall have obtained a faculty of moving its body dissolved, and so it may inform its humid matter, by Un-folding Penetration, Dilatation and Congelation. In every mixed body Natural Fire is the Principle of Heat and Motion. Unnatural Fire they name that which being procured and coming from

without is introduced into the matter artificially; that it may increase and multiply the strength of the natural heat. The Fire Contrary to Nature they call that which putrefies the Composite, and corrupts the temperament of Nature. It is imperfect, because being too weak for generation, it is not carried beyond the bounds of corruption: such is the Fire or heat of the menstruum: yet it hath the name improperly of Fire against Nature, because in a manner it is according to Nature, for although it destroys the specific form, and corrupts the matter, yet it disposes it for reproduction.

95. It is more credible nevertheless that the corrupting Fire, called Fire against Nature, is not different from the Innate, but the first degree of it, for the order of nature requires, that Corruption should precede Generation: the fire therefore that is innate, agreeable to the Law of Nature, performs both, by exciting both successively in the matter: the first of corruption more gentle stirred up by feeble heat to mollify and prepare the body: the other of generation more forcible, moved by a more vehement heat, to animate and fully inform the Elementary body disposed of by the former. A double Motion doth therefore proceed from a double degree of heat of the same fire; neither is it to be accounted a double Fire, for far better may the name of "Fire contrary to Nature" be given to violent and destructive fire.

96. Unnatural Fire is converted into Natural or Innate Fire by successive degrees of Digestion, and increase and multiply it. Now the whole secret consists in the multiplication of Natural Fire, which of itself is not able to Work above its proper strength, nor communicate a perfect Tincture to imperfect Bodies; for although it be

sufficient to itself, yet hath it not any further power; but being multiplied by the unnatural, which most abound with the virtue of multiplying doth act far more powerfully, and reaches itself beyond the bounds of Nature-colouring strange and imperfect bodies, and perfecting them, because of its plentiful Tincture, and the abstruse Treasure of multiplied Fire.

97. Philosophers call their Water, Fire, because it is most hot, and imbued with a Fiery Spirit; again Water is called Fire by them, because it burns the bodies of perfect Metals more than common fire does for it perfectly dissolves them, whereas they resist our Fire, and will not suffer themselves to be dissolved by it; for this cause it is also called Burning Water. Now that Fire of Tincture is hid in the belly of the Water and manifests itself by a double effect, viz., of the body's Solution and Multiplication.

98. Nature uses a double Fire in the Work of generation, Intrinsic and Extrinsic; the former being placed in the seeds and mixtures of things, is hid in their Centre; and as a principle of Motion and Life doth move and quicken the body. But the latter, Extrinsic, whether it be poured down from Heaven or Earth, raises the former, as drowned with sleep, and compels it to action; for the vital sparks implanted in the seeds stand in need of an external motor, that they may be moved and act.

99. It is even so in the Philosophers' work; for the matter of the Stone possesses his Interior Fire, which is partly Innate, partly also is added by the Philosophers Art, for those are united and come inward together, because they are homogeneous: the internal stands in need of the external, which the Philosopher administers according to

the Precepts of Art and Nature; this compels the former to move. These Fires are as two Wheels, whereof the hidden one being moved by the visible one, it is moved sooner or later; and thus Art helps Nature.

100. The Internal Fire is the middle agent between the Motor and the Matter; whence it is, that as it is moved by that, it moves this; and if so be it shall be driven intensely or remissly, it will work after the same manner in the matter. The Information of the whole Work depends of the measure of External Fire.

101. He that is ignorant of the degrees and points of external Fire, let him not start upon the Philosophical Work; for he will never obtain light out of darkness, unless the heats pass through their middle stages, like the Elements, whose Extremes are not converted, but only their Means.

102. Because the whole work consists in Separation and perfect Preparation of the Four Elements, therefore so many grades of Fire are necessary there unto; for every Element is extracted by the degree of Fire proper to it.

103. The four grades of Heat are called the heat of the Water Bath, the heat of Ashes, of Coals, and of Flame, which is also called "Optetic:" every grade hath its degrees, two at least, sometimes three; for heat is to be moved slowly and by degrees, whether it be increased or decreased; so that Matter, after Nature's example, may go on by degrees and willingly unto formation and completion; for nothing is so strange to Nature as that which is violent. Let the Philosopher propound for his consideration the gentle access and recess of the Sun, whose Light and Lamp bestows its heat to the things of

the world, according to the times and Laws of the Universe, and so bestows a certain temperament upon them.

