

English alchemical verse from the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (20 items)
Various pieces on the Emerald Tablet of Hermes (8 items)
The works of Sir George Ripley (11 items)
Some pieces of Nicolas Flammel (3 items)

English alchemical verse

English alchemical verse from Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*. Transcribed by Justin von Bujdoss.

AEnigma Philosophicum
John Dastin's Dream
Discription of the Stone
The Hunting of the Greene Lyon
Hermes Bird
The Hermet's Tale
The Magistry
The Mistery of Alchymists by George Ripley
Peace the Black Monke on the Elixir
Thomas Robinson on the Philosopher's Stone
Testament of John Dee John Gwynn
A short work of George Ripley
The Worke of Richard Carpenter
John Gower concerning the Philosophers' Stone
Thomas Charnock - The Breviary of Alchemy
Dialogue Between a Father and his Son
Anonymous Alchemical Poems
Alchemical Aenigmas by Thomas Charnock
Experience and Philosophy
Liber Patris Sapientiae

Description of the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*:-

Ashmole, Elias. *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum. Containing Severall Poetical Pieces of our Famous English Philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language. Faithfully Collected into one Volume, with Annotations thereon, by Elias Ashmole, Esq. Qui est Mercuriophilus Anglicus. The first part, London, Printed by J. Grismond for Nath: Brooke, at the Angel in Cornhill. MDCLII. 1652.*

xvi + 486 + viii pages.

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p107-193 **The Compound of Alchymie. A most excellent, learned, and worthy worke, written by Sir George Ripley, Chanon of Bridlington in Yorkeshire, Containing twelve Gates.**

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Aenigma Philosophicum

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AEnigma Philosophicum.

There is no light, but what lives in the Sunne;
 There is no Sunne, but which is twice begott;
 Nature and Arte the Parents first begonne:
 By Nature 'twas, but Nature perfects not.
 Arte then what Nature left in hand doth take,
 And out of One a Twofold worke doth make.

A Twofold worke doth make, but such a worke
As doth admitt Division none at all
(See here wherein the Secret most doth lurke)
Unlesse it be a Mathematicall.
It must be Two, yet make it One and One,
And you do take the way to make it None.

Lo here the Primar Secret of this Arte,
Contemne it not but understand it right,
Who faileth to attaine this formost part,
Shall never know Artes force nor Natures might.
Nor yet have power of One and One so mixt,
To make by One fixt, One unfixid fixt.

D.D. W. Bedman

John Dastin's Dream

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The Work of John Dastin

Not yet full sleping, nor yet full waking,
But betweene twayne lying in a trauince;
Halfe closed mine Eyne in my slumbering,
Like a Man rapt of all cheer & countenance;
By a manner of weninge & Rememberance
Towards Aurora, ere Phoebus uprose,
I dreamed one came to me to doe me pleasaunce
That brought me a Boke with seven seals close.

2. Following upon I had a wonerfull dreame,
As semed unto my inward thought,
The face of him shone as the Sun-beame:
Which unto me thys hevenly Boke brought,
Of so greate Riches that yt may not be bought,
In order set by Dame Philosophie,
The Capitall and the flowrishing wrought
By a wife prince called Theologie.

3. Thys Boke was written with letters [aureat],
Perpetually to be put in memory,
And to Apollo the Chapters consecrate,
And to rge seven Gods in the hevenly Consistory:
And in Mercuries litle Oratory,
Groweth all the fruite in breese of thys Science,
Who can expresse hem and have of hem Victory,
May clayme the tryumph of his Minerall prudence.

4. Of this matter above betweene Starrs seaven,
By Gods and Godessess all of one assent,

Was Sent Caducifer to Erth downe from Heaven:
Saturnus as Bedell by great advisment;
For to summon a general Parliament,
By concord of all both old and young of age,
To say in Breife their Councell most prudent:
For Common proffit to knit up a Marriage.

5. Betweene twaine Borne of the Imperiall blood,
And descended from Jupiters line,
Of their Natures most pure and most good;
Wythowte infeccion their seede is most divine;
That noe Eclips may let them for to shine,
So that Mercury doth stint all debate,
And restraine their Courage by meaknes them incline;
That of frowardnes they be not indurate.

6. For the Sunne that sitteth so heigh a loft,
His gloden dew-droppes shall cleerly raigne downe,
By the meane of Mercury that moven first made soft:
Then there schalbe a glad Coniunction,
Whan there is made a Seperacion:
And their two Spermes by Marriage are made one;
And the said Mercury by devision,
Hath taken his flight and from both is gone.

7. These be the two Mercuries cheife of Philosophers,
Revived againe with the Spirit of lyfe,
Richer then Rubies or Pearles shut in Cofeurs;
Washed and Baptized in waters vegetative,
The body dissevered with heate nutritive:
By moderate moysture of Putrefaccion;
So that there is no excesse nor no strife
Of the foure Elements in their Coniunction.

8. The graine of Wheate which on the ground doth fall,
But it be dead it may not fructifie,
If it be hole the vertue doth appayle;
And in no wise it may not Multiplie,
The increase doth begin whan it doth Putrefie;
Of good Grafts commeth Fruites of good lastage;
Of Crabs Verjuyce, of ash is made Lye,
Of good Grapes followeth a good Vintage.

9. Who soweth good Seede repeth good againe,
Of Cockles sowne there can grow no good Wheate,
For as such a Ploughman traveleth in vain,
To fruitfull Land Cockle is not meete;
Gall is ever bitter, Honey is ever sweete,
Of all things contrary is fals Conneccions,
Let Male and Female together ever meete;
But both be clensed of their Complexions.

10. A Man of Nature ingendereth but a Man,
And every Beast ingendereth his semblable;
And as Philosophers rehearse well can,
Diana and Venus in marriage be notable,

A Horse with a Swine joyneth not in a stable,
For where is made unkindly geniture,
What followeth but things abominable:
Which is to say Monstrum in Nature.

11. All this I finde in the said Boke,
Brought to me when I lay a sleepe;
And of one thing good heede I toke;
The Wolf in kind is Enemy to the Sheepe.
The Rose full divers to the wild Neepe:
For things joyned that be contrary;
Dame Nature complayning doth sit and weepe:
For falce receipts found in her Library.

12. And there it was to be pitiously complained,
That men to err by false Opinions
That be so farr from truth away restrained,
Like as they had lost wholly their Reasons,
Not considering in their discretions;
What mischeife followeth as is oft seene,
By these false froward Conneccions:
As doth leapers with folkes that byne cleane.

13. Notwithstanding he that is fate so high in heaven,
Crown'd with a Crowne of bright stones cleere,
Borne there to raine as ceife chosen of seaven:
Equal with Phoebus shone in the same sphere;
Without difference as Clerkes to us leare,
Sate there most royallin his diadem:
Very Celestiall and Angelike of cheare;
And in all vertue like as he did seeme.

14. And in that Boke I found well by writing,
Like as the processe made mention:
How that there was once a mighty rich King,
Cleane of nature and of Complexion:
Voyde of deformity from head soe forthe downe,
Which for his beauty as it is specified,
And for his cleanes most soverayne of renowne:
Was among Planets in heaven stelled.

15. Certaine Brethren I found he had in Number,
and of one Mother they were borne every each one:
But a Sicknes did them fore cumber,
That none was whole on his feete to gone,
Hoarse of language, cleere voice hed they none:
For with a scabb that was contagious,
They were infected, hole was their none;
For ever exiled because they were Leaprous.

16. The said King rose up in his Royall fee,
Seeing this mischeife cast his Eye downe,
And of his mercy, and fraternall pittye,
Surprized in heart, full of Compassion:
And began to complaine of their Infeccion,
Alas quoth he how came this adventure,

Under what froward or false Constelacion;
Or in what howre had yee your ingendure.

17. But sithence this mischeife is to you befall,
There is nothing which were more expedient,
Then to chuse one out amongst us all,
Without spott all cleere of his intent,
For you to dye by his owne assent,
To save the people from their Damnation:
And with his blood ere you be fully shent,
To make of his mercy your remission.

18. The which Liquor most wholesome is and good,
Against leprous humors and false infeccions,
When from a veyne taken is the blood;
Cleansing each part from all corrupcions,
The Originall taken from generacions:
Which is descended downe from stock ryall,
Nourished with Milke of Pure complexion;
With menstrous which are not superficiall.

19. But when the Brethren of this worthy King
Heard the Language, they fell in full great dread,
Full sore [fore] weeping and said in Complayning
That none of them was able to bleede,
Because their blood was infeccious indeede,
And corrupt blood made is now Sacrifice,
Wherefore alas there is noe way to speede,
That we can finde, to help us in any wise.

20. Of our Birth and of our Originall,
Cleerely and truly to make mencion;
Excuse is there none in parte nor in all;
In sin was our first conception:
Our bringing forth and generation,
Fulfilled was in sorrowe and wickednesse,
And our Mother in a short conclusion
With Corrupt milke us fostred in distresse.

21. For who may make that seede to be cleane,
That first was conceived in uncleanes,
For cancred rust may naver I meane,
By noe crafte shew forth perfect brightness:
Now let us all at once our Course addres;
And goe unto our Mother to ask by and by,
The finall cause of our Corrupt sickness;
That she declare unto us the Cause and why.

22. The said Children uprose in a fury
Of wofull rage, and went by one assent
Unto their Mother that called was Mercury:
Requiring her by greate advisement,
Before her Godesses being everyone present.
To tell them truly and in noe parte to faine,
Why their nature was corrupt and shent [fhent];
That caused them evermore to weepe and complaine.

23. To whom the Mother full bright of face and hew,
Gave this answer remembered in Scripture,
First when I was wedded a new,
I conceived by prosses of true Nature:
A Child of Seede that was most cleane and pure,
Undefined, most orient, faire and bright,
Of all the P L A N E T S cheife of ingendure:
Which now in Heaven giveth so cleere a light.

24. Whose Complexion is most temperate,
In heate and cold and in humidity,
In Erth also that there is noe debate,
Nor noe repugnaunce by noe quallity:
Nor none occasion of none infirmity,
That among them there may be none discord,
So well proportioned every-each in his degree,
Each however and space they be of so tru accord.

25. Whose Nature is so imperiall,
That fire so burning doth him no distresse:
His royall kinde id so celestiall,
Of Corruption he taketh no sickness;
Fire, Water, Air, nor Erth with his drines,
Neither of them may alter his Complexion,
He fixeth Spirits through his high noblenes;
Saveth infected bodyes from their Corrupcion.

26. His Heavenly helth death may not assayle,
He dreadeth noe venome, nor needeth no treacle,
Winde Tempest ne Wether against him may prevaile,
Soe high in Heaven is his Tabernacle,
In Erth he worked many a miracle:
He cureth Lepers and fetcheth home Fugitive,
And to gouty Eyne giveth a cleere Spectacle:
Them to goe that lame were all their lief.

27. He is my Son and I his Mother deare,
By me conceived truly in Marriage;
As touching your Birth the sickness doth appeare,
Of Menstruous blood brought forth in tender age,
Your Leprie is shewed in Body and in Visage,
To make your hole Medicine is no other
Drinke, nor potion to your advantage,
But the pure blood of him that is your deare Brother.

28. A good Shepard must dye for his Sheepe,
Without grudging to speak his words plaine,
And semblable take hereof good keepe,
Your Brother must dye and newe be borne againe,
Though he be old, of hereof well certaine;
To youth againe he must be renewd,
And suffer passion or else all were vaine,
Then rising againe right fresh and well hewd.

29. Old Aeson was made young by Medea,

With her drinks and her potions,
Soe must your Brother of pure Volunta
Dye and be young through his operation,
And that through subtile natures Confections,
By whose death plainely to expresse;
Yee shalbe purged from all infeccions:
And your foule leaprie changed to cleanes.

30. With the said words the King began to abrayd
The tale adverting that she had tould,
How might a Man by nature thus he said
Be borne againe, namely when he is old;
Then said his Mother by reason manifold:
But if the Gospell thus doth meane,
In Water and Spirit be renovate hott and cold,
That he shall never plainely come into Heaven.

31. The King was trifty and heavy of cheere,
Upon his Knees meekly kneeled downe,
Prayed his Father in full low manner,
To translate the Challice of his passion,
But for he thought the redempcion
Of his brethren, might not be fulfilled,
Without his death nor their Salvation;
For them to suffer he was right willed.

32. And for to accomplish his purpose in sentence,
By cleere example of who so looketh right,
Heavy things from their Circumferance,
Must up assend and after be made light,
And things light ready to the flight
Must descend to the Center downe,
By interchaunging of natures might,
As they be moved by meane of Revolucion.

33. So as Jupiter in a Cloud of Gold,
Chaunged himselfe by transformacion,
And descended from his hevenly hold
Like a Golden dewe unto Danae downe,
And she conceived as made is mencion,
By influence of his power divine;
Right so shall Phoebus right soveraigne of renowne
To be conceived of his Golden raine decline.

34. And to comfort his Brethren that were full dull,
The Sun hath chosen without warr or strife,
The bright Moone when she was at the full,
To be his mother first, and after his wedded wife;
In tyme of Ver the season vegetative,
In Aries when Titan doth appeare,
Inspired by grace with the Spirit of lyfe,
This marriage hallowed at mdday Spheare.

35. And at this feast were the Godes all,
Saturne from blackness was turned to white;
And Jupiter let his mantle fall,

Full pale and meager of great delight,
Clothed in Lylies that in every manner wight,
Of Heaven and Erth, and Gods of the Sea,
Rejoyced in Heart, and were full glad and light,
To be present at this great Solemnity.

36. Mars forgot there his sturdy black hardines,
Cast off his Habergeon fret with old rust;
Venus foresooke her minerall redness,
Took Gold for green and she again also for lust,
Because she had in Phoebus such a trust,
That he should this feast hold of most noblenes:
Of brotherly pittie needs as he must,
Give her a mantle of Orientall brightness.

37. After this Wedding here afore devised,
Of faire Phoebus and freth Lucine;
Philosophers have prudently practised,
A Closset round by their wife Doctrine,,
Cleere as Christall of Glasse a litle shrine;
With heavenly deawe stuffed that dungeon,
Kept night and day with glorious maidens nyne;
To keep the Queene in her Concepcion.

38. Religiously they kept their Sylenee,
Till that from heaven their royall light,
And there with all in open audience;
Was heard a voice almost at mid night,
Among the Virgins most amiable of sight,
That said unto them, to save that was forlorne;
I must againe through my imperiall myght,
Be of my Mother new conceived and borne.

39. I must passe by water and by Fire,
The burnt abide and there from not decline,
To save my brethren I have so greate desire,
With new light their darkness to yllumine,
But fore I dread that venomous Serpentine,
Which ever advanceth with his violence,
My tender youth to hurt and to invenome,
But in your keeping doe you your diligence.

40. The King thus entred in his bed royall,
The Queene conceived under a Sun bright;
Under her feete a mount like Christall,
Which hed devoured her husband anon right,
Dead of defire and in the Maidens fight;
Lost all the Collour of his fresh face,
Thus was he dead, the Maidens feeble of mighr
Dispaired, slept in the same place.

41. The Serpent bold shed out of his poyson,
The Queene and Maidens for feare tooke them to flight,
Seven tymes assending up and downe
With in a vault, now darke, now cleere of light,
Their generation was so strong of might,

After death now passeth Purgatory;
Ao Resurreccion as any Sun bright,
Things that were lost to bring to his glory.

42. The Queene tooke her possession,
The Soule reviving of the dead King;
But of old hatred the toxicate poyson,
Was by the Serpent cast in to their hindring;
The Prince was buried, but of his rising,
The Brethren were glad the truth was seene,
When they were washed by his naturall clensing;
And their old Leprie by Miracle was made cleane.

43. The full Moone halfe shaddowed the Sun,
To putt away the burning of his light;
Black shaddowed first the skyes were to dunn,
The Ravens bill began who looketh right,
Blacker than Jett or Bugle to fight;
But little and little by ordinary apparance,
The temperate fire with his cherishing might
Turned all to white, but with noe violence.

44. Tyme to the Queene approached of Childing,
The Child of Nature was ready to fly,
Passage was there to his out going:
He spread his wings and found no liberty;
Of nyne Virgins he devoured three,
The other six most excellent and faire,
Fearfull for dread in their greatest beauty,
Spread their feathers and flew forth in the Aire.

45. The Child coloured first Black, and after White,
Having noe heate in very existence,
But by cherishing of the Sun bright,
Of forraine fire there was no violence:
Save that men say which have experience,
He drank such plenty of the Water of the well,
That his six sisters made noe resistance;
But would have devowred; Dasten can you tell.

46. Sometymes black, sometymes was he redd,
Now like ashes, now Citrine of Colour:
Now of Safforne hew, now Sanguine was his head,
Now white as a lylie he shewed him in his bower,
The Moone gave nourishment to him in his labour;
And with all their dorce did their buisnes,
To cloath him fresher then any flowre,
With a mantle of everlasting whitnes.

Discription of the Stone

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A Discription of the Stone.

Though Daphne fly from Phoebus bright,
Yet shall they both be one,
And if you understand this right,
You have our hidden Stone.
For Daphne she is faire and white:
But Volatile is she;
Phoebus a fixed God of might,
And red as blood is he.
Daphne is a Water Nymph,
And hath of Moysture store,
Which Phoebus doth consume with heate,
And dryes her very sore.
They being dryed into one,
Of christall flood must drinke,
Till they be brought to a white Stone:
Which wash with Virgins milke,
So longe untill they flow as wax,
And no fume you can see,
Then have you all you neede to aske,
Praise God and thankfull be.

Hunting of the Greene Lyon

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The Hunting of the Greene Lyon.

ALL haile to the noble Companie
Of true Students in holy Alchimie,
Whose noble practice doth hem teach
To vaile ther secrets with mistie speach;
Mought yt please your worshipfulnes
To heare my silly soothfastnes,
Of that practise which I have seene,
In hunting of the Lyon Greene:
And because you may be apaid,
That ys truth, that I have said;
And that you may for surety weene,
That I know well this Lyon Greene:
I pray your patience to attend
Till you see my short writt end,
Wherein Ile keepe my noble Masters rede,
Who while he lived stodee me in steede;
At his death he made me sweare hym to,
That all the secrets I schould never undoe
To no one Man, but even Spread a Cloude
Over my words and writes, and so it shroude,
That they which do this Art desire,
Should first know well to rule their Fyre:
For with good reason yt doth stand,

Swords to keep fro mad Mens hand:
Least th'one shoul, kill th'other burne,
Or either doe some fore shroud turne:
As some have done that I have seene,
As they did hunt thys Lyon Greene.
Whose collour doubtles ys not soe,
And that your wisdomes well doe know;
For no man lives that each hath seens
Upon foure feete a Lyon colloured Greene:
But our Lyon wanting maturity,
Is called greene for unripenes trust me,
And yet full quickly he can run,
And soone can overtake the Sun:
And suddainely can hym devoure,
If they be both shut in one towre:
And hym Eclipse that was so bryght,
And make thys redde to turne to whyte:
By vertue of hys crudytie,
And unripe humors whych in hym be,
And yet wything he hath such heate,
That whan he hath the Sun up eate,
He bringeth hym to more perfection,
Than ever he had by Natures direccion.
This Lyon maketh the Sun sith [fith] soone
To be joined to hys Sister the Moone:
By way of wedding a wonderous thing,
Thys Lyon should cause hem to begett a King:
And tis as strange that thys Kings food,
Can be nothing but thys Lyons Blood;
And tis as true that thys ys none other,
Than ys it the Kings Father and Mother.
A wonder a Lyon, and Sun and Moone,
All these three one deede have done:
The Lyon ys the Preist, and the Sun and Moone the wedd,
Yet they were both borene in the Lyons Bedd;
And yet thys King was begott by none other,
But by Sun and Moone hys owne Sister and Brother.
O noble Master of pardon I you pray,
Because I did well-neere bewray
The secret which to me ys so deare,
For I thought none but Brothers were here:
Than schould I make no doubt,
To have written plainley out,
But for my fealty I must keepe aye,
Ile turn my pen another way,
To speake under Benedicite
Of thys noble Company:
Wych now perceives by thys,
That I know what our Lyon ys.
Although in Science I am noe Clerke,
Yet I have labour'd in thys warke:
And truly wythouten any nay,
If you will listen to my lay:
Some thing thereby yow may finde,
That well may content your minde,
I will not sweare to make yow give credence,

For a Philosopher will find here in evidence,
Of the truth, and to men that be Lay,
I skill not greatly what they say.
For they weene that our Lyon ys
Common Quicksilver, but truly they miss:
And of thys purpose evermore shall fayle,
And spent hys Thrift to ltle availe,
That weeneth to warke hys wyll thereby,
Because he doth soe readely flie;
Therefore leave off ere thou begin,
Till thou know better what we meane;
Whych whan thou doest than wilt thou say
That I have tought thee a good lay,
In that whych I have said of thee before,
Wherefore lysten and marke well my lore.
Whan thou hast they Lyon with Sol and Luna well fedd,
And layd them clenly in their Bedd;
An easie heate they may not misse,
Till each the other well can kisse;
And that they shroude them in a skin,
Such as an Egg yelke lyeth in:
Than mus thou draw from thence away,
A right good secret withouten any nay:
Wych must serve to doe thee good'
For yt ys the Lyons Blood:
And therewith must be the King fedd,
When he ys risen from the dead:
But longe tyme it wilbe,
Or ere his death appear to thee;
And many a sleepe thou must lack,
Or thou hym see of Collour black.
Take heede yow move hym not with yre,
But keepe hym in an easy fyre;
Untill you see hym separate,
From hys vile Erth vituperate;
Wych wilbe black and light withall,
Much like the substance of a fusball:
Your magnet in the midst wilbe,
Of Collour faire and white trust me;
Then whan you you see all thys thing,
Your fire one degree increasing;
Untill yow well may se thereby,
Your matter to grow very dry:
The yt ys fit wythout delay,
The excrements be tane away;
Prepare a Bed most bryght and shine
For to lodge this young Chylde in:
And therein let hym alone lye,
Till he be thoughly dry;
Than ys tyme as I doe thinke,
After such drouth to give him drinke:
But thereof the truth to shew,
Is greate secret wekk I know;
For Philosophers of tyme old,
The secret of Imbibition never out tould;
To create Magnesia they made no care,

In their Bookes largely to declare;
But how to order it after hys creacion,
The left poore men without consolacion;
Soe many men thought they had had perfeccion,
But they found nothing in their Projeccion:
Therefore they mard what they had made before,
And of Alchimy they would have no more.
Thus do olde Fathers hide it from a Clearke,
Because in it consisteth the whole subtill warke;
Wych if ye lift of me to know,
I shall not faile the truth to shew.
Whan your pure matter in the glasse is fitt,
Before that you your vessell shitt;
A portion of your Lyons sweate
Must be given it for to eate:
And they must be grounded so well together,
That each fro other will flee now whither;
Then must you seale up your Glasse,
And in hys Furnace where he was,
You must set them there to dry.
Which being done then truly,
You must prepare like a good Phisitian,
For another Imbibition:
But evermore looke that you dry
Up all hys drinke, that none lye by,
For if yow make hym drink too free,
The longer will your workeing be,
And yf you let hym be too dry,
Than for thirst your Child may dye;
Wherefore the meane to hold is best,
Twixt overmoyst and too much rost [roft];
Six tymes thy Imbibitions make,
The seaventh that Saboath's rest betake:
Eight dayes twixt ilke day of the six,
To dry up moist and make it fix;
Then at the nynth tyme thy Glasse up seale,
And let him stand six weeks each deale:
With his heate tempered so right,
That Blackness passed he may grow white;
And so the seaventh weeke rest him still,
Till thow Ferment after thy will;
Which if thow wilt Ferment for Whyte,
Thereby thow gainst noe greate prifitt;
For I assure thee thow needest not dred,
To proceede with fire till all be Redd;
Than must thow proceede as did Philosophers old
To prepaire thy Ferment of peure Gold,
Which how to doe though secret that it be,
Yet will I truly teach it thee.
In the next Chapter as erst I did say,
That soe the truth finde yow may,
Therefore of Charity and for our Lords sake,
Let noe man from my writings take
One word, nor add thereto,
For certainly if that he doe,
He shall shew malice fro the which I am free,

Meaning truth and not subtilty;
Which I refer to the Judgement
Of those which ken the Philosophers intent:
Now listen me with all your might,
How to prepare your Ferment right.
O noble Worke of workes that God has wrought,
Whereby each thing of things are forth aye broght;
And fitted to their generacion,
By a noble Fermentacion;
Which Ferment must be of such a thing,
As was the workes begynning;
And if thow doe progresse aright
Whan thow hast brought the worke to whight;
And than to stay is thy intent,
Doe after my Comandement;
Worke Luna by her selfe alone,
With the blood of the Greene Lyon:
As earst thow didst in the begining,
And of three didst make one thing,
Orderly yeilding forth right,
Till thy Magnet schew full whyte;
Soe must thow warke all thy Ferment,
Both White and Red, else were yt shent.
Red by yt selfe and soe the White,
With the Lyons Blood must be deight;
And if thow wilt follow my lore,
Set in thy Ferment the same houre,
Of Sol for Redd, of Luna for White,
Each by himself let worke tight;
Soe shall thy Ferment be ready edress,
To feed the King with a good mess
Of meates that fitt for his digestion,
And well agreeing to his Complexion;
If he be of Collour White,
Feed hym than with Luna bright;
If his flesh be perfect Red,
Than with the Sun he must be fedd,
Your Ferment one fourth parte must be,
Into your Magnet made evenly,
And joyne hem warme and not cold,
For raw to ripe you may be bold
Have disagreement soe have heate and cold:
Therefore put hem warme into thy Glasse,
Then seale it up even as it was:
And Circle all till yt be wonne,
By passing degrees every each one:
Both black and whyte, and also redd,
Than of the Fire heere have noe dread;
For he will never dreade the fyre,
But ever abide thy desire.
And heere a secret to thee I must shew,
How to Multeplie that thow must know,
Or else it wilbe over micle paine
For thee to begin thy worke againe:
I say to thee that in noe fashion,
It's so well Multeplied as with continuall Firmentation:

And sure far it will be exalted at the last,
And in Projeccion ren full fast:
Therefor in the fyre keepe Firment alway,
That thy Medicine augment mayst aye;
For yf the maid doe not her leaven save, (crave;
Then of her Neighbours sche must needs goe
Or sche must stay till sche can make more,
Remember the Proverbe that store is no sore:
Thus have I tought thee a lesson, full of truth,
If thow be wicked therefore my heart is reuth:
Remember God hys blessing he can take,
Whan he hath given it, if abuse any you make,
For surely if thow be a Clerke,
Thow wilt finde trewth in thys werke:
But if so be that thow be lay,
And understand not what I say,
Keepe Councell then and leve thy Toy,
For it befitts no Lymmer loy,
To medle with such grete secresie:
As ys thys hygh Phylosophy.
My Councell take, for thow schalt finde it true,
Leave of seeking thys Lyon to pursue,
For hym to hunt that ys a prety wyle,
Yet by hys Craft he doth most Folke beguile,
And hem devour and leave hem full of care,
Wherefore I bidd thee to beware.
And Councell give thee as my frend,
And so my Hunting here I end.
Praying God that made us we may not myss
To dwell with hym in hys Hevenly blyss.

Hermes Bird

[Back to English alchemical verse.](#)

Hermes Bird.

Problemis of olde likenes and fuguris,
Wych proved byn fructuos of sentens;
And have auctorite grounded in Scripture,
By resemblaunce of notabil apperence;
Wych moralites concludyng on prudence:
Lyke as the Bibel reherseth be wryting,
How Trees sum tyme chese hemselfe a King.

2. First in theyre choise they namyd the Olyve
To regne among hem, Iudicium doth expres;
But he hymselfe can excuse hym blyue,
He myght not foresake hys fatnes:
Nor the Fig-tree hys amorus swetnes:
Nor the Vyne hys holsum fresche terrage:
Wych gyveth comfort to all manner of age.

3. And semleabil Poyetes laureat,
By derke parables full convenient;
Feynein that Birdis and Bests of estate,
As rial Egeles and Lyons by assent,
Sent owte writtes to hole a Parlement;
And made degrees brevely for to sey,
Sum to have Lordschip and sum to Obey.

4. Egeles in the Eyre hyghest take theyre flyght,
Power of Lyons on the growne ys sene;
Cedre amonge Trees highest ys of sight,
And the Laurer of nature ys ever grene,
Of flowris all Florra Goddes and Quene:
Thus of all thyng ther byn diversites,
Sum of estate and sum of lower degres.

5. Poyetys write wonderfull lyknes,
And Covert kepe hemselve full clos;
They take Bestes and Fowles to witnes:
Of whos feynyng Fabelis furst a ros,
And here I cast unto my purpos,
Owte of the Frensche a tale transcelate,
Whych in a Pamphlet I red and saw as I sate.

6. Thys Tale wych y make of mencion,
In gros reherseth playnely to declare,
Thre Proverbys payed for raunsome
Of a fayre Byrde that was take in a snare,
Wonder desirus to scape owte of hir care:
Of myne Auctor followyng the prosses,
So as it fel in Order y schall expres.

7. Whilom ther was in a small vilage,
As my Auctor maketh rehesal;
A Chorle the wich had lust and gret corage,
Within hymselfe by hys deligent travel,
To array hys Garden with notabil repanel:
Oflenght and brede y lyche square and long,
Heggyd and dychyd to make yt sure and strong.

8. All the Aleys made playne with Sande,
Benches coverid with new Turves grene,
Set Erbes with Condites at the ende;
That wellid up agen the Sun schene,
Lyke Silver stremys as any cristal clene:
The burbely Waves up ther on boylyng,
Rownde as Beral theyr bemys owte chedyng.

9. Mides the Garden stode a fresh Lawrer,
Ther on a Byrde syngyng both day and night;
With shynyng federis brighter then Gold weer,
Wych wyth hir song made hevly hertis lyght;
For to behold hit was an hevenly syght:
How towerd evyn and in the dawyng,
Sche dyd her payne most ameus to syng.

10. Esperus enforced hyr corage,
Towerd evyn when Phebus went to nest;
Amonges the braunches to hir avauntage:
To syng hir complyn as yt was best,
And at the rysyng to the Quene Alcest
To syng ageyne as hit was to hir dew,
Erly on the morrow the day-fter to [falew].

11. Hit was a very heavenly melody,
Evyn and Morne to her the Byrd song;
And the [sote] sugeryd Armony:
Of uncoud Warbelis and twenes drew along,
That al the Garden of the noyse rong:
Tyll on a morow that Tytan schone ful cler,
The Byrd was trapped and cawt in a Panter.

12. The Chorle was glad that he thys Byrd hath take
Mere of cher loke and of visage:
And in all hast he cast for to make
Within hys howse a lytil prati Cage,
And with hir songto rejoyce hys corage:
And with at the last the sely Byrd abrayede,
And sobirly to the Chorle sche sayde:

13. I am now take and stond under daunger,
Hold streyte that y may not fle;
Adew my song and al my notes cler,
Now that y have lost my liberte,
Now y am thrall and sumtyme was fre:
And trust wel y stand in distres,
Y can nat syng ne make no gladnes.

14. And thogh my Cage forged were of Gold
And the penacles of Beral and Cristal:
Y remember a Proverbe sayde of olde;
Who lisit hys fredom in sooth he ys in thral,
For me had laver upon a brance smale,
Merle to syng amonge the wodis grene,
Than in a Cage of Golde bryght and chene.

15. Songe and Presun have no acordaunce,
Trowys thow y wyl syng in Presun,
Song procedet of joy and in plesaunce;
And Presun causeth deth and destruction,
Ryngyng of Feteris maketh no mere [sown];
Or how schoulde he be glad and jocownde,
Ageyn hys wil that lyth in cheynys bownde.

16. What avayleth a Lyon to be Kyng of Bestes
Fast schut in a Tower of ston alone;
Or an Egell under stryete cheynys,
Called also the Kyng of Fowlys everichon,
Fy on Lordschyp than Liberte ys gon:
Answer herto and hit nat a start,
Who syngeth mere that syngeth not with hert.

17. If thou wilt rejoyce the of my syngyng,
Let me go fleen fre fro dawnger:
And everyday in the mornyng
Y will repayre to thy Lawrer,
And fressely to syng with notis cler;
Under thi Chaumber or afore thy Hal,
Every season when thou lyst me cal.

18. To be schut and pyned under drede,
No thyng acordyng to my nature:
Though I were fed with Mylke and Wastelbrede;
And swete Crudis brought to my pasture,
Yet had y lever do my bese cure:
Erly in the morow to scrape in the Vale,
To fynde my dener amongs the Wormys smale.

19. The Laborer ys gladder at hys Plough,
Erly on the morrow to fede hym on bakon:
Then sum ben that have tresour y nowgh;
And no fredom with hys pocession;
To go at large but as Bere at the stake,
To pas hys bonde but yf he leve take.

20. Take thys answer ful for conclusion,
To syng in prison thou schalt not me constreyne:
Tyll y have fredom in woddis up and downe:
To fle at large on bowys both rough and plaine,
And of reson thou schuldest not disdeyn:
Of my desyre but laugh and have good game,
But who ys a Chorle wold every man wer the same.

21. Well quod the Chorle sith hit woll not be,
That y dsyre by my talkyng;
Magre thy wyll thou schalt chefe on of thre:
Within a Cage merele to syng,
Or to the Kychyn y schall thy bode brynge:
Pul thy federis that byn so bryght and clere,
And after rost or bake the to my dynere.

22. The quod the Byrde to resson y sey not ney,
Towching my song a ful answer thou hast:
And when my federis pulled byn away,
If y be rosted or bake in a past,
Thou schalt of me hve a smal repaste:
But yf thou wylt werke by my councel,
Thou mayst by me have gret avayle.

23. If thou wolt to my rede assent,
And suffer me go frele fro Preson:
Witowte raansom or any oder rent;
Y schall the gyf a notabil grete gwerdon,
The thre grete Wysdoms acording to reson;
Mor of valew, take hede what y profer,
Than al the Gold that ys shet in thy Cofer.

24. Trust me wel y schal the not deceyve.

Well quod the Chorle tel and let se:
Nay quod the Byrde a forne conseyye;
Who schal teche of Reson he most go fre,
Hit fitteth a Master to have his Liberte:
And at large to teche hys lesson,
Hafe me not suspecte y mene no treson.

25. Wel quod the Chorle y holde me content,
Y trust the promys which thow hast made to me;
The Byrde fle forth the Chorle was of sent:
And toke hys flight up to the Lawrer tre,
Then thought sche thus now that y stand fre:
With snaris panteris y cast not al my lyve,
Nor wyth no lyme twygges no more to strive.

26. He ys a Fole that schaped ys daungere,
That broke hys fetteris and fled ys fro Preson,
For to resort agene: for brente childe dredes fyre:
Eche man bewar of Wisdom and reson,
Of suger strawed that hideth false poyson;
Ther ys no venom so perilus in scherpnys,
As whan yt hath triakcle of lyknes.

27. Who dredeth no perell in perell he schal falle,
Smothe Waters byn of fithes depe:
The Quayle pipe can most falsely calle;
Tyl the Quayle under the net doth crepe;
A blyered Fowler trust not thogh he wepe:
Exchew hys thumble, of weping take no hede,
That small Byrds can nyp by the hede.

28. And now that y such a daunger am scaped,
Y wyl bewar and afore provide:
That of no Fowlar y wil no more be Japed,
From theyre lyme twygges to fly far asyde,
There perel ys perel to abyde:
Com ner thow Chorle, take hede to my speche;
Of thre Wysdomys that y schal the teche.

29. Yes not of Wysdom to hasty credness,
To every Tale nor eche tyding:
But consyder of Reson and Prudens;
Among Talys ys many a grete lesyng,
Hasty credens hath cawsed grete hynderyng:
Report of talis and tydyngys brought up new,
Maketh many a man ful on trew.

30. For on party take thys for my Raansom,
Lerne the second grownded of scripture:
Desyre thow not by no condicion
Thyng that ys ympossybyl to recure,
Worldly desyres stante alle in a venture:
And who desyreth to soare hygh a lofte,
Oft tyme by foden turne he falleth on softe.

31. The thyrd is thys, bewar both even and morrow,

Forget yt nought but lerne thys of me:
For Tresor lost, make never to grete Sorrow;
Wych in no wyfe may not be recovered be,
For who that taketh sorrow for loss in that degree:
Reken fyrst hys losse, and after reken hys peyne,
Of one sorrow he maketh Sorrowys twentyne.

32. Aftur thys Lesson the Byrde began a songe,
Of hyr ascape gretely rejoycyng
And sche remembered hyr alleso of the wronge
Don by the Chorle, fyrst at hyr takyng,
And of the affray, and of hyr impresonyng:
Glad that sche was a large and owte of drede,
Seyde unto hym hoveryng above hys hede,

33. Thow were quod sche a very natural Fole
To suffer me departe of thy lewdnes:
Throw owthtys of right to complaine and make dole,
And in thy hert have gret hevenes,
That thow hast lost so passyng grete riches:
Wych myght suffice by valed in rekeyng
To pay the raunsom of a mighty Kyng.

34. Ther ys a Stone wych ys called Fagownce,
Of olde engendered within myne entrayle:
Wych of fyne Golde poyseth a grete unce;
Setryne of Colors lyke Garnetis of entayle,
Wych makyth men victorius in batayle;
And who that bereth on hym thys Stone,
Ys ful asured ageyne hys mortal Fone.

35. Who hath thys in possession,
Schal suffer no Povert ne non Indygens:
But of Tresour have plente and foyson,
And every Man schal don hym reverence,
And non Enemy schal don hym non offence;
But from thi hondes now that I am gone,
Pleyne gyf thow wilt for thy parte ys none.

36. As y the abrayde her before,
Of a stone now that I had:
The wych now thow hast forelore;
Be all refon thow schuld ys ben sad,
And in thi hert nothyng glad:
Now Chorle y the tel in my device,
I was eyred and bred in swite Paradyce.

37. Now mo namys y schal the tel,
Of my stone that y cal Fagownce:
And of hys vertuis with hys smel;
That ben so swete and so odferus,
Wyth Ennock and Ely hath be my servis:
My swete songe that sowndeth so scherpe,
Wyth Angelles voyse that passeth eny harpe.

38. The nigrum deamond that ys in Morienis sees

And the white Charbonkkel that rolleth in wave;
The setryne Reby of rych degrees:
That passeth the stonys of comen sawe,
In the Lapidery ys grown by olde lawe;
He passeth all stonys that ys under hevyn,
After the cowrse of kynde by the Planets sevyn.

39. Hyt ys for none Chorle to have schuch tresour,
That exsedeth alle Stonys in the lapidery:
And of alle vertuis he bereth the flowr,
Wyth all joy and grace yt maketh man mery,
That in thys worlde schal never byn [sory];
Now very Chorle thow passeth thy gras,
Y am at my leberte even as I was.

40. As Clerkys fyndeth in the Bybell,
At paradys yatis whan he was cast;
By an Angel both fayr and stylly,
A downe Kyng Elysawnder ther I threst,
And of all stonys yt was y lest;
Soche stonys in place few ben y brought,
Soroful ys the Chorle and heavy in hys thowte.

41. Now more Chorle yt tel y can,
And thow wolt to me take hede:
The Byrde of Ermes ys my name,
In all the worlde that ys so wyde,
Wyth gletering of grace by every syde,
Hose me myght have in hys covertowr,
He wer rychcher than eny Emperowr.

42. Elysawnder the conquerowr my Ston smot downe
Upon hys helme whan hyt pyght:
No mor then a pese that ys so rownde,
Hyt was ther to no manys fyght,
That leyde fo pleyne the manly Knyght;
Now y tel the wyth melde Stevyn,
Thys myghty grace cam owte fro hevyn.

43. Hit cawseth Love and maketh man Gracius,
And favorabel in ever mannes fyght:
Hit maketh acorde of two Folks envyus;
Comforteth Sorowful and maketh hevvy herts lyght,
Lyke passyng of colour Sunny bright:
Y am a fole to tel the at onys,
Or to teche a Chorle the pryce of precious Stonys.

44. Men schalle not put a precius Margareyt,
As Rubey, Saferys, and odther Stonys ynde;
Emeraudys, nor rownde Perlys whyte,
Byfore rude Swyne that love draffe of kinde:
For a Sowe delyteth hyr as y fynde
Mor in fowle draffe hyr Pygges for to glad,
Than al the Perry that comes owte of Granade.

45. Heche thyng drawes to hys semblable,

Fysshes in the See, Bestys on the Stronde;
The Eyr for Fowlis ys Commendabyll,
To the Plowghman for to tyll hys Londe,
And to a Chorle a Muk-forke in hys honde.
Y lese my tyme eny more to tare
To tell the bewar of the Lapidare.

46. That thow haddest thow getyst no more,
Thi Lyme twygges and Panters y defie;
To let me gon thow were fowle over seen,
To lese the richches only of [solye]:
Y am now fre to syng man to fle
Wher that my list: and he is a Fole at all
That goth at large, and maketh hymselfe thrall.

47. To here of Wisdome thi neres be halfe defe,
Like a [Nasse] that lysteth upon a Harpe;
Thow must go pype in a Ive leffe:
Better ys to me to syng on Thornes scharpe,
Than in a Cage wyth a Chorle to carpe:
For hyt was seyde of Folks many yere agone,
A Chorles Chorle is oft woe be gone.

48. Now Chorle y have the her tolde,
My vertuys her wyth grete experience;
Hyt were to sume man better than Golde;
To the yt ys no fructius a sentence,
As Chepys Croke to the ys better than a Launce:
Adew now Globbe wyth herte fore,
In Chorles clowchys com y never more.

49. The Chorle felt hys herte part in twenyne,
For very sorow and in sunder ryve:
Alas quod he y may wel wepe and pleyne;
As a wreche never lyke to thryve,
But for to indure in povert all my lyve:
For of foly and wylfulness,
Y have now lost all holy my ryches.

50. I was a Lorde y crye owte on Fortune,
And had grete Tresor late in my keeping;
Wych myght heve made me long to continue;
Wyth that ilke Stone to have levyd a Kyng,
Yf y had set hyt in a Ryng:
Borne it upon me y had gode y nowe,
Than schuld y no mor have gon to the plowe.

51. Whan the Byrde saw the Chorle thus morne,
That he was hevy of hys cherem
Sche take her flyght and agayne return:
Towards hym and sayd as ye schal here,
O dull Chorle wisdom for to lere;
That y the taute all ys lefe behynde,
Reysed away and clene owte of thy meynde.

52. Taw tey the not thys Wysdome in sentens,

To every tale brought up of new,
Not to hastyle gyf not ther to credens;
Unto tyme thow know hit be trew,
All ys not Gold that scheweth Goldys hew:
Nor stonys all by nature as y finde,
Byn not Saferus that schewyth colour ynde.

53. In thys Doctryne y lost my labour,
To teche the such Proverbys of substaunce;
Now mayst thow see thy lewd blynde error;
For all my body poysed in Balans,
Weyth not a nounce lewdw ys thi remembraunce;
Yet have y mor poyse closyd in myne entrayle,
Than all my Body set for Countervayle.

54. All my Body weyth not an unce,
How myght y have then in me a ston:
That poyseth mor than doth a grete Fagounce:
Thy brayne ys dull thi witte almost gon,
Of hre Wysdoms thow hast lost on;
Thow schulds not after my sentence,
To every tale gese to hastyly credence.

55. I badde also bewar both even and morrowe,
For thyng lost by suden adventur;
Thow schulds not make to moche sorow;
Whan thow seyst thow mayst not hit recover,
Her thow sayest wych doth thy besy cure;
In the snare to catch me agayne,
Thow art a Fole thy labor ys in vayne.

56. In the thyrde aslo thow dost rave,
Y bad thow schulds in no manner wise
Covet thyng the wych thow mayst not have,
In wych thow hast fogetyn myne empryse,
Thaty may say playnly to devyse,
Thow hast in madnes forget yn all thre,
Notabyl Wysdomys that y taute the.

57. Hit wer but foly mor wyth the to carpe,
Or to teche of Wysdomys mor or lesse;
Y holde hym madde that bryngs forth hys Harpe,
Theron to teche a rode for dollyd Asse,
And mad ys he that syngyth a Fole a Masse:
And he ys most madd that doth hys besynesse,
To teche a Chorle the termys of Gentlenesse.

58. And semeblably in Apryll and in May,
Whan gentyl Byrds most make melody;
But the Cockow can syng butoo lay;
In odthir tewnys sche hath no fantasy:
Thus every thyng as Clerks do specify;
As Frute on the Trees, and Folke of every age,
Fro whense they come they have a tallage.

59. The Wynter tetryth of hys Welsom wyndys,

Of the gentyll Frute bostys the Gardener;
The Fysher castyth hys hokys and hys lynys,
To catche Fysshe in the fresh Revyr,
Of tyllyth of Londe treftyth the powre;
The Gentylman treftyth of Gentry,
The Chorle delytith to speke rebawdry.