104. The first degree of the Bath of Heat is called the heat of a Fever; the second, of Dung. The first degree of the second grade is the simple heat of Ashes; the second is the heat of Sand. Now the degrees of Fire, Coals and Flame want a proper Name, but they are distinguished by the operation of the intellect, according to their intensity.

105. Three Grades only of Fire are sometimes found amongst Philosophers, viz., the Water Bath, of Ashes and of Flame: which latter comprehend the Fire of Coals and of Flame: the Heat of Dung is sometimes distinguished from the Heat of the Bath in degree. Thus for the most part Authors do involve the light in darkness, by the various expressions of the Philosophers' Fire; for the knowledge thereof is accounted amongst their chief secrets.

106. In the White Work, because three Elements only are extracted, Three degrees of Fire do suffice; the last, to wit the "Optetic," is reserved for the Fourth Element, which finishes the Red Work. By the first degree the eclipse of Sol and Luna is made; by the second the light of Luna begins to be restored; by the third Luna attains unto the fullness of her splendor; and by the fourth Sol is exalted into the highest apex of his glory. Now in every part the Fire is administered according to the rules of Geometry; so that the Agent may answer to the disposition of the Patient, so their strength be equally poised betwixt themselves.

107. Philosophers have very much insisted upon secrecy in regard to their Fire; they scarce have been bold to

describe it but show it rather by a description of its qualities and properties, than by its name: as that it is called Airy Fire, Vaporous, Humid and Dry, Clear or Star-like; because it may easily by degrees be increased or remitted as the Artificer pleases. He that desires more of the knowledge of Fire may be satisfied by the Works of Lullius, who hath opened the Secrets of Practice to worthy minds candidly.

108. Of the conflict of the Eagle and the Lion also they write diversely, because the Lion is the strongest animal, and therefore it is necessary that more Eagles act together (three at least, or more, even to ten) to conquer him: the fewer they are, the greater the contention, and the slower the Victory; but the more Eagles, the shorter the Battle, and the plundering of the Lion will more readily follow. The happier number of seven Eagles may be taken out of Lullius, or of nine out of Senior.

109. The Vessel wherein Philosophers decoct their work is twofold; the one of Nature, the other of Art; the Vessel of Nature which is also called the Vessel of Philosophy is the Earth of the Stone, or the Female or Matrix, where into the sperm of the Male is received putrefies, and is prepared for generation; the Vessel of Nature is of three sorts, for the secret is decocted in a threefold Vessel.

110. The First Vessel is made of a transparent Stone, or of a stony Glass, the form thereof some Philosophers have hid by a certain Enigmatic description; sometimes affirming that it is compounded of two pieces, to wit, an Alembic and a Bolt-head; sometimes of three at other times of the two former with the addition of a Cover.

111. Many have feigned the multiply of such like Vessels

to be necessary to the Philosophical Work, calling them by divers names with a desire of hiding the secret by a diversity of operations; for they called it Dissolvent of solutions; Putrefactory for putrefaction; Distillatory for distillation; Sublimatory for sublimation; Calcinary for calcination &c.

112. But all deceit being removed we may speak sincerely, one only Vessel of Art suffices to terminate the Work of either Sulphur; and another for the Work of the Elixir; for the diversity of digestions requires not the change of Vessels; yea we must have a care lest the Vessel be changed or opened before the First work be ended.

113. You shall choose a form of glass Vessel round in the bottom (or cucurbit), or at least oval, the neck a hand's breadth long or more, large enough with a straight mouth made like a Pitcher or Jug, continuous and unbroken and equally thick in every part, that it may resist a long, and sometimes an acute Fire The cucurbit is called a Blind-head because its eye is blinded with the Hermetic seal, lest anything from without should enter in, or the Spirit steal out.

114. The second Vessel of Art may be of Wood, of the trunk of an Oak, cut into two hollow Hemispheres, wherein the Philosophers' Egg may be cherished till it is hatched of which see the Fountain of Trevisan.