60. All on to a Faucon and a Kyte,
As good an Owle as a Popyngay;
A dunghyll Douke as deyntieth as a Snyte,
Who servys a Chorle hase many a wofull day,
Y cast me never her after mor with the play;
To fore Chorle any more to syng,
Of Wysdom to carpe in my lyfyng.

61. The Folke that schall thys Fabyll se and rede,
New Forged Talys y councel them to fle
For lesse of Good take not to grete hede,
But not Sorowfull for noon adversyte;
Covet not thyng that may not be,
And remember wher ye goan,
A Chorlys Chorle ys ofte wo begon.

62. Unto purpose thys Proverbe ys ful ryve,
Redde and reported by olde remembraunce:
A Chylds Byrde, and a Chorlys Wyfe,
Hath ofte sythys sorrow and mischaunce.
Who hath Fredom hath sufficiaunce:
Better ys Freedom wyth lytle in gladnes,
Than to be a Chorle wyth all worldly rychches.

63. Go lytyl Quiar and rcommaunde me
To my Mayster wyth humbyl affeccyon,
Be sekynge hym lowly of mersy and pete
Of thys rude makynge to ha compassion:
And towchynge thys Translacyon
Owte of the Frenshe, how so ever the Englyshe be,
All thyng ys sayd under correccyon,
Wyth supportation of yowr benygnite.

Finis.

The Hermet's Tale

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The Hermet's Tale.

In Pilgrimage one onely thing I found
Of worth in Lemnes nere to Vulcan's shopp,
A Christall founteine runnig under ground,
Between a Vally and a Mounsteins topp.
Pleas'd with this sight, I bid a Hermite tell

The story of the place, who there did dwell.

Within this Vale a hallowe dusky Cave
There is (quoth he) of greate Antiquity,
Where plumes of Mars blew greene and red you have:
Torne from his crest for his Iniquity.
The Troope of Smiths, as he for Venus lay,
Supris'd and tooke him, yett he gett away.

For as the Cyclops him in tryumph brought,
To halting Vulcan to receive his doome,
They lifted up his beaver, and found nought
But vacant place and Armour in the roome.
Of th'armour then they thought they had good prize,
But working it they found itt scyndarize.

The Smiths amaz'd finding themselves deluded,
Satt all in Counsaile in their Masters Denne,
Deliberating well, at length concluded,
There is no equall War twixt Godds and men,
Lett's finde the Angry God and pardon crave,
Lett's give him Venus our poore selves to save.

They sought in Heaven Mars knew his fact so bad,
He came out there, then one began to tell,
Saturne turn'd from his Throne, a Place had
Not far from thence, hard by this Christall Well.
Thither they wen, and found two Gods alone,
Sitting within a darke, but glittering throne.

Down fell old Vulcan on his crooked knee,
And said forgive, O mighty God of Warr,
My servants and my selfe (once God as yee)
Then use thy will with Venus my faire starr.
Saturne (quoth Mars) and I must not yet part,
Though shee for whom th'art pard'ned hath my heart.

With this the Cuckold with his sweaty Troope
Went to Forge and seem'd to make a legg,
Att every steppe, where halting made him stoope,
In thanks to Mars, granting what he did begg;
In whose remembrance you shall ever have
Syndars, and fetters in that hollow Cave.

But lett me tell you all that then befell,
Iove seeing this, meaning the Smith to right,
Sent downe a winged God, he trusted well,
Disguis'd in habitt of a shineing light,
Which to the Vally from the Hill's high topp,
Affrighted all the Smiths in Vulcans shopp.

A voyce was heard from Ioves Embassadour,
To summon Mars t'appeare before the Gods:
With Saturne forth came Venus Paramour:
Thinkeing with might to gett of right the odds:
Downward came he 9 myles, they upward fower,

All mett in mist, he fledd, they nere went lower.

Vulcan came hobling up to se what's done,
He findes nor light, nor Gods, but other shape;
To witsse of this fact he calles the Sonne,
Who streght cryes Murther, and made hast to scape:
Sme dyeing Soule groan'd forth, Apollo stay,
Helpe wise Apollo ere thou goest away.

With this Apollo lookeing round about,
Espies this fountaine knowes the voice was here,
And boweing downe to finde the party out,
Himselfe unto himselfe doth streight appeare.
There gaz'd he till a sturdy showre of rayne
Tooke wise Apollo from himselfe againe.

Farewell Apollo then Apollo sayd,
To morrow when this storme is fully past,
Ile turne and bring some comfortable ayd,
By which Ile free thee ere the latter cast.
Then did itt cry as if the voice were spent,
Come sweete Apollo, soe itt downwards went.

Vulcan went to his Forge, the Sonne to bed,
But both were up betimes to meete againe;
Next morne after the storme a pale foule dead
Was found att bottome of this faire Fountaine.
Smith (said Apollo) helpe to lade this spring,
That I may raise to life yonder dead thing.

Then Vulcan held Apollo by the heele,
While he lades out the Waters of the Well;
Boweing and straining made Apollo feele
Blood from his nose, that in the fountaine fell.
Vulcan (quoth he) this Accident of blood
Is that or nought must does this Creature good.

He spake the word, and Vulcan sawe itt done,
Looke Sol (said he) I see itt changeth hue,
Fewe Gods have vertue like to thee o Sonne,
From pale itt is become a ruddy blue;
Vulcan (quoth Phoebus) take itt to thy forge,
Warme it, rubb it, lett itt caste the Gorge.

Thus Vulcan did, itt spued the Waters out,
And then itt spake and cry'de itt was a cold;
Then Vulcan stuft and cloath'd it round about,
And made the Stone as hott as ere itt would.
Thus fourteene dayes itt sickly did indure,
The Sonne came every day to se the cure.

As itt grewe well the Colours went and came,
Blew, Blacke, White, Redd, as by the warmth & heate,
The humours moved were within the same,
Then Phoebus bid him put it in a sweate;
Which Vulcan plyed soe well, it grue all Red,

Then was itt found, and cald for drinke and bread.

Stay (quoth Apollo) though itt call for meate,
Digestion yett is weake, 'twill breede relapse,
By surfett, therefore eye you lett itt eate,
Some little exercise were good perhapps,
Yett had itt broath alowde the strength to keep,
But when 'twas on his leggs it would scarce creepe.

Sol sawe some reliques left of th'ould disease,
A solutine (quoth he) were good to clense,
With which the sickness he did so appease,
Health made the Patyent seeke to make amense;
Who went away three weekes, then brought a Stone,
That in projection yeelded ten for one.

This did he lay down att Apollo's feete,
And said by cureing one th'hast saved three:
Which three in this one present joyntly meete,
Offring themselves which are thine owne to thee.
Be our Physitian, and as we growe old,
Wee'le bring enough to make new worlds of Gold.

With that this Hermite tooke me by the hand
And ledd me to his Cell; Loe here (quoth he)
Could'st thou but stay, and truly understand
What thou now seest, thou knowst this Mystery.
I stayd, I saw, I tryd, and understood,
A Heav'n on Earth, and everlasting good.

The Magistr

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The Magistr

Through want of Skill and Reasons light
Men stumble at Noone day;
Whilst buisily our Stone they seeke,
That lyeth in the way.

Who thus do seeke they know not what
Is't likely they should finde?
Or hitt the Marke whereat they ayme
Better then can the Blinde?

No, Hermes Sonns for Wisdome aske
Your footesteps shee'le direct:
Shee'le Natures way and secret Cave
And Tree of lyfe detect.

Sun and Moone in Hermes Vessell
Learne how the Collours shew,

The nature of the Elements,
And how the Daisies grow.

Greate Python how Appollo flew,
Cadmus his hollow-Oake:
His new rais'd army, and Iason how
The Fiery Steeres did yoke.

The Eagle which aloft doth fly
See that thou bring to ground;
And give unto the Snake some wings,
Which in the Earth is found.

Then in one Roome sure binde them both,
To fight till they be dead;
And that a Prince of Kingdomes three
Of both them shalbe bred,

Which from the Cradle to his Crowne,
Is fed with his owne blood;
And though to some it seemeth strange,
He hath no other Foode.

Into his Virgin-Mothers wombe,
Againe he enter must;
Soe shall the King by his new-byrth,
Be ten times stronger just.

And able is his foes to foile,
The dead he will revive:
Oh happy man that understands
This Medicen to atchive!

Hoc opus exigium nobis fert ire per altum.
December, 1633.

The Mistery of Alchymists

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The Mistery of Alchymists,

**Composed by Sir Geo: Ripley
Chanon of Bridlington.**

When Sol in Aries and Phoebus shines bright,
The Elements reviving the new Year springing
The Son by his Vertue gives Nature & Light,
And moysture refresheth all things growing:
In the season of the Yeare when the Sun waxeth warme,
Freshly and fragrante the Flowers doe grow,

Of Natures subtile working we cannot discern,
Nor yet by our Reason we can it not know,
In foure Elements is comprehended things Three,
Animalls, Vegetabills, Mineralls must be,
Of this is our Principle that we make our Stone,
Quality and Quantity is unknowne to many one.
Quality (Father) would I faine know, Son.
Of what nature it is and what it hath in his kinde.
As Colours divers which on the ground do grow, Father.
Keep well this secret (Son) and marke it in thy minde.
Without Proportion (Father) how should I it know, Son.
This working now is far from my minde
Nature and kinde (Son) together do grow, Father.
Quality by waight (Son) shalt thou never finde.
To Separate Elements (Father) I must needes know, Son.
Either in Proportion which be more or less.
Out of our Principle foure Elements thou shalt draw, Father.
Thou shalt neede nothing else that needefull is;
Our Principle in quality is so perfectly mixed,
By vertue of the Son and his quality,
So equally Joyned, so well mixed may be.
This Principle (Father) is but one thing, Son.
Good (Father) tel me where it doth grow.
In every place (Son) you shall him well finde; Father.
By Tast and by Colour thou shalt him well know;
Fowle in the Ayer with it doe fly,
And Fishes doe swim there with in the Sea,
With Reason of Angels you may it discern,
Both Man and Woman to governe,
With our fixed Body (Son) we must thus begin.
Of him make Mercury and Water cleare,
Man and Woman is them within,
Married together by vertue of our Fire,
The Woman in he working is full wild,
Be well aware she goe not out;
Till she have conceived and borne a Chylde,
Then all his kin on him shal lout;
In their workes they be unstable,
The Elements they be so raw;
And their Colour so variable,
As sometyme like the head of a Crow,
When he is black ye may well like,
Putrefaction must go before,
After Blacke he wilbe White,
Then Thank ye God the Chylde is borne.
This Chylde is both King and Emperour,
Through his region both far and neere;
All the World doth him honour,
By the vertue he hath taken of the Fire:
His first Vertue is White and pure,
As any Christall shining cleere,
Of White tincture then be you sure;
By vertue taken of our Fire,
His first Vesture that is so White,
Betokeneth his Virginitie,
A similitude even thereto like,

And according to the Trinity:
Our Medicen is made of things Three,
Against which the Philosophers cannot say nay,
The Father, the Sone in one degree,
Corpus, Spiritus & Anima.
When Nature is with Nature, thou mayst fruite finde,
By proportion more or lesse,
In practice hereof many men be blinde,
Because they understand not what Nature is;
His second Vesture as Gold is Red,
In his Vessel bright shining,
A Daidem set on his head,
Richer than any earthly thing.
His third Vesture is Purple pure,
Like Sun-beames he shineth bright and clere,
Of Red tincture then be you sure:
By the vertue he hath taken our Fire.
My beloved Son I command thee,
As thou wilt have my love and blessing,
That unto God kneele on thy knee,
Unto him give laude and thankeing;
For theis guifts of grace geuen unto thee,
To have trew knowledge of this worthy Scyence,
That many men seeke by land and sea,
And cannot finde it for any expence:
I shall shew thee my Son a hid Secret,
Beacause thou art vertuous in thy living,
Of me else shouldst thou never it weet,
And for thou art wife in thy Councell keeping,
And therefore I charge thee on my blessing,
Not to shew it to any man living,
For it is the first Principle of our blessed Stone,
Through which our noble worke is releued,
Note well that I shew now to thee my Son,
If Sulphur be absent our worke is deprived;
Our Sulphur my Son is Water and Fire,
Constraining the Body till it be dead,
Oh hem thou hast never thy desire,
Till he be bloe as any Lead,
After all this he doth revive,
That in his Vessel before was dead;
I can no better in my reason contrive,
Then to figure him to the greate God head.
For as there dyedno more then One,
Howbeit that there be persons Three,
The Father, The Sone by might is one:
The holy Ghost make full our Trinity:
A similitude like unto our Stone,
In him ben things three which be concluded all in one,
Our Sulphur is likened to the holy Ghost,
For he is quick, called the Spirit of Slyfe,
In his working of might he is most.
He raiseth our Body from death to lyfe,
Many (my Son) with him do rife,
The holy Gospell therein is expert,
The number of my reason cannot contrive,

Multum & quantum fructum adsert:
I liken our Sulphur to the Adamant Stone,
That Steele drawes to him naturally,
So doth our Sulphur the woman,
When she from her husband would flye.
I muse greatly (Father) and mervaile in minde, Son.
Whereof this Stone is ingendered,
And also of what manner of kinde,
For I have traveled many a Country,
In vallies low and on hills high,
And spurred therefore of foes and freind,
Yet could I never that Sulphur see,
Nor in any place wat I where him to finde.
Son he is made of the Elements, Father.
That God hath given both soule and lyfe,
From Mettall he may never be absent,
For he rules both man and wife.
Father I pray you for charity, Son.
Where shall I this Sulphur finde,
For perfectly I know him not by quality,
Nor yet to fore know him by kinde.
In our Water Son keep this in minde, Father.
For there he will appear as white as snow.
Gramarcy Father to me ye be full kinde, Son.
For through your teaching full well I it know,
Now Father I pray you for charity,
The while it is in your minde,
To ken the red Sulphur that you will teach me,
And then I trust your Doctrine to finde.
White and Red Son be both one in kinde, Father.
Now hast thou all thy desire,
Keepe well this secret and close it in thy minde,
His tincture and growing is by vertue of our Fire,
For in our Fire our Stone will grow,
And there his riches he doth encrease,
And so doth no Stone that I do know,
That in the fire will put him in prease;
We liken him therefore unto the Sun,
That to all Elements giveth light.
Never sith the World was begun,
Was any but he of so much might,
Were he never of so high degree,
Saphir, Diamond or Emarald Stone,
The Turcas, or the rich Ruby,
Of all vertuous Stones set ower alone,
The greatest Carbuncle that is full of light,
May not with our Stone Compaire,
For if they in the Fire should fight,
The Carbuncle of vertue should be full bare,
To destroy our Stone, Son that will not be,
The Elements in him be so equall;
He is an Oyle incumbustible,
And of all things most imperiall.
In which Elements (Father) is our Sulphur in? Son.
Is he in all, or in any one?
In all (Son) he needes must be, Father.

For Seperation of Elements make we none,
Sulphur in Elements Son we may not see,
By Nature in them he is so privily mixed,
In Elements he is a quality,
Our Stone will never else be perfectly fixed.
Quality (Son) growes also in fire,
Betwixt the White Stone and the Redd,
For many Colours there will appere,
While the tyme the Woman be dead.
Father must the Woman needes be dead? Son.
Our Stone else my Son will never be Redd; Father.
For whereas a Woman is in presence,
There is much moysture and accidence,
Wetnes and humours in her be,
The which would drown'd our Quality;
Perceive well (Son) by Noahs flood,
To much moysture was never good.
Like as quality is hid in quantity,
So must our Erth in Waters be,
The riches in him thou shalt finde,
After alteration of kinde,
His Oyle in him is congelate,
This makes our Body liquefact,
Sulphur and Oyle all of one kinde,
Which makes oure Stone rich and couloring,
I cannot tell thee Son a richer thing,
Then he is in the Fire during,
The Fire to him may do no wrong,
Sulphur of Nature makes him so strong.
How to make our Stone (Father) I would faine know. Son.
In soft heates my (Son) Elements will meete, Father.
Hast not to fast whilst they be rawe,
In the Vessell (Son) the better thou shalt him keepe,
Rule well the Fire and beware of the Lawe,
Shut well the Vessell for going forth of the Spirit;
Soe shall you all things the better keepe;
For how to get him againe it is strange to know,
It is hard for some men to make Elements meete,
Keepe well this Secret Son and God daily praise,
Put into tht Vessell Water cleare,
And set it in Fire full forty dayes,
And then in the Vessell blackness will appeare,
When that he is black he will change tyte,
Many Colers in him then will appeare,
From coulour to colour till it be white,
The it is tyme Son to change the Fire,
And melt the heat to your desire,
And if you will have him White still,
Then must you your Medicine apply,
A dry Fire put him till,
And a moyst Fire naturally,
Till he be made fixed,
For to take Mercury before his flight,
As he is by nature privily mixed,
Of fusion then he shalbe light,
And if you to his proportion take,

Fine Luna then will he make,
So micle of piercing will he be,
Both fluxible with penetrabilitie;
And (Son) if thou wilt have thy Medicine Red,
In a dry Fire thou shalt him keepe,
Ever still in one steed,
That never your Vessell come to wet.
So hard, so heavy and so peircing, Son.
(Father) this a wonderous thing,
So hot, so moyst, so light, so wet,
This greate Secret Father will I keepe,
So white, so red, so profitable,
Of all Stones most incomparable.
He may do more than any King, Father.
He is so rich Son in his working,
Gould and Silver men would faine have,
Poore and rich for it do crave,
Thay that of it have most aboundance,
Of the people have most obaisance,
To serve them both day and night,
And in the feeld will for it fight,
Therefore Son upon my blessing,
Keepe secretly this precious cunning,
Of thy Councell make neither King nor Knight,
If they knew they would set it light;
For when they have what they will,
God's curse wil come they say the untill,
For had I wist and had I wend,
That commeth evermore behinde,
Our Mercury my (Son) is white and thin,
In our Vessell shining bright and cleere,
Our Sulphur is in him within,
Burning him more then our dry Fire,
He fixes him more in one yeare,
By his naturall working I understand,
Then doth the Sonne by his dry Fire,
The years a long thousand,
In short space we may have done,
When our Medicine thou wilt assay,
Thou maist make both Sol and Lune,
In lesse space then in one day.
Father is it Water in the well springing, Son.
Or is it the Water in the river running?
Other Water (Father) can I not finde.
Noe (Son) it is of another kinde,
Howbeit it is Water cleere,
Our Sulphur in him is soe cleving,
He may not be departed by any fire,
I tell thee the throath in this thing.
By no fire (Father) how may that be? Son.
Fire he is ever brenning, Father.
Our Sulphur is made of the Sun and such humidity
That in the Fire he is ever during.
The tyme of our working would I know, Son.
In what space might be made our Stone,
By Corne and Frut (Son) thou maist it wel know.

Once in a yeare it is afore thee done;
The Sun in the Zodiak about doth gonne,
Though the twelve Signes once in a yeare,
Soe long it is ere we can make our Stone.
Haste not too fast but rule well thy Fire, Father.
The vertue of our Stone few men can tell,
The Elements in him be so mighty,
Aboundance of treasure in him do dwell;
For in riches all Stones exceeds he.

Finis.

Pearce the Black Monke on the Elixir

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Pearce the Black Monke upon the Elixir.

Take Erth of Erth, Erths Moder,
And Watur of Erth yt ys no oder,
And Fier of Erth that beryth the pryse,
But of that Erth louke thow be wyse,
The trew Elixer yf thow wylt make,
Erth owte of Erth looke that thow take,
Pewer futel faire and good,
And than take the Water of the Wood:
Cleere as Chrystall schynyng bryght:
And do hem togeder anon ryght,
Thre dayes than let hem lye,
And than depart hem pryvyly and flye,
Than shall be browght Watur schynyng,
And in that Watur ys a foule reynyng,
Invisible and hyd and unseen,
A marvelous matter yt ys to weene.
Than depart them by dystillynge,
And you schalle see an Erth apperinge,
Hevie as metal schalle yt be;
In the wych is hyd grete prevety,
Destil that Erth in grene hewe,
Three days during well and trew;
And do hem in a body of glass,
In the wych never no warke was.
In a Furnas he must be sett,
And on hys hede a good lymbeck;
And draw fro hym a Watur clere
The wych Watur hath no peere,
And aftur macke your Fyer stronger,
And there on thy glasse continew longer,
So schal yow se come a Fyer;
Red as blode and of grete yre,
And aftur that an Erth leue there schale,

The wych is cleped the Moder of alle;
Then to Purgatory sche must be doe,
And have the paynes that longs thereto,
Tyl sche be bryghter than the Sune,
For than thow hast the Maystrey wone;
And that schalbe wythin howre three,
The wych forsooth ys grete ferly:
Than do her in a clene Glass,
Wyth some of the Watur that hers was.
And in a Furnas do her againe,
Tyl sche have drunke her Watur certaine,
And aftur that Watur give her Blood,
That was her owne pewre and good,
And whan sche hath dranke alle her Fyer,
Sche wyll wex strong and of grete yre.
Than take you mete and mycke thereto,
And fede the Chylde as you schowlde do,
Tyl he be growne to hys full age,
Than schal he be of strong courage;
And tourne alle Bodies that leyfull be,
To hys own powre and dignite,
And this ys the makynge of owre Stone,
The trewth here ys towlde yow evereech one.
For all that taketh any other wey,
Mouch they looseth and mouch they may,
For trewly there ys no other way of righte,
But Body of Body and Lyghte of Lyghte,
Man of Man begottyn ys,
And Beste of Beste to hys lykenes,
Alle the fooles in the worlde seeken;
A thyng that they may never meeten,
They wolde have Metalle owte of hem,
That never was fownde by worldly men:
Ne never was fownde by Goddis myghte,
That they schould beare any such fyghte.
All Saltes and Sulphures far and nere,
I interdite hem alle in fere,
Alle Corosive waters, Blood and Hayre,
Pyss, Hornes, Worms and Saudiver,
Alume, Atriment, Alle I suspende,
Rasalger [Rafalger] and Arsnick I defende,
Calx vive, and Calx mort hys Brother,
I suspende them both, one and other,
For of alle things I wyll no moe,
But sowre Elements in Generall I say soe,
Sun and Moone, Erth and Water;
And here ys alle that men of clatter,
Our Gold and Sylver ben no common plate,
But a sperme owte of a Bodi I take,
In the wych ys alle Sol, Lune, Lyfe and Lyghte
Water and Erth, Fyre and Fryght:
And alle commyth of one Image,
But the Water of the Wood makyth the marriage;
Therefore there ys none other waye,
But to take thee to thy Beades and praye:
For Covetous Men yt fyndyth never,

Though they seek yt once and ever,
Set not your Hearts in thys thyng,
But only to God and good lvyng.
And he that wyll come thereby,
Must be meeke, and full of mercy:
Both in Spyrit and in Countenannace,
Full of Chereti and good Governauce;
And evermore full of almes deede,
Symple and pewerly hys lyf to leade:
Wyth Prayers, Pennaunces, and Piety,
And ever to God a lover be,
And alle the ryches that he ys sped,
To do God wrschyppe wyth Almes deede.
In Arsenyck sublymed there ys a way streight,
Wyth Mercury calcyned nyne tymes hys weight
And grownde together with Water of myght
That bereth ingression lye and lyght,
And anon as they togyther byne,
Alle runnyth to Water bryght and shene,
Upon thys Fyre they grow togethyr,
Tyll they be fast and flee no whythyr;
But than feede hem fowrth wyth thy hond,
Wyth mylke and meate tyle they be stringe,
And thow schalt have there a good Stone,
Whereof and Ounc on fowrty wyll gone:
Upon Venus or on Mercury,
Thys Medicyn wyll make thee merry.
And yow that have fowght mani a day,
Leave worke, take yowre Beades and pray,
For the longer that yow seeken,
The longer yt ys or yow meeten;
And he that now sayne would be sped,
Lysten to my Daughter Megg:
For schhe scall tell yow trewth and ryghte,
Hearken now wyth all your myght.
I am Mercury the myghty Flower,
I am most worthy of Honour;
I am sours of Sol, Luna, and Mars,
I am genderer of Iovis, many be my snares:
I am setler of Saturne, and sours of Venus,
I am Empresse, Pryncestes and Regall of Queenes,
I am Mother of Myrrour, and maker of lyght,
I am head and hyghest and fayrest in syght:
I am both Sun, and Moone,
I am sche that alle thynges must doone.
I have a Daughter hight Saturne that ys my darlyng,
The wych ys Mother of all werking,
For in my Daughter there byne hydd,
Fowre thyngs Commonly I kydd:
A Golden seede, and a spearme rych,
And a Silver seede none hym lich;
And a Mercury seede full bryght,
And a Sulphur seede that ys ryght.
Of my Daughter wythowten dred,
Byn made Elyxirs whyte and redd,
Therefor of her draw a Water cler,

The Science yf thow lyst to leare.
Thys Water reduceth every thyng,
To tendernes and to fyxing:
It burgeneth growyth and gyveth fryght and lyght,
Ingression lyfe and lastyng in syght:
Alle ryghteous werkes sooth to say,
It helpeth and bryngyth in a good way:
Thys ys the Water that ys most worthy,
Aqua perfectissima & flos mundi:
For alle werks thys Water makyth whyte,
Reducyng and schyning as Sylver bryght:
And of the Oyle greate marvell there ys,
For all thyngs yt bryngyth to rednes:
As Cytrine gold he ys full high,
None ye so redd nor none ys so worthy:
And in the Erth grete marvele ys hyd,
That ys first so black, and than so red:
And alle ys done in howres three,
Thys may be cleped Gods Prevetie:
Than the Erth shall torne red as blood,
Citrine Gold, naturall cleere and good,
And than the red Oyle to hem schall goe,
Red Ferment, and red Mercury alsoe,
And grow togeder weekes seaven,
Blessed be Almyghty God of Heven:
One Ounce of thys Medycine worthy
Cast upon two hundred ownces of Mercury:
Schall make Gold most royall,
And ever enduring to holde tryall;
Fyre and Hammer Tuch and Test,
And all essayes most and least.
And yt ys Medycen above common Gold,
To mans body as God yt would.
For Gold that cometh from Oare,
Is nourished with fowle Sulphur:
And Engendered upon Mercury he ys,
And nouryshed by Erth and Sulphur I wys,
And our Gold ys made of the pewel soules,
In the wych ys now Corrupcyon foule:
But purged pewre as clene as Chrystall,
Body and Spyryt and Sowle wyth all;
And so they grow into a stone,
In the wych Corrupcyon there ys none;
And than cast hym upon Mercury,
And he schalbe Gold most worthy,
Now have you heard the makyng of our Stone,
The begynyng and endyng ys all one.

Thomas Robinson on the Philosopher's Stone

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Thomas Robinsonus De Lapide Philosophorum.

The Heavens, the Earth, and all that in them is,
Were in six Dayes perfected from Abisse:
From One sprung foure; from foure a second One;
This last a Gritt; that first the Corner Stone.
Without the First the Last may not be had;
Yet to the First the Last is too too bad.
When from the Earth the Heavens were seperated,
Were not the Heavens with Earth first Cohobated:
And when the Heavens, and the Earth and all were not;
Were onely Heavens create; and Earth forgott?
No: Heavens, and Earth sprung all from one at first:
Then who can say of Heavens, or Earth is worst?
Is not the Earth the Mother of them all?
And what the Heavens, but Earths essentiall?
Although they have in Heaven no Earthly residence,
Yet in the Earth doth rest their Heavenly influence:
Were not the Earth, what were the other Three?
Were not the Heavens, what on the Earth could be?
Thus as they came, so shall they passe together;
But unto Man not knowe from whence, or whither.
And for the tyme of Earths Heaven purifying,
Six thousand yeares they live, and have their dying:
Then all shall rest eternall and divine,
And by the Beauty of the Godhead shine.
I swear there is noe other truth but this
Of that great Stone; which many seeke and misse.

Finis.

Testament of John Dee John Gwynn

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Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi Summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568.

This Letter third and last I minde to make,
At your request for very vertues sake;
Your written panges, and methods set aside,
From that I byd, looke that you never slide.
Cut that in Three, which Nature hath made One,
Then strengthen hyt, even by it self alone,
Wherewith then Cutte the poudred Sonne in twayne,
By length of tyme, and heale the woonde againe.
The self same Sunne twys yet more, ye must wounde,
Still with new Knives, of the same kinde, and grounde;
Our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law,
Both binde and lewse, only with rype and rawe,

And ay thanke God who only is our Guyde,
All is ynugh, no more then at this Tyde.

A short work of George Ripley

'A short Worke That beareth the Name... of George Ripley', is included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 1652, pages 393-396.

[Back to Ripley's works](#) . [Back to English alchemical verse](#) . [Information on Ripley](#).

Take Heavy, Soft, Cold, and Drye;
Clense him, and to Calx grind him subtilly:
Dissolve him in Water of the Wood;
If thou can do any good
Thereof, take a Tincture
And Earthly Calx good and pure.
Of this maist thou have with thy travaile,
Both Mercury, Water, and Oyle;
Out of the Ayre with Flames great,
Fire into the Earth doth Creepe;
In this Worke if thou wilt winn,
Take heed wherewith thou dost begin,
And in what manner thou dost work,
For loosing thy way in the darke;
And where, with what, and how, thy matter shal end;
I tell and Councell thee as my Frend:
Make Water of Earth, and Earth of Water;
Then art thou well onward in the matter.
For thou shalt find hid in the myre,
Both Earth, Water, Ayre, and Fire:
I tell thee my Brother, I will not flatter,
Of our Earth is made our Water:
The which is cleere white as Snow;
And makes our Earth Calcine and growe.
Blackness first to thee doth shew,
As by thy practise thou shalt know:
Dissolve and Calcine, oft, and oft;
With Congelation till the Body to whitnes be brought:
Make the Body fluxible, and flowing;
With the Earth, perfect, and teyning.
Then after Ferment is once done;
Whither thou wilt with Sunne or Moone,
Dissolve him with the Water of life,
Ycalled Mercury withouten strife:
Put the Soule with the Body, and Spirite
Together in one that they may meete
In his Dammes belly till he wax great,
With giving Drinke of his owne sweate:
For the Milke of a Cow to a Child my brother
Is not so sweete as the Milke of his Mother:
This Child that is so marveilously wrought,
Unto his Heritage must be brought:
His livelyhood is so worthy a thing,
Of abilitye to spend with a King:
He that beareth all this in minde,

And understandeth these Parables all;
With Seperation he may finde,
Poore and Rich, great and small;
With our Sulphur we make our Antimony, White and Red;
And thereof we make our Mercury quick, and dead.
This is a Mettall that I speake of one of the seaven,
If thou be a Clerk read what I meane.
There is no Plannet of six neither great nor small,
But if he be put to them, he will Calcine them all.
Unto red blood he must be brought;
Else of him thou gettest right nought:
Reach him then with the Wood Water,
Man, and Woman Clothed under one hatter,
In and of them is conceived a Child
Lovely of beauty, meeke and mild;
Out of the Earth with dropps stronge,
Nourish the Child in his Mothers wombe;
Till he be come to full age;
And then make thou a Mariage,
Betweene the Daughter, and the Sonne,
And then thou hast the Mastery wonn.
The beginning of this Worke, if thou wilt crave,
In holly Writ thou shalt it have:
Both in Masse Booke and in Psalter
Yea wrighten before the Preest at the Alter:
And what is Antimony that thou shalt worke,
I have written to thee if thou be a Clerke;
Looke about before if thou canst finde
Plainely written, which maketh men blind:
Our Werke is bringing againe our Mercury,
And that Philosophers call Solucion;
And if thou loose not the uncleane body,
Thou werkest without discretion;
The Inbibition of Water, is not the loosing;
But bringing the Body into water againe turning:
That is to say into such water,
That is turning the Body into his first Matter:
The second Werke is to bring,
Earth and Water to Congealing;
The cleansing of the Third is another
Unto Whiteness; my owne Brother;
With this Water of his owne,
That is full marvalous to be knowne:
The fourth werke is distilling
Of Water, and Earth upsweating.
And thus hast thou by one assent,
Earth, Ayre, Water, and Fire; the foure Elements:
The Ashes that are in the bottome of the Vessell,
Looke thou dispise them not though left,
For I tell thee right well,
There is the Diadem of our Craft.

The Worke of Richard Carpenter

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THE WORKE OF RICH: CARPENTER.

OF Titan Magnasia take the cler light,
The rede Gumme that ys so bryght,
Of Philosofris the Sulfer vife,
I called Gold wythouten stryfe:
Of hem drawe owte a Tincture,
And make a matrimony pure:
Betweene the husband and the wyfe,
I spoused wyth the Water of lyfe:
And so that none dyvysion
Be there, in the conjenccion
Of the Moone and of the Sonne,
After the marriage ys begonne;
And that Mercury the planete,
On loes make hem fo to mete:
That eyder wyth oder be joyned even,
As a Stone engendered sente down fro heven;
Of hem make water clere rennynge,
As any Chrystall bryght schynyng.
Drawen out of bodyes fyxed,
By Nature prively mixed
Within a vessal depured clene,
Of Philosofris bright and schene;
Beware the Fume escape the nowght,
And alleso marked well in thy thowght;
That of the Fire the quallitee,
Equal to Phebez bemes be;
In the moneth of June and Jule,
Understand me be not dulle;
For thou schalt see marveles grete,
Colures spring oute of the heate:
Fyrste Blakke and Whyte, and so Redde,
And after Setryne wythouten drede:
And so wythin howres thre,
That Stone schall thorowe perced be
Wyth Aier that schall upon hym lyght,
The wych ys a wonder syght:
Whenne the spiryt ys refreyned,
And wyth the Bodie so constrayned,
That hem asounder maye nothyng parte,
So Nature hem doth there so coart,
In matrise whenne they both ben knyte,
Lett never thy Vessel be unshytte;
Tyl thys ingendred have a stone,
That in thys world ys not suche on:
For hyt ys called Anymal,
Richer then the Mineral.
Wyche ys founden in every plase,
Who foundeth hyt myght have grase:
In the and me and over alle
Both Vegetables and Sophisticall:
On Hilles hye and Valeys lowe,
He groweth who cowde hyt know,
Take thys for an informacion,

In Caryt and in Proporcion,
Lyth alle who so coude seke oute,
In Bus and Nubi ys alle the doute:
He that puttes hemself in pres,
To Genis and to Species:
Qualitas and every Quantite,
To mane a man hyt wol not be,
To brynge about thys tresour,
I mene owre Stone of such valour;
And yet who coude well understonde,
May fynde hit redy at hys honde:
For Fowles that in the Ayre done flee,
And also Fisches in the See:
The moyster of the rede Grape
And of the Whyte, who coud hym take:
Vertues of Erbes vegetyff,
And soules of Bestes sensytyff:
Reyson of Angels that doth discerne,
Goude and Yeul Man to governe,
All bryngs to thyn house
Thys Noble Ston so precious,
And Soverente of alle thys Werke,
Both to Lewd and to Clerke:
This lyth alle by discrecion,
In Fyre, and in Decoccion:
The craft recordeth yif he can rede,
How all and sume who shal spede;
In Bokes eler as ye maye see,
Stat in Ignis regimine:
To brynge fosth at my devys,
Thys ryche Rubye, thys Ston of prys:
Harde hevy and Percyng,
Now ys thys a wonder thyng:
I coude never suche on a spye;
Save that I finde howe on Marie:
Fyrst found hyt wythouten lese,
The wyche was suster to Moysez:
But who hyt be be that schall hyt werke,
Let hem not begenn in the derke:
For he mai fayle for faute of lyght,
But the Sunne schyne full bright:
Advyse the well er thow begene,
Or else lytel schalt thow wyne.

John Gower concerning the Philosopher's Stone

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JOHN GOWER CONCERNING the PHILOSOPHERS STONE.

AND also with great diligence,
Thei fonde thilke Experience:
Which cleped is Alconomie,
Whereof the Silver multiplie;
Thei made, and eke the Gold also.
And for to telle howe itt is so:
Of bodies seven in Speciall,
With fowre Spirites joynt withall;
Stant the substance of this matere,
The bodies which I speke of here,
Of the Plannets ben begonne,
The Gold is titled to the Sonne:
The Moone of Silver hath hi part,
And Iron that stonde uppon Mart:
The Leed after Saturne groweth,
And Jupiter the Brasse bestoweth;
The Copper sette is to Venus:
And to his part Mercurius
Hath the Quicksilver, as it falleth,
The which after the Boke it calleth,
Is first of thilke foure named
Of Spirits, which be proclymed,
And the Spirite which is seconde,
In Sal Armoniake is founde:
The third Spirite Sulphur is,
The fourth Sewende after this,
Arcennium by name is hotte
With blowyng, and with fires hote:
In these things which I say,
Thei worchen by divers waye.
For as the Philosopher tolde,
Of Gold and Sylver thei ben holde,
Two Principall extremittees,
To which all other by degrees,
Of the mettals ben accordant,
And so through kinde resemblant:
That what man couth awaie take,
The rust, of which they waxen blake,
And And the favour of the hardnes;
Thei shulden take the likeness;
Of Gold or Silver perfectly,
Bot for to worche it sykerly;
Between the Corps and the Spirite,
Er that the Metall be parfite,
In seven forms itt is sette
Of all, and if one be lette,
The remnant may not avayle,
But otherwise it maie nought fayle;
For thei by whome this Arte was founde,
To every poynt a certayne bounde,
Ordeinen that a man may finde,
This Craft is wrought by wey of kinde;
So that there is no fallace in;

But what man that this werke begyn;
He mote awaite at every tyde,
So that nothyng be left asyde.
Fyrst of Distillacion,
Forth with the Cogelacion,
Solucion, Disscencion,
And kepe in his entencion,
The poynt of Sublimacion,
And forthwith Calcinacion,
Of very Approbacion,
So that there be Fixacion,
With temperate hetes of fyer,
Tyll he the perfite Elixer,
Of thilke Philosophers Stone,
Maie gette, of which that many one
Of Philosophers, whilome write,
Of thilke Stone with other two,
Which as the Clerkes maden tho;
So as the Bokes itt recorden,
The kinde of hem I shall recorden.
These old Philosophers wise,
By wey of kynde in sondry wise;
Thre Stones made through Clergie,
The fyrst I shall specifie,
Was cleped Vegetabilis;
Of which the proper vertue is,
To mans heale to serve,
As for to keepe, and to preserve,
The body fro sickness all,
Till death of kinde upon hym fall.
The second Stone I the behote,
Is Lapis Animalis hote:
The whose vertue, is proper and couth,
For Eare and Eye, Nose and Mouth;
Whereof a man may here, and see,
And smell and tast, in his degree,
And for to feele and for to goe,
Itt helpeth a man of both two:
The witts five he undersongeth
To keepe, as it to hym belongeth.
The third Stone in speciall
by name is cleped Minerall,
Which the Mettalls of every myne,
Attempreth, till that thei ben fyne;
And pureth hem by such a wey,
That all the vice goth away,
Of Rust, of Stynke, and of Hardnes:
And when they ben of such clenness,
This minerall so as I fynde,
Transformeth all the fyrst kynde,
And maketh hem able to conceive,
Through his vertue and receive
Both in substance and in figure,
Of Gold and Silver the nature.
For thei two ben the extremittees,
To which after the properteies,

Hath every mettall his desire,
With helpe and comferte of the fyre.
Forth with this Stone as it is said,
Which to the Sonne and Moone is laide:
For to the Red, and to the White,
This Stone hath power to profite;
It maketh Multiplicacion
Of Gold and the fixacion,
It causeth and of this babite,
He doth the werke to be parfite:
Of thilke Elixer which me call
Alconomy, as is befalle
To hem, that whilome were wise;
But now it stant all otherwise:
Thei speken fast of thilke Stone,
But how to make it now wote none.
After the sooth Experience,
And nathles greate diligence,
Thei setten up thilke dede,
And spillen more then thei spede;
For alwey thei fynde a lette,
Which bringeth in povertie and Dette;
To hem that rich were to fore,
The Losse is had the Lucre is lore:
To gette a pound thei spendeth five,
I not how such a Craft shall thrive:
In the manner as it is used,
It were better be refused,
Then for to worchen upon wene,
In thinge which stant not ast thei wene:
But not for thy who that it knew,
The Science of himselfe is trew:
Uppon the forme as it was founded,
Whereof the names yett be grounded;
Of hem, that first it founden out:
And thus the fame goth all about,
To such as soughten besines,
Of vertue and worthines,
Of whom if I the names call,
Hermes was one the first of all,
To whom this Art is most applied,
Geber thereof was magnified,
And Ortolane and Morien,
Among the which is Avicen.
Which founde and wrote and greate partie,
The practicke of Alconomie,
Whose bokes plainlie as thei stonde,
Uppon this Craft few understonde.
But yet to put hem in assay,
There be full manie now a day,
That knowen litle that thei mene,
It is not one to wite and wene,
In forme of words thei it trete;
But yet thei failen of beyet.
For of to much, or of to lite,
There is algate found a wite:

So that thei follow not the line,
Of the perfect Medicine,
Which grounded is upon nature;
But thei that written the Scripture;
Of Greke, Arabe, and Caldee,
Thei were of such Auctoritee,
That thei firste founden out the wey,
Of all that thou hast herd me sey,
Whereof the Cronicke of her Lore,
Shall stonde in price for evermore.

Charnock's Breviary of Alchemy

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THE BREVIARY OF NATURALL PHILOSOPHY.

Compiled by the unlettered Scholar
T H O M A S C H A R N O C K.

Student in the most worthy Scyence of
Astronomy and Philosophy. The first of Ianuary
Anno. Dom. 1557.

Anno. Dom. 1557. The first day of the new yeare
This Treatise was begun as after may appeare.

The Booke Speaketh.

Come hither my Children of this Discipline,
Which in naturall Philosophy have spent so long time;
To ease your painfull Study I am well willed
And by the grace of God it shall be fulfilled;
If he in me (my Author) will shed one drop of grace,
The better he shall finish me and in shorter space.
And if you will know what I am surely,
I am named The Breviary of naturall Philosophy.
Declaring all Vessells and Instruments,
Which in this Science serve our intents.
For moe things belong unto the same,
More then any Author hath written the Name;
Which hath brought many a one in great doubt,
What is the Implements that longeth thereabout;
Wherefore in good order, I will anon declare,
What Instruments for our Arte you neede to prepare.

The Preface of the Author.

Goe forth little Booke in volume but small,
Yet hast thou in thee that is not in them All,
For satisfying the mindes of the Students in this Arte,
Then art thou worth as many Bookes, as will lye in a Cart:
Glad may he be that hath thee in his keeping,
For he may find through diligent seeking,
All things in thee which shall be necessary,
As Vessells and Instruments belonging to Alchimy;
Which would set many a Mans heart on fire,
To have the same knowledge they have so great desire.
And no mervaile though they be glad and faine,
For they have spent many a pound in vain;
In making of Vessells of many divers sorts,
And have brought them out of many strange Ports:
Because the did not well understand,
That all things we need we have in England.
Now think you that this will not save many a Marke,
Unto those that have so wrestled so long in our Warke?
Yes some should spend all the money in their pouch,
If they new but this or half so much.
Wherefore of pitty I will nolonger refraine,
But declare all things their purpose to attaine.
Wherefore if you do not happen upon my Booke,
Either by casualty, Hooke, or by Crooke:
Yet I pray for my Soule when I am dead and rotten,
That of Alchimy Scyence the dore hath let open;
Sufficient for the if thou have any Braine,
Now sharpen thy wits that thou maist it attaine.

The first Chapter.

Now will I declare all things at large,
Of Implements of this Work and what is the charge:
And first with the Potter I will begin,
Which cannot make that which he hath never seene;
Whether that thy Vessels be made to thy minde,
Stand by while he worketh more surety to finde,
And shew him what to do by some sign of similitude,
And if his witts be not dull or rude,
He will understand what thou dost meane,
For I thinke few Potters in the Realme
Have made at any tyme such cunning ware,
As we for our Scyence doth fashion and prepaire;
And when he hath formed them unto thy purpose,
For what occaison thou needest not disclose:
But if he say unto you, Good Master myne,
Tell me for what purpose or what engine
Shall these Vessels serve that thou cause me to make,
For all my life hitherto I dare undertake
I never formed such, nor the like of them;
Yet are they but plaine without wrinkle or hem,
One within another, it is a pretty feate,
The third without them to guide up the heate:

Then say unto him to satisfie his minde,
That ye have a Father which is somewhat blinde,
Who if it please God you will indeavor,
To stil a water his blindnes to diffever:
Which is the Elixir of lyfe as wise men say,
And in this doing God send me my pray;
The will he will say this or the like,
I pray God to send yee that which you seeke,
And thus with the Potter thou hast now done,
Without thou breake thy Pots with the heate of the Sun:
Which if it doe it turns thee to paine,
And there is no way but to make them new againe.
As soone as with the Potter thou has made an end,
Then with a Joyner thou must Condescend,
Who also must have this Councill and writt,
To make a Tabernacle the Vessell to fitt;
Which wilbe also in greate doubt,
For what purpose it will serve about;
In that he never made nor framed none such,
Although it be made like to a Hutch:
Then tell him a Tale of a roasted Horse,
Unto the which he will have no remorse:
And laugh and say it is a Borrough for a Fox,
Although it be made sure with Keys and locke,
And thus with a Joyner thou hast made an end,
Whithout thou set it on fire as I did mine.
As for Glassemakers they be scant in this land,
Yet one there is as I doe understand:
And in Sussex is his habitacion,
At Chiddensfold he workes of his Occupation:
To go to him it is necessary and meete,
Or send a servant that is discrete:
And disire him in a most humble wise
to blow thee a Glasse after thy devise;
If were worth many an Arme or a Legg,
The could shape it like to an egge;
To open and to close as close as a haire,
If thou have such a one thou needest not feare.
Yet if though hadst a number in to store,
It is the better, for Store is no fore.

The Second Chapter.

Now LORD of thy grace I beseech thee suffer me,
To finish my pretence in this rude Studie:
For this nor ought else without thy help can be done,
As neither the Conjunction of Sun nor Moone:
Nor yet other Planets can motion themselves an houre,
Without thy providence and thy divine power:
Wherefore in all things that we doe begin,
Let us with prayer call for the helpe of him:
Tha he bring our doings to effect,
Which must be done very Circumspect:
Wherefore if you thinke to obtaine your intent,
Feare God and keepe his Comandment:

And beware of Pride and let it passe,
And never be looking too much in thy Glasse;
Deceive noe man with false measure,
For truly that is ill gotten treasure:
But let thy weights be true and just,
For weight and measure every man must
Unto his Neighbour yeild uprightly,
And so must thou in the worke of Philosophy:
And also feed him which is hungry,
And give him drinke which is thirsty.
Give liberally I say as riches doe arise,
And from thirsty body turn not away thy Eyes.
What and two poore Men at one tyme come unto thee
And say, Master, for the love of God and our Lady,
Give us your Charity whatsoever you please,
For we have not one peny to do us ease;
And we are now ready to the Sea prest,
Where we must abide thee moneths at the least;
All which tyme to Land we shall not passe,
No although our Ship be made of Glasse,
But all tempest of the Aire we must abide,
And in dangerous roades many tymes to ride;
Bread we shall have none, nor yet other foode,
But only faire water descending from a Cloude:
The Moone shall us burn so in processe of tyme,
That we shalbe as black as men of Inde:
But shortly we shall passe into another Clymate,
Where we shall receive a more purer estate;
For this our Sinns we make our Purgatory,
For the which we shall receive a Spirituall body:
A body I say which if it should be sould,
Truly I say it is worth his weight in Gold:
Son give theis two, one penny in their Journey to drinke,
And thou shalt speede the better truly as I think.

The third Chapter.

Now have I good will largely to write,
Although I can but slenderly indite;
But whether I can or cannot indeede,
With the Chapter of Fire I will proceede:
Which if thou knowest not how to governe and keepe,
Thou wert as good go to bed and sleepe,
As to be combred therewith about,
And therefore I put thee most certainly out of doubt;
For when I studied this Scyence as thou doest now,
I fell to practice by God I vowe:
I was never troubled in all my lyfe beforene,
As intending to my Fire both Midday Eve and Morne:
And all to kepe it at an even stay;
It hath wrought me woe moe then I will say.
Yet one thing of truth I will thee tell,
What a greate mishap unto my Worke befell;
It was upon a Newyeares day at Noone,
My Tabernacle caught fire, it was soone done:

For within an houre it was right well,
And streight of fire I had a smell.
I ran up to my worke right,
And when I cam it was on fire light:
Then was I in such feare that I began to stagger,
As if I had byne wounded to the heart with a dagger;
And can you blame me? no I think not much,
For if I had beene a man any thing rich,
I had rather have given 100 Markes to the Poore,
Rather then that hap should have chanced that houre.
For I was well onward of my Work truly,
God save my Masters lyfe, for when he thought to dye,
He gave me his work and made me his Heire,
Wherefore alwaies he shall have my prayer:
I obteyned his grace the date herefro not to varie,
In the first and second yeare of King Phillip & Queene Mary.
Yet lewdly I lost it as I have you tould,
And so I began the new and forgot the old,
Yet many a night after I could not sleepe in Bed
For ever that mischance troubled my head,
And feare thereof I would not abide againe;
No though I shoulde reape a double gaine,
Wherefore my charge rose to a greater summe,
As in hyring of a good stoute Groome;
Which might abide to watch and give me attendence,
Yet often tymes he did me displeasaunce,
And would sleepe so long till the Fire went out,
Then would the Knave that whorson Lout,
Cast in Tallow to make the fire burne quicker,
Which when I knew made me more sicker;
And thus was I cumbred with a drunken sott,
That with his hasty fire made my Worke too hott;
And with his sloth againe he set my worke behinde;
For remedy thereof to quiet my Minde,
I thrust him out of dores, and took my selfe the paine,
Although it be troublesome it is the more certaine,
For servants doe not passe how our workes doe frame,
But have more delight to play and to game.
A good servant saith Solomon let him be unto thee,
As tyme owne heart in each degree.
For it is precious a faithfull servant to finde,
Esteeme him above treasure if he be to thy minde;
Not wretchles, but sober, wise, and quiet,
Such a one were even for my dyet:
Thus having warn'd thee of an ill servant sufficient,
But a good servant is for our intent.

The fourth Chapter.

When my Man was gone I began it anewe,
And old troubles then in my minde did renew;
As to break sleepe oftentimes in the night,
For feare that my Worke went not aright;
And oftentimes I was in greate doubt,
Least that in the night, my fire should go out:

Or that it should give to much heate,
The pensiveness thereof made me to breake sleepe;
And also in the day least it should miscary,
It hath made my minde oftentimes to varie;
Wherefore if thou wilt follow my reade,
See thy fire safe when thou goest to Bed:
At Midnight also when thou dost arise,
And in so doing I judge thee to be wise:
Beware that thy Fire do no man harme,
For thou knowest many a mans House and Barne
Have byne set on fire by mischance,
And specially when a Foole hath the governance;
Our Fire is chargeable, and will amount
Above 3 pound a weeke, who hath list to cast account,
Which is chargeable to many a poore man,
And specially to me as I tell can:
And Geber bids poore men be content,
Haec Scientia pauperi & agento non convenit
Sed potius est illis inimica, and bids them beware,
Because their mony they may not well spare;
For thou must have Fires more then one or two,
What they be George Ripley will thee shew;
Above a hundred pounds truly did I spend,
Only in fire ere 9 moneths came to an end;
But indeed I begun when all things were deare,
Both Tallow, Candle, Wood, Coale and Fire:
Which charges to beare sometymes I have sold,
Now a Jewell, and then a ring of Gold:
And when I was within a Moneths reckoning,
Warrs were proclaimed against the French King.
Then a Gentleman that ought me greate mallice,
Caused me to be prest to goe serve at Callys:
When I saw there was noone other boote,
But that I must goe spight of my heart toote;
In my fury I tooke a Hatchet in my hand,
And brake all my Worke whereas it did stand;
And as for my Potts I knocked them together,
And also my Glasses into many a shiver;
The Crowes head began to appeare as black as Iett
Yet in my fury I did nothing let:
But with my worke made such a furious faire,
That the Quintessence flew forth in the Aire.
Farewell quoth I, and seeing thou art gon,
Surely I will never cast of my Fawcon,
To procure thee againe to put me to hinderance,
Without it be my fortune and caunce,
To speake with my good Master or that I dye;
Master I. S. his name is truly:
Nighe the Citty of Salisbury his dwelling is,
A spirituall man for sooth he is;
For whose prosperity I am bound to pray,
For that he was my Tutor many a day,
And understood as much of Philosophie,
As ever did Arnold or Raymund Lullie:
Gerber, Hermes, Arda, nor yet King Caleb,
Understood no more then my good Master did.

I travelled this Realme Est and West over,
Yet found I not the like betweene the Mount and Dover:
But only a Monke of whome Ile speak anon,
Each of them had accomplished our White Stone:
But yet to the Red Worke they never came neere,
The cause hereafter more plainely shall appeare;
And thus when I had taken all this paines,
And the could not reape the fruit of my gaines:
I thought to my selfe, so to set out this Warke,
That others by fortune may hit right the Marke.

The fifth Chapter.

I am sorry I have nothing to requite my Masters gentleness,
But only this Boke a little short Treatise;
Which I dare say shall as welcome be to him,
As if I had sent him a Couple of Milch Kine:
And heere for his sake I will disclose unto thee,
A greater seacret which by God and the Trinity,
Since that our Lord this wold first began,
Was it not so opened I dare lay my hand,
No, all the Philosophers which were before this day,
Never knew this secret I dare boldly say.
And now to obteyne thy purpose more rathe
Let thy Fire be as temperate as the Bath of the Bathe.
Oh what a goodly and profitable Instrument,
Is the Bath of the Bathe for our firey intent!
To seeke all the World throughout I should not finde,
For profit and liberty a Fire more fitt to my minde.
Goe or ride where you list for the space of a yeare
Thou needest not care for the mending of thy Fire.
A Monke of Bath which of that house was Pryor,
Tould me in seacret he occupied none other fire,
To whome I gave credit even at the first season,
Beacuse it depended upon very good reason:
He had our Stone, our Medicine, our Elixir and all,
Which when the Abbie was supprest he hid in a wall:
And ten dayes after he went to fetch it out,
And there he found but the stopple of a Clout.
Then he tould me he was in such an Agonie.
That for the losse thereof he though he should be frenzie,
And a Toy tooke him in the head to run such a race,
That many yeare after he had no setling place;
And more he is darke and cannot see,
But hath a Boy to leade him through the Country.
I hapned to come on a day whereas he was,
And by a word or two that he let passe,
I understood streight he was a Philosopher,
For the which cause I drew to him neare;
And when the Company was all gone,
And none but his Boy and he and I alone,
Master quoth I for the love of God and Charity,
Teach me the seacrets of Naturall Philosophy.
No Son, quoth he, I know not what thou art,
And shall I reveale to thee such a precuios Arte?

No man by me shall get such gaines,
No not my Boy which taketh with me such paines,
That disclose it lyes not in my Bands,
For I must surrender it into the Lords hands,
Because I heare not of one that hath the fame;
Which lifts up his minde and is apt for the same,
Which if I could finde I would ere I dye,
Reveale to him that same greate mistery:
Yet one there is about the City of Salisbury,
A young man of the age Eight and Twenty,
Charnock is his name of Tennes that Isle,
His praise and Comendacions soundeth many a Mile;
For that Younge man he is toward and apt,
In all the seaven liberall Scyences set none apart:
But of each of them he hath much or litle,
Whereof in out Scyence he may claime a title:
His praise spreads also for his goof indighting,
And of some of his doings I have heard the reciting,
Both of Prose and Meeter, and of Verse also;
And sure I commend him for his first shewe,
I thinke Chaucer at his yeares was not the like,
And Skelton at his yeares was further to seeke;
Wherefore for his knowledge, gravity and witt,
He may well be Crowned Poet Laureat.
Cease Father quoth I and heare me speake,
For my name is Charnocke upon whome you treat;
But this which you say to me is a greate wonder,
For these quallities and I am far assunder;
I am no such Man as you have made reckoning,
But you shall speake for me when I go a wiving:
Your praise will make me speede, though it be not true,
Nor yet my substance worth an old horse shooe.
Is your name Charnocke, and the same Man?
Yes Sir quoth I: then stumbled he to give me his hand:
And talked an howre with me in the Philosophers speche,
And heard that no no question I was to seeche,
My Son quoth he let me have thy prayer,
For this Science I will make thee myne heire;
Boy quoth he lead me into some secret place,
And then departe for a certaine space,
Untill this man and I have talked together:
Which being done, quoth he, now gentle Brother,
Will you with me to morrow be content,
Faithfully to receive the blessed Sacrement,
Upon this Oath that that I shall heere you give,
For ne Gold ne Silver as long as you live,
Neither for love you beare towards your Kinne,
Nor yet to no great Man preferment to wynne:
That you disclose the seacret that I shall you teach,
Neither by writing nor by no swift speech;
But only to him which you be sure
Hath ever searched after the seacrets of Nature?
To him you may reveale the seacrets of this Art,
Under the Covering of Philosophie before this world yee depart.
What answer will you give me: let me heare?
Master quoth I, I grant your desire.

The Son quoth he keepe thys Oath I charge thee well
 As thinkest to be saved from the pitt of Hell.
 The next day we went to Church, and after our devocion
 A Preist of his Gentleness heard both our Confessions;
 Which being done, to Masse streight we went,
 And he ministered to us the holy Sacrement;
 But he never wist what we meant therein:
 For with a contrary reason I did him blinde,
 And so home to dinner we went with our hoast,
 All which refeccion I paid for the Cost.
 When dinner was done I walked in the field,
 And when we were in the midds, Boy quoth he go pick a Thsitle
 And come not againe before I for whistle.
 Now Master quoth I the Coast from hearers is cleare,
 The quoth he my Sonn hearken in thyne Eare;
 And within three or foure words he revealed unto me,
 Of Minerall prudence the greate Misterie.
 Whic when I heard my Spirits were ravished for Joy,
 The Grecians were never gladder for the wynning of Troy:
 As I was then remembering my good Master thoe,
 For even the selfe same secret he did me shew:
 Nyne dayes and no more I tarried with him sure,
 But Lord in this tyme what secrets of Nature
 He opened to me at divers sundry tymes,
 As partly I have told thee in my former Rimes:
 The rest is not to be written on paine of Damnacion,
 Or else in this Boke truly I would make relation;
 Now Father quoth I, I will depart you froe,
 And for you I wil pray whether forever I goe;
 Son quoth he Gods blessing goe with thee and thyne,
 And if thou speede well, let me heare of thee againe.

The sixt Chapter.

WHEN I was gone a mile or two abroade,
 With fervent prayer I praised the Lord:
 Giveing him thanks for that prosperous Journy,
 Which was more leaver to me then an 100 l. in mony:
 Surely quoth I my Master shall know all this,
 Or else my Braines shall serve me amisse;
 Which if they were so good as the Monke made mencion,
 Then would I write to my Master with a better invencion,
 O Lord quoth I what a solemne Oath was this given!
 Surely in sheetes of Brasse it is worthy to be graven;
 For a perpetuall memory ever to remaine
 Among the Philosophers, for an Oath certaine:
 And when I was two dayes Journey homeward,
 To aske him a question to him againe I fared,
 Which I had forgotten, and would not for my Land,
 But doubt truly I might understand.
 I thought it not much to goe backe with all speede,
 To seeke him out, & to the house where I left him I yed,
 And there in a Chamber anone I founde him out,
 Praying upon his Beades very devout:
 Father quoth I a word with you I doe beseech:

Who is that quoth he? my Son Charnocke by his speech:
Yea forsooth quoth I, I am come back to you,
Desiring you heartily to tell me one thing true:
Which is this. Who was in Philosophy yout Tutor,
And of that Seacret to you the Revealer?
Marry quoth he and speake it with harty Joy,
Forsooth it was Ripley the Canon his Boy:
Then I remembered my good Master againe,
Which could he did it never attaine
Of no manner of Man but of God, he put it in his head,
As he for it was thinking lying in his Bead:
And thus I tarried with him all that night,
And made him good Cheere as I might.
In the morning I tooke my leave of him to depart,
And in the processe of tyme came home with a merry heart;
But that mirth was shortly turn'd to care,
For as I tould you so my Worke did fare.
Once I set it on fyre which did me much woe,
And after my Man hindered me a Moneth or two;
Yet the Gentleman did me more spight then the rest,
As when he made me from my work to be prest,
Then Bedlam could not hold me I was to fret,
But sowst at my worke with a greate Hatchett;
Rathing my Potts and my Glasses altogether,
I wisse they cost me more or I gott them thither:
The ashes with my stur flew all about,
One Fire I split and the other I put out:
All the Rubish to the dunghill I carried in a Sack,
And the next day I tooke my Coates with the Crosse at the back;
And forth I went to serve a Soldiers rome
And surely quoth I, there shall come the day of Dome;
Before I practise againe to be a Philosopher,
Wherefore have me Commended to my good Master.
And now my students in this Art, my promise I have kept justly,
And that you shall finde true when you understand me truly;
Which before that day never thinke to speede
For a plainer Boke then this never desire to reade:
And true it is also yf you can pick it out,
But it is not for every Cart slave or Loute;
This to understand, no though his witts were fyne,
For it shalbe harde enough for a very good Divine
To Conster our meaning of this worthy Scyence,
But in the study of it he hath taken greate diligence:
Now for my good Master and Me I desire you to pray,
And if God spare me lyfe I will mend this another day.

Finished the 20th of July, 1557. By the unlettered
Schollar THOMAS CHARNOCK, student
in the most worthy Scyence of ASTRONOMY
and PHYLOSOPHY.

Dialogue Between a Father and his Son

[Back to English alchemical verse.](#)

A Dialogue betwixt the FATHER and the SONNE, Concerning the two Principles of the BLESSED STONE.

Father

My Sonne if that Sulphur be absent away,
Our worke is reprov'd whatever they say,
And it is our Water & Fire as tru as your Creed
Which constraineth a Body till it be dead:
Of him shalt thou never have your desire,
Till he be blew as Lead through his owne Fire,
I do liken our Sulphur to the magnet Stone,
That still draweth to her Naturally,
So with our Sulphur the firey Woman Mercury,
When she would from he husband flye.

Son

Father I pray you for Charity,
Where shall I this Sulphur finde?
For I never did him se with Eye;
Nor never knew him in his kinde.

Father

In our Water my Sonne keepe it in your minde,
Where he will appeare so white as any snow,

Son

Grammercy Father ye be full kinde,
For through your teaching full well I know.
Now teach me the Red stone when it is in minde,
How it is made by Natures Law.

Father

The White and Red be both of one kinde,
Now hast thou my Son all thy desire,
Whose tincture by growing thou shalt it so finde,
Through vertue of the Sun and regiment of Fire
His riches there he dost increase,
Farre passing all that I can name,
If they in Fire shall come in presse:
Gune is their glory but he the same,
For the vertues of the Planets seaven
Shall have, and also from the Pole of heven,
Since the World began noe Gemme is found
Equall him till in vertues all,
The Saphir, nor the Diamond,
The Ruby rich behind shall fall,
So shall the Turkie and Carbuncle:
If they in fire together shall fight,
All One except shall loose their might,
The fire on him hath power none,
His Elements be so coequall,
An Incombustible Oyle is this our Stone
In power farr passing others all.

Son

In what Element Father is our Sulphur bright?
Is it in all, or is it in one?

Father

In all Sonne he must need be of right,

For Seperacion of Elements we make none:
And yett in them we can it not see,
For sensuall matter he is none,
But equallitie only intellectuall,
Without which our Stone never fixt be shall.
Qualitie Sonne alsoe groweth in the fire;
Betwixt the White Stone and the Read,
For Colours many to you shall appeare,
Untill the tyme the Woman be dead:
The which things if ye shall not see,
Red shall your Stone at noe time bee;
For where the Woman is in Presence,
There is much moysture and Accidence:
Watry humors that in her bee
Will drowne and devoure our qualitee,
Remember and thinke of Noahs flood,
For too much Water was never good:
And yet as qualitie is hid in quantitie,
So must in Water our Earth be:
Riches in him thou shalt much finde,
After alteracions all due to his kinde;
When Oyle in him is coagulate,
Then is our Stone body made liquefact:
When Sulphur Water and Oyle be one,
Indued with riches then is our Stone.
I cannot thee tell a richer thing;
Then is our Stone when he is fire dureing,
Our Fire maketh he so strong.
Son
Father how to make our Stone,
Fayne would I knowe that have we done;
Father
My Sonne with lent and easie heate,
The Elements togeather will kindly meate:
Haste not to fast while they be rawe,
Keep well the Fier, beware of the lowe.
Shutt well the Vessell least out passe the Spirit,
So shall you all things the better keepe;
For if the Spiritts doe passe you from,
Remedy to gett them againe have you none:
And how marveillous it is the Elements to meete
Keepe this as your principall secrete,
At you begining give God the prayse;
And keepe your Matter in heate forty dayes,
But so that all things be made cleare,
Or else you are never the neare:
And within this tyme itt wil be Black;
And oft chainge colour till it be White,
There you may cease and further proceede,
By mendinge the heate to your measure indeed;
And there withall now will I end,
And to God onely thee Commend.

Anonymous Alchemical Poems

[Back to English alchemical verse .](#)

ANONYMI.

I Shew you here a short Conclusion,
To understand it if ye have grace,
Wrighten without any delusion;
Comprehended in a litle space.
All that is in this Booke wrighten is,
In the place comprehended is,
How Nature worketh in her kinde,
Keepe well this Lesson in your minde:
I have declared micle thing,
If you have grace to keepe in minde,
How that our Principle is One thing,
More in Number and One in kinde;
For there ben things Seven
That in a Principle doe dwell,
Most precious under Heven,
I have so sworne I may not tell.
In this Booke I shew to you in wrighting,
As my Brethren doe each one,
A similitude of every like thing,
Of which we make our Stone.
Our Stone is made of a simple thing,
That in him hath both Soule and Lyfe,
He is Two and One in kinde,
Married together as Man and Wife:
Our Sulphur is our Masculine,
Our Mercury is our Femenine,
Our Earth is our Water cleere;
Our Sulphur also is our Fier,
And as Earth is in our Water cleare,
Soe is Aer in or Fier.
Now have yee Elements foure of might,
And yet there appeareth but two in sight;
Water and Earth ye may well see,
Fier and Aer in them as quality:
Thys Scyence maie not be taught to every one,
He were acurst that so schould done:
How schould ye have Servants than?
Than non for other would ought done,
To tyl the Lande or drive the Plough,
For ever ech man would be proud enough;
Lerned and leude would put them in Presse,
And in their workes be full busie,
But yet thay have but little increse,
The writings to them is so misty.
It is full hard this Scyence to finde,
For Fooles which labour against kinde;
This Science I pray you to conceale,
Or else with it do not you meale,
For and ye canot in it prevaile,

Of much sorrow then may you tell:
By suddain mooving of Elements Nature may be letted,
And wher lacks Decoction no perfection may be,
For some Body with leprosy is infected;
Raw watery humors cause superfluity:
Therefore the Philosopher in his reason hath contrived
A perfect Medicine, for bodyes that be sick,
Of all infirmities to be releevd,
This healeth Nature and prolongeth lyfe eak;
This Medicine of Elements being perfectly wrought,
Receptes of the Potecary we neede not to buy,
Their Druggs and Dragms we set at nought,
With quid pro quo they make many aly.
Our Aurum potable Nature will increase,
Of Philosophers Gold if it be perfectly wrought,
The Phisitians with Minerall pureth him in prese:
Little it availeth or else right nought.
This Scyence shall ye finde in the old boke of Turb;
How perfectly this Medicine Philosophers have wrought,
Rosary with him also doth record,
More then four Elements we occupie nought;
Comune Mercury and Gold we none occupie,
Till we perfectly have made our Stone,
Then with them two our Medicine we Multiply,
Other receptes of the Potecary truly we have none.
A hundred Ounces of Saturne [Lead] ye may well take;
Seeth them on the fire and melt him in a mould,
A Projection with your Medicin upon hem make,
And anon yee shall alter him into fine Gold;
One Ounce upon a hundred Ounces is sufficient,
And so it is on a thousand Ounces perfectly wrought,
Without dissolucion and Subtillant;
Encreasing of our Medicine els have we nought.
Joy eternall and everlasting blisse,
Be to Almyghty God that never schal miss.

In some Copies I found these following
Verses set before this Worke.

Earth out of Earth clensed pure,
By Earth of himselfe through his nature,
Rectified by his Milke who can it tye,
And afterward united with Water of lyfe truly:
A Dragon lying in his deepe denne,
Rotting in Water to Putrefie then:
Leprouse huge and terrible in sight,
By bathing and balning the Dragon cometh to light;
Evermor drowned in th bottome of his Well,
Tyl all his Leprousie will no longer dwell,
In his owne Nature he altereth claene
Into a pure substance, ye wat what I meane.
I shew you here a short Conclusion, &c.

ANONYMI.

I Schal yow tel wyth hert mode,
Of three Kynggys that ben so goude,

And how thaye came to God almyght,
The wich was ther a sweet syght.

I figure now howr besset [blessed] Stone,
Fro Heven wase send downe to Solomon:

By an Angele bothe goude and style,
The wych wase than Christis wylle.

The present of hem in Bedlem than,
To Cryst brwght Aurum Tus & Myrham.

Owre Sol and Sulphir wyth his Mercuri,
Both Bodi and Soule wyth oure Luneyre.

Aurum betokeneth heer, owre Bodi than,
The wych was brwght to God and Man.

And Tus alleso owre Soule of lyfe,
Wyth Myrham owre Mercurye that ys hys Wyfe.

Here be the thre namys fayre and good
And alle thaye ben but one in mode.

Lyke as the Trenite ys but on,
Ryght so conclude the Phylosofeers Stone.

Thow mayst a se her now in syght,
Off owre Stone figuriet a right.

How sende he wase out of Heven,
By an Angele wyth mylde Stefyn.

And by hys fygure thow mayst se
That hyt ys lyke to personis Thre.

To Fader and Sonne and holi Gost,
The wych was and ys of mytis most;

Into hys blyse now come wee,
Amen goud Lord for cheyte.

ANONYMI.

Her ys an Erbe men call Lunayrie,
I blesset mowte hys maker bee.
Asterion he ys, I callet alle so,
And other namys many and mo;
He ys an Erbe of grete myght,
Of Sol the Sunn he taketh hys lyght,
He ys the Fader, to Croppe and Rote;

Wyth fragrant Flowris that ben sote,
Flowrys to bere in that stede,
Swm ben Whyte, and swm ben Red:
Hys Lewys [Leaves] grwyth, both day and nyght,
Lyke to the Ferment that ys so bright:
I shall declare, thys Erbe so lyght,
To many a man hyt ys a fayre seyght;
Frist at the Rote I wolle begynne,
That cawsyth alle things for to sprynge;
A growyth a pon a Mowntayne brym,
Where Febis hath grete dominacion:
The Sunne by day, the Mone by nyght,
That maketh hym both fayre and bryght,
The Rote growyth on stonns clere,
Whyte and Rede, that ys so peyre:
The Rote ys blacke, the Stalke ys red;
The wyche schall ther never be dede,
The Lewis [Leaves] be rownd, as a Nowbel son,
And wexsyth and wanyth as the Mon:
In the meddes a marke the brede of a peni,
Lo thys is lyke to owre sweght Lunayre:
Hys Flowrys schynith, fayre and cler,
In all the Worlde thaye have non pere,
He ys not fownde in no manner wise,
But of a Schepeherd in Godis servyse:
The good Schepeherd that I her mene,
Ys he that keepeth hys Sowle clene:
Hys Flowrys ben gret and sum ben small,
Lyke to hem that growyth in Dale;
With many a vertue both fayre and cler,
As ther ben dayes in alle the yere,
Fro fallyng Ewel and alle Sekeneys,
From Sorowe he brengyth man to Bles;
Unto that blese that wee maye come,
Byth the help of Marys Sonne:
And of hys Moder that ys so fre,
Amen good Lord for cherite.

Alchemical Aenigmas by Thomas Charnock

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AEnigma ad Alchimiam.

When vii. tymes xxvi. had run their rase,
Then Nature discovered his blacke face:
But when an C. and L. had overcome him in fight,
He made him wash his face white and bright:
Then came xxxvi. wythe greate rialltie,
And made Blacke and White away to fle:
Me thought he was a Prince off honoure,
For he was all in Golden armour;

And on his head a Crowne off Golde
That for no riches it might be solde:
Which tyll I saw my hartte was colde
To thinke at length who should wyne the filde
Tyll Blacke and White to Red dyd yelde;
Then hartely to God did I pray
That ever I saw that joyfull day.

1572. T. Charnocke.

AEnigma ad Alchimiae.

When vii. tymes xxvi. had runne their rase,
Then Nature discovered his blacke face.
But whith an C. and L. came in with great blost
And made Blacke nye to flye the Coste:
Yet one came after and brought 30 off greate might,
Which made Blacke and White to flee quite;
Me though he was a Prince off honor,
For he was all in Golden Armour,
And one his head a Crowne off Golde:
That for no riches it myght be solde,
And trewly with no Philosopher I do mocke;
For I did it my sellffe Thomas Charnocke:
Therefore God coomforte in thy warke
For all our wrettinges are verye darke,
Despyse all Bookes and them defye,
Wherein is nothing but Recipe & Accipe;
Fewe learned men with in this Realme,
Can tell the aright what I do meane;
I could finde never man but one,
Which cowlde teache me the secrets off or Stone:
And that a Pryste in the Close off Salesburie,
God rest his Soll in heven full myrie.

1572.

T. CHARNOCKE.

Experience and Philosophy

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EXPERIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY.

Have you not heard yee Princes great, you Lords & Ladies all,
Of the mishap and heavy chaunce that now of late did fall?
A wofull Tale to tell
Who could expresse it well:
Oh that some learned Poet had byne
With me, to se that I have sene:
Or else some other standing by,
That well could write a Tragidy
Of lasting fame and memory.

For yet not since this World began,
Such cry, such clamour as was than
Heard never any earthly Man.

Experience that Princesse greate, I saw her in her Throne
Of glory, where her Majesty delightes to sitt upon;
And on her wayting by
A blessed Company
Of Virgins pure, that as I gesse,
Were Children to that great Goddesses:
Their Princely port, their Comly grace,
Their pierles featur'd hand and face
Did schew them of Noble race:
But of their prudent skill to tell,
In Artes where in they did excell,
No earthly Toungue can do it well.

And as I gazed thus upon that strange and dreadfull sight,
I saw how that Experience did teach these Ladies right,
The Seven Artes Divine,
With desent discipline,
By divers rules and orders grave,
As she thought good for them to have.
But for to see how diligent
And buisily their time they spent
To learne those Artes most excellent,
The endlesse travells that they tooke
From place to place, from booke to booke,
Amazed me on them to looke.

For some in divers Languages did reason dispute,
And others some did sing and play on Organ, Harpe and Flute;
And some with Compasses found
All Measures square and round:
And some by Cyphering could tell
Infinite Summes and Numbers well:
And somes with Eloquence began
As Poets and Orators to scan
The Causes between Man and Man:
And some upon the Stars did gaze,
And other some sat in a Maze,
To judge of Seacrets that there was.

Soe that nothing created was under the Firmament,
That hath a Being or Life by any Element,
No Simple nor Compound
In all the World is found
Under the Sky, or Clouds that fly,
But they sought out the privity:
This Rocky Earth, this heavy Masse,
This Articke Virgin, this let not passe
To seeke the thing that therein was:
But put themselves in presse to creepe
Into the Center of the Deepe,
Where sundry Soules and Spirits doe sleepe.

This thing Experience gan prudently to debate,
With cheerfull looke and voyce full mylde, as it seemed to her state,
And soone decreed she
Of her benignity:
Not for their sundry paines I take,
But only for her Glory sake,
That all these ladies in a row
Should further of her Secrets know,
That from her Majesty did grow;
Wherewith to Councell called shee
A Lady grave of greate degree,
That named was Philosophy.

And after their discourse and talke, that Lady fell downe flatt
On hands & knees before the Queene in heaven where she satt.
And looking upon her face
Did say unto her grace:
Blessed be thou Experience,
Full mighty is thou Influence;
Thy wondrous workes records full well
In wordell of wordels where thou doest dwell,
In Earth, in Heaven, and in Hell;
That thou art now the very same,
That of Nothing All things did frame,
Wherefor now blessed be thy Name.

Wherewith the Heavens opened, and fiery flames did fall
Downe from the Throne of endles Joy and feate imperiall,
Where Angels infinite
Like glistening Starrs did fitt:
So pure and simple was the Light,
As all the World had burnt bright;
The flames and floods began to roare,
And did present their hidden store,
Of Spirits that sing for evermore,
All glory and magnificence,
All humble thankes and reverence
Be given to E X P E R I E N C E.

Then sylence fell upon the face of Heaven Christalline
Where all the Powers mustered full ready to encline;
To that most Sapient,
The high Omnipotent:
That said be it, and it was don,
Our Earth, Our Heaven were begun;
I am said it the most of might,
In worde of lyfe and eke in light.
I am Mercy and Judgement right,
The Depth is myne so is the Hight:
The Cold, the Hot, the Moyst, the Dry,
Where All in All is there am I.

What thing can tell when I began, or when I make an end?
Wherewith I wrought, and what I mought, or what I did intend?
To doe when I had done
The worke I had begun.

For when my Being was alone
One thing I made when there was none,
A Masse confused darkly clad
That in it selfe all Nature had
To form and shape the good and bad;
And then as Tyme began to fall,
It pleased me the same to call
The first Matter, Mother of all.

And from that Lumpe divided I foure sundry Elements,
Whom I commanded for to raigne in divers Regiments:
In Kinde they did agree,
But not in Quality.
Whose simple Substance I did take,
My seate invisible to make:
And of the Qualities compound,
I made the Starry Sky so round
With living Bodyes on the ground;
And blessed them infinitely,
With lyfe and long prosperity,
And bad them grow and Multiply.

Respecting these divided things so created by me,
Their light and lively spreading forth of them in their degree;
Retourning to the Masse,
Where there begining was,
And saw the refuse of the same,
How Voyd and Empty it became,
All darke, and nothing to remaine,
I put with wrath and great disdain,
My only Curse therefor was no raygne;
For I the Author of all Light
Did banish Darkness from my sight,
And blessed all things that shined bright,

So that I mard nothing I made, for that which I made is still,
And so schalbe unto the end, only to worke my will:
One thing was first imployd,
And shall not be destroid,
It compasseth the World so round,
A Matter easy to be found:
And yet most hardest to come by:
A Secret of Secrets pardye,
That is most vile and least set by,
And it my Love and my Darling,
Conceived with all living thing,
And travells to the Worlds ending.

What neede have I of mans Devise of Peny or of Pound,
Of Gold or Silver, Lead or Tynn or Copper in the ground,
Iron or Silver Quick,
Whereat the blind to prick;
Of Cankered Corosives that rust,
By Salts and sulphurs all to dust?
Seeke out therefore my darling deare;
For unto me it is most neere,

My spouse my Love and my Compeare:
And unto it looke thou direct
My seaven Children long elect,
That all things else they might reject.

A Child begetting his owne Father, and bearing his Mother,
Killing himselfe to give lyfe, and light to all other:
Is yt that I do meane,
Most myld and most extreame.
Did not the Word that dwelt in me
Take forme and walked visibly;
And did not I then dwell in it,
That dwelt in me for to unite
Three powers in one seate to sit?
And the Experience did say
Now knowest thou all, heers lyes the Key,
And then she vanisht cleane away.

There with arose Phylosophy as one filled with grace,
Whose looks did shew that she had byne in some Heavenly place:
For oft she wipt her Eyes,
And oft she bowd her knees.
And oft she kist the Steps with dread,
Whereon Experience did tread;
And oft she cast he Head on high
And oft full low she cast her Eye
Experience for to espy:
But when she saw that she was gon,
And that her selfe was left alone:
I never hread thing make such mone.

FINIS.

Liber Patris Sapientiae

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LIBER PATRIS SAPIENTIAE.

Thow that thys Boke beginneth to rede,
Keepe well thys Councell the better schalt thow spede:
Be thow in a place secret by thyself alone,
That noe man see or here what thow schalt say or done.

2. Yet ere thow begyn to rede much, take thow good hede,
Wyth whom thow kepest company I counsell thee indede;
Trust not thy freind too much, wherefore thow goe,
For he that thow trustest best sometyme may be thye Foe.

3. And take hede to the words of the Fader of Wysdom,
How he techeth hys Sonne how he schould done;
To kepe hys precepts of bodely governance

And wyth hys Conyng he will gretly advance.

4. And yf thou wylt not to hys wordys take hede,
Thou schalt stand here oft in gret feare and dread.
For he that hath a fore wytt he nedes not do amysse,
And he that doth Folly the Folly schalbe hys.

5. Now my dere Sonne be thou not a know
To Lerne nor to Leud, to Hygh nor to Low:
Neyther to Young nor Old, Rych nor Poore,
Unto them thou tech nothyng my Lore.

6. Also to scuche men that hold themselves wise,
And so forth to the foolys that glyde on the Ice:
They weene in grete Bokes schould be the Art
Of the Science of Alchemy, but they be not worth a fart.

7. Therefor my Sonn to thee thys Science I may well teach,
And yf thou wylt upon thy enemy be wreach;
Or to purchase or build any good thyng,
It schalbe to thy gret furtheryng.

8. Thys worthy Science of Alchemy if thou wylt it leare,
A lyttle mony out of thy purse thou must forbear;
To buy therewyth Flos Florum it is most worthiest,
And to build well her Cabyn and her Nest.

9. And if thou put out mony for any other thing.
It is to thy losse; and to thy great hindring:
Except yt be for thy workes naturall Foode.
Which is had out of Stone, Ayre and Wood.

10. And if thou have all thyngs wythin the growing,
Then thou needest not to to buy any manner of thing,
That schould be to thys Science belonging,
But beware of thy selfe for feare of hanging.

11. For then thou and thys Science were for ever lost,
If thou make thereof any manner of boast,
To any Man or Woman, Old or Young,
Beware of thy selfe for feare of discovering.

12. For if thou make any man privie
Of thy Councill, Rich or Needy,
Thou must so beware Sleeping or Waking,
For once ymagining of Money making.

13. For yf God sends thee grace and understanding
Wyth thys Science thou mayst have good lyving:
But beware of speach of Women liberall,
And of the voice and fight of Children generall.

14. Sonn in thyne owne howse thou maist well gett
A good Morsell of meat they mouth to sweet,
Both Pheasant, Partridge, Plover and Leveret,
Though thou cry yt not owte in the common Market.

15. Therefore kepe close of thy Tongue and of thy Hand,
From the Officers and Governours of the Land;
And from other men that they of thy Craft nothing know,
For in wytnes thereof they wyll thee hang and draw.

16. And thereof the People will the at Sessions indight,
And great Treason against the they wyll write;
Wythowt that the Kings grace be to thee more,
Thow schalt for ever in thys world be forlore.

17. Alsoe wythowt thow be sure of another thyng,
To purchase the Lycence of thy King:
For all manner of doubts thee schall betide,
The better thow maiste Work, and both goe and ride.

18. Alsoe another thing I schall thee lere,
The poore People take thow nothing deare,
But ever serve thy God alway at the begynnyng,
And among the poore People the better schalbe thy living.

19. Now my Chylde to my precepts looke thow take hede,
Whatsoever fall after the better schall thow spede.
Better it ys to have a thyng, then for it to wish,
For when thow feelst a Sore tis hard for thee to get a Leech.

20. Now my deare Son to the I wyll declare,
More of thys Warke which schalbe thy welfaire;
If thow canst consider all my sayings,
For therewith thow mayest finde a full precious thing.

21. And Son though thys Writing be made in Ryme,
Yet take thow thereat noe greate disdaine.
Till thow hast proved my words in deede and in thought,
Iwatt it well it schalbe set at nought.

22. Therefor of all Bodyes and Spyrits more or lesse,
Mercury is called Flos Florum and worthiest Prynmesse:
For her Birth and marvelous dealing,
Sche ys most worthiest to have byne King.

23. For sche ys Erth and Water most heaviest,
And sche will conjoyne wyth Fire and Aire most lyghtest;
And so forth wyth her love sche will run and flee,
For sche delighteth noe other game or glee.

24. Some say that of Sulphur and Mercury all Bodyes minerall are made,
Ingended in the Erth with divers Colours cladd:
By the vertue of Decoccion before Preperacion,
To the lykenes of every body Mynerall in ther fashion.

25. I will first begin wyth Saturne after other mens sayings,
How he ys ingended in the Erth wyth unclene Mercury flying:
And of Mercury he ys most heaviest wyth black Sulphury Erth mixed,
Save he ys soft of fusion, and hys Sulphur nothing fixed.

26. Jupiter is a whyte Body made pure Mercury outward,
And of clere Sulphur somewhat Erthly and white inward;
He ys kynde softest and well in his fixation,
For he is almost fixt, but he lacketh Decoction.
27. Mars ys a white Body most of unclean Mercury in the Erth y'made,
And he ys hardest of fusion with Sulphur Erthly cladd;
To blackness and rednes he will soonest consume,
By heate or by corrosive when the Spirit beginneth to fume.
28. Sol is the purest from what red & is made of clene Mercury & Sulphur fixed,
Ingendered with clere red Sulphur, in the Erth well mixed,
And therefore he ys without defalt and lacketh no degree;
For he ys almost hardest of Fusion and heviest in ponderossity.
29. Venus ys a Body more red of pure Mercury made in hys substance,
Most of red Sulphur and greene and therein is great variance:
In the Erth ingendered with Corrosive and bitter substance,
Well fixed and hard of fusion, rude in governance.
30. Mercury ys a Body if he be with a Substance moved,
Mixing one kinde with his kinde, so schall he be loved;
On Spirit received wyth another, the which of them be maine,
Is casue of ingeneration of every body Mettalyne.
31. Luna ys a pure white Body of clene Mercury & Sulphur white ingendered
And sche is a litle hard of fusion & almost well fixed
And sche is next cleanest in Tincture of whitenes,
Of Ponderosity light, of Jupiter bearing his whitenes.
32. And soe after the Colour of that Erth ys Sulphuri and receptuall,
Some men do say ys engendered every Metall;
But my Son the perfect worke of thys alteration,
I schall informe the true way of another fashion.
33. Now have I declared the working of the Bodies Mynerall,
Whereof they be ingendered after other mens sayings over all;
And as in place of the Erth one Body was fully wrought,
Soe must the artificiall Medicine, be or else it ys nought.
34. Now will I declare the worthiness of Mercury in speciall,
How sche ys the notalest Spirit that ys mynerall,
Most marvelous in working and in degree,
Sche is called the Matter principallest of the three.
35. Also sche ys very subtile in many things artificiall,
Sche will both give and take Tincture most speciall,
To hym or of hym that sche loveth most best,
In speciall when sche ys warmed in her Nest.
36. My Son Mercury ys called the mightiest Flos florum,
And most royall, and richest of all the Singulorum;
Sche ys very Patron and Princes most royall,
And sche ys very Mother of every Mettall.
37. Sche ys Vegitable, Animalle and Minerall,

Sche ys Foure in kinde, and One in generall:
Sche is Erth, Aire, Water and Fyre,
Among all other sche hath no Peere.

38. Sche kylleth and slayeth, and also doth calcine,
Sche dyeth, and also doth sche live againe;
Sche giveth lyfe and also ingression,
For joyntly sche ys three in one.

39. Sche ys a very frendly mixar,
The progeneration of a greate Elixar:
Sche ys both Body Soule and Spirite,
In Colour very red, black and white.

40. Many be the wooers that hang on her tayle,
But sche will not with them I'deale;
They would her wedd against her will,
With foemen that liken her full ill.

41. Sche will deale with no manner of wight,
But with her Husbande as it ys greate right:
With him sche will bear much fruit,
For he ys by her nature of her selfe same sute.

42. My Son of hem Fooles have much dispight,
And therein such Fooles loose their light:
For sometymes he ys darke, and sometymes bright,
For he ys lyke no other wight.

43. For if they have their kynde ingendering,
Their naturall foode and goode keeping,
They schall increase fruit by dede,
Very red and white, King and Queene.

44. My Son in thys Scyence I doe deny,
All things that be discording truly,
All manner of Salts I doe defie,
And all manner of Sulphurs in waters of Corrosie.

45. Also Alloome, Vitrial, Auripigmentum and Haire,
Gold, Silver, Alkaly and Sandiver;
Honey, Wax, and Oyles or Calx else,
Gumms, Galls, and also Egg shells.

46. Also I defie Antimony, Berrall, and Christall,
Rosinm Pitch, also Amber, Jett and Corral;
Hearbs, Dated Stones, Marble, or Tinglas,
If there come any of all these it ys the worse.

47. Also Berrills, Gotts Hornes, and Alome plome,
Good with them will none be done;
All things that discordeth from Mettall,
It ys contrary to thy worke in generall.

48. My Son many fooles to me have sought,
Good with them and I accord right nought;

I leave them there as I them finde,
And as Fooles I make them blinde.

49. For whych Mercury they have errd full sore
And then when they had they could doe no more,
Therefore in Phylosophers sche bear'th the floower,
For sche ys King, Prince, and Emperour.