115. The third Vessel Practitioners have called their Furnace, which keeps the other Vessels with the matter and the whole work: this also Philosophers have endeavored to hide amongst their secrets.

116. The Furnace which is the Keeper of Secrets, is called

Athanasius, from the immortal Fire, which it always preserves; for although it afford unto the Work continual Fire, yet sometimes unequally, which reason requires to be administered more or less according to the quantity of matter, and the capacity of the Furnace.

117. The matter of the Furnace is made of Brick, or of daubed Earth, or of Potter's clay well beaten and prepared with horse dung, mixed with hair, so that it may cohere the firmer, and may not be cracked by long heating; let the walls be three or four fingers thick, to the end that the furnace may be the better able to keep in the heat and withstand it.

118. Let the form of the Furnace be round, the inward altitude of two feet or thereabouts, in the midst whereof an Iron or Brazen plate must be set, of a round Figure, about the thickness of a Penknife's back, in a manner possessing the interior latitude of the Furnace, but a little narrower than it, lest it touch the walls; it must lean upon three or four props of Iron fixed to the walls, and let it be full of holes, that the heat may be the more easily carried upwards by them, and between the sides of the Furnace and the Plate. Below the Plate let there be a little door left, and another above in the walls of the Furnace, that by the Lower the Fire may be put in, and by the higher the temperament of the heat may be sensibly perceived; at the opposite part whereof let there be a little window of the Figure of a Rhomboid fortified with glass, that the light over against it may show the colours to the eye. Upon the middle of the aforesaid plate, let the Tripod of secrets be placed with a double Vessel. Lastly, let the Furnace be very well covered with a shell or covering agreeable unto

it, and take care that the little doors be always closely shut, lest the heat escape.

119. Thus thou hast all things necessary to the First Work, the end whereof is the generation of two sorts of Sulphur; the composition and perfection of both may be thus finished.

The Practice of the Sulphur.

Take a Red Dragon, courageous, warlike, to whom no natural strength is wanting; and afterwards seven or nine noble Eagles (Virgins), whose eyes will not wax dull by the rays of the Sun: cast the Birds with the Beast into a clear Prison and strongly shut them up; under this let a Bath be placed, that they may be incensed to fight by the warmth, in a short time they will enter into a long and harsh contention, until at length about the 45th day or the 50th the Eagles begin to prey upon and tear the beast to pieces, which dying will infect the whole Prison with its black and direful poison, whereby the Eagles being wounded, they will also be constrained to give up the ghost. From the putrefaction of the dead Carcasses a Crow will be generated, which by little and little will put forth its head, and the Heat being somewhat increased it will forthwith stretch forth its wings and begin to fly; but seeking chinks from the Winds and Clouds, it will long hover about; take heed that it find not any chinks. At length being made white by a gentle and long Rain, and with the dew of Heaven it will be changed into a White Swan, but the new born Crow is a sign of the departed Dragon. In making the Crow White, extract the Elements, and distil them according to the order prescribed, until they be fixed in their Earth, and end in Snow-like and most

subtle dust, which being finished you shall enjoy thy first desire, the White Work.

120. If thou intend to proceed further to the Red, add the Element of Fire, which is not needed for the White Work: the Vessel therefore being fixed, and the Fire strengthened by little and little through its grades, force the matter until the occult begin to be made manifest, the sign whereof will be the Orange colour arising: raise the Fire to the Fourth degree by its degrees, until by the help of Vulcan, purple Roses be generated from the Lily, and lastly the Amaranth dyed with the dark Redness of blood: but thou may not cease to bring out Fire by Fire, until you shall behold the matter terminated in most Red ashes, imperceptible to the touch. This Red Stone may rear up thy mind to greater things, by the blessing and assistance of the holy Trinity.

121. They that think they have brought their work to an end by perfect Sulphur, not knowing Nature or Art, and to have fulfilled the Precepts of the secret are much deceived, and will try Projection in vain; for the Praxis of the Stone is perfected by a double Work; the First is the creation of the Sulphur; the Second is the making of the Elixir.

122. The aforesaid Philosophers' Sulphur is most subtle Earth; most hot and dry, in the belly whereof the Fire of Nature abundantly multiplied is hidden. Therefore it deserves the name of the Fire of the Stone, for it hath in itself the virtue of opening and penetrating the bodies of Metals, and of turning them into its own temperament and producing its like, wherefore it is called a Father and Masculine seed.