50. Yet my deare Son be thow not a knowne
To Learned, nor to Lewde, to High, nor to Low;
That thys worke standeth by Mercury and in her fire,
Her owne speciall Love both life and deare.

51. For he yse her Son, sche ys hys Fright,
In whome sche worketh all her myght:
He ys her Son, sche ys hys Mother,
Sche loveth him peramore and no other.

52. In Sol, and Lune, in her meeting ys all love,
For our Mercury only ys all her behove,
And with them sche worketh all her might,
But they may never increase on fright.

53. Therefor it ys possible to cast a Projection pure,
Upon a Million to make a perfect Body of tincture:
Wyth Medicine of Spirits well joyned and fixed,
It schall not be perceived where it ys well mixed.

54. And therefor if there com Silver or Gold in at thy Gate,
The which men use in coyne or in common Plate;
I sweare by God that all thys world hath wrought,
All thy labour and warke schall turne to nought.

55. For with what Mettall soever that Mercury be joyned,
Because of her Coldness and Moistnes sche ys acloyd:
Put them never so close togeder sche will fume anon,
And when they come into the fire sche wil sone be gone.

56. Therefore Mercury hath a Lover that passeth them
A thousandfold, who so will him ken
And he ys her Lover and her Leman sweete,
And so hys Councell sche will keepe.

57. Both in hys Chamber and also in hys Bedd,
Also alive and when they byne dead;
Seeke yee forth fooles as ye have sought,
For in all other things finde yee right nought.

58. As I said in the 32. Chapter unto my Conclusion,
How I schould informe the truth after another fashion,
And to perform thys Scyence both in word and deede,
In making of our Medicine God must us speede.

60. The which ys called the greate Elixer,
And ys verily made with a stronge mixar;
The which is a Stone very Minerall,

And thow maist him well gett ever all.

61. My Son thow schalt take to Mercury no other thing,
But Erth that's heavy and hard and stiff standing:
The which in himselfe ys derke bright dry and cold,
To joyne them togeder thow maist be full bold.

62. One of them to 10 parts of that Water running most heaviest
And they schalbe both one, and to thy warke most mightiest:
Then hast thow Man and Woman togeder brought,
The which ys done by greate love in a thought.

63. The which two be both Spirits, & one Body most heaviest,
When they be in your Chamber and bed joynd in the Element lightest,
The which ys more bigger, and bigger hott and dry,
And therein they will both kiss togeder & neither weepe nor cry.

64. For when Erth and Water ys well mixed,
By the vertue of the lightest Element well hardend and fixed:
For before that time they be Water running both,
And then schall turne to fix body be they never so loath.

65. For theyr bed they schall make a perpetuall Conjunction,
After the feeding of the light Element and of their proportion;
Soe schould they be decoct, having the parfait fixascion,
In the likenes of a body on fusion having hys fashion.

66. But as the first in their Bed they may indure no greate heate,
Soe as they may well labour in their Bed for sweate:
Att the first if there be in their Chamber overmuch red Colour,
Hastily going thereto will cause greate Dolour.

67. For in their first Nest they schould be both water running,
And because of heate they schould be ever drying.
And so therein become a subtill dry Substance,
The which warke schall thee greatly avaunce.

68. Therefor their Nest must be made of a strong kinde,
Of the most hardest and cleerest Body, that they not out winde;
For if it so be that their Chamber or Nest begin to break,
Anon out thereof they will begin to Creak.

69. And then ys all thy warke and thy greate labour lost,
Then thou maist begin againe upon a new cost,
And so thow mayest not be negligent and hasty, but out of the bed be sure,
Without it be hard stuff and clere it will not indure.

70. And if thow wil at the first hand give suddaine heate,
It will unto thy Warke be nothing meete;
And if thow let him have any suddaine greate Cold,
All thys schall breke thy warke, then art thow to bold.

71. Let their Nest be somewhat large with a broade roufe,
And therein they schall abide if it be strong and close above;
And in proportion put thereto nothing more nor lesse,
But as ys sayd before if thow doe yt ys the worse.

72. Also from the beds head there must rise a highe Spoute,
And another almost downe to the bottome that the Spirit go not out;
For thou must save the flyers that swim into the upper place,
For they may hereafter ingender a body as well as the other in space.

73. Also be sure that thou put in their Bed no other thing,
Then thereof thou schalt have no greate winnyng,
If thou do thys it schall be to thee for the best
To keepe them close from flying and warme in their Nest.

74. First with soft fyre her Nest must be warmed,
With a litle bigger Fyre with overmuch they schalbe harmed,
Under thy Chamber flowre measure thy Fyre with tyme,
Then commeth the reward, Gold and Silver fine.

75. After the quantity space and tyme must be had,
For to deale togeder they be in their dealing glad.
And how long space and tyme I cannot well say,
That they in their Chamber and Nest wilbe in sport and play.

76. Behold the uppermost of their Nest what there commeth out,
The sweting of their Bodys labouring round aboute,
And when they have played and sweate and laboured so sore,
They wilbe still, and neither labour nor sweate any more.

77. Then let them coole easily, and draw their breath,
And then there schalbe some above and some beneath:
There thou schalt see a Stone as it were grey pouthur,
Which schalbe to the[e] a ryght greate wonder.

78. Then take them out of their Chamber and Bed anon,
And lay them upon a Marble stone and breake them thereon:
And looke what thou hast in of Colour and Ponderostiy,
Put to him as much Flos florum greatest in dignity.

79. That ys the same Spirit that thou hadst before,
And so medle them togeder and leare them the same lore;
Altogeder in another Bed and in their Chamber they must be,
For a marvelous warke thereof thou schalt understand and see.

80. And thus so oft thou must Multiplie thy Warke,
To ascend and descend into the Aire as doth the Larke;
For when the Larke ys weary above in hys stound,
Anon he falleth right downe to the ground.

81. Behold well their Body, and to their head lay thine Eare,
And harken thou well what wark they make there:
If they begin to sing any manner of voyce,
Give them more heate till thou heare no noyce.

82. And thus give them more heate in their Chamber and Bed also,
Till thou hearest no manner of noyse rumbling to nor fro:
And thus continue in their Bed in their sporting playes,
After the quantity thereof continue so may dayes.

83. When their play and wrestling ys all well done,
In their voyce singing and crying and sweating up and downe;
Give their Chamber bigger heate till their Nest be red,
And so bring the downe low and have no feare nor dread.

84. For thus with heate they schalbe brought full low,
That they schall in their Bed ne cry nor crow,
But as a Body lye still downe in their Bed,
In their owne liknes as they were bodyes dead.

85. Of Grey and White ys all hys cheife Colour,
For then he ys past all hys greate Dolour:
I swears by Almighty God that all hath wrought,
Thow hast found out that many other Men hath sought.

86. Then take thow hym out of hys Chamber and Bed,
And thow schalt then find a fixt Body as he were dead;
Keepe thow hym close and secretly within thy place,
And thank Almighty God of hys grace.

87. Now my Son before thys, after thys Science I have right well sought
And thus to thee I have the White Elixer parfety wrought;
And if thow wilt of the Red Elixer parfety understand,
Thow must take such another warke in hand.

88. My Son whan thow hast wrought more upon more,
Dubling each time as I said before;
Make thow what thow wilt of Red substance,
As I did the White warke in manner of Governace.

89. Then thow must take the Red Stone that ys all ponder,
And lay on a Mable Stone and breake him asunder;
And to medle him with the white Spirit and Water cleere,
And so put him in hys Bed and Chamber in the Fire.

90. And so in hys Chamb. & hys Bed, he must all thys while be
Till thow hast turn'd and brought him to another manner of glee:
Thys Red Elixer if thow wilt open worke heare,
Thys manner of Schoole thow must right well leare.

91. Thow must hang him in his Chamber with red Colour,
Till he be fixed and brought from hys great Dolour:
Then of thys worthy warke be not thow agast,
For in the warke all the worst ys past.

92. And so in hys fiery Nest and Chamber let him be sure,
For the longer he be in, the better schalbe hys tincture;
Soe that he runn not like blood overcoming hys fusion,
Then hast thow perfectly thys worke in conclusion.

93. Thus he must continue in thys greate heate of Firing,
Till he be full fixed that he be not running nor flying:
Then he will give tincture without Number running like wax,
Unto hys like of fusion he will both joyne and mix.

94. And yf thy Warke be thus well guided and so forth led

Then hast thou in thy Warke right well and wittily sped:
For if thou do otherwise then I have thee tould,
In the adventure of thy warke thou maist be to bold.

95. For if thou warke by good measure and perfect tyme,
Thou shalt have very good Gold and Silver fine;
Than shalt thou be richer in thy self than any King,
Wythout he labour the Science and have the same thing.

96. Now my deare Son I schall teach thee how to cast a Projection,
Therein lyeth all the greates perfectnes with the Conclusion:
To leade an imparfect Body to hys greates perfectnesse,
In joyning that like to hys like thou standest in no distres.

97. For when thou hast joyned the milke to the Bodies dry,
Than hast thou the White and Red Elixer truly:
The which ys a Marvilous and very precious Stone,
For therein lieth in thys Science all the worke upon.

98. In thys Science these Stones be in themselves so precious,
That in their working and nature they be marvelous:
To schew thee the greates vertue furthermore I will declare,
That if thou canst with thys manner of working well fare.

99. First thou must take of that Body which ys next Sol in perfection,
And of his colour toward in ponderosity & proportion:
Being soluble as it were cleere blood running,
In the hot Element yt ys alwayes lightest and fleeting.

100. Then take part of the Red Elixer that ys the precious Stone,
And cast him upon that body that ys blood running anon:
And whan thou hast thus perfectly thys warke wrought,
It schalbe turned into perfect Sol with litle labour or nought.

101. On the same wise do for Luna that is in the Colour so white,
In joyning with that body that is schining and somewhat light;
In the same proportion cast him the very white Stone,
And then ys all thy greates warke both made and done.

102. Than hast thou both the Red warke and the White,
Therefore blessed be that tyme both day and night:
For thys warke that standeth by greates vertue and love,
Thou must thanke Almighty God in heaven above.

103. Sonn in the 21 Chapter there write I a full true Rime,
That ys to say unto thys warke thou have no greates disdain;
Till thou have proved my words in deed and thought,
I know it well thys Science schalbe set at nought.

104. My Son to these last precepts looke thou take good hede,
For better 'tys to have then to wish for in time of neede:
For who so ys bold in tyme to a Freind to breake,
He that ys thy Freind may be thy Fo and hys emnity wreake.

105. And therefore my Son I schall give thee a greates charge,
In uttering of spech be thou not to large;

To tell every man what thou hast in Silver or Gold,
For to have it from thee many men wilbe right bold.

106. Also use not to revill or ryott that schould excede
To thy bodily health, the better schalt thou speede;
Use temperate dyet and temperate travell,
For when Physitian thee fayleth thys schall thee availe.

107. And leave all blind warkes that thou has seene or heard of Conclusions
Or proved by Sublimations, Preparations, Distillations, or Dissolutions;
Of such manner of things greate Bokes do greatly specifie
And all those contrary sayings in this Craft I do plainly deny.

108. Also my Son remember how thou art mortall,
Abiding but a while in thys World which ys terrestriall:
Thou wottest not how long nor hence how soone,
That death schall thee visitt and unto thee Come.

109. And remember thee well at thy departing,
Whome thou lovedst and trustedst best old and young:
Make him thine Heire and most of thy Councell,
And give him thy Cunning or thy Boke every deale.

110. But beware of flattering and glosing People,
Of Boasters and Crackers for they will thee beguile:
Of thy precious Cunning behinde or before,
And when they have their intent they will give thee a scorne.

111. Therefor make no Man of thy Councell rude nor rustie,
But him that thou knowest both true and trustie;
In ryding and going sleeping and waking,
Both in word and deede and hys disposing.

112. Also in thy owne Chamber looke thou be secret,
That thy dores and windowes be close shet;
For some wyll come and looke in every Corner,
And anon they will aske what thou makest there.

113. And therefore a good excuse must soone be had,
Or else thou schalt verily wine for to run madd;
Say thou labourest fore both sleeping and waking,
To the perfect way of strange Colours making.

114. As yt be sure Bice, Vermillion, Aurum Musicum, & others moe
Or else with some people thou schalt never have a doe;
Also thereof thou must have many samples to schew,
Or else they that harmes thinke will say so.

115. Also furthermore I give thee right good warning,
Beware of thy warking and also of thy uttering,
For the examination of the People better or wose,
Ere thou have for thy warke thy mony in thy purse.

116. Therefor take heede my Son unto these Chapters fixscore
And all manner of things said what schould be don before:
For Astronomy thou must have right good feeling,

Ore else in thys Boke thow schalt have simple believing.

117. For thow must know well of seaven principle Characters,
To what Bodyes in heaven moving that they be likened in those figures
And to understand their properties and their Conditions,
In Colours, qualities, softnes, hardnes, & in their proper fashions.

118. Now Son to thee that understandest perfection & Sciences
Whether it be Spectulative or Practick to my sentences:
In thys Science and labour I thinke it greate ruthe,
Therefore I write to thee very truth.

119. And to thee that understand no perfection nor practike
In no conclusion proved that schould be to hys warke like,
By Almighty God that all thys world hath wrought,
I have said and performed to the right nought.

120. Therefore my Son before that thow thys Boke begin,
Understand wisely in thys what ys written therein:
For if thow canst not finde by thys Boke neither Sol nor Moyne,
Then go forth an seeke thow further as other fooles have done.

Explicit Liber dictus Pater Sapientiae.

Various Pieces on the Emerald Tablet

- Everard's Commentary on the Emerald Tablet
- The Emerald Tablet from the Geheime figuren
- Various versions of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes [provided by Jon Marshall]
- A Commentary on the Emerald Tablet by Cohn de Toraeke.
- Hortulanus Commentary on the Emerald Tablet.
- William Salmon's Commentary on the Emerald Tablet.
- Synesius' Epilogue on the Emerald Tablet.
- Explanation of the Emerald Tablet from the Glory of the World
- Latin text of the Emerald Tablet

Everard's Commentary on Emerald Tablet

[Transcribed from Ms. Ashmole 1440.]

[Back to pieces on Emerald Tablet](#) . [Back to alchemical texts](#) .

Tabula Smaragdina
or
The Table of Emerald
said to be found
in the Sepulchre of Hermes

with glosses (in italic)

by John Everard, Doctor of Divinity

- 1. It is true without any lying, certain and most true, that which is inferior, or below, is as that which is superior or above** there being one Universal matter and form of all things, differenced only by accident, and particularly by that great mystery of Rarefaction and Condensation, **and that which is superior as that which is inferior, to work and accomplish the Miracles of one thing**, and to show the great variety and diversity of operations wrought by that Spirit that worketh all things in all things.
- 2. And as all things were from ONE, by the Mediation of one**, God having created all things in the beginning, which is the beginning of all things, and the wisdom of his Father, **so all things spring and took their original from this one thing by adaptation or fitting itself accordingly** in number weight and measure, for Wisdom builds her own house.
- 3. The Father of this one thing**, or that which he useth instead of an Agent, in all the Operations thereof, **is the Sun, and the mother thereof** or which supplies the place of a female and Patient **is the Moon; the Nurse thereof** receiving in her lap all the influences of heat and moisture, the Sulphur and Mercury of Nature (for the Spirit of GOD moveth not but upon the Face of the water) **is the Earth. The Wind or Air carried in its Belly** as one of the links in the chain, that link superior things to them that are below.
- 4. This is the Father original and fountain of all perfection**, and all the secret and miraculous things done in the world; **Whose force is then perfect and complete** to perform those Miracles, and many more **when it is turned into Earth**; that is from a volatile and unfixed thing as it was both before and in the preparation, to a most fixed Earth, but quintessential, wherein all the virtues are both concentrated and doubled, nay infinitely increased. To which purpose **Thou shalt separate the Earth from the Fire**, for they being united, and the subject being but one thing (like Adam and Eve before their separation, or Plato's Hermaphrodite, a man and a woman joined together back to back) could not generate or beget, till all parts be separated, and purged; **and the subtle or fine aethereal from the thick or gross, sweetly** and with much leisure all haste being from Hell, and with a greate deal of wit, judgment and discretion: for to every thing there is an appointed time, and for the production of all animals, vegetables and minerals, the measure of the Igne (fire) is measured, 2. Edras 4, 37. And therefore is requisite both patience to persevere and expect the appointed time, and wit or judgment to find, and order the fire. **It ascendeth from Earth to Heaven, and descendeth from Heaven to Earth**, even as the rain, which in like manner is often cohobated upon the earth; and one part of it is by the appointment of wisdom fixed into earth, whilst another part of earth is attenuated and dissolved; this being the perpetual motion of wisdom itself : and by this means it acquireth the virtue and power of all things above, the subtilty, purity, penetrative activity of fire, light, heaven **and things below**, the fluidness, fixedness and capableness of all influences, which the lower elements of Earth and Water have. **So shalt thou have the glory of the whole world** which consisteth in long life, health, youth, riches, wisdom and virtue, **Therefore shall all obscurity fly from thee** the obscurity and darkness of the body, its distemper and sickness; of the Soul and Mind, that which ariseth from these ignorances which is cured not in the branch only but in the root, when we have put our light in a clear glass. **This is the most strong strength of all strength**, the mightiest expression of all the power strength and efficacy of nature which can be in sublunary things, **for it will overcome any subtle thing**, as metals in Mercury, and the spirit of the bodies; which though they be thin it will be congealed, and though they be volatile, it will fix: and likewise in living weight, there is no disease so spiritual but it will root it out: **and every hard thing it will pierce** as well in compact metals with whom it will join inseparably, as in diseases that affect the solidest part of bodies. **Thus was the World created**: Therefore do the philosophers call their Stone, the little world made of the same Chaos, and after the same manner that the great one was. **From whence will be wonderful adaptations**, or fittings of Agents and Patients, and by that means strange productions in all the kingdoms of Nature, animal, vegetable and mineral : **and the manner of them is this**, which is showed and set down before, and the method of operation the same: **Therefore am I called Hermes Trismegistus** or the thrice greatest Mercury, **having the three parts of the philosophy of the whole world**, and endowed with the knowledge of the Body, Soul and Spirit, whereof all things consist, and of all things that are in the three kingdoms of Nature. **Thus endeth that which I have spoken of the operation of the Sun**: for whatsoever is made or done in all sublunary matters, is done only by the power of the Sun, of whom the Psalmist saith the Almighty hath placed his Tabernacle, it being the Fountain of all natural heat or Nature itself in the Creatures, which is nothing but the finger or ordinate power of the Almighty; And the finger or power of God, is God himself, to whom is due all that, and infinitely more, than the creatures can possibly ascribe unto him.

Blessed be He for evermore.

Amen.

Finished at Fulham on Sunday August 9, 1640.

By J.E.D.D.

[i.e. John Everard Doctor of Divinity]

Tabula Smaragdina from the *Geheime figuren*



This picture, plain and insignificant in appearance,
Concealeth a great and important thing.
Yea, it containeth a secret of the kind
That is the greatest treasure in the world.
For what on this earth is deemed more excellent
Than to be a Lord who ever reeketh with gold,
And hath also a healthy body,
Fresh and hale all his life long,
Until the predestined time
That cannot be overstepped by any creature.
All this, as I have stated, clearly

Is contained within this figure.
Three separate shields are to be seen,
And on them are eagle, lion, and free star.
And painted in their very midst
Artfully stands an imperial globe.
Heaven and Earth in like manner
Are also placed herein intentionally,
And between the hands outstretched towards each other
Are to be seen the symbols of metals.
And in the circle surrounding the picture
Seven words are to be found inscribed.
Therefore I shall now tell
What each meaneth particularly
And then indicate without hesitation
How it is called by name.
Therein is a secret thing of the Wise
In which is to be found great power.
And how to prepare it will also
Be described in the following:
The three shields together indicate
Sal, Sulphur and Mercurium.
The Sal hath been one Corpus that
Is the very last one in the Art.
The Sulphur henceforth is the soul
Without which the body can do nothing.
Mercurius is the spirit of power,
Holding together both body and soul,
Therefore it is called a medium
Since whatever is made without it hath no stability.
For soul and body could not die
Should spirit also be with them.
And soul and spirit could not be
Unless they had a body to dwell in,
And no power had body or spirit
If the soul did not accompany them.
This is the meaning of the Art:
The body giveth form and constancy,
The soul doth dye and tinge it,
The spirit maketh it fluid and penetrateth it.
And therefore the Art cannot be
In one of these three things alone.
Nor can the greatest secret exist alone:
It must have body, soul, and spirit.
And now what is the fourth,
From which the three originate,
The same names teach thee
And the sevenfold star in the lower shield.
The Lion likewise by its colour and power
Showeth its nature and its property.
In the Eagle yellow and white are manifest.
Mark my words well, for there is need of care:
The imperial orb doth exhibit
The symbol of this highest good.
Heaven and earth, four elements,
Fire, light, and water, are therein.
The two hands do testify with an oath

The right reason and the true knowledge,
And from what roots are derived
All of the metals and many other things.
Now there remain only the seven words,
Hear further what they mean:
If thou dost now understand this well
This knowledge shall nevermore fail thee.
Every word standeth for a city
Each of which hath but one gate.
The first signifieth gold, is intentionally yellow.
The second for fair white silver.
The third, Mercurius, is likewise grey.
The fourth for tin, is heaven-blue.
The fifth for iron, is blood-red.
The sixth for copper, is true green.
The seventh for lead, is black as coal.
Mark what I mean, understand me well:
In these city gates, indeed,
Standeth the whole ground of the Art.
For no one city alone can effect anything,
The others must also be close at hand.
And as soon as the gates are closed
One cannot enter any city.
And if they had no gates
Not one thing could they accomplish.
But if these gates are close together
A ray of light appeareth from seven colors.
Shining very brightly together
Their might is incomparable.
Thou canst not find such wonders on earth,
Wherefore hearken unto further particulars:
Seven letters, and seven words,
Seven cities, and seven gates,
Seven times, and seven metals,
Seven days, and seven ciphers.
Whereby I mean seven herbs
Also seven arts and seven stones.
Therein stands every lasting art.
Well for him who findeth this.
If this be too hard for thee to understand
Here me again in a few other particulars:
Truly I reveal to thee
Very clearly and plainly, without hatred or envy,
How it is named with one word
Vitriol, for him who understandeth it.
If thou wouldst oft figure out
This Cabbalistic way with all diligence,
Seven and fifty in the cipher
Thou findest figured everywhere.
Let not the Work discourage thee,
Understand me rightly, so shalt thou enjoy it.
Besides that, note this fully,
There is a water which doth not make wet.
From it the metals are produced,
It is frozen as hard as ice.
A moistened dust a fuller wind doth raise,

Wherein are all qualities.
If thou dost not understand this,
Then I may not name it for thee otherwise.
Now I will instruct thee
How it should be prepared.
There are seven ways for this art,
If thou neglectest any of them thou workest in vain.
But thou must, before all things else, know
Thou hast to succeed in purification.
And although this be twofold,
Thou art in need of one alone.
The first work is freely done by it
Without any other addition,
Without distilling something in it,
Simply through its putrefication.
From all of its earthliness
Is everything afterwards prepared.
This first way hath two paths,
Happy is he who goeth on the right path.
The first extendeth through the strength of fire,
With and in itself, note this well.
The second extendeth further
Until one cometh to treasure and to gain.
This is done by dissolving,
And again by saturating, I inform you:
This must be undertaken first of all,
So comest thou to the end of the fine art.
After the whole purification hath been completed
It will be prepared and boiled in the sun
Or in the warm dung of its time,
Which extendeth itself very far
Until it becometh constant and perfect,
And the treasure of the Wise is in it.
The other ways are very subtle
And many mighty one fail therein,
For here is the purpose of the distillation
And the sublimation of the Wise Men.
The separation of the four elements
Is also called by the Wise Men
Air, water, and rectified fire.
The earth on the ground hath mislead many,
Having been deemed a worthless thing,
Although all the power lieth in it.
Some know not how to separate it
From their Cortibus, therefore they fail.
It was cast behind the door,
But the Wise Man taketh it up again,
Purifieth it snow-white and clear:
This is the ground, I say in truth.
But if thou dost wish to separate it,
Note that it is of no little importance,
For if they are not prepared
Then you are in error, that I swear.
Therefore thou must also have some vinegar
Which is revealed to the Wise Men,
Wherewith thou wilt effect the separation,

So that nothing earthly remaineth in it any mo
Till body and soul have to be separated,
Otherwise called fire and earth
And after they are thus purified,

And thereupon followeth the mixture, observe!
And so it cometh to a wondrous strength,
The finished figures with the unfinished.
And if the fire be likewise rightly controlled,
It will be entirely perfect
In much less time than a year.
Now thou hast the entire way in its length
On which are not more than two paths.
From these one soon wandereth and goeth astray,
Else it all standeth clear and plain.
The one is the water of the Wise Men,
Which is the Mercurius alone.
The other is called a vinegar,
And it is known only to a very few.
And this vinegar doth circle
Away from the philosophical iron.
It is Lord Aes whom it maketh glad.
Therefore they have combined so closely
Many hundred forms and names are given
After each hath chosen it.
One way springeth from the true source,
A few have worked on it for a whole year.
But many through their art and craft
Have shortened so long a space of time.
And quickly is the preparation set free
As Alchemy doth point out.
The preparation alone
Maketh this stone great and glorious.
Although there is but one matter
It lacketh nothing else.
But when it is clarified
Its name hath misled many.
However, I have revealed enough to thee
In many ways, forms, and fashions.
There are many names; I say
Let not thyself be misled from the true way.
In their scriptures the Elders write
That it is a draught, a great poison.
Others call it a snake, a monster,
Which is not costly anywhere.
It is common to all men.
Throughout the world, to rich and also to poor.
It is the property of the metals
Through which they conquer victoriously.
The same is a perfection
And setteth a golden crown upon it.
Now the practice is completed
For him who understandeth it and knoweth the matter.
Only two things more are to be chosen
Which thou wilt find by now
If thou dost follow the right way

And attend carefully to thy work.
The composition is the one
Which the Wise Men kept secret.
The nature of the fire also hath hidden craft;
Therefore its order is another.
With that, one should, not deal too much
Or else all execution is lost.
One cannot be too subtle with it.
As the hen hatcheth out the chick
So also shall it be in the beginning,
And time itself will prove it.
For just as the fire is regulated
Will this treasure itself be produced.
Be industrious, constant, peaceful, and pious,
And also ask God for His help:
If thou dost obtain that, then always remember
The poor and their needs.

Emerald Tablet of Hermes

Many years ago, a group of people decided to publish different translations of the Emerald Tablet and various commentaries upon it. The group broke up, the work was never finished.... Here is some of what remained. Verses have been numbered for comparison. - Jon Marshall.

[Back to pieces on Emerald Tablet.](#)

The Emerald Tablet of Hermes

History of the Tablet

History of the Tablet (largely summarised from Needham 1980, & Holmyard 1957)

The Tablet probably first appeared in the West in editions of the pseudo-Aristotelean *Secretum Secretorum* which was actually a translation of the *Kitab SIRR al-Asrar*, a book of advice to kings which was translated into latin by Johannes Hispalensis c. 1140 and by Philip of Tripoli c.1243. Other translations of the Tablet may have been made during the same period by Plato of Tivoli and Hugh of Santalla, perhaps from different sources.

The date of the *Kitab SIRR al-Asrar* is uncertain, though c.800 has been suggested and it is not clear when the tablet became part of this work.

Holmyard was the first to find another early arabic version (Ruska found a 12th century recension claiming to have been dictated by Sergius of Nablus) in the *Kitab Ustuqus al-Uss al-Thani* (Second Book of the Elements of Foundation) attributed to Jabir. Shortly after Ruska found another version appended to the *Kitab SIRR al-Khaliqa wa San`at al-Tabi`a* (Book of the Secret of Creation and the Art of Nature), which is also known as the *Kitab Balaniyus al-Hakim fi'l-`Ilal* (book of Balinas the wise on the Causes). It has been proposed that this book was written may have been written as early as 650, and was definitely finished by the Caliphate of al-Ma'mun (813-33).

Scholars have seen similarities between this book and the Syriac Book of Treasures written by Job of Odessa (9th century) and more interestingly the Greek writings of the bishop Nemesius of Emesa in Syria from the mid fourth century. However though this suggests a possible Syriac source, non of these writings contain the tablet.

Balinas is usually identified with Apollonius of Tyna, but there is little evidence to connect him with the *Kitab Balabiyus*, and even if there was, the story implies that Balinas found the tablet rather than wrote it, and the recent discoveries of the dead sea scrolls and the nag hamamdi texts suggest that hiding texts in caves is not impossible, even if we did not have the pyramids before us.

Ruska has suggested an origin further east, and Needham has proposed an origin in China.

Holmyard, Davis and Anon all consider that this Tablet may be one of the earliest of all alchemical works we have that survives.

It should be remarked that apparently the Greeks and Egyptians used the term translated as 'emerald' for emeralds, green granites, "and perhaps green jasper". In medieval times the emerald table of the Gothic kings of Spain, and the Sacro catino- a dish said to have belonged to the Queen of Sheba, to have been used at the last supper, and to be made of emerald, were made of green glass [Steele and Singer: 488].

Translations

From Jabir ibn Hayyan.

0) Balinas mentions the engraving on the table in the hand of Hermes, which says:

- 1) Truth! Certainty! That in which there is no doubt!
- 2) That which is above is from that which is below, and that which is below is from that which is above, working the miracles of one.
- 3) As all things were from one.
- 4) Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon.
- 5) The Earth carried it in her belly, and the Wind nourished it in her belly,
- 7) as Earth which shall become Fire.
- 7a) Feed the Earth from that which is subtle, with the greatest power.
- 8) It ascends from the earth to the heaven and becomes ruler over that which is above and that which is below.
- 14) And I have already explained the meaning of the whole of this in two of these books of mine.
[Holmyard 1923: 562.]

Another Arabic Version (from the German of Ruska, translated by 'Anonymous').

0) Here is that which the priest Sagijus of Nabalus has dictated concerning the entrance of Balinas into the hidden chamber... After my entrance into the chamber, where the talisman was set up, I came up to an old man sitting on a golden throne, who was holding an emerald table in one hand. And behold the following - in Syriac, the primordial language- was written thereon:

- 1) Here (is) a true explanation, concerning which there can be no doubt.
- 2) It attests: The above from the below, and the below from the above -the work of the miracle of the One.
- 3) And things have been from this primal substance through a single act. How wonderful is this work! It is the main (principle) of the world and is its maintainer.
- 4) Its father is the sun and its mother the moon; the
- 5) wind has borne it in its body, and the earth has nourished it.
- 6) the father of talismen and the protector of miracles
- 6a) whose powers are perfect, and whose lights are confirmed (?),
- 7) a fire that becomes earth.
- 7a) Separate the earth from the fire, so you will attain the subtle as more inherent than the gross, with care and sagacity.
- 8) It rises from earth to heaven, so as to draw the lights of the heights to itself, and descends to the earth; thus within it are the forces of the above and the below;
- 9) because the light of lights within it, thus does the darkness flee before it.
- 10) The force of forces, which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates into everything gross.
- 11) The structure of the microcosm is in accordance with the structure of the macrocosm.
- 12) And accordingly proceed the knowledgeable.
- 13) And to this aspired Hermes, who was threefold graced with wisdom.
- 14) And this is his last book, which he concealed in the chamber.
[Anon 1985: 24-5]

Twelfth Century Latin

- 0) When I entered into the cave, I received the tablet zaradi, which was inscribed, from between the hands of Hermes, in which I discovered these words:
- 1) True, without falsehood, certain, most certain.
 - 2) What is above is like what is below, and what is below is like that which is above. To make the miracle of the one thing.
 - 3) And as all things were made from contemplation of one, so all things were born from one adaptation.
 - 4) Its father is the Sun, its mother is the Moon.
 - 5) The wind carried it in its womb, the earth breast fed it.
 - 6) It is the father of all 'works of wonder' (Telesmi) in the world.
 - 6a) Its power is complete (integra).
 - 7) If cast to (turned towards- versa fuerit) earth,
 - 7a) it will separate earth from fire, the subtle from the gross.
 - 8) With great capacity it ascends from earth to heaven. Again it descends to earth, and takes back the power of the above and the below.
 - 9) Thus you will receive the glory of the distinctiveness of the world. All obscurity will flee from you.
 - 10) This is the whole most strong strength of all strength, for it overcomes all subtle things, and penetrates all solid things.
 - 11a) Thus was the world created.
 - 12) From this comes marvelous adaptations of which this is the procedure.
 - 13) Therefore I am called Hermes, because I have three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.
 - 14) And complete is what I had to say about the work of the Sun, from the book of Galieni Alfachimi.
- [From Latin in Steele and Singer 1928: 492.]

Translation from Aurelium Occultae Philosophorum..Georgio Beato

- 1) This is true and remote from all cover of falsehood
 - 2) Whatever is below is similar to that which is above. Through this the marvels of the work of one thing are procured and perfected.
 - 3) Also, as all things are made from one, by the consideration of one, so all things were made from this one, by conjunction.
 - 4) The father of it is the sun, the mother the moon.
 - 5) The wind bore it in the womb. Its nurse is the earth, the mother of all perfection.
 - 6a) Its power is perfected.
 - 7) If it is turned into earth,
 - 7a) separate the earth from the fire, the subtle and thin from the crude and course, prudently, with modesty and wisdom.
 - 8) This ascends from the earth into the sky and again descends from the sky to the earth, and receives the power and efficacy of things above and of things below.
 - 9) By this means you will acquire the glory of the whole world, and so you will drive away all shadows and blindness.
 - 10) For this by its fortitude snatches the palm from all other fortitude and power. For it is able to penetrate and subdue everything subtle and everything crude and hard.
 - 11a) By this means the world was founded
 - 12) and hence the marvelous conjunctions of it and admirable effects, since this is the way by which these marvels may be brought about.
 - 13) And because of this they have called me Hermes Trismegistus since I have the three parts of the wisdom and Philosophy of the whole universe.
 - 14) My speech is finished which I have spoken concerning the solar work
- [Davis 1926: 874.]

Translation of Issac Newton c. 1680.

- 1) Tis true without lying, certain & most true.
 - 2) That wch is below is like that wch is above & that wch is above is like yt wch is below to do ye miracles of one only thing.
 - 3) And as all things have been & arose from one by ye mediation of one: so all things have their birth from this one thing by adaptation.
 - 4) The Sun is its father, the moon its mother,
 - 5) the wind hath carried it in its belly, the earth its nourse.
 - 6) The father of all perfection in ye whole world is here.
 - 7) Its force or power is entire if it be converted into earth.
 - 7a) Seperate thou ye earth from ye fire, ye subtile from the gross sweetly wth great industry.
 - 8) It ascends from ye earth to ye heaven & again it desends to ye earth and receives ye force of things superior & inferior.
 - 9) By this means you shall have ye glory of ye whole world & thereby all obscurity shall fly from you.
 - 10) Its force is above all force. ffor it vanquishes every subtile thing & penetrates every solid thing.
 - 11a) So was ye world created.
 - 12) From this are & do come admirable adaptaions whereof ye means (Or process) is here in this.
 - 13) Hence I am called Hermes Trismegist, having the three parts of ye philosophy of ye whole world.
 - 14) That wch I have said of ye operation of ye Sun is accomplished & ended.
- [Dobbs 1988: 183-4.]

Translation from Kriegsmann (?) alledgedly from the Phoenician

- 1) I speak truly, not falsely, certainly and most truly
 - 2) These things below with those above and those with these join forces again so that they produce a single thing the most wonderful of all.
 - 3) And as the whole universe was brought forth from one by the word of one GOD, so also all things are regenerated perpetually from this one according to the disposition of Nature.
 - 4) It has the Sun for father and the Moon for mother:
 - 5) it is carried by the air as if in a womb, it is nursed by the earth.
 - 6) It is the cause, this, of all perfection of all things throughout the universe.
 - 6a) This will attain the highest perfection of powers
 - 7) if it shall be reduced into earth
 - 7a) Distribute here the earth and there the fire, thin out the density of this the suavest (suavissima) thing of all.
 - 8) Ascend with the greatest sagacity of genius from the earth into the sky, and thence descend again to the earth, and recognise that the forces of things above and of things below are one,
 - 9) so as to posses the glory of the whole world- and beyond this man of abject fate may have nothing further.
 - 10) This thing itself presently comes forth stronger by reasons of this fortitude: it subdues all bodies surely, whether tenuous or solid, by penetrating them.
 - 11a) And so everything whatsoever that the world contains was created.
 - 12) Hence admirable works are accomplished which are instituted (carried out- instituuntur) according to the same mode.
 - 13) To me therefor the name of Hermes Trismegistus has been awarded because I am discovered as the Teacher of the three parts of the wisdom of the world.
 - 14) These then are the considerations which I have concluded ought to be written down concerning the readiest operations of the Chymic art.
- [Davis 1926: 875 slightly modified.]

From Sigismund Bacstrom (allegedly translated from Chaldean).

- 0) The Secret Works of CHIRAM ONE in essence, but three in aspect.
 - 1) It is true, no lie, certain and to be depended upon,
 - 2) the superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior agrees with the superior, to effect that one truly wonderful work.
 - 3) As all things owe their existence to the will of the only one, so all things owe their origin to the one only thing, the most hidden by the arrangement of the only God.
 - 4) The father of that one only thing is the sun its mother is the moon,
 - 5) the wind carries it in its belly; but its nurse is a spirituous earth.
 - 6) That one only thing is the father of all things in the Universe.
 - 6a) Its power is perfect,
 - 7) after it has been united with a spirituous earth.
 - 7a) Separate that spirituous earth from the dense or crude by means of a gentle heat, with much attention.
 - 8) In great measure it ascends from the earth up to heaven, and descends again, newborn, on the earth, and the superior and the inferior are increased in power.
 - 9) By this wilt thou partake of the honours of the whole world. And Darkness will fly from thee.
 - 10) This is the strength of all powers. With this thou wilt be able to overcome all things and transmute all what is fine and what is coarse.
 - 11a) In this manner the world was created;
 - 12) the arrangements to follow this road are hidden.
 - 13) For this reason I am called Chiram Telat Mechasot, one in essence, but three in aspect. In this trinity is hidden the wisdom of the whole world.
 - 14) It is ended now, what I have said concerning the effects of the sun. Finish of the Tabula Smaragdina.
- [See Hall 1977: CLVIII,]

From Madame Blavatsky

- 2) What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is similar to that which is below to accomplish the wonders of the one thing.
 - 3) As all things were produced by the mediation of one being, so all things were produced from this one by adaption.
 - 4) Its father is the sun, its mother the moon.
 - 6a) It is the cause of all perfection throughout the whole earth.
 - 7) Its power is perfect if it is changed into earth.
 - 7a) Separate the earth from the fire, the subtile from the gross, acting prudently and with judgement.
 - 8) Ascend with the greatest sagacity from earth to heaven, and unite together the power of things inferior and superior;
 - 9) thus you will possess the light of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly away from you.
 - 10) This thing has more fortitude than fortitude itself, because it will overcome every subtile thing and penetrate every solid thing.
 - 11a) By it the world was formed.
- [Blavatsky 1972: 507.]

From Fulcanelli (translated from the French by Sieveking)

- 1) This is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth:-
- 2) As below, so above; and as above so below. With this knowledge alone you may work miracles.
- 3) And since all things exist in and emanate from the ONE Who is the ultimate Cause, so all things are born after their kind from this ONE.
- 4) The Sun is the father, the Moon the mother;
- 5) the wind carried it in his belly. Earth is its nurse and its guardian.
- 6) It is the Father of all things,

- 6a) the eternal Will is contained in it.
 - 7) Here, on earth, its strength, its power remain one and undivided.
 - 7a) Earth must be separated from fire, the subtle from the dense, gently with unremitting care.
 - 8) It arises from the earth and descends from heaven; it gathers to itself the strength of things above and things below.
 - 9) By means of this one thing all the glory of the world shall be yours and all obscurity flee from you.
 - 10) It is power, strong with the strength of all power, for it will penetrate all mysteries and dispel all ignorance.
 - 11a) By it the world was created.
 - 12) From it are born manifold wonders, the means to achieving which are here given
 - 13) It is for this reason that I am called Hermes Trismegistus; for I possess the three essentials of the philosophy of the universe.
 - 14) This is the sum total of the work of the Sun.
- [Sadoul 1972: 25-6.]

From Fulcanelli, new translation

- 1) It is true without untruth, certain and most true:
 - 2) that which is below is like that which is on high, and that which is on high is like that which is below; by these things are made the miracles of one thing.
 - 3) And as all things are, and come from One, by the mediation of One, So all things are born from this unique thing by adaption.
 - 4) The Sun is the father and the Moon the mother.
 - 5) The wind carries it in its stomach. The earth is its nourisher and its receptacle.
 - 6) The Father of all the Theleme of the universal world is here.
 - 6a) Its force, or power, remains entire,
 - 7) if it is converted into earth.
 - 7a) You separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently with great industry.
 - 8) It climbs from the earth and descends from the sky, and receives the force of things superior and things inferior.
 - 9) You will have by this way, the glory of the world and all obscurity will flee from you.
 - 10) It is the power strong with all power, for it will defeat every subtle thing and penetrate every solid thing
 - 11a) In this way the world was created.
 - 12) From it are born wonderful adaptations, of which the way here is given.
 - 13) That is why I have been called Hermes Trismegistus, having the three parts of the universal philosophy.
 - 14) This, that I have called the solar Work, is complete.
- [Translated from Fulcanelli 1964: 312.]

From Idres Shah

- 1) The truth, certainty, truest, without untruth.
- 2) What is above is like what is below. What is below is like what is above. The miracle of unity is to be attained.
- 3) Everything is formed from the contemplation of unity, and all things come about from unity, by means of adaptation.
- 4) Its parents are the Sun and Moon.
- 5) It was borne by the wind and nurtured by the Earth.
- 6) Every wonder is from it
- 6a) and its power is complete.
- 7) Throw it upon earth,
- 7a) and earth will separate from fire. The impalpable separated from the palpable.
- 8) Through wisdom it rises slowly from the world to heaven. Then it descends to the world combining the power of the upper and the lower.
- 9) Thus you will have the illumination of all the world, and darkness will disappear.
- 10) This is the power of all strength- it overcomes that which is delicate and penetrates through solids.

- 11a) This was the means of the creation of the world.
 12) And in the future wonderful developments will be made, and this is the way.
 13) I am Hermes the Threefold Sage, so named because I hold the three elements of all wisdom.
 14) And thus ends the revelation of the work of the Sun.
 (Shah 1964: 198).

Hypothetical Chinese Original

- 1) True, true, with no room for doubt, certain, worthy of all trust.
 2) See, the highest comes from the lowest, and the lowest from the highest; indeed a marvelous work of the tao.
 3) See how all things originated from It by a single process.
 4) The father of it (the elixir) is the sun (Yang), its mother the moon (Yin).
 5) The wind bore it in its belly, and the earth nourished it.
 6) This is the father of wondrous works (changes and transformations), the guardian of mysteries,
 6a) perfect in its powers, the animator of lights.
 7) This fire will be poured upon the earth...
 7a) So separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, acting prudently and with art.
 8) It ascends from the earth to the heavens (and orders the lights above), then descends again to the earth; and in it is the power of the highest and the lowest.
 9) Thus when you have the light of lights darkness will flee away from you.
 10) With this power of powers (the elixir) you shall be able to get the mastery of every subtle thing, and be able to penetrate everything that is gross.
 11a) In this way was the great world itself formed.
 12) Hence thus and thus marvellous operations will be achieved.
 [Slightly altered from Needham 1980: 371.]

TEXTUAL REMARKS

On #3 Some Latin texts have meditatione (contemplation), others mediatione (mediation). Some texts have adaptatione (by adaptation), some have adoptionis (by adoption).

On #6 'Telesmi' is a greek word, some texts have 'thelesmi'.

On #6, 7 In some texts 'Its Power is Complete' is a separate line. In the generally accepted reading, this runs into #7 producing 'Its Power is complete if versa fuerit to earth'. Where possible this has been indicated by diving these lines in 6, 6a, 7, & 7a

On #7, 8 In some texts the 'Wisdom, capacity' (magno ingenio) is read as referring to #7, and hence the operation of Separation is to be carried out 'carefully', in other readings the 'wisdom' is held to refer to #8 and the product of the Separation which thus ascends with 'wisdom'.