123. That we may leave nothing untouched, let the Students in Philosophy know that from that first Sulphur, a second is generated which may be multiplied ad infinitum: let the wise man, after he hath got the everlasting mineral of that Heavenly Fire, keep it diligently. Now of what matter Sulphur is generated, of the same it is multiplied, a small portion of the first being added, yet as in the Balance. The rest, a tyro may see in Lullius, it may suffice only to point to this.

124. The Elixir is compounded of a threefold matter, namely, of Metallic Water or Mercury sublimated as before; of Leaven White or Red, according to the intention of the Operator; and of the Second Sulphur, all by Weight.

125. There are Five proper and necessary qualities in the perfect Elixir, that it be fusible, permanent, penetrating, tincturing, and multiplying; it borrows its tincture and fixation from the Leaven; its penetration from the Sulphur; its fusion from Argent vive, which is the medium of conjoining Tinctures; to wit of the Ferment and Sulphur; and its multiplicative virtue from the Spirit infused into the Quintessence.

126. Two perfect Metals give a perfect Tincture, because they are dyed with the pure Sulphur of Nature, and therefore no Ferment of Metals may be sought except these two bodies; therefore dye thy Elixir White and Red with Luna and Sol; Mercury first of all receives their Tincture, and having received it, doth communicate it to others.

127. In compounding the Elixir take heed you change not or mix any thing with the Ferments, for either Elixir must have its proper Ferment, and desires its proper Elements;

for it is provided by Nature that the two Luminaries have their different Sulphurs and distinct tinctures.

128. The Second work is concocted as the First, in the same or a like Vessel, the same Furnace, and by the same degrees of fire, but is perfected in a shorter time.

129. There are three humors in the Stone, which are to be extracted successively; namely, Watery, Airy, and Radical; and therefore all the labour and care of the Workman is employed about the humor, neither is any other Element in the Work of the Stone circulated beside the humid one.

For it is necessary, in the first place, that the Earth be resolved and melted into humour. Now the Radical humour of all things, accounted Fire, is most tenacious, because it is tied to the Centre of Nature, from which it is not easily separated; extract, therefore, these three humors slowly and successively; dissolving and congealing them by their Whorls, for by the multiplied alternative reiteration of Solution and Congelation the Whorl is extended and the whole work finished.

130. The Elixir's perfection consists in the strict Union and indissoluble Matrimony of Siccum and Humidum, so that they may not be separated, but the Siccum may flow with moderate heat into the Humidum, abiding every pressure of Fire. The sign of perfection is that if a very little of it be cast in above the Iron or Brazen Plate while very hot, it flow forthwith without smoke.

Let three weights of Red Earth or of Red Ferment, and a double weight of Water and Air well ground up be mixed together. Let an Amalgam be made like Butter, or Metallic Paste, so that the Earth being mollified maybe insensible to the touch. Add one weight and a half of Fire; let these

be transferred to the Vessel and exposed to a Fire of the first degree; most closely sealed; afterwards let the Elements be extracted out of their degrees of Fire in their order, which being turned downwards with a gentle motion they may be fixed in their Earth, so as nothing Volatile may be raised up from thence; the matter at length shall be terminated in a Stone, Illuminated, Red and Diaphanous; a part whereof take at pleasure, and having cast it into a Crucible with a little Fire by drops give it to drink its Red Oil and incerate it, until it be quite melted, and do flow without smoke. Nor may thou fear its flight, for the Earth being mollified with the sweetness of the Potion will retain it, having received it, within its bowels: then take the Elixir thus perfected into your own power and keep it carefully. In God rejoice, and be silent.

132. The order and method of composing and perfecting the white Elixir is the same, so that thou use the white Elements only in the composition thereof; but the body of it brought to the term of decoction will end in the plate; white, splendid, and crystal-like, which incerated with its White Oil will be fused. Cast one weight of either Elixir, upon ten times its weight of Argent-vive well washed and thou wilt admire its effect with astonishment.