Needham quotes Ruska to the effect that sections 3, 12 and 14 are probably late additions (op. cit)

COMMENTARIES

On #1

Hortulanus: "... the most true Sun is procreated by art. And he says most true in the superlative degree because the Sun generated by this art exceeds all natural Sun in all of its properties, medicinal and otherwise" (Davis modified by 'Linden')

On #2

Albertus Magnus: Hermes says "the powers of all things below originate in the stars and constellations of the heavens: and that all these powers are poured down into all things below by the circle called Alaur, which is, they said, the first circle of the constellations". This descent is "noble when the materials receiving these powers are more like things above in their brightness and transparency; ignoble when the materials are confused and foul, so that the heavenly power is, as it were oppressed. Therefore they say that this is the reason why precious stones more than anything else have wonderful powers" (60 -61). While the "seven kinds of metals have their forms from the seven planets of the lower spheres" (168).

Hortulanus: "the stone is divided into two principle parts by the magistracy, into a superior part which ascends above and into an inferior part which remains below fixed and clear. And these two parts moreover are concordant in their virtue since the inferior part is earth which is called nurse and ferment, and the superior part is the spirit which quickens the whole stone and raises it up. Wherefore separation made, and conjunction celebrated, many miracles are effected."

Burckhardt: "This refers to the reciprocal dependence of the active and the passive... essential form cannot be manifested without passive materia.. the efficacy of the spiritual power depends on the preparedness of the human 'container' and vice versa.... 'Above' and 'below' are thus related to this one thing and complement one another in its regard".

Schumaker: "There are corresponding planes in various levels of creation, hence it is safe to draw analogies between macrocosm and microcosm, the mineral kingdom and the human, animal and vegetable kingdoms etc".

Needham: "the whole affirmation looks remarkably like the doctrine that extreme of Yang generates Yin, and vice versa".

On #3

Hortulanus: "our stone, which was created by God, was born and came forth from a confused mass, containing in itself all the elements- and hence our stone was born by this single miracle".

Trithemius: "Is it not true that all things flow from one thing, from the goodness of the One, and that whatever is joined to Unity cannot be diverse, but rather fructifies by means of the simplicity and adaptability of the One" "What is born from Unity? Is it not the ternary? Take note: Unity is unmixed, the binary is compounded, and the ternary is reduced to the simplicity of Unity. I, Trithemius, am not of three minds, but persist in a single integrated mind taking pleasure in the ternary, which gives birth to a marvelous offspring" (Bran)

Burckhardt: "the undivided, invisible Light of the unconditioned One is refracted into multiplicity by the prism of the Spirit". As the Spirit contemplates the Unity without full comprehension "it manifests the 'many-sided' All, just as a lens transmits the light it receives as a bundle of rays".

Schumaker: As God is one, all created objects come from one thing, an undifferentiated primal matter.

On #4

Hortulanus: " As one animal naturally generates more animals similar to itself, so the Sun artificially generates Sun by the power of multiplication of...the stone.... in this artificial generation it is necessary that the Sun have a suitable receptacle, consonant with itself, for its sperm and its tincture, and this is the Luna of the philosophers"

Redgrove: Sun and Moon "probably stand for Spirit and Matter respectively, not gold and silver".

Burckhardt: Sun "is the spirit (nous), while the moon is the soul (psyche)".

Schumaker: "If the moon is associated with water, as because of its 'moisture' [as] was usual, and the sun with fire, the prima materia is understood to have been generated by fire, born of water, brought down from the sky by wind, and nourished by earth".

On #5

Albertus Magnus: by this Hermes "means the levigatio [making light weight] of the material, raising it to the

properties of Air. And why he says the wind carries the material [of the stone] in its belly is that, when the material is placed in an alembic- which is a vessel made like those in which rosewater is prepared- then by evaporation it is rendered subtle and is raised towards the properties of Air... And there distills and issues from the mouth of the alembic a watery or oily liquor with all the powers of the elements" (17). In metals the moisture is not separated from the dryness, but is dissolved in it; and being so dissolved, it moves about there as if it had been swallowed by the Earth and were moving about in its bowels. And on this account Hermes said "The mother of metal is Earth that carries it in her belly".

Hortulanus: "It is plain that wind is air, and air is life, and life is spirit... And thus it is necessary that the wind should bear the whole stone.... [However] our stone without the ferment of the earth will never come to the effect, which ferment is called food"

Trithemius: "the wind carries its seed in her belly".

Maier: By "the wind carried him in its belly" Hermes means " 'He, whose father is the Sun, and whose mother is the Moon, will be carried before he is born, by wind and vapour, just as a flying bird is carried by air'. From the vapours of winds, which are nothing else but wind in motion, water proceeds, when condensed, and from that water, mixed with earth, all minerals and metals arise". The substance carried by the wind is "in chemical respect.. the sulphur, which is carried in mercury". Lull says "'The stone is the fire, carried in the belly of the air'. In physical respect it is the unborn child that will soon be born". To be clearer, "'All mercury is composed of vapours, that is to say of water, which the earth raises along with it into the thin air, and of earth, which the air compels to return into watery earth or earthy water" As the elements contained within are each reduced to a watery condition, they either follow the volatile elements upward as in common mercury, or they stay below with the solid elements as in philosophical Mercury "and in the solid metals". So "Mercury is the wind which receives the sulphur... as the unripe fruit from the mothers womb, or from the ashes of the burnt mother's body and takes it to a place where it may ripen". Ripley says "our child shall be born in the air, that is the belly of the wind" [de Jong 1969: 55- 7.]

Maier (2nd Comment) on "The earth is its nurse": Food changes into the substance of the eater and is then assimilated. "This harmony dominates the whole of nature, for the like enjoys the like". The same happens in the Work and Nature "just as is the growth of the child in the mother's womb. So also a father, a mother and a nurse have been attributed to the philosophical child... it comes into being from the twofold seed and then grows as an embryo does". As a woman must moderate her diet to avoid miscarriage, "in the same way one must set about philosophical work with moderation". The Seeds also have to be united. "Philosophers say that the one comes from the East and the other from the West and become one; what does this mean but combining in a retort, a moderate temperature and nourishment?". "One may wonder why the earth is referred to as the nurse of the philosophic child, since barrenness and dryness are the main properties of the element earth". The answer is that not the element, but the whole Earth is meant. "It is the nurse of Heaven not because it resolves, washes and moistens the foetus, but because it coagulates, fastens and colours the latter and changes it into sap and blood... The Earth contains a wonderful juice which changes the nature of the one who feeds on it, as Romulus is believed to have been changed by the wolf's milk into a bellicose individual" [de Jong 1969: 63 -5.]

Burckhardt: "The wind which carries the spiritual germ in its body, is the vital breath". Vital breath is the substance of the realm between heaven and earth, it "is also Quicksilver which contains the germ of gold in a liquid state". The earth is "the body, as an inward reality".

On #6

Burckhardt: the word talisman is derived from Telesma. Talismans work by corresponding to their prototype, and by making a "'condensation', on the subtle plane, of a spiritual state. This explains the similarity between the talisman, as the bearer of an invisible influence, and the alchemical elixir, as the 'ferment' of metallic transformation".

On #7

Hortulanus: The stone is perfect and complete if it is turned into earth "that is if the soul of the stone itself... is turned into earth, namely of the stone and is fixed so that the whole substance of the stone becomes one with its nurse, namely the earth, and the whole stone is converted to ferment"

Trithemius: it is the seed from #5 that must be cast upon the earth.

Bacstrom: "Process- First Distillation".

Burckhardt: "when the Spirit is 'embodied', the volatile becomes fixed".

Schumaker: if the prime matter is to be used it must be fixed into a substance "capable of being handled".

On #7a

Hortulanus: "You will separate, that is, you will dissolve, because solution is separation of parts.."

Burckhardt: The separation "means the 'extraction' of the soul from the body".

Schumaker "Since the volatile principle is fire -or sometimes, air- stability is produced by its removal. Or, alternatively but less probably, the earth is impurity ('the gross') and a purified fire ('the subtle') is what is wanted.

On #8

Albertus Magnus: In intending to teach the operations of alchemy Hermes says the stone "'ascends to heaven' when by roasting and calcination it takes on the properties of Fire; for alchemists mean by calcinatio the reduction of material to powder by burning and roasting. And the material 'again descends from heaven to earth' when it takes on the properties of Earth by inhumatio, for inhumation revives and nourishes what was previously killed by calcination".

Hortulanus: "And now he deals with multiplication [of the stone]." "Although our stone is divided in the first operation into four parts... there are really two principle parts". The ascending, non fixed, and the earth or ferment.

"It is necessary to have a large quantity of this non fixed part and to give it to the stone which has been made thoroughly clean from dirt.... until the entire stone is borne above by the virtue of the spirit"

"Afterwards it is necessary to incerate the same stone,..with the oil that was extracted in the first operation, which oil is called the water of the stone" Roast or boil by sublimation until the "entire stone descends... and remains fixed and fluent". "That which is coporeal is made spiritual by sublimation, and that which is spiritual is made corporeal by descension".

Trithemius: "When the ternary has at last returned to itself it may, by an inner disposition and great delight, ascend from the earth to heaven, thereby receiving both superior and inferior power; thus will it be made powerful and glorious in the clarity of Unity, demonstrate its ability to bring forth every number, and put to flight all obscurity".

Bacstrom: "Last Digestion". "The Azoth ascends from the Earth, from the bottom of the Glass, and redescends in Veins and drops into the Earth and by this continual circulation the Azoth is more and more subtilised, Volatilizes Sol and carries the volatilized Solar atoms along with it and thereby becomes a Solar Azoth, i.e. our third and genuine Sophic Mercury". The circulation must continue until "it ceases of itself, and the Earth has sucked it all in, when it becomes the black pitchy matter, the Toad [the substances in the alchemical retort and also the lower elements in the body of man -Hall], which denotes complete putrifaction or Death of the compound".

Read, suggests this section describes the use of a kerotakis, in which metals are suspended and subject to the action of gasses released from substances heated in the base, and from their condensation and circulation.

Burckhardt: "dissolution of consciousness from all formal 'coagulations' is followed by the 'crystalisation' of the Spirit, so that active and passive are perfectly united."

Schumaker: "Separate the volatile part of the substance by vaporization but continue heating until the vapour reunites with the parent body, whereupon you will have obtained the Stone".

On #9

Trithemius: When the ternary has returned to Unity cleansed of all impurities "the mind understands without contradiction all the mysteries of the excellently arranged arcanum".

Bacstrom: the black matter becomes White and Red. The Red "having been carried to perfection, medicinally and for Metals" is capable of supporting complete mental and physical health, and provides "ample means, in finitum multiplicabile to be benevolent and charitable, without any diminution of our inexhaustible resources, therefore well may it be called the Glory of the whole World". Contemplation and study of the Philosopher's Stone ("L. P.") elevates the mind to God. "The Philosophers say with great Truth, that the L.P. either finds a good man or makes one". "By invigorating the Organs the Soul makes use of for communicating with exterior objects, the Soul must acquire greater powers, not only for conception but also for retention". If we pray and have faith "all Obscurity must vanish of course".

Burckhardt: "Thus the light of the Spirit becomes constant..[and] ignorance, deception, uncertainty, doubt and foolishness will be removed from consciousness".

On #10

Trithemius: The Philosopher's Stone is another name for the 'one thing', and is able to "conquer every subtle thing and to penetrate every solid". "This very noble virtue... consists of maximal fortitude, touching everything with its desirable excellence".

Bacstrom: "The L.P. does possess all the Powers concealed in Nature, not for destruction but for exaltation and regeneration of matter, in the three Departments of Nature". "It refixes the most subtil Oxygen into its own firey Nature". The power increases "in a tenfold ratio, at every multiplication". So it can penetrate Gold and Silver, and fix mercury, Crystals and Glass Fluxes.

Burckhardt: "Alchemical fixation is nevertheless more inward... Through its union with the spirit bodily consciousness itself becomes a fine and penetrating power". He quotes Jabir "The body becomes a spirit, and takes on... fineness, lightness, extensibility, coloration... The spirit... becomes a body and acquires the latter's resistance to fire, immobility and duration. From both bodies a light substance is born, which.. precisely takes up a middle position between the two extremes".

Schumaker: The product of the distillation and reunion will "dominate less solid substances, but because of its own subtlety it will 'penetrate' and hence dominate, other solid things less pure and quasi-spiritual than itself".

On #11

Burckhardt: "the little world is created according to the prototype of the great world", when the human realises their original nature is the image of God.

Schumaker: "The alchemical operation is a paradigm of the creative process. We may note the sexual overtones of what has preceded"

On #12

Burckhardt: "In the Arabic text this is: "This way is traversed by the sages".

On #13

Hortulanus: "He here teaches in an occult manner the things from which the stone is made." "the stone is called perfect because it has in itself the nature of minerals, of vegetables and of animals. For the stone is three and one, tripple and single, having four natures.... and three colours, namely black, white and red. It is also called the grain of corn because unless it shall have died, it remains itself alone. And if it shall have died... it bears much fruit when it is in conjunction..."

Newton: "on account of this art Mercurius is called thrice greatest, having three parts of the philosophy of the whole world, since he signifies the Mercury of the philosophers.... and has dominion in the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, and the animal kingdom".

Bacstrom: the wisdom of the world (?) is hidden in "Chiram and its Use". Hermes "signifies a Serpent, and the Serpent used to be an Emblem of Knowledge or Wisdom."

Burckhardt: "The three parts of wisdom correspond to the three great divisions of the universe, namely, the spiritual,

psychic and corporeal realms, whose symbols are heaven, air and earth".

Schumaker: "The usual explanation of Trismegistus.. is that Hermes was the greatest philosopher, the greatest priest, and the greatest king".

General

Trithemius: "our philosophy is celestial, not worldly, in order that we may faithfully behold, by means of a direct intuition of the mind through faith and knowledge, that principle which we call God...."

Trithemius: "Study generates knowledge; knowledge prepares love; love, similarity; similarity, communion; communion, virtue; virtue, dignity; dignity, power; and power performs the miracle".

Newton "Inferior and superior, fixed and volatile, sulphur and quicksilver have a similar nature and are one thing, like man and wife. For they differ from one another only by degree of digestion and maturity. Sulphur is mature quicksilver, and quicksilver is immature sulphur: and on account of this affinity they unite like male and female, and they act on each other, and through that action they are mutually transmuted into each other and procreate a more noble offspring to accomplish the miracles of this one thing". "And just as all things were created from one Chaos by the design of one God, so in our art all things... are born from this one thing which is our Chaos, by the design of the Artificer and the skilful adaptation of things. And the generation of this is similar to the human, truly from a father and mother".

Blavatsky: the mysterious thing "is the universal, magical agent, the astral light, which in the correlations of its forces furnishes the alkahest, the philosopher's stone, and the elixir of life. Hermetic philosophy names it Azoth, the soul of the world, the celestial virgin, the great Magnes, etc" It appears to be that which gives organisation ("the maze of force-correlations"), and form i.e. the perfect geometry of snowflakes.

Sherwood Taylor: "the operation of the Sun.. was carried out by a 'spirit', universal, the source of all things, having the power of perfecting them. Its virtue is integral [# 6a] (ie having the power to convert the diverse into a single substance), if it be turned into earth (ie. solidified). This conveyed that the Stone was to be a solidified pneuma.

Pneuma was the link between earth and heaven, having the virtue of the celestial and subterranean regions- the power of the whole cosmos from the fixed stars to the centre of the earth. It overcomes every nature and penetrates every solid. It is the source of the whole world and so it can be the means of changing things in a wonderful way. The three parts of the philosophy of the whole world are presumably of the celestial, terrestrial, and subterranean regions".

Shah: The table is "the same as the Sufi dictum... 'Man is the microcosm, creation the macrocosm - the unity. All comes from One. By the joining of the power of contemplation all can be attained. This essence must be separated from the body first, then combined with the body. This is the Work. Start with yourself, end with all. Before man, beyond man, transformation".

A COMMENTARY OF IBN UMAIL

HERMUS said the secret of everything and the life of everything is Water.... This water becomes in wheat, ferment; in the vine, wine; in the olive, olive oil.... The beginning of the child is from water.... Regarding this spiritual water and the sanctified and thirsty earth, HERMUS the great, crowned with the glorious wisdom and the sublime sciences, said [#1] Truth it is, indubitable, certain and correct, [#2] that the High is from the Low and the Low is from the High. They bring about wonders through the one, just as things are produced from that one essence by a single preparation. Later by his statement [#4] Its father is the Sun and its mother the Moon he meant their male and their female. They are the two birds which are linked together in the pictures given regarding the beginning of the operation, and from them the spiritual tinctures are produced. And similarly they are at the end of the operation. Later in his statement [#7 ?] the subtle is more honourable than the gross, he means by the subtle the divine spiritual

water; and by the gross the earthly body. As for his later statement [#8] with gentleness and wisdom it will ascend from the earth to the sky, and will take fire from the higher lights, he means by this the distillation and the raising of the water into the air. As for his later statement [#8a] It will descend to the earth, containing the strength of the high and the low, he means by this the breathing in (istinshaq) of the air, and the taking of the spirit from it, and its subsequent elevation to the highest degree of heat, and it is the Fire, and the low is the body, and its content of the controlling earthly power which imparts the colours. For there lie in it those higher powers, as well as the earthly powers which were submerged in it.

The natural operation and decay causes it to be manifest, and hence the strength of the earth, and of the air, and of the higher fire passed in to it. Later he said [#9] it will overcome the high and the low because in it is found the light of lights: and consequently the darkness will flee from it. [See Stapleton et al. p 74, 81.]

APPENDIX

Translation from Roger Bacon's edition of *Secretum Secretorum* made c 1445

- 1) Truth hath hym so, and it is no doubt,
 - 2) that the lover is to the heigher, and the heigher to the lower aunsweren.
- The worcher forsoth of all myracles is the one and sool God, of and fro Whom Cometh all meruelous operacions.
- 3) So all thynges were created of o soole substance, and of o soole disposicion,
 - 4) the fader wherof is the sone, and the moone moder,
 - 5) that brought hym forth by blast or aier in the wombe, the erthe taken fro it,
 - 6) to whom is seid the increat fader, tresour of myracles, and yever of vertues.
 - 7) Of fire is made erthe.
- 7a) Depart the erthe fro the fire, for the sotiller is worthier than the more grosse, and the thynne thyng than the thik.
This most be do wisely and discretly.
- 8) It ascendith fro the erth into the heven, and falleth fro heven to the erthe, and therof sleith the higher and the lower vertue.
 - 9) And yf it lordship in the lower and in the heigher, and thow shalt lordship aboue and beneth, which forsoth is the light of lightes, and therfor fro the wolle fle all derknesse.
 - 10) The higher vertue ouer-cometh all, for sothe all thynne thyng doth in dense thynges.
 - 11a) After the disposicion of the more world rynneth this worchyng.
- 13) And for this prophetisyng of the trynyte of God Hermogenes it called Triplex, trebil in philosophie, as Aristotle seith.

[See Manzalaoui 1977: 65 -6.]

Translation of same source, made c. 1485.

- 1) The trwthe is so, and that it is no dowght,
- 2) that lower thyngis to hyer thyng, and hyer to lower be correspondent. But the Werker of myracles is on Godde alone, fro Home descendyng euery meruulus werk.
- 3) And so alle thyngis be creat of one only substauns, be an only dysposicion,
- 4) of home the fadyr is the sonne, and the mone the modyr,
- 5) qwyche bar her be the wedyr in the wombe. The erthe is priuyd fro her-to.
- 6) This is clepyd or seyde the fadyr of enchauntmentis, tresour of myracclis, the yessuer of vertuys.
- 7) Be a lytil it is made erthe.
- 7a) Depart that qwyche is erthly fro that qwyche is fi Fry, for that qwyche is sotel is mor wurthy han that qwyche is grose, and that rar, porous, or lyght, is mor bettyr than qwyche is thyk of substauns. This is done wysely or dyscretly.
- 8) It ascendyng fro the erth in-to heuyn and fallyng fro heuyn in-to erth, and ther-of it sleth the ouyr vertu and the nedyr vertu, so it hath lorchyp in the lowe thyngis and hye thingis,
- 9) and thu lordschyp pist vppeward and downward, and with the is the lyght of lyghtys. And for that alle derkness

schal fle fro the.

10) The ovyr vetu ourcomyth alle, for euiry rar rhyng werkyth in to euiry thyk thyng.

11a) And aftyr the dysposicion of the mor world rennyth thys werking.

13) And for that Hermogines is clepyd threfoold in filosophye, and of the meruellys of he world.

[See Manzalaoui 1977: 174-5]

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A Commentary on the Emerald Tablet

This 13 stanza verse may be, to those who understand it, one of the most profound examples of wordmanship ever recorded. To this writer, these words hold within their scope the essence of all scripture, myth, and spiritual metaphor.

The following interpretation of the Emerald Tablet of Hermes is offered by this writer who has spent many years contemplating, and proving, its content. My intent is only to aid those whose inner being responds to the tablet's song. Please understand that there are as many interpretations as there are interpreters, but there is only one Tablet. Did Hermes write it? Was there such a person, after all? We cannot be sure, nevertheless, the words are before us and they resonate with the truth and power of their meaning.

Each person who is drawn to the Emerald Tablet will have their own ideas and understanding of it, as it should be. Hopefully, some of these ideas will be shared so that everyone may benefit. No one person, in my opinion, can comprehend all that these words contain. - Cohn de Toraeke.

[Back to pieces on Emerald Tablet.](#)

THE EMERALD TABLET OF HERMES

- I. I SPEAK NOT FICTION, BUT WHAT IS CERTAIN AND MOST TRUE.
- II. WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, AND THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW FOR PERFORMING THE MIRACLE OF ONE THING.
- III. AND AS ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM ONE, BY THE MEDIATION OF ONE, SO ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM THIS ONE THING BY ADAPTATION.
- IV. ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER WAS THE MOON, THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS BELLY, ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH.
- V. IT IS THE CAUSE OF ALL PERFECTION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.
- VI. ITS POWER IS PERFECT IF IT BE CHANGED INTO THE EARTH.
- VII. SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, GENTLY, AND WITH JUDGMENT.
- VIII. IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH TO HEAVEN, AND DESCENDS AGAIN TO EARTH, THUS YOU WILL POSSESS THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD AND ALL OBSCURITY WILL FLY AWAY.
- IX. THIS THING IS THE FORTITUDE OF ALL FORTITUDE, BECAUSE IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS, AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID THING.
- X. THUS ARE ALL THINGS CREATED.
- XI. THENCE PROCEED WONDERFUL ADAPTATIONS WHICH ARE PRODUCED IN THIS WAY.
- XII. THEREFORE AM I CALLED HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, POSSESSING THE THREE PARTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WHOLE WORLD.
- XIII. WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE OPERATIONS OF THE SUN IS COMPLETE.

First: The meaning of the term - HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY.

The word "Hermetic" comes from the name Hermes Trismagistus; the Egyptian God of Wisdom who was blessed with three Magisteries, and who, it is traditionally believed, wrote the Emerald Tablet.

[hermetic] - sealed and impenetrable from the outside.

[philosophy] - from philo(s); Greek/Latin - beloved, or loving

+ sophia; Greek - wisdom. Therefore, Hermetic Philosophy means "The Sealed and Beloved Wisdom."

Hermes' words are simple and eloquent, and yet they encompass the whole Philosophy of the Great Art which includes the practical work of making the plant stone and mineral stone (referred to as The Minor Work and The Major Work, respectively).

Understand that Hermetic Philosophy IS the key. How one makes the stones, according to the sages, is as simple as making bread once the ingredients and processes are understood. They say that when the seeker understands the NATURE of the stones and their correct PROCESSES they will, with industry and perseverance, easily accomplish

the work.

In this Spirit and Light Hermes' words apply to the comprehension of both stones for they are similar in nature, but very different in degree. Above all else, according to the sages, you will succeed in possessing the Stone when you have first succeeded in possessing it, metaphorically, within your heart. This is called, "At-One-ment", which is more commonly pronounced, atonement. Also - isn't it curious that At-One-ment and (S)tonement share the same numerical value of 8?

Hermes, through his words, becomes a metaphor for Creation's process.

The EMERALD TABLET OF HERMES - an interpretation.

I. I SPEAK NOT FICTION, BUT WHAT IS CERTAIN AND MOST TRUE.

"I SPEAK . . ." In the Christian Bible, at the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, it is written, 'In the beginning was the WORD, and the WORD was with God, and the Word WAS God.' This implies sound (vibration) as the first cause or affect upon Creation by 'I' (God), the Source of all that is to follow. EveryTHING in the universe, from the incomprehensible, to the most rarefied thought, even black holes, flows from 'I' and carries the essence of 'I' within it, flesh of its flesh, so to speak.

"NOT FICTION, . . ." Fiction is imaginary falsehood. Though a thought may be false within its context, it still exists and has its being in Mind; only its application can be false. Just as there is no fiction in a giant redwood that began from a single seed, there is no fiction in Creation, which began from a single word. The first infinitesimal SOUND of the first Word instantly established infinite MIND.

"BUT WHAT . . ." This inquisition opens the void of the NO-THING like a mother's womb opens to receive her husband's seed. Though there IS only the ONE, the ONE must acknowledge Itself to become itself, and thus the Word becomes two in ONE Mind - positive, and negative, male and female.

"IS CERTAIN . . ." The first stirring of the Word is Potential, undefined yet CERTAIN (Absolute) - 'Omniscient, Omnipresent, and Omnipotent.

". . . AND MOST TRUE." Potential desires expression. Inherent within the dual nature of Mind, which is both male as LIFE, and female as LAW (here, Law implies the principles of universal structure), is WILL, which, in turn, empowers Mind's desire to express itself through CONCEPTion. Their offspring is LOVE or the REALITY of LAWful LIFE, which is the 'MOST TRUE' love.
. . . . What is more lovable than the TRUTH itself - their Son?

The phonetics of Son and Sun, or Sol and Soul, is not accidental. Life, Law, and Truth are, alchemically speaking, Spirit (Mercury), Body (Salt), Soul (Sulfur), respectively. The TRINITY.

With these first eleven words Hermes has described creation.

II. WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, AND THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW FOR PERFORMING THE MIRACLE OF ONE THING.

"WHAT IS BELOW IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE, . . ." and "AND THAT WHICH IS ABOVE IS LIKE THAT WHICH IS BELOW . . ." These words bring to mind so many interpretations that it seems redundant to comment upon them. From the Bible - God speaks to Moses, I AM THAT I AM, to the most common contraction - AS ABOVE, SO BELOW.

In essence, for use with alchemical theory and philosophy, my sense is that these words should best be regarded to mean that the universal energies [ABOVE] work through and have their being in their physical counterpart

[BELOW], such as a plant, for example.

I define REAL as that which is eternal, and ACTUAL as that which is temporal. Therefore, there is a Real pattern for the plant which represents its eternal idea and, for a period of time, an ACTUALized physical body. Likewise the experiences of the temporal body can exert an influence on the eternal counterpart.

A Stone is made by separating the three essentials, Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury; purifying them, and recombining them. Once done they are empowered exponentially by repeated imbibitions and circulations. The Philosopher's Stone and the Plant Stone, to a lesser degree, are like lenses through which the universal power and perfect intelligence pass. The stone focuses and concentrates the threefold primal energy of the creative Word. That is why it will transmute metal, or flesh, to its level of potency. The more potent the stone, the more profound its affects.

". . . FOR PERFORMING THE MIRACLE OF ONE THING." Transmuting lead to gold, or restoring the sick, or old, to health is unexplainable and implies a divine source for the Stone's goodness. One thing, which represents the ONE in all its forms; One Universe, One Mind, One energy, One power, One intellect, in one object - the Stone. That is a miracle!

III. AND AS ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM ONE, BY THE MEDIATION OF ONE, SO ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM THIS ONE THING BY ADAPTATION.

"AND AS ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM ONE . . ." Again, this would first imply the ONE original Source of All. Secondly, since we know that the Above has a Below, and visa-versa, it also implies a physical counterpart which is the Philosophical Mercury, the Prima Materia. Also known as the Great Sea from which springs all life, the Mother of Christ - Mary; from mare - the sea (as in, mariner, etc.). It is written that all things in the objective universe can be absorbed and dissolved in the Mercury of the Wise - without a trace. So, this One thing as a concept is represented by THE Mercury - not metallic mercury.

"BY THE MEDIATION OF ONE . . .," The mediator in alchemical philosophy is universal MIND, or SOUL, of which there can only be one. In alchemy this is represented by the philosophical Sulfur [Soul Fire] objectified in our solar system by our sun. Our planet and everything in it and on it came from the differentiation of Solar material [particles].

". . . SO ALL THINGS ARE PRODUCED FROM THIS ONE THING BY ADAPTATION." Solar particles may be looked upon as SEED ideas. From this seed grows all things by adaptation. Just as a seed adapts to its environment to grow and fulfill itself, so does a universe, a planet, or a person grow from a seed.

IV. ITS FATHER IS THE SUN, ITS MOTHER WAS THE MOON, THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS BELLY, ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH.

"ITS FATHER IS THE SUN . . ." The sun is radical; it radiates and is masculine.

"ITS MOTHER WAS THE MOON, . . ." The moon is magnetic; it concentrates and is feminine.

Here, the past tense of "WAS" is used. In my opinion this means that the elemental or nuclear universe was created once only and is constantly renewing and evolving by adaptation, though stimulated by a constant barrage of NEW solar energy - therefore the sun IS its Father. To expand this concept; the infinity of suns [stars] provides the universe with constant renewal and expansion. Black holes [negative polarity] contract the universe. The universe breathes - exhaling / inhaling. In some teachings this is referred to as the Divine Breath.

These are metaphors for the duality of the objective universe. The pure spiritual energy streaming from our sun has to have some kind of body - a photon. This photon carries within itself its identity, or its soul, and as a seed represents that which is above the sun [nonphysical]. It will contribute its seminal virtue as it joins other seminal

particles [protons] to coagulate within the concentrating negative field of electrons [the MOON factor], and form a more complex particle like an atom. The atoms make elements which make molecules, etc. - all by Adaptation.

"THE WIND CARRIED IT IN ITS BELLY, . . ." This, I think, is literally true. The solar wind showers our high atmosphere with photons and other solar particles [solar seeds] which are carried about the sky in the wind and moisture [when isolated from rainwater it is called Gur, or Ghur]. The seed is then brought to earth via thunder storms and charged with electrical energy. That's why the spring rain and the morning dew are so valued by alchemists; they contain electrically charged solar seed.

One of my early mentors explained that the seven color rays of the sun correspond to the seven tones of the musical scale, and they also correspond to the seven primary particles, or seeds, of material existence, at least on Earth. He taught that from these seven distinct particles, which contain the whole universe in potential, every element on the periodic scale was, by adaptation, created.

". . . ITS NURSE IS THE EARTH." Adaptive growth occurs as the earth's rich and infinite array of elements is made available to the solar seed. Whether in the mineral, vegetable, or animal kingdom, the seed will find fertile options with which and in which to evolve. Realize that we are talking about the REAL seed not a seed kernel, like a grain of rice. One cannot see the seed, only its tangible body, the kernel.

Each of the 7 primary solar seeds [masculine] has, within the elemental mix of the earth, a crystalline counterpart that is feminine [negative]. They are alive in nature and they attract one another. The Marriage spoken of by the adepts, when they describe the making of Stones, is the purified union of these two, male and female, which are the volatile and fixed aspects of the same element. While in the marriage chamber, the philosophical vessel, the volatile becomes fixed and the fixed becomes volatile. Eventually, after they have consummated their union by consuming one another their SON (Stone) is born.

V. IT IS THE CAUSE OF ALL PERFECTION THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD.

Here, I think, is meant perfection as nature has it rather than as man would design it. The universe is slightly out of balance, though it perpetually tends toward balance. If it were in balance there would be no movement and no time, no sense of evolution or growth. However, what we experience as perfection is a form of calm balance within the fray of nature's arena. Perhaps our words joy, bliss, ecstasy, or contentment, may convey this type of perfection.

Another kind of perfection is objective perfection. Gold we say is a perfect metal, a diamond a perfect gem, and so forth. Something without flaws. We also say a strong, healthy, person, is perfectly fit, and our natural scientists are always looking for the perfect specimen. Man can recognize and facilitate what in nature he accepts as perfection, but man cannot create perfection. Only God is perfect.

To the alchemists, perfection was represented by the epitome of the world's virtue, which they thought was the universe's virtue as well - the concentration and empowerment of the Prima Materia - the TRUE Philosophical Mercury. To them, everything that had reached the zenith of its potential had arrived there by virtue of the Mercury and thus contained it, yet some natural objects contained more than others - i.e., the metals.

VI. ITS POWER IS PERFECT IF IT BE CHANGED INTO THE EARTH.

Understand that in nature the Mercury is volatile, vaporous, and both male and female; the Spirit contains the Sulfur within it. Only after it is isolated, separated, and purified, are the male and female separately discernible.

Through art they are reunited in their perfection with their proper body [Salt] and, once empowered exponentially by many circulations, enabled to penetrate all matter and raise its vibrations to its own highest potential of perfection, like the transmutation of illness to health. Think of the Stone as a super conductor of the virtues of the sun.

The sun's light and virtue passes THROUGH the stone rather than from it. Metaphorically speaking, Jesus (God's Son) felt virtue, which he always acknowledged came from his Father in heaven, go out of him when a sick woman touched the hem of his robe (his outer garment, which is analogous to the physical Earth [as the Stone] as stated in stanza VI).

Years ago I had come down with the flu. I had all the symptoms, fever, chills, dry mouth, and headache. My teacher put two drops of his preparation under my tongue and had me lie down. In two hours I was fine, even energetic. What was it? I don't know. Perhaps a charged Antimonial Theriac? By charged I mean it either contained the PM (Philosophical Mercury), or the mixture had been distilled out of a host menstruum of PM. It tasted extremely floral yet metallic.

VII. SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, GENTLY, AND WITH JUDGMENT.

"SEPARATE THE EARTH FROM THE FIRE, . . ." Here, Hermes talks about the process, but he's also implying that nature performs the same operation - As Above, So Below. Think of the Universe as analogous to water's characteristics. You have vapor [moisture], humidity [steam], fluid [water], solid [ice]; and before they combined to make water you had the elements hydrogen and oxygen, which are common to all its forms. Also common to all its forms is FIRE which is put there by the sun.

When you separate the water from most of its fire you have ice - its CRYSTAL formation. Likewise, even one of the most dense element known, osmium, has a melting point of 2700o C as it becomes fluid, and a boiling point of more than 5300o C as it becomes a vapor. Everything is bound by four natural qualities; warm, cold, dry, wet, and four natural states; fire, air, water, earth.

Specifically, he indicates here that the Mercury [fire] - and Sulfur - is to be separated from its body or vehicle, perhaps a plant or metallic ore.

"THE SUBTLE FROM THE GROSS, . . ." In the case of a plant, the essential oils must be separated from the gross oils. In the case of minerals and metals - the subtle fire is locked up in their crystalline structure which has to be cracked and broken.

"GENTLY, . . ." This is a primary KEY to all alchemical operations. Separation of the subtle parts from the gross parts will usually require an application of some type of externally manipulated heat. If this heat is too violent and too fast it will drive the subtle virtues away; if it is too weak, the subtle virtues can never break free. The great secret of alchemical operations is the CONTROL OF THE FIRE!

"AND WITH JUDGMENT." You do not want to destroy the life in the things you work with. Each kingdom has its own comfortable life sustaining range of temperature, even the metals.

For example: To hatch a fertilized chicken egg there must be the right amount of heat for the right amount of time - approximately 110o F. for several days. Too much heat and you have a cooked chick, too little and it cannot germinate and grow. It is the same in the plant and mineral kingdoms. That's why an alchemist knows that a foundry cast metal is dead because the heat required to melt it drove out the spirit - its Mercury. Learning to correctly sense the heat and the character of your fire takes time and practice. Meditation upon the fire does not hurt, either.

VIII. IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH TO HEAVEN, AND DESCENDS AGAIN TO EARTH, THUS YOU WILL POSSESS THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD AND ALL OBSCURITY WILL FLY AWAY.

At this juncture many opinions flourish. What, exactly, ascends and descends? The Mercury? The Sulfur and the

Mercury? Nature herself may give a clue.

The sun radiates its energy into earth's ionosphere, stratosphere, and atmosphere, its light penetrates the cloud cover, and eventually reaches the earth's surface. Sun rays penetrate the oceans, rivers, lakes, ponds, and polar ice fields, invigorating, purifying, and sanitizing them all. It interacts with the earth's water in its various states. Water [the Moon factor] is highly magnetic, and crystalline - a liquid crystal, if you will. It is not only the most abundant fluid on the planet, but the most abundant chemical, and probably the least known and understood.

The earth is an organic, multidimensional, fluxing plasma of life forces, magnetic fields, and energy vortexes, all of which are potentially fertile and depend on water. From the arctic poles to the equator the earth's substance constantly moves. Winds, rains, erosion, volcanoes, tornadoes and hurricanes, undersea volcanic action, and tectonic plate movement all bring forth elemental material that intermixes with the Earth's water and is CIRCULATED.

"IT ASCENDS FROM THE EARTH TO HEAVEN, AND DESCENDS AGAIN TO EARTH, . . ." The elementally laden waters evaporate and ascend to the high altitudes where they are charged by the Sun and impregnated under the influence of the Moon before they condense as rain, snow, hail, mist, or dew, and descend back to the earth. They have regained the power to germinate bringing forth new life that will contribute to nature's drama. This process repeats itself perpetually. All life forms cycle through their term from birth to death whether it be for millions of years, or milliseconds. It is a constant circulation that everyday, little by little, evolves the whole planet.

". . . THUS YOU WILL POSSESS THE GLORY OF THE WHOLE WORLD . . ." Here Hermes suggests that through personal observation one will understand Nature's processes, which are gloriously straightforward, and come to know her Laws. Knowledge of the Laws of nature are indispensable in guiding one through the maze of pitfalls one encounters in producing the Great Stone. The lack of true knowledge instead of wild and confusing theory is the reason so many try, but so few succeed.

For example, observe a rose: During the night, between midnight and three, especially during the full moon, the blossom will cover its petals with microscopic droplets of its precious oil. As dawn nears the descending dew condenses on the rose petals and bonds with the tiny droplets of rose oil. As the first rays of the sun strike and warm the petals the charged water evaporates and ascends into the air with its little passenger of oil. This scene recurs with every tree, plant, and flower in our gardens and meadows and regenerates our atmosphere with its sweet aroma, to say nothing of the medicinal advantage it lends to one who breaths the morning air [prana?]. This happens over the whole planet each day. It is the natural process of steam distillation.

The dew also carries trace minerals and metals that have been exposed through the natural processes of erosion and other surface disturbance.

". . . AND ALL OBSCURITY WILL FLY AWAY." I, for one, agree with the sages; nature is our best teacher. We should study the relationship between the three kingdoms and focus on understanding natural dynamics. It is plain and simple once the concept begins to formulate and clarify. The books we pour over represent what someone else perceived - and they can keep us blind to our own light.

To quote a sage that I once studied, "You must break free from thinking with your ego and be like a child observing the wondrous domain you call Earth. Open your heart and be like an infant suckling your daily ration of Wisdom from her breast."

The Stones are made by artificially duplicating Nature's processes as long as we follow her Laws. Indeed, there is a place in this work for Astrology, Qabala, and Magic, but true alchemy has no better friend than Nature herself.

Man is an ignorant being; his knowledge is limited, but his ignorance is infinite.< Ram Ashied

IX. THIS THING IS THE FORTITUDE OF ALL FORTITUDE, BECAUSE IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS, AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID THING.

On the mental plane, after a stone has been successfully accomplished, a humbling sense of knowing occurs which brings with it understandings of those things pondered in vagueness and obscurity before. It marks a rite of passage that leaves one aware that the accomplishment was not an end of a quest, but rather a preparation for greater responsibility.

"THIS THING IS THE FORTITUDE OF ALL FORTITUDE,..." One's meditations are deeper and more profound. A bit more weight is felt spiritually but this is accompanied with joy and a sense of well being. Yet, one may feel more isolated as one's life changes due to changes in inner values and desires. This can mean changes in relationships and social choices. The FORTITUDE to meet these challenges is in you, nor are you alone because inner dimensional assistance is certainly evident.

On the physical plane the alchemists assure us that the Stones, both Major and Minor, when ingested in very small doses, strengthen the body organically by reinvigorating each system. This is accomplished on an atomic level in each cell by balancing all forces and bringing the cell's body, mind, and spirit into perfect harmony. Fortitude in the physical sense means that one regains the ability to meet all health and personal challenges with full strength.

"...BECAUSE IT OVERCOMES ALL SUBTLE THINGS,..." Diseases are incapable of taking root in the body, the power and virtue of the Stone augments the immune system and overwhelms them. The Philosopher's Stone is, of course, more permanent and more powerful than the plant stone.

Channels are opened as the body rejects its drosses and toxins. The chakras open allowing more vital hormone secretion to occur. The body actually transfigures to a higher state of energy. And the mind opens and expands becoming more psychically sensitive.

"...AND PENETRATES EVERY SOLID THING." On the mental plane this refers to the sages' claim that one can pierce the veil and perceive past and future clearly. One's mental power increases so that one may achieve a certain power and control over the elements, especially the weather.

On the physical, it is claimed by some who write of the virtues of the Philosopher's Stone that they have experienced the renewal of teeth, darkening of hair, renewed sexual potency and desire. Women who have passed menopause conceive and give birth in their fifties and sixties. Tumors and skin blemishes disappear, such as liver spots. Glasses are put away as normal eyesight returns.

In metal transmutation the stone transmutes a metal to its next highest level, tin to copper, copper to silver, silver to gold. According to the story of Bit Nur*, a light emitting crystal called a Billur, made by monastery alchemists, Chakimim, in the Himalayas, transmuted any metal exposed to its brilliant light into the next highest metal, silver to gold, for example. The author stated that the monks told him that their crystal was the TRUE Stone of Hermes.

Are these claims true? Only those who accomplish the glorious Stone will know.

*Paracelsus Research Society, Alchemical Laboratory Bulletins 1960-1972, Page 154.

X. THUS ARE ALL THINGS CREATED.

He speaks here of All THINGS. Creation is a process that is still going on from minute to minute. A constant flow of energy expressing countless forms of objective existence that mirror the unseen. The Stones epitomize that concentrated power that is exercised every moment by Divine Mind. They are artificial, man made, but divinely directed, and yet they transmit the creative power of God.

XI. THENCE PROCEED WONDERFUL ADAPTATIONS WHICH ARE PRODUCED IN THIS WAY.

Once the Stone(s) is in hand, its bearer will be directed from within as to its use - where, when, and how, and for

whom. It has been claimed that the stone will make a dead branch flower, a blind person see, a tremor removed from one, palsy from another, and a barren field produce abundantly.

XII. THEREFORE AM I CALLED HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, POSSESSING THE THREE PARTS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

There is contention here as to his meaning. Does he mean that he has achieved mastery over his Body, his Mind, and his Spirit? Or could he mean he has gained mastery or been made a Magistry over Salt, Sulfur, and Mercury in Nature. Some think he means that he is a Master Alchemist, a Master Astrologer, and a Master Magician (Qabalist). Others believe that he is one of the early incarnations of Christ. Actually, we each must decide for ourselves.

XIII. WHAT I HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE OPERATIONS OF THE SUN IS COMPLETE.

I have no more to add.

For comparison I have included another version of the Emerald Tablet. It was first written in the Chaldaen language, then translated to German, and then later to English. It has come from the Chakimim of Bit Nur. According to the story, they sang this like a hymn.

PRAISE AND HONOR BE UNTO OUR LORD WHO CREATED HEAVEN AND EARTH THROUGH A WORD. AND HE CREATED THAT WHICH IS ABOVE LIKE UNTO THAT WHICH IS BELOW AND THAT WHICH IS BELOW LIKE THAT WHICH IS ABOVE.

HIS FATHER IS THE SUN, HIS MOTHER THE MOON, AND HIS BREATH THE WIND BLOWED GENTLY OVER THE EARTH FRUCTIFYING IT.

AND THE CREATURES FROM BELOW MIX THEIR POWERS WITH THOSE FROM ABOVE AND THEY BEGET A WONDERFUL BEING.

FOUR ELEMENTS DOES IT CONTAIN WITHIN ITSELF.

IN ITS EARTH IS OUR LORD. IN ITS WATER IS OUR LORD. IN ITS AIR IS OUR LORD. IN ITS FIRE IS OUR LORD.

EARTH, WATER, AIR, AND FIRE PAY ATTENTION TO HIS WILL, AND OBEY THE LAW OF OUR LORD.

THUS IS THE WORLD CREATED AND THE NAME OF OUR LORD IS THE KEY TO ITS SECRET.

Hortulanus Commentary on the Emerald Tablet

This famous commentary on the Emerald Tablet is found in a number of books and alchemical collections in Latin. The first published English version was included in Roger Bacon, *The mirror of alchimy*, London 1597.

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A briefe Commentarie of Hortulanus the Philosopher, upon the Smaragdine Table of Hermes of Alchimy.

The praier of Hortulanus.

Laude, honour, power and glorie, be given to thee, O Almighty Lorde God, with thy beloved sonne, our Lord Iesus Christ, and the holy Ghost, the comforter. O holy Trinitie, that art the onely one God, perfect man, I give thee thanks that having the knowledge of the transitorie things of this worlde (least I should bee provoked with the pleasures thereof) of thy abundant mercie thou hast taken mee from it. But forsomuch as I have knowne manie deceived in this art, that have not gone the right way, let it please thee, O Lord my God, that by the knowledge which thou hast given me, I may bring my deare friends from error, that when they shal perceive the truth, they may praise thy holy and glorious name, which is blessed for ever. Amen.

The Preface.

I Hortulanus, so called from the Gardens bordering upon the sea coast, wrapped in a Iacobin skinne, unworthy to be called a Disciple of Philosophie, moved with the love of my welbeloved, doo intend to make a true declaration of the words of *Hermes*, the Father of Philosophers, whose words, though that they be dark and obscure, yet have I truly expounded the whole operation and practise of the worke: for the obscuritie of the Philosophers in their speeches, dooth nothing prevaile, where the doctrine of the holy spirit worketh.

Chapter I.

That the Art of Alchimy is true and certaine.

The Philosopher saith. *It is true*, to wit, that the Arte of *Alchimie* is given unto us, *Without leasing*. This hee saith in detestation of them that affirme this Art to bee lying, that is, false. *It is certaine*, that is proved. For whatsoever is proved, is most certaine. *And most true*. For most true golde is ingendred by Art: and he saith most true, in the superlative degree, because the golde ingendred by this Art, excelleth all naturall gold in all proprieties, both medicinall and others.

Chapter II.

That the Stone must be divided into two parts.

Consequentlie, he toucheth the operation of the stone, saying: *That which is beneath, is as that which is above*. And this he sayth, because the stone is divided into two principall parts by Art: Into the superior part, that ascendeth up, and into the inferiour part, which remaineth beneath fixe and cleare: and yet these two parts agree in vertue: and therefore hee sayeth, *That which is above, is like to that which is beneath*. And this division is necessarie, *To perpetuate the myracles of one thing*, to wit, of the Stone: because the inferiour part is the Earth, which is called the Nurse, and Ferment: and the superiour part is the Soule, which quickeneth the whole Stone, and raiseth it up. Wherefore separation made, and coniunction celebrated, manie myracles are effected in the secret worke of nature.

Chapter III.

That the Stone hath in it the foure Elements.

And as *all things have proceeded from one, by the meditation of one*. Heere giveth hee an example, saying: as all things came from one, to wit, a confused Globe, or masse, by meditation, that is the cogitation and creation of one, that is the omnipotent God: *So all things have sprung*, that is, come out *from this one thing* that is, one confused lumpe, *by Adaptation*, that is by the sole commandement of God, and miracle. So our Stone is borne, and come out of one confused mass, containing in it the foure Elements, which is created of God, and by his sole miracle our stone is borne.

Chapter IV.

That the Stone hath Father and Mother, to wit, the Sunne and Moone.

And as wee see, that one living creature begetteth more living creatures like unto it selfe: so artificially golde engendereth golde, by vertue of multiplication of the foresaid stone. It followeth therefore, the Sunne is his father, that is, Philosophers Gold. And as in everie naturall generation, there must be a fit and convenient receptacle, with a certaine consonancie of similitude to the father: so likewise in this artificiall generation, it is requisite that the Sunne have a fitte and consonaunt receptacle for his seede and tincture: and this is Philosophers silver. And therefore it followes, the Moone is his mother.

Chapter V.

That the coniunction of the parts of the stone is called Conception.

The which two, when they have mutuallie entertained each other in the coniunction of the Stone, the Stone conceiveth in the bellie of the winde: and this is it which afterwarde he sayeth: *The winde carried it in his bellie*. It is plaine, that the winde is the ayre, and the ayre is the life, and the life is the Soule. And I have already spoken of the soule, that it quickneth the whole stone. And so it behoveth, that the wind should carry and recarry the whole stone, and bring forth the masterie: and then it followeth, that it must receive nourishment of his nurce, that is the earth: and therefore the Philosopher saith, *The earth is his Nurse*: because that as the infant without receiving food from his nurse, shuld never come to yeres: so likewise our stone without the firmentation of his earth, should never be brought to effect: which said firmament, is called nourishment. For so it is begotten of one Father, with the coniunction of the Mother. *Things*, that is, sonnes like to the Father, if they want long decoction, shalbe like to the Mother in whitenesse, and retaine the Fathers weight.

Chapter VI.

That the Stone is perfect, if the Soule be fixt in the bodie.

It followeth afterward: *The father of all the Telesme of the whole worlde is here*: that is, in the worke of the stone is a finall way. And note, that the Philosopher calleth the worke, the Father of all the Telesme: that is, of all secret, or of all treasure *Of the whole worlde*: that is, of every stone found in the world, is here. As if he should say, Behold I shew it thee. Afterward the Philosopher saith, *Wilt thou that I teach thee to knowe when the vertue of the Stone is perfect and compleate?* to wit, when it is converted into his earth: and therefore he saith, *His power is entire*, that is, compleate and perfect, *if it be turned into earth*: that is, if the Soule of the stone (whereof wee have made mention before: which Soule may be called the winde or ayre, wherein consisteth the whole life and vertue of the stone) be converted into the earth, to wit of the stone, and fixed: so that the whole substance of the Stone be so with his nurse, to wit earth, that the whole Stone be turned into ferment. As in making of bread, a little leaven nourisheth and fermenteth a great deale of Paste: so will the Philosopher that our stone bee so fermented, that it may bee ferment to the multiplication of the stone.

Chapter VII.

Of the mundification and cleansing of the stone.

Consequently, hee teacheth how the Stone ought to bee multiplied: but first he setteth downe the mundification of the stone, and the separation of the parts: saying, *Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the thinne from the thicke, and that gently and with great discretion*. Gently, that is by little, and little, not violently, but wisely, to witte, in Philosophicall dounge. Thou shalt separate, that is, dissolve: for dissolution is the separation of partes. *The earth from the fire, the thinne from the thicke*: that is, the lees and dreggs, from the fire, the ayre, the water, and the whole substance of the Stone, so that the Stone may remaine most pure without all filth.

Chapter VIII.

That the unfixed part of the Stone should exceed the fixed, and lift it up.

The Stone thus prepared, is made fit for multiplication. And now hee setteth downe his multiplication and easie liquefaction, with a vertue to pierce as well into hard bodies, as soft, saying: *It ascendeth from the earth into heaven, and again it descendeth into the earth.* Here we must diligently note, that although our stone bee divided in the first operation into foure partes, which are the foure Elements: notwithstanding, as wee have already saide, there are two principall parts of it. One which ascendeth upward, and is called unfixed, and an other which remaineth below fixed, which is called earth, or firmament, which nourisheth and firmeth the whole stone, as we have already said. But of the unfixed part we must have a great quantity, and give it to the stone (which is made most clean without all filth) so often by masterie that the whole stone be caried upward, sublimating & and subtiliating. And this is it which the Philosopher saith: *It ascendeth from the earth into the heaven.*

Chapter IX.

How the volatile Stone may againe be fixed.

After all these things, this stone thus exalted, must be incerated with the Oyle that was extracted from it in the first operation, being called the water of the stone: and so often boyle it by sublimation, till by vertue of the firmentation of the earth exalted with it, the whole stone doo againe descend from heaven into the earth, and remaine fixed and flowing. And this is it which the Philosopher sayth: *It descendeth agayne into the earth, and so receyveth the vertue of the superiours by sublimation, and of the inferiours, by descension:* that is, that which is corporall, is made spirituall by sublimation, and that which is spirituall, is made corporall by descension.

Chapter X.

Of the fruit of the Art, and efficacie of the Stone.

So shalt thou have the glorie of the whole worlde. That is, this stone thus compounded, that shalt possesse the glorie of this world. *Therefore all obscuritie shall flie from thee:* that is, all want and sicknesse, because the stone thus made, cureth everie disease. *Here is the mightie power of all power.* For there is no comparison of other powers of this world, to the power of the stone. *For it shall overcome every subtil thing, and shall pearce through every solide thing.* It shall overcome, that is, by overcomming, it shall convert quick *Mercury*, that is subtil, congealing it: and it shall pearce through other hard, solide, and compact bodies.

Chapter XI.

That this worke imitateth the Creation of the worlde.

He giveth us also an example of the composition of his Stone, saying, *So was the world created.* That is, like as the world was created, so is our stone composed. For in the beginning, the whole world and all that is therein, was a confused Masse or Chaos (as is above saide) but afterward by the workmanship of the soveraigne Creator, this masse was divided into the foure elements, wonderfully separated and rectified, through which separation, divers things were created: so likewise may divers things bee made by ordering our worke, through the separation of the divers elements from divers bodies. *Here shal be wonderfull adaptations,* that is, If thou shalt separate the elements, there shall be admirable compositions, fitte for our worke in the composition of our Stone, by the elements rectified: Whereof, to wit, of which wonderfull things fit for this: *the meanes,* to wit, to proceede by, *is here.*

Chapter XII.

An enigmaticall insinuation what the matter of the Stone shoulde be.

Therefore I am called Hermes Trismegistus. Now that he hath declared the composition of the Stone, he teacheth us after a secret maner, whereof the Stone is made: first naming himselfe, to the ende that his schollers (who should hereafter attaine to this science) might have his name in continuall remembrance: and then hee toucheth the matter saying: *Having three parts of the Philosophie of the whole world:* because that whatsoever is in the worlde, having matter and forme, is compounded of the foure Elements: hence is it, that there are so infinite parts of the world, all

which he divideth into three principall partes, Minerall, Vegetable, and Animall: of which jointly, or severally, hee had the true knowledge in the worke of the Sunne: for which cause he saith, *Having three parts of the Philosophie of the whole world*, which parts are contained in one Stone, to wit, Philosophers Mercurie.

Chapter XIII. Why the Stone is said to be perfect.

For this cause is the Stone saide to be perfect, because it hath in it the nature of Minerals, Vegetables, and Animals: for the stone is three, and one having foure natures, to wit, the foure elements, & three colours, black, white and red. It is also called a graine of corne, which if it die not, remaineth without fruit: but if it doo die (as is above said) when it is ioyned in coniunction, it bringeth forth much fruite, the aforementioned operations being accomplished. Thus curteous reader, if thou know the operation of the Stone, I have told thee the truth: but if thou art ignorant thereof, I have said nothing. *That which I have spoken of the operation of the Sunne is finished*: that is, that which hath benee spoken of the operation of the stone, of the three colours, and foure natures, existing and being in one onely thing, namely in the Philosophers Mercurie, is fulfilled.

Here endeth the Commentarie of Hortulanus, upon the Smaragdine table of Hermes, the father of Philosophers.

Salmon's Commentary on the Emerald Tablet

This commentary is included as Chapter 14 in the section on Hermes 'The Golden Work' in William Salmon's *Medicina Practica*, London 1692. It draws heavily from Hortulanus' commentary.

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The Smaragdine Table of Hermes.

I. Hermes. *This is true, and far distant from a Lie; whatever is below, is like that which is above; and that which is above, is like that which is below: By this are acquired and perfected the Miracles of the One Thing.*

Salmon. That is to say, the truth of this our Art is confirmed by Experience, we know it to be truth by very matter of Fact; and notwithstanding all the Sophisms, and Logomachia of the Schools, there is no Argument can stand against Experience. The Waters of the Cataracts of Heaven above, are like to the Waters below, when the great Fountain of the deep is broken up; and the Waters below, are like to the Waters above. There are two parts in our Stone, a Superior part that ascends up, and an Inferior part which remains beneath; and yet these two parts agree in One. The inferior Part or Earth, is called the Body or Ferment. The superior part or Spirit, is called the Soul or Life, which quickens the Stone, and raises it up: The first must be dissolved, and made Water, like the Superior; and the Superior must be coagulated, and made Earth, like the Lower, that they may be united, and become the Miracle of the one Thing; then it will be evidently demonstrated, that whatsoever is below, is like that which is above, and contrarywise. Nor do they differ one from another but by Accident, as Corruptible and Incorruptible, Pure and Impure, Heavy and Light, Clear and Opake, Agent and Patient, Masculine and Feminine, etc. all which are Accidents, not Substances. Heaven or that which is above is Incorruptible, where the pure Elements are made, from a Corruptible matter elevated or lifted up, in the Concavity of which Firmament, the Body or Substance of Luna is Graduated. Hence it is apparent that this our Medicine must resemble Heaven itself, in Activity, Penetrativeness, and Incorruptibility; nor must it work as the Elements in Natural Bodies, which are as it were Dead, and destitute of any Power or Action.

II. Hermes. *Also, as all things were made from One, by the help of One: So all things are made from One thing by Conjunction.*

Salmon. That is, as all things were made or come from One Confused Chaos, by the help of One Omnipotent or Almighty God; so our Stone is born or brought fourth out of one Confused Mass, by the help of one particular

Matter or Thing, which contains in it four Elements, Created by the determination of God. Here Hermes points forth the Universal Medicine in imitation of the Worlds Creation; which is performed by one Universal Spirit, and so by a Supernatural Experiment, points forth this Our Natural Work. It is the Opinion of many Philosophers that the Spirit of Natural things, or the Spirit of Nature is the Medium between the Soul and the Body, as being that which makes the absolute and firm Conjunction. But the opinion of some is though the Spirit is said to be the more subtile Subsistence; yet it can be no more separated from the Soul, than Light from the Sun.

III. Hermes. *The Father thereof is the Sun, and the Mother thereof is the Moon: the Wind carries it in its Belly, and the Nurse thereof is the Earth.*

Salmon. As living Creatures beget their Like or Kind, so Gold generates Gold by the Virtue of Our Stone: The Sun is its Father, that is, Our Philosophical or Living Gold. And as in every natural Generation, there must be a fit and convenient receptacle, with a certain likeness of kind to the Father; so likewise in this Our Artificial Generation, it is requisite that the Sun, or our Living Gold, should have a fit and agreeable Receptacle or Womb, for its Seed or Tincture; and this Our Philosophical or Living Silver, i.e. Mercury, which is the Mother thereof. What Sol and Luna are in the Heavens above, the same are Our Gold and Silver in Our Heavens below. The Universal Masculine Seed is the Sulphur of Nature, the first and most Potent cause of all Generation: And if Sol does Live, it is necessary, as Paracelsus saith, to live in some things, viz. in its own Radical Humidity, and most pure and simple Air, which contemperates the heat thereof by its Humidity. The Wind is the Air, and the Air is the Life, and the Life is the Soul, which quickens the whole Stone. And therefore the Wind, Air, Life and Soul must carry the Stone, viz. bring forth Our Magistry: which being brought forth, it must be nourished by its Nurse, which is the Earth; for The Earth (saith Hermes) is its Nurse. The Wind Carries it in its Belly; by which the Universal, Inferior, and Feminine Seed is dilated through the Air, and joyned to the Universal Superior and Masculine Seed; the Air or Mercury is the Womb wherein the two Seeds are conjoynd. The Air arises from Fire and Water, as the Heaven from Fire and Air. Under the Appellation of Fire, is comprehended the most pure substance of the Earth, ascending with Fire: and under the Name of Air the most pure Substance of Water; The Belly or Womb of Nature, is a most pure Breath or Matter, raised from all the inferior Elements, converted into a Volatility or Air, in which is conceived by the help of Luna, the Universal Seed of the Sun, speciflicated also by the other Lights or Stars. Hermes will have three Elements, two under the Names of Sol and Luna, the third under the Name of Ventus, the Wind. The Earth is the Nurse of this Birth of the Air, by whose Breasts it is Nourished, whence it Sucks the Mercurial Milk, (that is the more thick substance of the Inferior Water remaining yet in the Earth) by which it grows and increases to its Substance and Perfection, as a Child to the Stature and Strength of a Man.

IV. Hermes. *This is the Mother or Fountain of all Perfection, and its Power is Perfect and Intire, if it be changed into Earth.*

Salmon. As if he should say, this Arcanum which I here shew you is the Original and Fountain of all Arcanums and Mysteries, the secret Treasure of the whole World. But it is not brought to its Perfection till it is changed into Earth; then indeed is its Power perfect and intire: that is, if the Soul of the Stone (of which we have spoken before and which may be called the Wind or Air, which is also the Life, Virtue, Power and Spirit) be converted into Earth, viz. a fixt Substance or Matter; so that the whole Air, Spirit, Life and Soul of the Stone may be conjoynd to its Earth, which is its Nurse, and be all turned into Ferment. As in making of Bread, a little Leaven Ferments and Transmutes, a great deal of Meal or Paste: so also must Our Stone be Fermented, that it may become Ferment to the Eternal Multiplication thereof. That which the Wind does bear in its Belly must be converted into Earth, then is the Work completed; which is done by a long and Unwearied Decoction (not by evaporating, but retaining the Spirits) till it becomes inspissated, and in success of time is dried to a Pouder or Earth. But the time will be long and tedious, therefore you must attend it with Patience, according to the Matter you work upon. Some things are remote from Perfection, other things more remote, and others most remote, whilst other things are near to Perfection, others neerer, and some things nearest of all. He that knows not these things before he begins his Work, may afterwards deplore his Error, with very great loss.

V. Hermes. *Separate the Earth from the Fire, and the Subtile and Thin from the Gross and Thick; but prudently with long Sufferance, Gentleness and Patience, and Wisdom, and Judgement.*

Salmon. Hetherto he has only discoursed the Theory, he now comes to shew you the Practical Part, shewing first the Purification of the Matter of the Stone. You must do it gently, by little and little, not Violently, but Prudently and

Wisely, after a Philosophick manner: By Separating he means Dissolving: for Dissolution is the Separation of parts: Some will have it, that by the Earth here, he means the Lees or Dreggs of the matter, which is to be Separated from the Fire, the Air, and the Water, and the whole Substance of the Stone, that it may become Pure, and free from any Putrefaction or Defiled Matter: and this the Spagyrick Philosophers say is the first Operation or Preparation of the Matter or Parts of their Stone. But some understand hereby, the Separation of the four Elements, and this doubtless is the thing if it be spoken of a Spagyric, and not Vulgar Separation. Under the Appellation of Fire, the two other are understood, viz. Air and Water; for the Fire cannot want or subsist without Air, nor is the Air without Water; for Air is made of Water by the Mediation of the Fire, by which it is forced to Ascend upwards. But as to the Earth, it partly Ascends and is made Volatile, and partly remains fixed below. By separating the Earth from the Fire, some will have it, that he would have the Thick to be separated from the Thin, not the Thin from the Thick, because the Earth is thicker than the Fire. But by separating the subtil from the gross, is to be understood, the subtilizing of the Thick Matter, and Spagyrically to reduce that subtilized Matter into Aether or Spiritual Air. But this most prudently be done which gentleness, long Suffering, Patience, etc. that is according to the Laws of Art, but gently, even with a gentle Heat according to Natural Generation. The Instrument of Nature, and of the Spagyrist's Fire, without which the Work cannot be done. This Fire is either Internal or External. The Internal is proper to the substance or Matter, and Naturally dwells within it, which you must prudently stir up and Excite. The External is either Violent, or Tempered in four several Degrees. The Violent is that with which some things are Calcined, other Sublimed, others (as Metalls) Liquefied or Melted. The Temperate in its several Degrees, imitate or resemble Nature, and are used for Putrefaction, Digestion, and Congelation, or Circulatorily to dissolve and fix. But Various are these kinds of Fire which are to be applied according as the Subject requires, and the prudence of the Artist directs, being continual without interruption from beginning to the End.

VI. Hermes. *It Ascends from the Earth up to Heaven, and descends again from the Heaven to the Earth, and receives the Powers and Efficacy of the Superiors and Inferiors.*

Salmon. Here it to be observed that though Our Stone be divided in the first Operation into four Parts, which are the four Elements, yet as we have already said there is but two principal Parts of it, One which Ascends upwards and is Volatile, and another which remains below, and is fixed, which is called Earth, and ferment which Nourishes and Ferments the whole Stone. But of the unfixed or Volatile part we must have a great quantity, that I may Nourish the purified Matter of the Stone, till it be made to Ascend, is sublimed, and subtilized: then being thus subtilized and made Volatile, it must be incrated with the Oyl, extracted from it in the first Operation, which is called the Water of the Stone, and so often Boyled by Sublimation, till by Virtue of the Fermentation of the Earth exalted with it; the whole Stone does again descend, from the Heaven to the Earth, and remains fixed and flowing; that is, that the Corporeal be made Spiritual by Sublimation, and the Spiritual be made Corporeal by Descension: Here is a Circulatory Distillation admirably declared, and the Construction of a Spagyric Vessel, to the Similitude of Nature. It Ascends from the Earth, i.e. from the inferiour part of the vessel; to Heaven, i.e. the superiour part: The matter generated of Sol, and Luna ascends, i.e. the thick Terrean substance thereof is converted or resolved, into Heaven, viz. into a subtle substance like to Heaven: he demonstrates the Spagyric solution, by what Instrument and Artifice it is done; then he teaches the Fixation, It Descends again to the Earth; as if he should say, after its substance is dissolved and made to Ascend under the Obedience of the Internal Celestial Virtues or Powers, standing there the determined time of Its Maturity, it returns again, or descends, that is to say, the Spirit is made Corporeal, which was before a Body or made from a Body, Spiritual, which is nothing but the Philosophick Riddle. *Fac Fixum Volatile, & rursus Volatile fixum, & totum habebis Magisterium.* And by this means it will obtain the Virtues of the Superior and Inferiour Powers, i.e. the Heavenly and Volatile Power, to penetrate, grow, increase or multiply: and the Earthly Power to give Substance, Corporeity, and Fixity.

VII. Hermes. *In this Work, you acquire to your self the Wealth and Glory of the whole World: Drive therefore from you all Cloudiness or Obscurity, Darkness and Blindness.*

Salmon. Possessing this Stone thus perfected, you possess all the Wealth and Treasures of the World; so that you may live free from Care and Trouble, from Discontent and Fears, from every Sickness and Disease: It is a Remedy for all Diseases both of Body and Mind: It strikes at the root of Infirmities; and destroyes that which would destroy or undermine the Health and Prosperity of the Humane Body. This Stone, this Wealth, this Treasure, though it be but like to a Grain of Mustard-seed, yet it grows to be the greatest of all Trees, in whose Branches the Birds of the Air make their Nests, and under whose shadow the Beasts of the Field dwell.

VIII. Hermes. *For the Work increasing or going on in Strength, adds Strength to Strength, forestalling and overtopping all other Fortitudes and Powers; and is able to Subjugate and Conquer all things, whether they be thin and Subtil, or thick and Solid Bodies.*

Salmon. There is no Comparison of the Powers of other Natural things, to the Power of the Stone, for it is able to overcome and master all other Powers: it can convert common Quick Silver into a Congealed substance, and Transmute it into fine Gold or Silver: and it can Penetrate and Peirce through all other hard solid or compact Bodies, and strike them with a never fading Tincture, so firm and fixt, which the Power and Strength of the Strongest and most Violent Fire can never conquer or overcome. This is as much as if he should say, it is the compleat Virtue of total Nature, the Power, Efficacy and Potency of all things, and even (as it were) above Nature, so that it may not improperly be said to be a Work Metaphysical, for that it seems to act above or beyond Nature. It overcomes or conquers all things, that is, it makes all subtil and thin things (as Quicksilver) thick and coagulates them: and on the contrary it Penetrates all thick and solid things, i.e. It makes every hard Metal whether Perfect or Imperfect (as Sol, Luna, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars and Venus) subtle and thin, and brings them to the greatest Perfection, expelling all the Malign and Dark Spirits possessing them and giving to them Tincture and Fixity, by its Subility and Spirituality.

IX. Hermes. *In this manner was the World made; and hence are all the wonderful Conjunctions or Joynings together of the Matter and Parts thereof, and the Marvellous Effects, when in this way it is done, by which these Wonders are Effected.*

Salmon. The Creation of the World he brings as a Prior Example, or Exemplification of the Work of Our Philosophick Stone, for as the World was Created, so is Our Stone composed. As in the beginning the whole World and all that is therein was a Chaos or confused Mass, but afterwards by the Virtue Word, Power, or Spirit of the Great Creator, a Separation was made, the Elements were divided and rectified, and the Universal World was produced and brought forth Beautiful and Perfect in Number, Weight and Measure. So also in this our work, we separate the Elements, which we divide and rectifie by many sublimations, depressions, and percipitations, whereby the perpetual and wonderful conjunction is made, which is the product of the prime matter, and the root of the Golden Kingdom, in which power is produced into Act.

X. Hermes. *And for this Cause I am called Hermes Trismegistus, for that I have the knowledge or understanding of the Philosophy of the three principles of the Universe. My Doctrine or Discourse, which I have here delivered concerning this solar Work, is compleat and perfect.*

Salmon. Hermes Trismegistus signifies the Thrice greatest Hermes, for that he had the Knowledge of the three Principals of the Universe, viz. Salt, Sulphur and Mercury, answering to the Body, Soul, and Spirit; Mineral, Vegetable, and Animal, of which he had the true Knowledge, he knew the way how to separate them, and conjoyn them again, to make the fixt Volatile and the Volatile fixt, to take away Tinctures, and restore better again, all which are contained in Our Philosophick Mercury which is the Womb in which Our Philosophick (which is the true) Gold is Generated. It is said to be perfect, because I. It contains all the Principles. 2. From its never fading Color. 3. Its never perishing Body. It is resembled to a grain of Wheat, which unless it Dies, it brings forth no Fruit; but if it Die, and is Putrefied, passing through Death and Putrefaction or Dissolution, to Life and Heaven, there by perfecting its Nature, it is infinitely profitable. What he has delivered concerning this Matter, viz. of the three Colors, Black, White, and Red; of the three Principles, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury; of the three Subsistences, Body, Soul, and Spirit; of the three Operations, Volatilization, Tincture, and Fixation; of the three States, Imperfection, Anihilation, and Perfection, he declared to be True and Compleat, and that the Stone thus Generated (existing and being in one only thing, viz. the Philosophick Mercury) by a series of Natural Operations, is Perfect and Intire, wanting nothing.

Synesius' Epilogue on the Emerald Tablet.

This epilogue to the true book of Synesius is included in *Basil Valentine His Triumphant Chariot of Antimony, with annotations of Theodore Kirkringius. M.D. With The True Book of the Learned Synesius a Greek Abbot taken out of the Emperour's Library, concerning the Philosopher's Stone.* London, 1678.

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The Epilogue according to Hermes.

Thus art thou to separate the *earth* from the *fire*, the *gross* from the *subtil* gently, with great Judgment, that is to say, separate the parts that are united to the Furnace, by the dissolution and separation of the parts, as the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, &c. that is to say, the more pure substance of the stone, until thou hast got it clean, and free from all spots or filth. And when he saith, *it ascends from the earth up into Heaven and returns again into the earth*, there is no more to be understood by it then the Sublimation of the Bodies. Further, to explain what distillation is, he sayes *the Wind carries it in its belly*, that is, when the water is distilled by the Alembick, where it first ascends by a wind full of Fume and Vapour, and afterwards returns to the bottom of the Vessel in water again. When he would also express the congelation of the matter, he sayes, *Its force is absolute, if it be turned into earth*, that is to say, be converted by decoction. And to make a general demonstration of all hath been said, he sayes, *It shall receive both the inferior and superior force*, that is to say, that of the Elements, for as much as, if the Medicine receive the force of the lighter parts, that is to say, air and fire, it shall also receive that of the more grave and weighty parts, changing itself into water and earth, to the end, that the Matters being thus perpetually joined together, may have permanence, durance, constancy, and stability. Glory be to God.

Glory of the World

This text is included in the *Musaeum Hermeticum* of 1625, though it was first published in German as *Gloria Mundi sonsten Paradeiss Taffel*, Frankfurt, 1620. Contained in the third part is an explanation of the Emerald Tablet.
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The Emerald Table

It is true, without any error, and it is the sum of truth; that which is above is also that which is below, for the performance of the wonders of a certain one thing, and as all things arise from one Stone, so also they were generated from one common Substance, which includes the four elements created by God. And among other miracles the said Stone is born of the First Matter. The Sun is its Father, the Moon its Mother, the wind bears it in its womb, and it is nursed by the earth. Itself is the Father of the whole earth, and the whole potency thereof. If it be transmuted into earth, then the earth separates from the fire that which is most subtle from that which is hard, operating gently and with great artifice. Then the Stone ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth, and receives the choicest influences of both heaven and earth. If you can perform this you have the glory of the world, and are able to put to flight all diseases, and to transmute all metals. It overcomes Mercury, which is subtle, and penetrates all hard and solid bodies. Hence it is compared with the world. Hence I am called Hermes, having the three parts of the whole world of philosophy.

Explanation of the Emerald Table of Hermes.

Hermes is right in saying that our Art is true, and has been rightly handed down by the Sages; all doubts concerning it have arisen through false interpretation of the mystic language of the philosophers. But, since they are loth to confess their own ignorance, their readers prefer to say that the words of the Sages are imposture and falsehood. The fault really lies with the ignorant reader, who does not understand the style of the Philosophers. If, in the interpretation of our books, they would suffer themselves to be guided by the teaching of Nature, rather than by their own foolish notions, they would not miss the mark so hopelessly. By the words which follow: "That which is above is also that which is below," he describes the Matter of our Art, which, though *one*, is divided into two things, the volatile water which rises upward, and the earth which lies at the bottom, and becomes fixed. But when the reunion takes place, the body becomes spirit, and the spirit becomes body, the earth is changed into water and becomes volatile, the water is transmuted into body, and becomes fixed. When bodies become spirits, and spirits bodies, your work is finished, for then that which rises upward and that which descends downward become one body. Therefore the Sage says that that which is above is that which is below, meaning that, after having been separated into two substances (from being one substance), they are again joined together into one substance, i.e., an union which can never be dissolved, and possesses such virtue and efficacy that it can do in one moment what the Sun cannot accomplish in a thousand years. And this miracle is wrought by a thing which is despised and rejected by the multitude. Again, the Sage tells us that all things were created, and are still generated, from one first substance and consist of the same elementary material; and in this first substance God has appointed the four elements, which represent a common material into which it might perhaps be possible to resolve all things. Its development is

brought about by the distillation of the Sun and Moon. For it is operated upon by the natural heat of the Sun Moon, which stirs up its internal action, and multiplies each thing after its kind, imparting to the substance a specific form.

The soul, or nutritive principle, is the earth which receives the rays of the Sun and Moon, and therewith feeds her children as with mother's milk. Thus the Sun is the father, the Moon is the mother, the earth the nurse -- and in this substance is that which we require. He who can take it and prepare it is truly to be envied. It is separated by the Sun and Moon in the form of a vapour, and collected in the place where it is found. When Hermes adds that "the air bears it in its womb, the earth is its nurse, the whole world its Father," he means that when the substance of our Stone is dissolved, then the wind bears it in its womb, i.e., the air bears up the substance in the form of water, in which is hid fire, the soul of the Stone, and fire is the Father of the whole world. Thus, the volatile substance rises upward, while that which remains at the bottom, is the "whole world" (seeing that our Art is compared to a "small world"). Hence Hermes calls fire the father of the whole world, because it is the Sun of our Art, and air, Moon, and water ascend from it; the earth is the nurse of the Stone, i.e., when the earth receives the rays of the Sun and Moon, a new body is born, like a new foetus in the mother's womb. The earth receives and digests the light of Sun and Moon, and imparts food to its foetus day by day, till it becomes great and strong, and puts off its blackness and defilement, and is changed to a different colour. This, "child," which is called "our daughter," represents our Stone, which is born

anew of the Sun and Moon, as you may easily see, when the spirit, or the water that ascended, is gradually transmuted into the body, and the body is born anew, and grows and increases in size like the foetus in the mother's womb. Thus the Stone is generated from the first substance, which contains the four elements; it is brought forth by two things, the body and the spirit; the wind bears it in its womb, for it carries the Stone upward from earth to heaven, and down again from heaven to earth. Thus the Stone receives increase from above and from below, and is born a second time, just as every other foetus is generated in the maternal womb; as all created things bring forth their young, even so does the air, or wind, bring forth our Stone. When Hermes adds, "Its power, or virtue, is entire, when it is transmuted into earth," he means that when the spirit is transmuted into the body, it receives its full strength and virtue. For as yet the spirit is volatile, and not fixed, or permanent. If it is to be fixed, we must proceed as the baker does in baking bread. We must impart only a little of the spirit to the body at a time, just as the baker only puts a little leaven to his meal, and with it leavens the whole lump. The spirit, which is our leaven, in like fashion transmutes the whole body into its own substance. Therefore the body must be leavened again and again, until the whole lump is thoroughly pervaded with the power of the leaven. In our Art the body leavens the spirit, and transmutes it into one body, and the spirit leavens the body, and transmutes it into one spirit. And the two, when they have become one, receive power to leaven all things, into which they are injected, with their own virtue.

The Sage continues: "If you gently separate the earth from the water, the subtle from the hard, the Stone ascends from earth to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth, and receives its virtue from above and from below. By this process you obtain the glory and brightness of the whole world. With it you can put to flight poverty, disease, and weariness; for it overcomes the subtle mercury, and penetrates all hard and firm bodies." He means that all who would accomplish this task must separate the moist from the dry, the water from the earth. The water, or fire, being subtle, ascends, while the body is hard, and remains where it is. The separation must be accomplished by gentle heat, i.e., in the temperate bath of the Sages, which acts slowly, and is neither too hot nor too cold. Then the Stone ascends to heaven, and again descends from heaven to earth. The spirit and body are first separated, then again joined together by gentle coction, of a temperature resembling that with which a hen hatches her eggs. Such is the preparation of the substance, which is worth the whole world, whence it is also called a "little world." The possession of the Stone will yield you the greatest delight, and unspeakably precious comfort. It will also set forth to you in a typical form the creation of the world. It will enable you to cast out all disease from the human body, to drive away poverty, and to have a good understanding of the secrets of Nature. The Stone has virtue to transmute mercury into gold and silver, and to penetrate all hard and firm bodies, such as precious stones and metals. You cannot ask a better gift of God than this gift, which is greater than all other gifts. Hence Hermes may justly call himself by the proud title of "Hermes Trismegistus, who holds the three parts of the whole world of wisdom."

Emerald Tablet of Hermes

This latin version of the Emerald Tablet has been supplied by Frederic Chaslin.

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Verum, sine Mendacio, certum et verissimum:
Quod est Inferius est sicut quod est Superius,

et quod est Superius est sicut quod est Inferius,
ad perpetranda Miracula Rei Unius.
Et sicut res omnes fuerunt ab Uno,
meditatione unius,
sic Omnes Res natae ab hac una Re, adaptatione.

Pater eius est Sol. Mater eius est Luna.
Portavit illud Ventus in Ventre suo.
Nutrix eius Terra est.
Pater omnis Telesmi totius Mundi est hic.
Virtus eius integra est si versa fuerit in Terram.
Separabis Terram ab Igne, subtile ab spisso,
suaviter, magno cum ingenio.

Ascendit a Terra in Coelum,
iterumque descendit in Terram,
et recipit Vim superiorum et inferiorum.
Sic habebis Gloriam totius Mundi.
Ideo fugiet a te omnis Obscuritas.
Haec est totius Fortitudinis Fortitudo fortis,
quia vincet Omnem rem subtilem,
Omnemque Solidam penetrabit.

Sic Mundus creatus est.
Hinc erunt Adaptationes Mirabiles,
quarum Modus est hic.
Itaque vocatus sum Hermes Trismegistus,
habens tres partes Philosophiae totius Mundi.

Completum est quod dixi de Operatione Solis.

The works of Sir George Ripley

Information on Ripley

Ripley's Twelve Gates
Philaethes exposition of Ripley's Vision
The Bosom Book of Sir George Ripley
A short work of George Ripley
Verses from the Ripley Scrowle
The Mistery of Alchymists by George Ripley
George Ripley's Epistle to King Edward [Transcribed by Justin von Bujdoss]
George Ripley's Epistle to King Edward Unfolded [Transcribed by Justin von Bujdoss]
A Treatise of Mercury and the Philosophers Stone [Transcribed by Justin von Bujdoss]
The Ripley Scroll

George Ripley

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George Ripley [1415?-1490] was one of the most important of English alchemists. Little is known about him, but it is supposed that he was a Canon at the Priory of St Augustine at Bridlington in Yorkshire during the latter part of the 15th century, where he devoted himself to the study of the physical sciences and especially alchemy. To acquire fuller knowledge he travelled in France, Germany and Italy, and lived for some time in Rome, and there in 1477 was made a chamberlain by Pope Innocent VIII. In 1478 he returned to England in possession of the secret of transmutation. He pursued his alchemical work, and is reputed to have given vast sums to the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem at Rhodes to defend them from the Turks. But his labours becoming irksome to the abbot and other canons, he was released from the order, and joined the Carmelites at Boston, where he died in 1490.

His name is attached to as many as five and twenty different works, most of which remain in manuscript. Whether or not they are all by him may be doubted, and it has been asserted that what is called the '[Vision](#)' is not by him but is the work of an anonymous writer of the following century. Tanner has enumerated his books and manuscript with the libraries of Oxford and elsewhere, where they are preserved.

Ripley adopted an allegorical approach to alchemy, and his most important writings are his *Compound of Alchemy* in verse which describes the alchemical process as undergoing twelve stages or 'Gates', and his emblematic 'Ripley Scrowle'. [The Compound of Alchymy](#), was one of the most popular on the subject. it circulated widely in manuscript. It was first printed at London :

The title has a woodcut border; there is an ornamental capital E containing a portrait of Queen Elizabeth, to whom the book is dedicated, and there is an engraved diagram called Ripley's Wheel. Ashmole reprinted it in the *Theatrum Britannicum* and added a note upon the author. He also printed several other pieces by Ripley: 'Verses belonging to his Scrowle', 'The Mistery of Alchymists', 'the Preface to his Medulla, which he wrote Ann. Dom. 1476, and dedicated to Geo. Nevell then Archbishop of Yorke', and another 'Shorte Worke'. All of these, like the 'Compound of Alchymy', are in verse.

Bibliography of printed books

The Compound of Alchymy. Or the ancient hidden Art of Alchemie: Containing the right & perfectest meanes to make the Philosophers Stone, Aurum potable, with other excellent Experiments. Divided into twelue Gates. First written by the learned and rare Philosopher of our Nation George Ripley,... whereunto is adioyned his Epistle to the King, his Vision, his Wheele, and other his Workes, neuer before published:... Set foorth by Ralph Rabbards Gentleman... London Imprinted by Thomas Orwin, 1591, small 4to. 52 folios.

Opuscula quaedam chemica. Georgii Riplei Medulla philosophiæ chemicæ. Incerti autoris Canones decem, mysterium artis mira breuitate et perspicuitate comprehendentes. Helicæ Monachi Franciscani Speculum alchymie. Ioan. Aurelii Augurelli Chrysopoeiæ compendium paraphrasticum. Artefi Clavis maioris sapientiæ.

Ioan. Pontanti Epistola de lapide philosophorum. Galli Etschenreuteri medici Epistola ad Guilielmum Gratarolum. Omnia partim ex veteribus manuscriptis eruta, partim restituta. Francofurti: J. Bringer. 1614. 157 pages.

Trois tractez de la philosophie naturelle, non encores imprimez; sçavoir, La turbe des philosophes... Plus, La parole delaissee de Bernard Trevisan. Et un petit traicté... intitulé, Les douze portes d'alchymie, autres que celles de Ripley [Ripley]. Paris: J. Sara. 1618. 8vo.

Chymische Schrifften des hochgelehrten, fürtresslichen vnd weitberhümten Philosophi Georgii Riplaei, Canonici Angli. Darinnen vom gebenedeyeten Stein der Weisen vnd desselben kunstreicher præparation gründlich gelehret wird, Zuvor durch den Hochgelahrten Herrn Nicolaum Barnaudum Chymicum zu Lateinischer Sprache publiciret, Jetzo aber allen Filiis doctrinae zum besten durch einen Liebhaber der Kunst in Deutsche Sprache gebracht, vnd in Druck gegeben Anno 1624. Gedruckt In verlegung Johann Birkners, Buchhändlers in Erffurt. 8vo. [1], 111 pages.

Opera omnia chemica, quotquot hactenus visa sunt, quorum aliqua jam primum in lucem prodeunt, aliqua MS. exemplarium collatione à mendis & lacunis repurgata, atque integrati restitua sunt... [With preface by Ludovicus Combach.] Cassellis: typis Jakob Gentschii, impensis Sebald Köhlers. 1649. 8vo. [14], 439 pages.

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Georgii Riplaei, Canonici in England zu Bridlington, Chymische Schrifften, Darinnen von dem gebenedeyten Stein der Weissen und desselben kunst-reichen Praeparation gründlich gehandelt wird. Nach der Lateinisch- und Englischen Edition Herrn William Salmon, Profess. Phys. ins Teutsche übersetzt durch Benjamin Roth-Scholtzen, Phil. & Med. Doct. Zu finden bey Johann Paul Krauss, Buchhändler in Wienn. 1756. 8vo. [4], 233, [3] pages. [Contains also: Artephius, Geheimer Haupt Schlüssel, p. 105. Das eröffnete Philosophische vatter-Hertz an seinen Sohn, p.153.]

Aurifontina Chymica [Sometimes ascribed to John Frederick Houpreght.] : or, a collection of fourteen small treatises concerning the first matter of philosophers, for the discovery of their (hitherto so much concealed) Mercury. Which many have studiously endeavoured to hide, but these to make manifest, for the benefit of Mankind in general. London: for William Cooper. 24mo. 22, 272 , 4 pages. [Item 4. A Treatise of Mercury and the Philosophers Stone. By Sir George Ripley.]

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Willam Salmon. Medicina Practica: or, Practical Physick. Shewing The Method of Curing the most Usual Diseases happening to Human Bodies... To which is added, The philosophick Works of Hermes Trismegistus, Kalid Persicus, Geber Arabs, Artefius Longævus, Nicholas Flammel, Roger Bachon, and George Ripley. All Translated out of The best Latin Editions, into English; and Carefully Claused, or divided into Chapters, and Sections, for the Pleasant Reading, and easier Understanding of those Authors. Together with a singular comment upon the first book of Hermes, the most Ancient of Philosophers. The whole Completed in Three Books. By William Salmon, Professor of Physick... London: Printed by W. Bonny, for Tho. Howkins and John Harris. 1692. 8vo. [30, 696, [2] pages. [Item 8. George Ripley. The Marrow of Alchymie.]

Manuscripts.

There are over 200 manuscript of Ripley's works, too many to list here.

Ripley's Twelve Gates

This text has been modernised by Adam McLean from the 1591 edition of *The Compound of Alchymy*.
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[The First Gate - Calcination](#)

[The Second Gate - Solution](#)

[The Third Gate - Separation](#)

[The Fourth Gate - Conjunction](#)

[The Fifth Gate - Putrefaction](#)
[The Sixth Gate - Congelation](#)
[The Seventh Gate - Cibation](#)
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CALCINATION - THE FIRST GATE

Calcination is the purgation of our stone,
And restoration also of its natural heat.
Of radical humidity it looseth none,
Inducing solution into our stone most mete.
Seek after philosophy I you advise
But not after the common guise,
With sulphur and salts prepared in diverse ways.

Neither with corrosives, nor with fire alone,
Nor with vinegar, nor with ardent water,
Neither with the vapour of lead,
Our stone is calcined according to our intent.
All those who to calcining so be bent,
From this hard science withdraw their hand,
Till they our calcining better understand.

For by such calcining, their bodies will be spoiled,
For it diminishes the moisture of our stone.
Therefore when bodies to powder be burnt,
Dry as ashes of tree or bone,
Of such calxes then will we will have none,
For moisture we multiply radical,
In our calcining, diminishing none at all.

And for a sure ground of our true calcination,
Work wisely only kind with kind.
For kind to kind has appetite and inclination.
He who does not know this, in knowledge is blind,
And may wander forth as mist in the wind,
Knowing never with profit where to alight,
Because he conceives not our words aright.

Join kind to kind therefore as reason is,
For as every young shoot answers its own seed,
Man begets man, a beast a beast, likewise,
Further to treat of this there is no need.
But understand this point if you will succeed,
Each thing is first calcined in its own kind,

This well concealed fruit therein shall you find.

And we make calx unctuous both white and red,
Of three degrees or our base be perfect,
Fluxible as wax, else stand they in little stead.
By right long process as philosophers do write,
A year we take or more for our respite.
For in less space our calxes will not be made,
Able to tinge with colour that will not fade.

And for thy proportions you must beware,
For therein may you be beguiled.
Therefore so that your work will not be marred,
Let your body be subtly filled with Mercury,
As much then so subtiled,
One of the Sun, two of the Moon,
Till altogether like pap be done.