133. Because in the Elixir the strength of Natural Fire is most abundantly multiplied by the Spirit infused into the Quintessence, and the depraved accidents of bodies, which beset their purity and the true light of Nature with darkness, are taken away by long and manifold sublimations and digestions; therefore Fiery Nature freed from its Fetters and fortified with the aid of Heavenly strength, works most powerfully, being included in this our

Fifth Element: let it not therefore be a wonder, if it obtain strength not only to perfect imperfect things, but also to multiply its force and power. Now the Fountain of Multiplication is in the Prince of the Luminaries, who by the infinite multiplication of his beams begets all things in this our Orb, and multiplies things generated by infusing a multiplicative virtue into the seeds of things

134. The way of multiplying the Elixir is threefold: By the first: R, Mingle one weight of Red Elixir, with nine times its weight of Red Water, and dissolve it into Water in a Vessel suitable for Solution; the matter being well dissolved and united coagulate it by decoction with a gentle Fire, until it be made strong into a Ruby or Red Lamel, which afterwards incerate with its Red Oil, after the manner prescribed until it melt and flow; so shall thou have a medicine ten times more powerful than the first. The business is easily finished in a short time.

135. By the Second manner. R, What Portion thou please of thy Elixir mixed with its Water, the weights being observed; seal it very well in the Vessel of Reduction, dissolve it in a Bath, by inhumation; being dissolved, distil it separating the Elements by their proper degrees of fire, and fixing them downwards, as was done in the first and second work, until it become a Stone; lastly, incerate it and Project it. This is the longer, but yet the richer way, for the virtue of the Elixir is increased even an hundred fold; for by how much the more subtle it is made by reiterated operations, so much more both of superior and inferior strength it retains, and more powerfully operates.

136. Lastly, take one Ounce of the said Elixir multiplied in virtue and project it upon an hundred of purified Mercury,

and in a little time the Mercury made hot amongst burning Coals will be converted into pure Elixir; whereof if thou cast every ounce upon another hundred of the like Mercury, Sol will shine most purely to your eyes. The multiplication of White Elixir may be made in the same way. Study the virtues of this Medicine to cure all kinds of diseases, and to preserve good health, as also other uses thereof, out of the Writings of Arnold of Villa Nova, Lullius and of other Philosophers.

137. The Significator of the Philosopher will instruct him concerning the Times of the Stone, for the first Work "ad Album" must be terminated in the House of Luna; the Second, in the second House of Mercury. The first Work "ad Rubeum," will end in the Second House of Venus, and the last in the other Regal Throne of Jupiter, from whence our most Potent King shall receive a Crown decked with most precious Rubies:

Thus doth the winding of the circling Year

Trace its own Footsteps, and the same appear.

138. A Three-Headed Dragon keeps this Golden Fleece; the first Head proceeds from the Waters, the second from the Earth, the third from the Air; it is necessary that these three heads do end in One most Potent, which will devour all the other Dragons; then a way is laid open for thee to the Golden Fleece. Farewell! Diligent Reader; in Reading these things invoke the Spirit of Eternal Light; Speak little, Meditate much, and Judge aright.

The Times of the Stone.

The interpretation of The Philosophers' Significator. To every Planet two Houses were assigned by the Ancients, Sol and Luna excepted; whereof the planet Saturn hath

his two houses adjoining. Philosophers in handling their Philosophical work begin their years in winter, to wit; the Sun being in Capricorn, which is the former House of Saturn; and so come towards the right hand. In the Second place the other House of Saturn is found in Aquarius, at which time Saturn, i.e., the Blackness of the work of the Magistery begins after the forty-fifth or fiftieth day. Sol coming into Pisces the work is black, blacker than black, and the head of the Crow begins to appear. The third month being ended, and Sol entering into Aries, the sublimation or separation of the Elements begin. Those which follow unto Cancer make the Work White, Cancer adds the greatest whiteness and splendor, and doth perfectly fill up all the days of the Stone, or white Sulphur, or the Lunar work of Sulphur; Luna sitting and reigning gloriously in her House, In Leo, the Regal Mansion of the Sun, the Solar work begins, which in Libra is terminated into a Ruby Stone or perfect Sulphur. The two signs Scorpio and Sagittarius which remain are required for the completing of the Elixir. And thus the Philosophers' admirable offspring takes its beginning in the Reign of Saturn, and its end and perfection in the Dominion of Jupiter.