Then make the Mercury four to the Sun,
Two to the Moon as it should be,
And thus your work must be begun,
In figure of the Trinity,
Three of the body and of the spirit three,
And for the unity of the substance spiritual,
One more than of the substance corporeal.

By Raymond's repertory this is true Proportion,
There who choose to look.
The same my Doctor did show to me,
But three of the spirit Bacon took,
To one of the body,
For which I lay awake many a night before I knew it.
And both be true, take which you choose.

If the water also be equal in proportion to the earth,
With heat in due measure,
From them shall spring a new young shoot,
Both white and red in pure tincture,
Which in the fire shall ever endure.
Kill you the quick, the dead revive;
Make trinity unity without any strife.

This is the surest and best proportion,
For where is least of the part spiritual,
The better therefore shall be solution,
Than if you did it swell with water,
Your earth overglutting which loses all,
Take heed therefore to the potter's loam,
And make you never too wet your womb.

That loam behold how it is tempered,
The mean also how it is calcinated,
And ever look you bear this in mind,
That never your earth with water be suffocated.
Dry up your moisture with heat most temperate,
Help Dissolution with moisture of the Moon,

And Congelation with the Sun, then you have done.

Four natures into the fifth so shall you turn,
Which is a nature most perfect and temperate,
But hard it is with your bare foot to spurn,
Against a bar of iron, or steel newly sharpened,
For many do so which be infatuated,
When they such high things take in hand,
Which they in no way do understand.

In eggs, in vitriol, or in blood,
What riches they go there to find.
If they Philosophy understood,
They would not in working be so blind,
To seek Gold and Silver out of their kind.
For like as fire is of the burning principle,
So is the principle of gilding likewise.

If you intend therefore to make,
Gold and Silver by craft of our philosophy,
Take neither eggs nor blood,
But Gold and Silver which naturally Calcined,
Wisely and not manually,
A new generation will be brought forth,
Increasing their kind as does everything.

And if it were true that profit might be,
In things which are not metalline,
In which be colours pleasant to see,
As in blood, eggs, hair, urine or wine,
Or in mean minerals dug out of the mine,
Yet must that element be putrefied and separated,
And with elements of perfect bodies be disposed.

But first make rotation of these elements,
And into water your earth turn first of all,
Then of your water make air by levitation,
And air make fire, then I will call you a Master,
Of all our secrets great and small.
The wheel of Elements then you can turn about,
Truly understanding our writings without doubt.

This done, go backwards, turning the wheel again,
And presently turn your fire into water,
Air into earth, else you will labour in vain.
For so to temperament is brought our stone,
And Nature's contractions, four are made one,
After they have three times been circulated,
And also your base is perfectly consummated.

This under the moisture of the Moon,
And under the temperate heat of the Sun,
Your Elements shall be incinerated soon,
And then you have the mastery won.
Thank God your work was then so begun,
For there you have one true token,

Which first in blackness will be shown to you.

That token we call the Head of the Crow,
And some men call it the Crow's bill,
Some call it the ashes of Hermes tree,
And thus they name it after their will,
Our Toad which eats his fill of the earth,
Some name it by that which it is mortified,
The spirit with venom intoxicated.

But it has an infinity of names, I say,
For it is named after each thing that is seen to be black,
Till the time it waxes white,
Then it has names of more delight,
Called after all things that be full white,
And the red likewise after the same,
Of all red things does take the name,

You are now within the first gate,
Of the Castle where the Philosophers dwell.
Proceed wisely that you may win,
And go though more gates of that Castle.
This Castle is round as any bell,
And gates it has yet eleven more,
One is conquered, now to the second go.

The end of the First Gate.

Ripley's Second Gate

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SOLUTION - THE SECOND GATE

Now I will speak a word or two of Solution,
Which reveals what ere was hid from sight,
And makes thin, things that were thick,
By virtue of our first menstruum clear and bright,
In which our bodies have been eclipsed from light,
And of their hard and dry compaction subtilated,
Into their own first matter kindly retrogradated.

One in gender they be, and in number two,
Whose father is the Sun, the Moon the mother,
Mercury moves between,
These and no more be our Magnesia, our Adrop,
And no other things be here, but only sister and brother,
That is to mean, agent and patient,
Sulphur and Mercury, co-essential to our intent.

Betwixt these two, equally contrary,
Engendered is our mean most marvellous,
Which is our Mercury and unctuous menstruum,
Our secret Sulphur working invisibly,

More fiercely than fire burning the body,
Dissolving the body into mineral water,
Which we do call night or darkness in the North.

But yet I trust, you understand not utterly,
The very secret of the Philosopher's Dissolution.
Therefore understand me, I counsel you wisely,
For the truth I will tell you without delusion,
Our Solution is cause of our Congelation,
For Dissolution on the one side corporeal,
Causes Congelation on the other side spiritual.

And we dissolve into water which wets no hand,
For when the earth is integrally incinerated,
Then is the water congealed; this understand,
For the elements be so together concatenated,
That when the body is from his first form altered,
A new form is induced immediately,
For nothing is without form utterly.

And here a secret I will disclose to you,
Which is the ground unto our secrets all,
Which if you do not know you shall but lose,
Thy labour and costs both great and small.
Take heed therefore that in error you not fall,
The more your earth, and the less your water be,
The rather and better solution shall you see.

Behold how ice to water does relent,
And so it must, for water it was before,
Right so again to water our earth is gone,
And water thereby congealed for evermore.
For after all Philosophers that ever were born,
Each metal was once mineral water,
Therefore with water they turn to water all.

In which water of kind occasionate,
Of qualities been repugnant and diversity.
Things into things must therefore be rotated,
Until diversity be brought to perfect unity.
For Scripture records when the earth shall be troubled,
And into the deep sea shall be cast,
Mountains and bodies likewise at the last.

Our bodies be likened conveniently to mountains,
Which after high Planets we name,
Into the deepness therefore of Mercury,
Turn them, and keep you out of blame,
For then you shall see a noble game,
How all shall become powder as soft as silk,
So does our rennet kindly curd our milk.

Then have the bodies lost their first form,
And others been induced immediately,
Then you have well bestowed your cost,
Whereas others uncunningly must go by,

Not knowing the secrets of our Philosophy.
Yet one point more I must tell thee,
How each body has dimensions three.

Altitude, Latitude and also Profundity,
By which always we must turn our wheel,
Knowing that your entrance in the West shall be,
Your passage forth to the North if you do well,
And there your lights lose their light each deal,
For there you must abide by ninety nights,
In darkness of purgatory without lights.

Then take your course up to the East anon,
By colours variable, passing in manifold ways,
And then be winter and spring nigh overgone,
To the East therefore devise your ascending,
For there the Sun with daylight does uprise in summer,
And there disport you with delight,
For there your work shall become perfect white.

Forth from the East into the South ascend,
And sit you down there in the chair of fire,
For there is harvest, that is to say an end
Of all this work after your own desire,
There shines the Sun up in his Hemisphere,
And after the eclipse is in redness with glory,
To reign as King upon all metals and Mercury.

All in one glass must all this thing be done,
Like to an egg in shape and closed well,
Then you must know the measure of firing,
Which if unknown your work is lost each deal.
Never let your glass be hotter than you may feel,
And suffer still in your bare hand to hold,
For fear of losing, as Philosophers have told.

Yet to my doctrine futhermore attend,
Beware your glass you never open nor move,
From the beginning until you have made an end,
If you do otherwise, your work may never achieve,
Thus in this Chapter, which is but brief,
I have taught you your true Solution,
Now to the third gate go, for this is won.

The end of the second gate.

Ripley's Third Gate

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SEPARATION - THE THIRD GATE

Separation does each part from the other divide,
The subtle from the gross, the thick from the thin,

But look you set aside manual Separation,
For that pertains to fools that little good do win,
But in our Separation Nature does not cease,
Making division of qualities elemental,
Into a fifth degree till they be turned all.

Earth is turned into water black and blue,
And water after into air under very white,
Then air into fire, elements there be no more,
Of these is made our stone of great delight,
But of this Separation much more must we write,
And Separation is called by Philosophers definition,
Tetraptative dispersion of the said four elements.

Of this Separation I find a like figure,
Spoken by the prophet in the psalmody,
God brought out of a stone a flood of water pure,
And out of the hardest rock oil abundantly,
So out of our precious stone if you be wise,
Oil incombustible and water you shall draw,
And thereabouts you need not at the coals to blow.

Do this with heat easy and nourishing,
First with moist fire and after that with dry,
Drawing out the phlegm with patience,
And after that the other Natures wisely,
Dry up thine earth till it be thirsty,
By Calcination, else you labour in vain,
And then make it drink up the moisture again.

Thus you must oftentimes make Separation,
Dividing your waters into two parts,
So that the subtle from the gross you take,
Till the earth remain below in colour blue,
That earth is fixed to abide all woe,
The other part is spiritual and flying,
But you must turn them all into one thing.

Then oil and water with water shall distil,
And through its help receive moving,
Keep well these two that you not spoil,
Your work for lack of due closing,
And make your stopple of glass,
Melting the top of your vessel together with it,
Then Philosopher-like it is shut up.

The water wherewith you may revive the stone,
Look you distil before you work with it,
Oftentimes by itself alone,
And by this sight you shall well know,
When it is quit from feculent faeces,
For some men can it with Saturn multiply,
And other substances which we defy.

Distil it therefore till it be clean,
And thin like water as it should be,

As heaven in colour bright and shine,
Keeping both figure and ponderosity,
Therewith did Hermes moisten his tree,
Within his glass he made it grow upright,
With flowers coloured beautiful to sight.

This water is like to the venomous Tyre,
Wherewith the mighty miracle is wrought,
For it is a poison most strong of ire,
A stronger poison cannot be thought,
At apothecaries therefore it is often sought,
But no man shall be intoxicated by it,
From the time it is elixerated into medicine.

For then it is the miracle true,
It is of poison most expulsive,
And in its workings does marvels show,
Preserving many from death to life,
But look you meddle it with no corrosive,
But choose it pure and quick running,
If thou thereby will have winning.

It is a marvellous thing in kind,
And without it nothing can be done,
Therefore did Hermes call it his wind,
For it flies up from Sun and Moon,
And makes our stone to fly with it soon,
Reviving the dead and giving life,
To Sun and Moon, husband and wife.

Which if they were not by craft made quick,
And their fatness with water drawn out,
So the thin was severed from the thick,
You should never bring this work about,
If you will speed therefore without doubt,
Raise up the birds out of their nest,
And after again bring them to rest.

Water with water will accord and ascend,
And spirit with spirit, for they be of one kind,
Which after they be exalted make to descend,
So shall you divide that which Nature formerly did bind,
Mercury essential turning into wind,
Without which natural and subtle Separation,
May never complete profitable generation.

Now to help you in at this gate,
The last secret I will tell to you,
Your water must be sublimated seven times,
Else no kindly Dissolution shall be,
And you shall not see putrefying,
Like liquid pitch, nor colours appearing,
For lack of fire working within your glass.

There are four fires which you must understand,
Natural, unnatural, against Nature also,

And elemental which does burn the brand.
These four fires we use and no more,
Fire against nature must do your bodily woe,
This is our Dragon as I you tell,
Fiercely burning as the fire of hell.

Fire of nature is the third menstrual,
That fire is natural in each thing,
But fire occasional, we call unnatural,
As heat of ashes, and baths for putrefying,
Without these fires you may nought bring to Putrefaction,
For to be separate,
Your matters together proportionate.

Therefore make fire within your glass,
Which burns the body more than fire Elemental,
If you will win our secrets,
According to your desire.
Then shall your seeds both rot and spire,
By help of fire occasional,
That kindly after they may be separated.

Of Separation the Gate must thus be won,
That furthermore yet you may proceed,
Towards the Gate of secret Conjunction,
Into the inner Castle which will you lead,
Do after my counsel if you will speed,
With two strong locks this Gate is shut,
As consequently you shall well know.

The end of the Third Gate.

Ripley's Fourth Gate

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THE FOURTH GATE - CONJUNCTION

After the chapter of natural Separation,
By which the elements of our Stone be dissevered,
Here follows the chapter of secret Conjunction,
Which Natures repugnant joins to perfect unity.
And so them knitteth that none from the other may flee,
When they by fire shall be examined,
They be together so surely conjugated.

And therefore Philosophers give this definition,
Saying this Conjunction is nothing else,
But a copulation of dissevered qualities,
Or a co-equation of principles, as others tell,
But some men with Mercury that the Apothecary sells,
Meld bodies which cannot divide their matter,
And therefore they slip aside.

For until the time the soul be separated,
And cleansed from its original sin with the water,
And thoroughly spiritualised,
The true Conjunction you may never begin.
Therefore the soul first from the body twin,
Then of the corporeal part and of the spiritual.
The soul shall cause perpetual conjunction.

Of two conjunctions the philosophers do mention make,
Gross when the body with Mercury is reincrudate,
But let this pass, and to the second take heed,
Which is as I have said, after separation celebrated,
In which the parties be left with least to colligate,
And so promoted unto a most perfect temperance,
That never after amongst them may be repugnance.

Thus Separation causes true Conjunction to be had,
Of water and air, with earth and fire,
But that each element into other may be laid,
And so abide for ever to your desire,
Do as do daubers with clay or mire,
Temper them thick and make them not too thin,
So do up drying, you shall the rather win.

But manners there be of our Conjunction three,
The first is called Diptative by Philosophers,
Which between the agent and patient must be,
Male and female, Mercury and Sulphur vive,
Matter and form, thin and thick to thrive,
This lesson will help thee without any doubt,
And our Conjunction truly to bring about.

The second manner is called Triptative,
Which is Conjunction, made of things three,
Of body, soul and spirit, that they not strive,
Which trinity you must bring to unity,
For as the soul to the spirit must bonded be,
So the body must the soul to him knit,
Out of thy mind let not this lesson flit.

The third manner and also the last of all,
Four Elements together which join to abide,
Tetraptative certainly the Philosophers do call it,
And especially Guido de Montano whose fame goes wide,
And therefore in most laudable manner this tide,
In our Conjunction four elements must aggregate in due proportion,
Which first were separated asunder.

Therefore like as the woman has veins fifteen,
And the man has but five to the act of their fecundity,
Required in our Conjunction first I mean,
So must the man our Sun have of his water three,
And nine his wife, which three to him must be.
Then like with like will joy have for to dwell,
More of Conjunction I needeth not to tell.

This chapter I will conclude right soon,
Therefore gross Conjunction charging thee to make but one,
For seldom have strumpets children of them bore,
And so you shall never come by our stone,
Without you let the woman lie alone,
That after she has once conceived of the man,
Her matrix be shut up from all others then.

For such as add ever more crude to crude,
Opening their vessel letting their matters cool,
The sperm conceived they nourish not but delude themselves,
And spoil their work each time.
If you therefore wish to do well,
Close up your matrix and nourish the seed,
With continual and temperate heat if you will speed.

And when your vessel has stood by five months,
And clouds and eclipses be passed each one,
The light appearing, increase your heat, then believe,
Until bright and shining in whiteness be your Stone.
Then may you open your glass anon,
And feed your child which is born,
With milk and meat, aye more and more.

For now both moist and dry is so contempered,
That of the water earth has received impression,
Which never after that asunder may be separate,
So water to earth has given ingression,
That both together to dwell have made profession,
And water of earth has purchased a retinue,
They four made one never more to strive.

Thus in two things all our intent does hang,
In dry and moist, which are two contraries.
In dry, that it bring the moist to fixing,
In moist, that it give liquefaction to the earth also,
That of them a temperament may thus go forth,
A temperament not so thick as the body is,
Neither so thin as water without miss.

Loosing and knitting thereof be two principles,
Of this hard science, and poles most principal,
How be it that other principles be many more,
As shining fanes which I shall show,
Proceed therefore unto another wall,
Of this strong Castle of our Wisdom,
That in at the fifth Gate you may come.

The end of the Fourth Gate.

Ripley's Fifth Gate

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THE FIFTH GATE - PUTREFACTION

Now we begin the chapter of Putrefaction,
Without which pole no seed may multiply,
Which must be done only by continual action,
Of heat in the body, moist not manually.
For bodies else may not be altered naturally,
Since Christ doth witness, unless the grain of wheat die in the ground,
Increase may thou not get.

And likewise unless the matter putrefy,
It may in no way truly be altered,
Neither may thy elements be divided kindly,
Nor the conjunction of them perfectly celebrated,
That thy labour therefore be not frustrated,
The privitie of our putrefying well understand,
Before ever you take this work in hand.

And Putrefaction may thus be defined, after philosophers sayings,
To be the slaying of bodies,
And in our compound a division of things three,
Leading forth into the corruption of killed bodies,
And after enabling them unto regeneration,
For things being in the earth, without doubt,
Be engendered of rotation in the heavens about.

And therefore as I have said before,
Thine elements commixed and wisely coequate,
Thou keep in temperate heat,
Eschewing evermore that they be not incinerate by violent heat,
To dry powder, unprofitably rubificated,
But into powder black as a crow's bill,
With heat of the Bath or else of our dunghill.

Until the time that ninety nights be passed,
In moist heat keep them for any thing,
Soon after by blackness you shall espy,
That they draw close to putrefying,
Which after many colours you shall bring,
With patience easily to perfect whiteness,
And so thy seed in his nature will multiply.

Make each the other then to hug and kiss,
And like as children to play them up and down,
And when their shirts are filled with piss,
Then let the woman to wash be bound,
Which often for faintness will fall in a swoon,
And die at last with her children all,
And go to purgatory to purge their filth original.

When they be there, by little and little increase,
Their pains with heat, aye, more and more,
Never let the fire from them cease,
And see that thy furnace be apt therefore,
Which wise men call an Athanor,

Conserving heat required most temperately,
By which thy matter doth kindly putrefy.

Of this principle speaks wise Guido,
And sayeth "by rotting dieth the compound corporeal",
And then after Morien and others more,
Upriseth again regenerated, simple and spiritual,
And were not heat and moisture continual,
Sperm in the womb might have no abiding,
And so there should be no fruit thereof upspring.

Therefore at the beginning our stone thou take,
And bury each one in other within their grave,
Then equally between them a marriage make,
To lie together six weeks let them have their seed conceived,
Kindly to nourish and save,
From the ground of their grave not rising that while,
Which secret point doth many a one beguile.

This time of conception with easy heat abide,
The blackness showing shall tell you when they die,
For they together like liquid pitch that tide,
Shall swell and bubble, settle and putrefy,
Shining colours therein you shall espy,
Like to the rainbow marvellous to sight,
The Water then beginneth to dry upright.

For in moist bodies, heat working temperate,
Engenders blackness first of all,
Which is the assigned token of kindly Conjunction,
And of true Putrefaction: remember this,
For then perfectly to alter thou can not miss,
And thus by the gate of blackness thou must come in,
To light of Paradise in whiteness if you wilt win.

For first the Sun in his uprising shall be obscured,
And pass the waters of Noah's flood on earth,
Which was continued a hundred and fifty days,
Ere this water went away,
Right so our waters shall pass (as wise men understood),
That you with David shall say,
"Abierunt in sicco flumina" : bear this away.

Soon after that Noah planted his vineyard,
Which royally flourished and brought forth grapes,
After which space you shall not be afraid,
For it likewise shall follow the nourishing of our stone,
And soon after that 30 days be gone,
You shall have grapes right as ruby red,
Which is our Adrop, our Ucifer, and our red lead.

For like as souls after pains transitory,
Be brought to Paradise, which ever is joyful life,
So shall our stone after his darkness in Purgatory be purged,
And joined in Elements without strife,
Rejoice the whiteness and beauty of his wife,

And pass from darkness of purgatory to light of Paradise,
In whiteness Elixir of great might.

And that you may the rather to putrefaction win,
This example take you for a true conclusion,
For all the secret of Putrefaction rests therein,
The heart of oak that hath of water continual infusion,
Will not soon putrefy, I tell you without delusion,
For though it lay in water a hundred years and more,
Yet should you find it sound as ere it was before.

But if you keep it sometimes wet and sometimes dry,
As thou may see in timber by usual experiment,
By process of time that oak shall utterly putrefy,
And so likewise according to our intent,
Sometimes our tree must with the Sun be burnt,
And then with water we must make it cool,
That by this means to rotting we may bring it well.

For now in wet, and now again in dry,
And now in heat, and now again to be in cold,
Shall cause it soon to putrefy,
And so shall thou bring to rotting your gold,
Treat thy bodies as I have thee told,
And in thy putrefying with heat be not too swift,
Lest in the ashes thou seek after your thrift.

Therefore your water you draw out of the earth,
And make the soul therewith to ascend,
Then down again into the earth it throw,
That they oftentimes so ascend and descend,
From violent heat and sudden cold descend your glass,
And make your fire so temperate,
That by the sides the matter be not vitrified.

And be you wise in choosing of the matter,
Meddle with no salts, sulphurs nor mean minerals,
For whatsoever any worker to thee does clatter,
Our Sulphur and Mercury be only in metals,
Which some men call oils and waters,
Fowls and bird, with many other names,
So that fools should never know our stone.

For of this world our stone is called the ferment,
Which moved by craft as nature does require,
In his increase shall be full opulent,
And multiply his kind after thine own desire,
Therefore is God vouchsafe you to inspire,
To know the truth, and fancies to eschew,
Like unto you in riches shall be but few.

But many men be moved to work after their fantasy,
In many subjects in which be tinctures gay,
Both white and red divided manually to sight,
But in the fire they fly away,
Such break pots and glasses day by day,

Poisoning themselves and losing their sight,
With odours, smokes, and watching up by nights.

Their clothes be bawdy and worn threadbare,
Men may them smell for multipliers where they go,
To file their fingers with corrosives they do not spare,
Their eyes be bleary, their cheeks lean and blue,
And thus I know they suffer loss and woe,
And such when they have lost that was in their purse,
Then do they chide, and Philosophers sore do curse.

To see their houses is a noble sport,
What furnaces, what glasses there be of diverse shapes,
What salts, what powders, what oils, or acids,
How eloquently of Materia Prima their tongues do clap,
And yet to find the truth they have no hope,
Of our Mercury they meddle and of our sulphur vive,
Whereon they dote, and more and more unthrive.

For all the while they have Philosophers been,
Yet could they never know what was our Stone,
Some sought it in dung, in urine, some in wine,
Some in star slime (some thing it is but one),
In blood and eggs : some till their thrift was gone,
Dividing elements, and breaking many a pot,
Shards multiplying, but yet they hit it not.

They talk of the red man and of his white wife,
That is a special thing, and of the Elixirs two,
Of the Quintessence, and of the Elixir of life,
Of honey, Celidonie, and of Secondines also,
These they divide into Elements, with others more,
No multipliers, but will they be called Philosophers,
Which natural Philosophy did never read or see.

This fellowship knows our Stone right well,
They think them richer than is the King,
They will him help, he shall not fail,
To win for France a wondrous thing,
The holy Cross home will they bring,
And if the King were taken prisoner,
Right soon his ransom would they make.

A marvel it is that Westminster Kirk,
Which these Philosophers do much haunt,
Since they can so much riches work,
As they make boast of and avaunt,
Drinking daily at the wine due taunt,
Is not made up perfectly at once,
For truly it lacketh yet many stones.

Fools do follow them at their tail,
Promoted to riches wishing to be,
But will you hear what worship and avail,
They win in London that noble city ?
With silver maces (as you may see),

Sargents awaiteth on them each hour,
So be they men of great honour.

Sargents seek them from street to street,
Merchants and Goldsmiths lay after them to watch,
That well is him that with them may meet,
For the great advantage that they do catch,
They hunt about as does a dog,
Expecting to win so great treasure,
That ever in riches they shall endure.

Some would catch their goods again,
And some more good would adventure,
Some for to have would be full fain,
Of ten pounds one, I you ensure,
Some which have lent their goods without measure,
And are with poverty clad,
To catch a noble, would be full glad.

But when the Sargents do them arrest,
Their pockets be stuffed with Paris balls,
Or with signets of St Martin's at the least,
But as for money it is pissed against the walls,
Then they be led (as well for them befalls),
To Newgate or Ludgate as I you tell,
Because they shall in safeguard dwell.

Where is my money become, saith one ?
And where is mine, saith he and he ?
But will you hear how subtle they be anon,
In answering that they excused be,
Saying of our Elixirs we were robbed,
Else might we have paid you all your gold,
Though it had been more by ten-fold.

And then their creditors they flatter so,
Promising to work for them again,
In right short space the two Elixirs,
Doting the Merchants that they be fain,
To let them go, but ever in vain,
They work so long, till at the last,
They be again in prison cast.

If any them ask why they be not rich ?
They say that they can make fine gold of tin,
But he (say they) may surely swim the ditch,
Which is upholded by the chin,
We have no stock, therefore may we not win,
Which if we had, we would soon work enough,
To finish up Westminster Kirk.

And some of them be so devout,
They will not dwell out of that place,
For they may without doubt,
Do what them list to their solace,
The Archdeacon is so full of grace,

That if they bless him with their cross,
He forceth little of other mens loss.

And when they there sit at the wine,
These monks they say have many a pound,
Would God (saith one) have some were mine,
Yet care away, let the cup go round,
Drink on saith another, the mean is found,
I am a master of that Art,
I warrant us we shall have part

Such causes Monks evil to do,
To waste their wages through their dotage,
Some bringeth a mazer, and some a spoon,
Their Philosophers gives them such comage,
Behighting them winning with domage,
A pound for a penny at the least again,
And so fair promises make fools fain.

A Royal medicine one upon twelve,
They promise them thereof to have,
Which they could never for themselves,
Yet bring about, so God me save,
Beware such Philosophers no man deprave,
Which help these Monks to riches so,
In threadbare coats that they must go.

The Abbot ought well to cherish this company,
For they can teach his Monks to live in poverty,
And to go clothed and monied religiously,
As did Saint Bennet, eschewing superfluity,
Easing them also of the ponderosity of their purses,
With pounds so aggravated,
Which by Philosophy be now alleviated.

Lo who meddles with this rich company,
Great boast of their winning they may make,
For they shall reap as much by their Philosophy,
As they of the tail of an ape can take,
Beware therefore for Jesus' sake,
And meddle with nothing of great cost,
For if thou do, it is but lost.

These Philosophers (of which I spoke before),
Meddle and blunder with many a thing,
Running in errors ever more and more,
For lack of true understanding,
But like must always bring forth like,
So hath God ordained in every kind,
Would Jesus they would bear this is mind.

They expect of a Nettle to have a Rose,
Or of an Elder to have an apple sweet,
Alas, that wisemen their goods should lose,
Trusting such doctrines when they them meet,
Which say our Stone is trodden under foot,

And makes them vile things to distil,
Till all their houses with stench they fill.

Some of them never learned a word in Schools,
Should such by reason understand Philosophy ?
Be they Philosophers ? Nay, they be fools.
For their works prove them without wit,
Meddle not with them, if you would be happy,
Lest with their flattery they so thee till,
That you agree unto their will.

Spend not thy money away in waste,
Give not to every spirit credence,
But first examine, grope and taste,
And as thou provest, so put your confidence,
But ever beware of great expense,
And if the Philosopher do live virtuously,
The better you may trust his Philosophy.

Prove him first, and him appose,
Of all the secrets of our Stone,
Which if he know not, you need not to lose,
Meddle you no further, but let him be gone,
Though he make ever so piteous a moan,
For then the Fox can fagg and faine,
When he would to his prey attain.

If he can answer as a Clerk,
How he has not proved it indeed,
And you then help him to his work,
If he be virtuous I hold it merited,
For he will thee quite if ever he speeds,
And thou shalt know by a little anon,
If he have knowledge of our Stone.

One thing, one glass, one furnace, and no more,
Behold if he does hold this principle,
And if he do not, then let him go,
For he shall never make thee a rich man,
Timely it is better you forsake him,
Than after with loss and variance,
And other manner of unpleasance.

But if God fortune you to have,
This Science by doctrine which I have told,
Reveal it not to whosoever it craves,
For favour, fear, silver or gold.
Be no oppressor, lecher not boaster bold,
Serve thy God and help among the poor,
If you wish this life to continue long.

Unto thyself your secrets ever keep,
From sinners, who have not God in dread,
But will cast you in prison deep,
Till you teach them to do it indeed,
Then slander on you shall spring and spread,

That you do coin then will they say,
And so undo you for ever and aye.

And if you teach them this cunning,
Their sinful living for to maintain,
In hell therefore shall be your winning,
For God will take disdain of you and them,
As thou nought could therefore you faine,
That body and soul you may both save,
And here in peace to have your living.

Now in this Chapter I have taught you,
How you must putrefy your body,
And so to guide you that you be not caught,
And put to durance loss and villany
My doctrine therefore remember wisely,
And pass forth towards the sixth gate,
For thus the fifth is triumphate.

The end of the Fifth Gate

Ripley's Sixth Gate

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THE SIXTH GATE - CONGELATION

Of Congelation I need not much to write,
But what it is, I will to you declare.
It is the induration of soft things of colour white,
And the fixation together of spirits which are flying,
How to congeal, you need not much to care,
For Elements will knit together soon,
So that Putrefaction be kindly done.

But Congelations be made in divers ways,
Of spirits and bodies dissolved to water clear,
Of salts also dissolved twice or thrice,
And then congealed into a fluxible matter;
Of such congealing, fools fast do clatter,
And some dissolve, dividing the Elements manually,
And congealing them after to a dry powder.

But such congealing is not to our desire,
For unto ours it is contrary,
Our congelation dreads not the fire :
For it must ever stand in it unctuous,
And so it is also a tincture so bounteous,
Which in the air congealed will not relent to water,
For then our work were spoiled.

Moreover congeal not into so hard a stone,
As glass or crystal, which melteth by fusion,

But so that it like wax will melt anon
Without blast: and beware of delusion,
For such congealing accords not to our conclusion,
As will not flow, but run to water again,
Like salt congealed, then labour you in vain.

Which congelation avails us not a deal,
It longeth to multipliers, congealing vulgarly,
If you therefore wish to do well,
(So that the medicine shall never flow kindly,
Neither congeal, without you putrefy it first)
First purge, and then fix the elements of our stone,
Till they together congeal and flow anon.

For when your matter is made perfectly white,
Then will the spirit with the body be congealed,
But of that time you may have long respite,
Or it congeal, like pearls in your sight,
Such congelation be you glad to see,
And after like grains red as blood,
Richer than any worldly good.

The earthly grossness therefore first mortified,
In moisture blackness is engendered;
This principle may not be denied,
For natural philosophers so say, I declare,
Which had, of whiteness you may not miss;
And into whiteness if thou congeal it once,
Then have you a stone most precious of all stones.

And like as the moist did putrefy the dry,
Which caused in colour blackness to appear,
So the moist is congealed by the dry,
Engendering whiteness shining with might full clear,
And dryness proceeding as the matter whitens,
Like as in blackness moisture does him show,
By colours variant always new and new.

The cause of this is heat most temperate,
Working and moving the matter continually,
And thereby also the matter is altered,
Both inward and outward substantially,
Not as do fools to their sophistical sight;
But in every part all fire to endure,
Fluxible, fixed and stable in tincture.

As Physic determines of each digestion,
First done in the stomach in which is dryness,
Causing whiteness without question,
Like as the second digestion causes redness,
Completed in the liver by temperate heat,
Right so our Stone by dryness and by heat,
Is digested to white and red complete.

But here you must another secret know,
How the Philosophers child in the air is born,

Busy you not to blow at the coal too fast,
And take this neither for mockery or scorn,
But trust me truly, else is all your work forlorn,
Without your earth with water be revived,
Our true congealing you shall never see.

A soul it is, being betwixt heaven and earth,
Arising from the earth as air with water pure,
And causing life in every lively thing,
Incessant running upon our four fold nature,
Enforcing to better them with all its cure,
Which air is the fire of our Philosophy,
Named now oil, now water mystically.

And by this means air which we call oil or water,
Our fire, our ointment, our spirit, and our Stone,
In which one thing we ground our wisdoms all,
Goes neither in nor out alone,
Nor the fire but the water anon.
First it leads out, and after it brings in,
As water with water, which will not lightly twin.

And so may water only our water move,
Which moving causes both death and life
And water to water doth kindly cleave,
Without repugnance or any strife,
Which water to fools is nothing rife,
Being without doubt of the kind of the Spirit,
Called water and that which leads out.

And water is the secret and life of every thing
Of substance found in this world,
For of water each thing has its beginning,
As is shown in women, when they are unbound,
Of water called Albumen, which passes before if all be sound,
First from them running,
With grievous throes before their childing.

And truly that is the most principal cause,
Why Philosophers charge us to be patient,
Till in time the water be dried all to powder,
With nourishing heat, continual, not violent;
For qualities be contrary of every element,
Till after black in white be made a union,
Of them for ever, congealed without division.

And furthermore, the preparation of this conversion,
From thing to thing, from one state to another,
Is done only by kindly and discrete operation of Nature,
As is of sperm within the mother;
For sperm and heat, are as sister and brother,
Which be converted in themselves as nature can,
By action and passion at last to perfect man.

For as the bodily part by nature was combined,
Into man, is such as the beginner was,

Which though it thus from thing to thing was altered,
Not out of kind, to mix with other kind did pass,
And so our matter spermatical within our glass,
Within itself must turn from thing to thing,
By most temperate heat only nourishing it.

Another natural example I may tell you,
How the substance of an egg by nature is wrought
Into a chicken without passing out of the shell,
A plainer example I could not have thought,
And their conversions be made till forth be brought,
From state to state, the like by like in kind,
With nourishing heat : only bear this in mind.

Another example here also you may read,
Of vegetable things, taking consideration,
How every thing grows of its own seed,
Through heat and moisture, by natural operation,
And therefore minerals be nourished by the administration
Of radical moisture, which was their beginning,
Not passing their kind within one glass.

There we turn them from thing to thing again,
Into their mother the water when they go,
Which principle unknown, you labourest in vain.
Then all is sperm ; and things there be no more,
But kind with kind in number two,
Male and female, agent and patient,
Within the matrix of the earth most orient.

And these be turned by heat from thing to thing
Within one glass, and so from state to state,
Until the time that nature does bring them,
Into one substance of the water regenerate:
And so the sperm with his kind is altered,
Able in likeness his kind to multiply,
As does in kind all other things naturally.

In the time of this said natural process,
While that the conceived sperm is growing
The substance is nourished with his own menstrual,
Which water only out of the earth did spring,
Whose colour is green in the first showing;
And from that time the Sun hides his light,
Taking his course throughout the North by night.

The said menstrual (I say to you in counsel)
The blood of our green Lion and not of vitriol,
Dame Venus can the truth of this tell to you,
At the beginning, to counsel if you call her,
The secret is hid by Philosophers great and small,
Which blood drawn out of our green Lion,
For lack of heat had not perfect digestion.

But this blood called our secret menstrual,
Wherewith our sperm is nourished temperately,

When it is turned into the corporeal faeces,
And so become perfectly white and very dry,
Congealed and fixed into his own body,
Then decocted blood to sight it may well seem,
Of this work named the milk white diadem.

Understand now that our fiery water thus sharp,
Is called our menstrual water,
Wherein our earth is loosed and naturally calcined,
By congelation that they may never twine,
But yet to congeal more water you may not hesitate,
Into three parts of the acute water said before,
With the fourth part of the earth congealed and no more.

Unto that substance therefore so congeate,
The fourth part put of crystalline water,
And make them then together to be disposed,
By congelation into a miner metalline,
Which like a new slipped sword will shine,
After the blackness which first will show,
The fourth part then give it of water new.

Many imbibitions it must have yet,
Give it the second, and after the third also,
The said proportion keeping in your wit,
Then to another the fourth time look you go,
Therefore pass not the fifth time and the sixth,
But put two parts at each time of them three,
And at the seventh time five parts must there be.

When you have made imbibition seven times,
Again you must turn your wheel,
And putrefy all that matter without addition,
First abiding blackness if you will do well,
Then into whiteness congeal it up each deal,
And after by redness into the south ascend,
Then have you brought your base to an end.

Thus is your water then divided into two parts,
With the first part the bodies be putrefied,
And to your imbibitions the second part must go,
With which your matter is afterward denigrated,
And soon upon easy decoction albificated,
Then is it named by Philosophers our starry stone,
Bring that to redness, then is the sixth gate won.

The end of the Sixth Gate.

Ripley's Seventh Gate

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Now I turn my pen to write of Cibation,
Since it must here the seventh place occupy:
But in few words it will be expedited,
Take heed therefore, and understand me wisely;
Cibation is called a feeding of our dry matter,
With milk and meat, which moderately you do,
Until it be brought unto the third order.

But give it never so much, that you it glut,
Beware of dropsy, and also of Noah's flood:
By little and little therefore you to it put
Of meat and drink, as seems to do it good,
That watery humours not overgrow the blood,
To drink therefore let it be measured so,
That you never quench it from that kindly appetite.

For if it drink too much, then it must have
A vomit or else it will be sick too long from the dropsy
Therefore thy womb thou save,
And from the flux, or else it will be wrong,
But rather let it thirst for drink along
Than you should give it overmuch at once.
Which must in youth be dieted for the nonce.

And if you diet it (as nature does require) moderately,
Till time that it be grown to age,
Keeping it from cold, and nourishing it with moist fire,
Then it shall grow, and wax full of courage,
And do to you both pleasure and advantage;
For it shall make dark bodies whole and bright,
Cleansing their leprosy through its might.

Three time must you also turn about your wheel,
Still keeping the rule of the said Cibation,
And then as soon as it does feel the fire,
Like wax it will be ready unto liquation:
This chapter needs no longer protestation,
For I have told you the diet most convenient,
After thine elements be made equipolent.

And also how you shall bring thy gold to whiteness,
Most like in figure to leaves of the hawthorn tree,
Called Magnesia, as I have told before,
And our White Sulphur without combustibility,
Which from the fire will never fly away.
And thus the seventh gate (as you desired)
In the uprising of the Sun is conquered.

The end of the seventh gate

Ripley's Eighth Gate

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THE EIGHTH GATE - SUBLIMATION

Here of our Sublimation a word or two
I have to speak, which is the eighth gate.
Fools do sublime, but you do not sublime so,
For we sublime not in the way they do,
To sublime truly therefore you shall not miss,
If you can make they bodies first spiritual,
And then your spirits (as I have taught you) corporeal.

Some do sublime Mercury from vitriol and salt,
And other spirits from scales of iron and steel,
Calcined from egg shells, and from quicklime,
And in their manner yet sublime they right well,
But such subliming accords never a deal,
To our intents, for we sublime not so,
To true subliming therefore, now I will go.

In Sublimation first beware of one thing,
That thou sublime to the top of the vessel;
For without violence you shall not bring it down again,
But there it will abide and dwell.
So I tell you it rejoices with refrigeration,
Keep it down therefore with temperate heat,
Full forty days, till it wax black and brown.

For then the soul begins to come out
From his own veins, for all that is subtle,
Will with the spirit ascend without doubt,
Bear in your mind therefore, and think on this,
How here eclipsed be your bodies,
As they do putrefy subliming more and more into water
Until they be all borne upwards.

And thus when they have spued out their venom,
Into the water then it does appear black,
Becoming spiritual each deal without doubt,
Subliming easily in our manner,
Into the water, which does bear it:
For in the air our child must thus be born
Of the water again, as I have said before.

But when these two by continual Sublimation,
Be laboured so with heat both moist and temperate,
That is all white and purely made spiritual,
Then heaven upon earth must be reiterated,
Until the soul with the body be incorporated,
That earth become all that before was heaven,
Which will be done in seven Sublimations.

And Sublimations we make for three causes,
The first cause is, to make the body spiritual,
The second is, that the spirit may be corporeal,
And become fixed with it and consubstantial,
The third cause is, that from its filthy original

It may be cleansed, and its saltiness sulphurous,
May be diminished in it, which is infectious.

Then when they thus together be freed from impurities,
They will sublime up whiter than the snow;
That sight will greatly comfort you :
For then anon perfectly you shalt know,
The spirits shall so be thrown down,
That this eighth gate shall to thee be unlocked,
Out of which many are shut and mocked.

The end of the eighth gate

Ripley's Ninth Gate

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THE NINTH GATE - FERMENTATION

True Fermentation few workers understand,
That secret therefore I will expound to you.
I travelled truly through many a land,
Ere ever I might find any that would tell it me :
Yet as God would, evermore blessed be he,
At at last I came to the perfected knowledge thereof,
Take heed therefore what I thereof do write.

Fermentations in divers manners be done,
By which our medicine must be perpetuated,
Into clear water - some looseth Sun and Moon,
And with their medicines make them to be congealed;
Which in the fire when they be examined,
May not abide, nor alter with complement:
For such fermenting is not to our intent.

But yet more kindly some other men do,
Fermenting their medicines in this way -
In Mercury dissolving both Sun and Moon,
Till time with the spirit they will arise,
Subliming them together twice or thrice;
Then Fermentation therewith they make;
That is a way, but yet we it forsake.

Some others there be which have more sense,
To touch the truth in part of fermenting -
They amalgam their bodies with Mercury like pap,
Then thereupon their medicines relenting;
These of our secrets have some hint,
But not the truth with perfect complement
Because they neither putrefy, nor alter their Ferment.

That point therefore I will disclose to you,
Look how you did with your imperfect body -
Do so with thy perfect bodies in each degree,

That is to say, first you putrefy them,
Destroying their former qualities utterly,
For this is wholly to our intent,
That first you alter before you ferment.

To your compound make ferment the fourth part,
Which ferments be only of Sun and Moon,
If you therefore be master of this art,
Your fermentation let thus be done,
Fix water and earth together soon,
And when your medicine as wax do flow,
Then upon amalgams look you it throw.

And when all that together is mixed,
Above the glass well closed make your fire,
And so continue it till all be fixed,
And well fermented to your desire,
Then make Projection after thy pleasure
For that is medicine each deal perfected,
Thus must you ferment both red and white.

For like as flour of wheat made into a paste,
Requires ferment, which we call leaven of bread,
That it may have the kindly taste,
And become cordial food to man and woman,
So you shall ferment your medicine,
That it may taste of the Ferment pure,
At all assays for ever to endure.

And understand that there be Ferments three,
Two be of bodies in nature clean,
Which must be altered as I have told you;
The third most secret of which I mean,
Is the first earth of his water green:
And therefore when the Lion does thirst,
Make him to drink till his belly burst.

Of this a question if I should move,
And ask of workers, what is this thing ?
Anon thereby I should them prove,
If they had knowledge of our fermenting:
For many a man speaks with wondering,
Of Robin Hood and of his bow,
Which never shot therein I trow.

For true Fermentation as I tell you,
Is the incorporation of the soul with the bodies,
Restoring to it the kindly smell,
With taste and colour by natural compacting together,
Of things dissevered, a due re-integration,
Whereby the body of the spirit takes impression.
That either the other may help to have ingression.

For like as bodies in their compaction corporeal,
May not show out their qualities effectually,
Until the time that they become spiritual,

No more may spirits abide with bodies steadfastly,
Till they be fixed together with them proportionally,
For then the body teaches the spirit to suffer fire,
And the spirit the body to enter to your desire.

Therefore you must ferment your gold with gold,
Your earth cleansed with his own water, I mean,
Nought else to say but element with element,
The spirit of life only going between,
For like as an adamant as you have seen
Draws iron to him, so does our earth by kind,
Draw down to him his soul borne up with wind.

With wind therefore the soul lead out and in,
Mingle gold with gold, that is to say,
Make Element with Element together run,
Till time all fire they may suffer,
For earth is Ferment without nay to water,
And water the earth unto,
Our Fermentation in this way must be done.

Earth is gold, and so is the soul also,
Not common, but ours thus elementary,
And yet thereto the Sun must go,
That by our wheel it may be altered:
For so to ferment it must be prepared,
That it profoundly may be joined,
With other natures as I said to you.

And whatsoever I have here said of gold,
The same of silver I will you understand,
That you putrefy them and alter (as I have told)
Ere you take in hand to ferment your medicine.
Forsooth I could never find anyone in England
Who could teach me to ferment in this way,
Without error, by practice or by speech.

Now of this chapter needs to treat no more,
Such I intend prolixity to eschew;
Remember well my words therefore,
Which you shall prove by practice true,
And Sun and Moon look you renew,
That they may hold of the fifth nature,
Then shall their tincture evermore endure.

And yet a way there is most excellent,
Belonging unto another working,
A water we make most redolent,
All bodies to oil wherewith we bring,
With which our medicine we make flowing,
A quintessence this water we call,
Which heals all diseases in man.

But with my base, after my doctrine prepared,
Which is our calx this must be done,
For when our bodies be so calcined,

That water will to oil dissolve them soon
Make you therefore oil both of the Sun and Moon,
Which is ferment most fragrant for to smell,
And so the ninth gate of this Castle is conquered.

The end of the Ninth Gate.

Ripley's Tenth Gate

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THE TENTH GATE - EXALTATION

We proceed now to the chapter of Exaltation,
Of which truly you must have pure knowledge,
But little is different from Sublimation,
If you conceive it right I you ensure,
Hereto accords the holy scripture,
Christ saying thus - "if I exalted be,
Then shall I draw all things unto me".

Our medicine if we exalt so,
It shall be thereby ennobled,
That must be done in two manners,
From time the parties be disposed,
Which must be crucified and examined,
And then bury together both man and wife,
To be after revived by the spirit of life.

Then up to heaven they must be exalted,
There to be in body and soul glorified,
For you must bring them to such subtlety,
That they ascend together to enter,
In clouds of clearness uniting together with Angels,
Then shall they draw as you shall see,
All other bodies to their own dignity.

If you therefore will exalt the bodies,
First you augment them with the spirit of life,
Till in time the earth be well subtilized,
By natural rectifying of every Element,
Exalting them up into the firmament,
Then much more precious shall they be than gold,
Because of the quintessence which they do hold.

For when the cold has overcome the heat,
Then into water the air shall be turned,
And so two contraries together shall meet,
Till either with the other right well agree,
So into air the water as I tell thee,
When heat of cold has got domination,
Shall be converted by craft of our circulation.

And of the air then fire you shall have,

By loosening, putrefying and subliming,
And fire you have of the earth material,
Thus by craft dissevering your elements,
Most especially well calcining your earth,
And when they be each one made pure,
Then do they hold all of the first nature.

In this way therefore make them be circulated,
Each into other exalting by and by,
And all in this one glass surely sigillate,
Not with thine hands, but as I teach you naturally,
Fire into water, then turn first hardly,
For fire is in Air, which is in water existent,
And this conversion accords to our intent.

Then furthermore turn on your wheel,
That into earth the air converted be,
Which will be done also right well,
For Air is in water being earth, trust me,
The water into fire, contrary in her quality,
Soon turn you may, for water is in earth,
Which is in fire, conversion true is this.

The wheel is now near turned about,
Into air turn earth which is the proper nest,
Of other Elements there is no doubt,
For earth is in fire, which in air takes rest,
This circulation begin you in the west,
Then into the south, till they exalted be,
Proceed duly, as I have taught you in the figure *.

In which process clearly you may see,
From one extreme how to another you may not go,
But by a mean, since they in qualities contrary be,
And reason will show that it be so,
As heat into cold, with other contraries more,
Without their means, as moist to heat and and cold,
Examples sufficient before this I have told.

Thus I have taught you how to make,
Of all your Elements a perfect circulation,
And at the figure example to take,
How you shall make this foresaid Exaltation,
And of your medicine in the Elements true graduation,
Till it be brought to a generative temperate,
And then you have conquered the tenth gate.

The end of the tenth gate.

Ripley's Eleventh Gate

[Back to Twelve Gates.](#)

Now I proceed to declare Multiplication,
Which is by Philosophers in this way defined,
Augmentation it is of the Elixir indeed,
In goodness and quantity both for white and red,
Multiplication is therefore as they do write,
That thing that does augment medicines in each degree,
In colour, in odour, in virtue, and also in quantity.

And why may you multiply this medicine infinitely,
Forsooth the cause is this,
For it is fire, which kindled will never die,
Dwelling with you, as fire does in houses,
Of which one spark may make more fire this way,
As musk in pigments and other spices more,
In virtue multiplied, and our medicine right so.

So he, who fire has less or more, is rich,
Because he may multiply it so hugely,
And so is he rich, who has in store any part,
Of our Elixir which can be augmented infinitely -
One way if you dissolve our powders dry,
And make often times of them Congelation,
Thereof in goodness then you make Augmentation.

The second way both in goodness and quantity,
It multiplies by iterated Fermentation,
As in that chapter I showed plainly to thee,
By diverse manners of natural operation,
And also in the chapter of our Cibation,
Where you may know how you shall multiply,
Your medicine with Mercury infinitely.

But if you will both loose and eke ferment,
Both more in quantity and better will it be -
And in such ways you may augment it soon,
That in your glass it will grow like a tree,
The tree of Hermes named seemly to see,
Of which one pip in a thousand will multiply,
If you can make your projection wisely.

And just as with Saffron when it is pulverised,
By little and little if it be tempered with liquor,
When with much more liquor dilated,
Tinges much more of liquor in quantity,
That being whole in his gross nature :
So shall you see, that our Elixir, the more it is made thin,
The further in tincture it fastly will run.

Keep in your fire therefore both morning and evening,
So that you do not need to run from house to house,
Among thy neighbours to seek or borrow your fire ,
The more you keep, the more good shall you win,
Multiplying it always more and more within your glass,
By feeding with Mercury unto your lives end,
So shall you have more than you need to spend.

This matter is plain, thereof I will write no more,
Let reason guide you,
Be never the bolder to sin therefore,
But serve thy God the better in each tide,
And while that you shall in this life abide,
Bear this in mind, forget not I thee pray,
As thou shalt appear before God at domesday.

His own great gifts therefore and his treasure,
Dispose you virtuously, helping the poor at need,
That in this world you may procure to yourself,
Mercy and grace with heavenly bliss to merit,
And pray to God devoutly that he lead you,
In at the twelfth gate, as he can best,
Soon after then you shall end your conquest.

The end of the eleventh gate.

Ripley's Twelfth Gate

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THE TWELFTH GATE - PROJECTION

In Projection it shall be proved if our practice be profitable,
Of which it behoves me the secrets here to move,
Therefore if your tincture be sure and not variable,
By a little of your medicine thus you may prove,
With Metal, or with Mercury as pitch it will cleave,
And tinge in Projection all fires to abide,
And soon it will enter and spread full wide.

But many by ignorance do mar what they made,
When they make Projection on unclesed metals,
For because of corruption their tinctures must fade,
Which they would not first take away from the body,
Which after Projection be brittle, blue and black.
That your tincture therefore may evermore last,
First see you cast your medicine upon ferment.

Then brittle as glass will your ferment be,
Upon bodies cleansed and made very pure,
Cast that brittle substance and soon you shall see,
That they shall be curiously coloured with tincture,
With all assays for ever shall endure,
But profitable Projection perfectly to make,
At the Psalms of the Psalter example thou take.

On 'Fundamenta' cast this psalm 'Nunc dimittis',
Upon 'verba mea', then cast 'Fundamenta' believe,
Then 'Verba' upon 'diligam', conceive me with your wits,
And 'diligam' upon 'attendite', if you wish to thrive,
Thus make you Projections, three, four, or five,

Till the tincture of the medicine begin to decrease,
And then it is time for Projection to cease.

By this misty talking I mean nothing else,
But that you must cast first the less on the more,
Increasing ever the number as wise men tell you,
And keep you this secret unto yourself in store,
Be covetous of cunning it is no sore burden,
For he that does not join the Elixir with bodies made clean,
Surely does not know what projection does mean.

Ten if thy multiply first into ten,
One hundred that number will assuredly make,
If one hundred into an hundred be multiplied,
Then ten thousand is that number if you count it wisely,
Then into as much more ten thousand to multiply,
Is a thousand thousand, I say,
Which multiplied into as much more, is a hundred millions.

That hundred millions being multiplied likewise,
Into ten thousand millions, as I do say to you,
Making so great a number I know not what it is,
Your number in Projection thus multiply always.
Now child through your courtesy for me that you pray,
Since I have told you our secrets all and some,
To which I beseech GOD by grace you may come.

Now you have conquered these twelve gates,
And all the Castle you hold at your will,
Keep your secrets in store to yourself,
And the commandments of God look you fulfil,
See you continue your glasses still in fire,
And multiply your medicines always more and more,
For wise men do say, that store is no sore.

The end of the twelve gates

Ripley's Recapitulation of the Twelve Gates

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RECAPITULATION

So to bring this treatise to a final end,
And briefly to conclude all these secrets here,
Diligently look at, and attend to your figure,
Which contains in it all these secrets great and small,
And if you conceive it, both theoretically and practically,
By figures and colours, by scripture plain,
It wisely conceived, you may not work in vain.

Consider first the latitude of this precious stone,
Beginning in the first side noted in the West,
Where the red man and the white woman be made one,

Espoused with the spirit of life to live in rest,
Earth and water equally proportioned, that is best,
And one part of the earth is good, and of the spirit three,
Which twelve to four also of the earth may be.

Three of the wife, and one of the man you take,
And the less of the spirit in this dispousation,
The better your Calcination for certain you shall make,
Then forth into the North proceed by obscuration,
Called the Eclipsing of the red man and his white wife,
Loosening them and altering them between winter and spring,
Turning earth into water, dark and nothing clear.

From thence by many colours into the East ascend,
Then shall the Moon be full appearing by day light,
Then is the purgatory passed, and her course at an end,
There is the uprising of the Sun appearing bright,
There is Summer after Spring, and day after night:
The earth and water which were black be turned to air,
And clouds of darkness blown over, and all appears fair.

And as the beginning of your practice was in the West,
And in the North the perfect mean of profound alteration,
So in the East after them is the beginning of speculation,
But of this course the Sun makes consummation up in the South,
There the elements are turned into fire by circulation,
Then to win your desire you need not be in doubt,
For the wheel of our philosophy you have turned about.

But turn your wheel about again two times,
Which being comprehended all the secrets of our philosophy,
In twelve chapters made plain to you, if you conceive this well,
And all the secrets by and by of our lower Astronomy,
Of how you shall calcine bodies, perfect, dissolve, divide, and putrefy,
With perfect knowledge of all the poles which be in our heaven,
Shining with inexplicable colours, never were a scene more gay.

And thus our secret conclusion know without fail,
Our red man tinges not, nor his wife, until they be tinged,
Therefore if you will lift yourself by this craft to avail,
Hide the altitude of bodies, and show out their profundity,
Destroying the first quality in every one of your materials,
And repair anon in them secondary qualities more glorious,
And in one glass, and with one rule, turn four natures into one.

Pale and black with false citrine, imperfect white and red,
The Peacock's feathers in gay colours, the rainbow which shall go over,
The spotted panther, the lion green, the Crows bill blue as lead.
These shall appear before you perfect white, and many more others.
And after the perfect white, grey, false citrine also,
And after these, there shall appear the red body invariable,
Then you have a medicine of the third order of his own kind multipliable.

You must divide your white Elixir into two parts,
Before you rubify, and into two glasses let these be done,
If you will have your Elixir for Sun and Moon do both so,

And multiply these soon into Mercury to great quantity,
And even if you had not at the beginning enough to fill a spoon,
Yet may you so multiply both white and red,
That if you live a thousand years, they shall stand you in stead.

Therefore I counsel you have recourse to your wheel,
And study well to know each chapter truly,
Meddle with no phantastic multipliers, but let them be,
Who will flatter you, feigning to be cunning in Philosophy,
Do as I bid you, them dissolve these aforesaid bases wisely,
And turn them into perfect oils with our true ardent water,
By circulation that must be done according to our intent.

These oils will fix crude Mercury and convert all bodies,
Into perfect Sun and Moon, when you shall make Projection,
That oily substance pure and fixed which Raimund Lully did call,
His Basilisk, of which he never made so plain detection,
Pray for me to God, that I may be one of his elect,
And that he will at domesday know me for one of his,
And grant me his bliss to reign with him forever. Amen

End of the Recapitulation.

Philalethes exposition of Ripley's Vision

This interesting exposition of a short poem of Sir George Ripley entitled his 'Vision', which uses symbolic ideas also explored in the *Ripley Scrowle*, is included in **Philalethes**, Eirenaeus. *Ripley Reviv'd: or, an Exposition upon Sir George Ripley's Hermetico-Poetical Works. Containing the plainest and most excellent Discoveries of the most hidden Secrets of the Ancient Philosophers, that were ever yet published. Written by Eirenaeus Philalethes an Englishman, stiling himself Citizen of the World.* London, Printed by Tho. Ratcliff and Nat. Thompson, for William Cooper at the Pelican in Little-Britain. 1678.

[Back to Ripley's works](#) . [Information on Ripley](#).

The Vision of Sr George Ripley, Canon of Bridlington, Unfolded.

When busie at my Book I was upon a certain Night,
This Vision here exprest appear'd unto my dimmed sight:
A Toad full Ruddy I saw, did drink the juice of Grapes so fast,
Till over-charged with the broth, his Bowels all to brast:
And after that, from poyson'd Bulk he cast his Venom fell,
For Grief and Pain whereof his Members all began to swell;
With drops of Poysoned sweat approaching thus his secret Den,
His Cave with blasts of fumous Air he all bewhited then:
And from the which in space a Golden Humour did ensue,
Whose falling drops from high did stain the soyl with ruddy hue.
And when his Corps the force of vital breath began to lack,
This dying Toad became forthwith like Coal for colour Black:
Thus drowned in his proper veins of poysoned flood;
For term of Eighty days and Four he rotting stood
By Tryal then this Venom to expel I did desire;
For which I did commit his Carkass to a gentle Fire:
Which done, a Wonder to the sight, but more to be rehearst;
The Toad with Colours rare through every side was pierc'd;
And White appear'd when all the sundry hews were past:
Which after being tinted Ruddy, for evermore did last.

Then of the Venom handled thus a Medicine I did make;
Which Venom kills, and saveth such as Venom chance to take:
Glory be to him the granter of such secret ways,
Dominion, and Honour both, with Worship, and with Praise.
Amen.

An Exposition upon Sir George Ripley's Vision.

Written by Æyrenæus Philalethes, Anglus, Cosmopolita

The Vision of George Ripley, Canon of Bridlington, Unfolded.

This Vision is a Parable rather or Enigm, which the Ancient Wise Philosophers have been wont to use often in setting out their secrets; this Liberty is granted to all men for to make use of Enigmatical expressions, to decipher that which is indeed mysterious. The Ancient Egyptians taught much by Hieroglyphicks, which way many Fathers of this Science have followed; but most especially they have made use of Mystical or Cabalistical descriptions; such is this. But to the thing in hand.

A Toad full ruddy I saw.

Here we have a Toad described, and in it the whole secret of Philosophers: The Toad is Gold; so called, because it is an Earthly Body, but most especially for the black stinking venemosity which this operation comes to in the first days of its preparation, before the whiteness appear; during the Rule of Saturn, therefore it is called the ruddy Toad. To this Authors assent with one accord; when they say our stone is nothing else but Gold digested unto the highest degree, to which Nature and Art, can bring it; and again the first work, saith another Philosopher, is to sublime Mercury, and then into clean Mercury to put clean bodies: many witnesses I could bring, yea the whole current of writers run this way: And what if some subtle Philosophers seem to deny this, on purpose to deceive the unwary? We shall not make it our work to reconcile them; (though we might) for many of them wrote very enviously, on purpose to ensnare; all of them wrote mysteriously, as much as they could to darken the truth: and at the best none of them were but men, and described things according to their apprehensions in Philosophy, none of them wrote in everything the naked truth; for then the Art would become so easie, that it would be condemned. But what needs words? we know the Truth, and we know by a secret Character, true Writers from Sophisters; and we need no Arguments being eye-witnesses our selves, and know that there is but one truth; not but one path, even the beaten path in which all who ever have attained this Art have trodden, nor can we be deceived our selves; nor would we deceive others.

Did drink the juice of Grapes.

This Toad is said to drink the juice of Grapes according to the Philosopher, the body, saith he, is not nobler than Gold, nor yet the water more precious than wine. This water they call sometimes Aqua Ardens, sometimes Acetum Acerrimum, but most commonly they call it their Mercury; this denomination I shall not insist upon; but shall assure you that is only deciphers Mercury, even that Mercury, of which I writ in my little Latine Treatise, called Introitus apertus ad oclusum Regis palatium; in that I discovered the whole Truth fully and nakedly, and if not too plainly, I am sure plain enough. I shall not here repeat; to that I remit the Reader.

This juice of Grapes this Toad is said to drink; that is not only in the gross Conjunction, which is an Impastation of the body, with the Water to the temper of Dough or Leaven, which the Water readily doth: such affinity there is between the Water and the Body; as the Philosopher saith, this Water is friendly and pleasant to the metals. But over, and besides the Water soaks Radically into our Body; being circulated upon it, according as the Philosopher saith, When its own sweat is returned to the Body, it perforates it marvellously. Thus the Body drinks in the Water, or Juice of Grapes, not so much then when they are first mingled: but most especially, when by Decoction it pierceth radically to the very profundity of it; and makes it to alter its Form; This is the Water which teareth the Bodies, and makes them no Bodies, but flying Spirits like a Smoak, Wind or Fume, as Artephius speaketh plentifully.

This operation is performed in a short while, in comparison of Subterranean operations of Nature, which are done in a very long time; therefore it is that so many Philosophers say, that it is done in a very short time, and yet it is not without cause, that so many of the Philosophers have complained of the length of this decoction.

Therefore the same Artephius who had said, that this fire of the Water of our Mercury, doth that in a short time above ground, that Nature was in performing in a 1000 years, doth in another place say, that the tincture doth not come out at once, but by little and little each day, and hour, till after a long time the decoction be compleat, according to the saying of the Philosopher: *Boyl, boyl, and again boyl, and accompt not tedious our long decoction.*

So fast.

So then this expression here, that the Toad doth drink in the Juice of Grapes so fast, doth not imply but that this work must have the true time of Nature; which is indeed a long time, and so is every decoction at least: so they will seem to the Artist who attends the fire day by day, and yet must wait for the fruit with Patience, till the Heaven have showred down upon the Earth the former and latter Rain: yet be not out of heart, but attend until the compleatment, for then a large Harvest will abundantly recompence all thy toyl.

Till over-charged with the Broth, his Bowels all to brast.

It follows in the Vision, that at length the Toad (over-charged with the broth) did burst asunder; This broth is the same which the fair Medea did prepare, and pour upon the two Serpents which did keep the Golden Aples, which grew in the hidden Garden of the Virgins Hesperides.

For the Vinegre of the Philosophers being circulated upon the Body, doth engender a substance like unto a bloody Broth, and makes Colours of the Rainbow, to appear in the ascension and descension upon your Lyon, until the Eagles have at length devoured the Lyon, and all together being killed with the Carion of the Carcasses become a venomous Toad, creeping on the Earth, and a Crow swimming in the midst of the dead Sea.

The Juice of Grapes then, which is our Mercury, drawn from the Chameleon or Air of our Physical Magnesia, and Chalybs Magical, being circulated upon our true Terra Lemnia; after it is grossly mixed with it by Incorporation, and set to our fire to digest, doth still enter in and upon our Body, and searcheth the profundity of it; and makes the occult to become manifest by continual ascension and descension: till all together become a Broth; which is a mean substance of dissevered qualities, between the Water and the Body, till at length the Body burst asunder and be reduced into a Powder, like to the Atoms of the Sun, black of the blackest and of a viscous matter.

And after that, from poysoned bulk he cast his venom fell.

This Reduction of the Body, thus in this water ingenders so venomous a Nature, that truly in the whole World there is not a ranker Poyson, or stink, according as Philosophers witness: And therefore he is said to cast his fell venom from his poysoned bulk; in as much as the exhalations are compared to the Invenomed Fume of Dragons, as Flamell in his Summary hath such an Allusion. But the Philosopher (as he adds in his Hieroglyphicks of the two Dragons), never feels his stink, unless he break his Vessels, but only he judgeth it by the colours proceeding from the rottenness of the Confections.

And indeed it is a wonder to consider, (which some Sons of Art are eye-witnesses of) that the fixed and most digested Body of Gold; should so rot and putrify, as if it were a Carcass, which is done by the admirable Divine virtue of our dissolving Water, which no Money can purchase. All these operations, which are so enlarged by variety of expressions, center in one, which is killing the quick, and reviving the dead.

For grief and pain whereof his members all began to swell.

This venomous fume of exhalations returning upon the Body, cause it to swell all over according to the saying of the Philosopher; The Body in this Water puffeth up, swelleth and putrefieth as a Grain of Corn, taking the nature living and vegetable, therefore for this cause this Water is in this sence called by the Philosophers their Leaven, for as

Leaven causeth Past to swell, so this fermented the body, and causeth it to tumefie and puff up; it is also called venom, for as this venom causeth swelling, so this Water by its reiteration uncessantly upon our body.

This operation is uncessant from the first incitation of the matter, even until compleat putrefaction; for the Toad doth always send forth his exhalations (being rather called the Lyon), till he be over-come in part: and then when the Body begins a little to put on the Nature of the Water, then it is compared to two Dragons, one winged, and the other without wings: and lastly when that stinking Earth appears, which Hermes calls his Terra Foliata, or Earth of Leaves, then it is most properly called the Toad of the Earth; from the first excitation, even to the last of this putrefaction; which exhalations are at the beginning for a time White, and afterwards become Yellowish, Blewish, and Blackish, (from the virulency of the matter) which exhalations hourly condensing, and ever and anon running

down like little veins in drops, do enter the Body marvellously, and the more it is entred; the more it swells and puffs up, till at length it be compleatly putrefied.

With drops of poisoned sweat, approaching thus his secret Den.

The following two Verses then are but a more Ample description of this work; of volatilization which is an ascension, and descension, or circulation of the confections within the Glass. Which Glass here called the secret Den, is else-where called by the same Author, a little Glassen-tun, and is an oval Vessel; of the purest White Glass, about the bigness of an ordinary Hen-Egg, in the which about the quantity of an ounce of 8 drachms of the confection, in all mixed is a convenient proportion to be set, which being Sealed up with Hermes Seal, the Glass having a neck about 6 fingers high, or thereabouts, which being thin and narrow; is melted together Artificially, that no Spirits can get out, nor no Air can come in, in which respect it is named a secret Den. Also it is called a secret Den, because of the secretness of Ashes or Sand, in which in a Philosophical Athanor it is set, the doores being firmly shut up, and a prospect left to look in by a Window, either to open a little, as much as is convenient sometimes, as occasion requires, or else with Glass put into it, to admit the view of the Artist; together with a light at hand to shew the colours.

His Cave with blasts of fumous Air, he all bewhited then.

Which Glass, Nest, and Furnace being thus secretly ordered, the Artist must in the first place expect to be in Prison a long time, as Bernard Trevisan saith, for the Concave of this secret place, will be so bewhited with the fumes which ascend, that an Artist rules his work more by skill and reason, or the eye of the mind, then of the Body, for the Spirits arising like a smook or Wind, sticketh to the Concave of the Glass, which is above the Sand or Ashes, and there by degrees, there grow drops which run down and moisten the Body below, and reduce as much as they can of the fixed, and so the Body by the Water, and the Water by the Body alter their colours.

And from the which in space a Golden Humour did ensue.

In so much that at length, the whole Vessel will seem as though it were all over gilded with Gold, for the exhalations will be Yellow, which is a sign of true Copulation of our Man and Woman together, but before this Yellow, and with it there will be an obscuring of the White brightness of the Fume, with mixture of Colours, Dark, obscure and Blewish.

The space is not long, for all the several passages are conspicuous before 40 days; for in that space from these Colours, are demonstrating Signs of Corruption and Generation, which is given us by the biting, and fiery Nature of our pontick Waters, and the resistance of our Bodies; in which Fight the Body is over-come, and killed, and dying yields these Colours: which is a Sign that the Eagles now are getting the Mastery, and our Lyon hath also a little infected them with his Carcass, which they begin to prey upon. This Operation is by Ingenious Artists called Extraction of Natures, and Separation, for the Tincture begins now to be separated from the Body. Also Reduction to the first matter; which is Sperm or Seed, which by reason of its double Nature is compared to two Dragons. I shall not enlarge in this Vision, but briefly unfold what is briefly laid down.

Whose falling drops from high did stain the soyl with ruddy hue.

These colours of the Mercury, do affect the subsident fixed Body, with sutable colours and the Bodies from these exhalations, be Tincted with a ruddy colour, which Flamel expresseth to this purpose, that these two Natures, or Dragons do bite one another very cruelly; and never leave from the time they have seized one upon another; till by their slaving Venom, and mortal hurts, they be all or a gore bloud, and then being stewed in their own Venom, are changed into a fifth Essence.

And when his Corps the force of vital breath began to lack.

But before the renovation of these Natures, they must in the first place pass through the Eclipse, both of the Sun and Moon and the darkness of Purgatory, which is the Gate of Blackness, and after that they shall be renovated with the light of Paradise.

This Allegorically is called Death, for as a man will resist violence, which entrencheth upon his life as long as he can, but if his Enemies are many and mighty, at length they grow too mighty for him, and he begins to fail both in strength and courage, and so Paleness, the Harbinger of Death, doth stand as it were on his lips, so our Body or Man the Sun, like a strong Champion, doth resist long, till he be wounded, and bleed as it were all over, and then dies, at whose death blackness doth begin to appear, as of old the Ravens were foretellers of Man's death approaching: for this Reiteration of Rotation of the Influences of the Heaven of it, together with heat still drying up and soaking in the Moisture as fast as it falls, brings it at last naturally to die and corrupt, as any other thing doth.

And then the Corps begin to lack breath; that is, the Fumes begin to cease: for with oft ascending and descending the Spirits are somewhat fixed, and turned into Powder or Dust, and are now in the bottom of the Vessel, drawing fast to Putrefaction: Nor do they for a time ascend, but remain below.

Wherefore govern your Fire, that your Spirits be not so exalted, and climb so high that the Earth want them, and they return no more: For this Operation is, as Morien saith, a drawing out of Water from the Earth, and again a returning of the same to the Earth, so often and so long till the Earth putrefie.

This dying Toad became forthwith like Coal for colour black.

This is the final end of the Combat, for herein in this Earth of Leaves all are reconciled, and final Peace is made; and now one Nature embraceth another, in no other form but in the form of a Powder impalpable, and in no other colour but black of the blackest.

From henceforth Natures are united, and boil and bubble together like melted Pitch, and change their forms one into another. Take heed therefore lest instead of Powder Black of the Blackest, which is the Crows Bill, you have an unprofitable dry half red Precipitate, Orange-coloured, which is a certain sign of the Combustion of Flowers, or Vertue of the Vegetative Seed. On this very Rock I have stumbled, and do therefore warn you.

Thus drowned in his proper Veins of poisoned Flood.

It appears by all that hath been said, and by the undoubted Testimony of all Philosophers who have been Eye-witnesses to this Truth, that the work is not so tedious, nor so chargeable, but that in the simple way of Nature the Mastery is to be attained: for when once the true body is Impasted with its true Leven, it doth calcine it self, and dissolve it self for the dissolution of the Body into a black and changeable coloured Water, which is the sign of the egression of the Tincture, is the Congelation of the Spirits into this lowest Period of Obscurity, which is this black Powder like unto Lamp-Black, this is the Complement of Eclipsation, which Contrition begins soon after the Colours, Yellowish, Blewish, etc.

For term of Eighty Days and Four he rotting stood.

This Calcination begins with these Variation in Colour about the two and fortieth day, of fiftieth at the farthest, in a good Regimen: After which comes putrefying Corruption, like to the Scum of boiling bloody Broath or melted Pitch; but Blackness in part, to wit, Superficial, begins about the fortieth day after the stirring up of the matter, in case of right Progress and Regimen of the Fire, or about the fiftieth at farthest. But this drowning of him in his own Poysen, and stewing him in his own Broath, is the intire Blackness and Cimmerian utter Darkness of compleat Rottenness, which according to the Author, is for the space of eighty four days. This time is not certainly agreed upon by Authors: But in this they all agree, they prescribe so long time until the Complement. One writes, That this Blackest Black indures a long time, and is not destroyed in less than five months. Another writes, That the King when he enters into his Bath pulls off his Robe, and gives it to Saturn, from whom he receives a Black Shirt, which he keeps forty two days: And indeed it is two and forty days before he put on this Black Shirt instead of his Golden Robe, that is, be destroyed as touching his Solary Qualities, and become instead of Fixt, Citrine, Terrene, and Solid, a Fugitive, Black, Spiritual, Watery, and Flegmatic Substance: But Putridness begins not till the first Forms be put off; for so long as the Body may be reduced into its former Nature, it is not yet well ground and imbibed: grind therefore and imbibe, till thou see the Bodies to become no Bodies, but a Fume and Wind, and then circulating for a season, thou shalt see them settle and putrifie.

Saturn then will hold the Earth, which is Occidental, Retentative and Autumnal, in the West; then proceed to the North, where Mercury holdeth the Water, where the Matter is Watery and Flegmatick, as it is Winter, and the North expulsive. But they who divide the Operation into Saturn's Rule, and after him succeeding Jupiter, ascribe to Saturn the whole of Putridness, and to Jupiter the time of variety of Colours. After Jupiter, who holds but twenty or two and twenty days, comes Luna, the third Person, bright and fair, and she holds twenty good days, sometimes two over and above: In this Computation it is good to count from the fortieth or fiftieth day of the first beginning of the Stone, to the fourteenth or sixteenth day of Jupiter's Reign, wherein in the washing of Laton there is still Blackness, though mixed with variety of gay Colours, which amounteth to the sum of days allowed by the Author in Putrifaction, to wit, Eighty four days. Accounting intire Blackness, with Augurellus, after four times eleven days and nights, which make four and forty: Or, according to another Philosopher, which saith, In the first Fifty Days there appears the True Crow, and after it in Threescore and Ten Dayes the White Dove; and after in Fourscore and Ten Days the Tyrian Colour.

By Tryal then this Venom to expel I did desire;
For which I did commit his Carkass to a gentle Fire.

Which done, a Wonder to the sight, but more to be rehearst;
The Toad with Colours rare through every side was pierc'd;
And White appear'd when all the sundry hews were past:
Which after being tinted Ruddy, for evermore did last.

I shall add my own Sentence: Mix thy two Natures well, and if thy matter be pure, both the Body, and the Water, and the internal Heat of thy Bath as it ought to be, and the external Fire gentle, and not violent; yet so that the Matter may circulate, the Spiritual Nature on the Corporal, in six and forty or fifty days expect the beginning of intire Blackness; and after six and fifty days more, or sixty, expect the Peacocks Tayl, and Colours of the Rainbow; and after two and twenty days more, or four and twenty, expect Luna perfect, the Whitest White, which will grow more and more glorious for the space of twenty days, or two and twenty at the most: After which, in a little more increased Fire, expect the Rule of Venus for the space of forty days, or two and forty; and after it the Rule of Mars two and forty days more; and after him the rule of Sol flavus forty days, or two and forty: And then in a moment comes the Tyrian Colour, the sparkling Red, the fiery Vermilion, and Red Poppy of the Rock.

Then of the Venom handled thus a Medicine I did make,
Which Venom kills, and saveth such as Venom chance to take.

Thus onely by Decoction these Natures are changed and altered so wonderfully to this blessed Tincture, which expelleth all Poyson, though it self were a deadly Poyson before the Preparation, yet after it is the Balsam of Nature, expelling all Diseases, and cutting them off as it were with one Hook, all that are accidental to Humane frail Body, which is wonderful.

Glory be to Him the Grantor of such secret Ways,
Dominion and Honour both, with Worship, and with Praise. Amen.

Now God only is the Dispenser of these glorious Mysteries: I have been a true Witness of Nature unto thee, and I know that I write true, and all Sons of Art shall by my Writings know that I am a Fellow-Heir with them of this Divine Skill. To the Ignorant I have wrote so plain as may be, and more I had written if the Creator of all things had given me larger Commission. Now to Him alone, as is due, be all Honour, and Power, and Glory, who made all things, and giveth knowledge to whom he listeth of his Servants, and conceals where he pleaseth: To Him be ascribed, as due is, all Service and Honour. And now, Brother, whoever enjoyeth this rare Blessing of God, improve all thy strength to do him service with it, for he is worthy of it, who hath created all things, and for whose sake they were and are created.

The Bosom Book of Sir George Ripley

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The Bosome-Book
of Sir George Ripley,
Canon of Bridlington.

Containing

His Philosophical Accurtations in the makeing
the Philosophers Mercury and Elixirs.

London,
Printed for William Cooper, at the Pelican in Little Britain. 1683.

The Bosome-Book of Sir George Ripley. The whole Work of the Composition of the Philosophical Stone, of the great Elixir, and of the first Solution of the gross Body.

First take 30 pound weight of Sericon or Antimony, which will make 21 pound weight of Gum, or near thereabouts, if it be well dissolved, and the Vinegar very good, and dissolve each pound thereof in a Gallon of twice distilled Vinegar when cold again, and as it standeth in Dissolution in a fit Glass Vessel, stirr it about with a clean Stick very often every day, the oftner the better, and when it is well moulten to the bottom, then filter over the said Liquors three several times, which keep close covered, and cast away the Feces, for that is superfluous filth which must be removed, and entreth not into the Work but is called Terra damnata.

The making of our Gum or green Lyon.

Then put all these cold Liquors thus filtered into a fit Glass Vessel, and set it into Balneo Mariae to evaporate in a temperate heat, which done our Sericon will be coagulated into a green Gum called our green Lyon, which Gum dry well, yet beware thou burn not his Flowers not destroy his greeness.

The Extraction of our Menstue, or blood of our green Lyon.

Then take out the said Gum, and put it into a strong Retort of Glass very well Luted, and place it in your Furnace, and under that at the first, make sober Fire, and anon you shall see a faint Water issue forth, let it waste away; but when you see a white Smoak or fume issue forth, then put too a Receiver of Glass, which must have a very large Belly, and the mouth no wider then it may well receive into that the Neck of the Retort, which close well together that no fume issue forth of the Receiver. Then encrease your Fire by little and little till the fume which issueth be reddish, then continue the greater Fire, until drops like blood come forth, and no more fume will issue forth, and when that leaveth bleeding let it cool or asswage the Fire by little and little, and when all things are cold, then take away the Receiver, and close it fast suddenly, that the Spirits vanish not away, for this Liquor is called, our blessed Liquor, which Liquor keep close stopped in a Glass till hereafter. Then look into the Neck of the Retort, and therein you shall find a white hard Ryme as it were the Congelation of a Frosty vapour or much like sublimate, which gather with diligence and keep it apart, for therein are contained great Secrets which shall be shewed hereafter, after the great Work is ended.

The Creation of our Basis.

Then take out all the Feces which remaineth in the Retort, and are blackish like unto Soot, which Feces are called our Dragon, of which feces Calcyne one pound or more at your pleasure in a fervent hot Fire in a Potters or Glass-makers Furnace, or in a Furnace of vente (or a Wind Furnace) until it become a white Calx, as white as Snow, which

white Calx keep well, and clean by it self, for it is called the Basis and Foundation of the Work, and it is now called Mars, and our white fixed Earth or ferrum Philosophorum.

The Calcination of the black Feces called our black Dragon.

Then take all the rest of the aforesaid black Feces or black Dragon, and spread them somewhat thin upon a clean Marble, or other fit Stone, and put into the one side thereof a burning Coal, and the Fire will glide through the Feces within half an Hour, and Calcyne them into a Citrine Colour, very glorious to behold.

The Solution of the said Feces.

Then dissolve those Citrine Feces in such distilled Vinegar, as you did before, and then filter it likewise, three times as before, and after make or evaporate it to a Gum again, and then draw out of it more of our Menstruum, called now, Dragons Blood, and iterate this Work in all points as afore, until you have either brought all, or the most part of the Feces into our Natural and blessed Liquor, all which Liquor put to the first Liquor or Menstrue called the Green Lyons Blood, and set that Liquor then altogether in one Vessel of Glass fourteen days in Putrifaction, and after proceed to the Separation of Elements, for now have you all the Fire of the Stone in this our blessed Liquor, which before lay hidden in the Feces, which Secret all the Philosophers do marvellously hide.

The Separation of the Elements whereof the first is the Air, and is also counted our Ardent-Water, and our Water Attractive.

Then put all the said putrified Menstruum into a Still of fine Venice Glass fit for the quantity thereof, put on the Limbeck, and close it to the Still with a fine Linnen Cloth dipt in the White of an Egg, and then set it in Balneo Mariae, put to the Receiver, which must be of a great length that the Spirit respire not out again, and with very temperate heat separate the Elements one from another, and then the Element of Air will issue forth first, which is an Oyl.

Our Ardent Water or Water Attractive is thus made.

When all the first Element is distilled, then in another Still fit for it, rectify it, that is to say, distil it over 7 several times, and until it will burn a Linnen Cloth clean up that is dipt in it, when it is put to the flame, which then is called our Ardent Water rectified, and it is also called our Water Attractive, which keep very close stopped, for otherwise the Spirit thereof which is very subtil will vanish away.

By often rectifying the Ardent Water, there will come Aer in a white Oyl swimming above the Water, and there will remain behind a yellow Oyl which with a stronger Fire will also come over. Put Sublimate beaten small upon a Plate of Iron, and in the Cold it will dissolve into Water, and filter it then, and put upon it some of the Ardent Water, and it will draw to it self all the Mercury in the form of a green Oyl swimming aloft, which separate and put into a Retort, and distill first a Water, and afterward will come a green thick Oyl which is the Oyl of Mercury.

The Flood or Water of the Stone.

Then draw out the Flood or Water of the Stone by it self in another Receptory, which Liquor will be somewhat white, and draw it with a very gentle Fire of Balneo, until there remain in the bottom of the Still, a thick Oily substance like unto liquid Pitch, keep this Water by it self in a fit Glass very close stopped.

Note when the Liquor cometh white, you must put on another Receiver, for then all that Element is come over, two or three drops of this black Liquid Oyl given in Spirit of Wine cureth all Poyson taken inwardly.

Our Mans Blood is thus made and rectified.

Then put our Ardent Water upon that Matter black and liquid, stir them well together, and let it so stand well covered, for 3 Hours then decant and filter it, put on fresh Ardent Water and repeat this Operation 3 times and then distil it again with a moist lent Fire of Balneo, and so do three times, and then it is called Mans blood rectified, which the Workers in the Secrets of Nature do so seek, and so hast thou the Elements exalted in the virtue of their quintessence, namely the Flood that is Water and the Air, let this Blood be kept for a season.

The Oyl or Fire, or the Earth of the Stone.

Then put up the Flood or Water upon the black and soft matter or Earth of the Stone, let them be well mingled together, and then distil the whole until there remain in the bottom, an Earth most dry and black which is the Earth of the Stone, save the Oyl with the Water for a season close stopt in any wise.

The Fiery Water.

Then beat this black Earth into Powder, and mingle it with Mans blood, and so let it stand 3 Hours, after that distil it on Ashes, with a good Fire, and Reiterate this work 3 times, and then it shall be called Water of the Fire rectified, and so hast thou three of the Elements exalted into the Virtue of the quintessence, namely, Water, Air and Fire.

The Earth.

Then Calcine the Earth black and dry, in a Furnace of Reverberation, until it become a very fine white Calx.

The Water of Life which is our Mercury and our Lunary.

Then mingle with this white Calx the Fiery Water, and distil it with a strong Fire all off as before, and Calcine the Earth again that remaineth in the bottom of the Still, and then distil it again with a strong Fire as before, and again Calcine it, and thus distil and Calcine 7 times until all the Substance of the Calx be lifted up by the Limbeck, and then hast thou the Water of Life rectified and made indeed Spiritual, and so hast thou the 4 Elements exalted in the Virtue of their quintessence. This Water will dissolve all Bodies and putrefy them and Purge them, and this is our Mercury and our Lunary, and whosoever thinketh that there is any other Water then this, is Ignorant and a Fool, and shall never be able to come to the effect.

A grand secret or Accurtation of Sr. George Ripley, for the help of those which have made the Philosophers Mercury and whose Poverty disables them to proceed to either the Red or White Elixir.

Take the Cerus or Cream of the finest and purest Cornish Tinn moulten, reduce it into fine white Calx, put it into a fit Glass Still, and thereupon pour a convenient quantity of our Mercury, when it is our Lunary perfect, then distil that Mercury from the Calx again, and imbibe it therewith again, and again distill and reiterate this work until the Calx is become subtil and Oyly, yea and so subtil indeed, that it will flow upon a Plate of Copper Fiery hot as Wax, and not evaporate, which then will convert Copper into fine Silver, for the softness and neshness of the Tinn is taken away by the benefit of our Mercury confixed unto it by Virtue of which, it is made indurate and clean that it may agree with hard Bodies in fusion and in Malleation even as pure Silver. This work is very gainful and easie to be dealt withal, use it therefore until thou be Rich, and then I pray thee for our Lords sake go to the great work, which is hear truly set forth unto thee, according as by Practice I have wrought and proved the same. For the which thank God.

The Oyl which is the Element of Fire, and our red Mercury.

The Flood with the Oyl afore reserved shall be distilled with a most lent Fire of Balneo, and the red Oyl which remaineth in the bottom shall be diligently kept by it self, for it is the Element of Fire, and the Water shall be rectified again, and the same work iterated, until no more of our said red Lunary will remain in it.

The work of Putrifaction.

When all your Elements be thus separated, then take the white Calcined Feces first of all reserved, called Mars, and put so much thereof into a Chymia as will scarcely fill half the Glass, and thereupon pour so much of our Ardent Water rectified as may but well cover the Calx which done incontinent stop close the Glass with a Blind-head, and set it into a cold place, until the Calx have drank up all the Liquor, which it will do in 8 days, then imbibe it again with the like quantity of the same Water and let it stand eight days more, and so Reiterate the work, from 8 days to 8 days, until the same Calx will drink no more; but stand Liquid still, then Seal up the Glass with a Hermes seal and set it in Balneo Mariae in a temperate heat to Putrifaction.

The digestion of the white Stone.

Then in that temperate Balneo let your Glass stand unremoved by the space of fully 150 days, and until the Stone within the Glass become first Russet, and after whitish green, and after that very white like unto the Eyes of Fishes, which then is Sulphur of Nature flowing, and not evaporating in Fire, and our white Stone ready to be fermented.

Another Secret Accurtation of Sr. George Ripley.

Take the above said Sulphur of Nature, and project a quantity upon a Plate of Glass fiery hot, and the Glass shall be converted into a Silver Colour, and that Colour shall not be removed by any Art.

The digestion of the Red Stone.

Then take out the white Stone and divide it in to two, and know the true weight of each half, the one half reserve to the white work, the other half put into the Glass, and seal it up again with Hermes Seal, and then remove the Glass into a Cinerition which is somewhat a hotter Fire, and let it stand there likewise unremoved in that digestion, until it become Red, and of a Purple Colour, so have you the red Stone also ready to be fermented.

The Preparation of the Ferment to the white-Stone.

Then take Silver well purged from all Metalls, and other filth that may be joyned with it, and dissolve it in as much of our Lunary, which is our Mercury as the quantity of your Silver is, and in no greater quantity as near as you may, and set it upon warm Ashes close covered, and when it is thoroughly dissolved, the whole Liquor will be green, then rectifie our Mercury, clean from it again twice or thrice, so that no drop of our Mercury be left with it, then seal up the Oyl of Luna in a Chemia, and set it in Balneo to putrefie, until it shew all Colours, and at the last come to be Christaline white, which then is the white Ferment of Ferments.

The Fermentation of the white-Stone.

Then put that half of the white Stone before reserved, for the white-Work into a fit Glass, and know his weight, and put so much of the foresaid Lune Ferment into the Glass with the Stone as may contain the 4th part of the said Stone, and in the said Glass well luted fix them together, in a fixatory Vessel under the Fire, which will be well done in 2 or 3 days.

The Inceration of the White-stone.

When they are thus fixed together, and become one very fine Powder, incerate, that is to say, imbibe it with the white Oyl of our Stone, which is our Lunary by pouring on as it were drop after drop, until the Stone be Oylish, then congeal it, and again imbibe it, and in this manner iterate this work, until this Stone will flow in Fire like Wax, when it is put upon a Plate of Copper Fiery hot and not evaporate, and congeal it up until it be hard, white and transparent clear as Chrystal, then it is the Medicine of the third degree, and the perfect white Stone, transmuting all Metaline Bodies, and chiefly Copper and Iron, into pure and perfect Silver.

The Preparation of the Red-ferment.

Then likewise take Gold very purely, first purged from all other Metals that may be joyned with it, with ten parts of Antimony, and then dissolve it in our Mercury or Liquor Solute, as before you did the Lune, and when it is perfectly dissolved the Liquor will be Citrine; then in like manner, rectifie from it again our Mercury or Liquor Solute, and then Seal up the Oyl of Gold Ferment in a Chemia fit for it, and set it in Balneo to Putrefie, which likewise will become black, and must stand still unremoved in digestion, until it become white, which then remove into a stronger Fire without opening the Glass, and then keep it until it change Colours and become Citrine, which then is also Ferment of Ferments for the Red-work.

The Fermentation of the Red-stone.

Then to the other half of the Stone before rubified, digested, and reserved for the Red-work, put so much of the

foresaid Gold Ferment as may contain the 4th part of the said Stone, and then fix them as you did the white-Stone, under Fire in a fixatory Vessel which will be then very well done in two or three days.

The work of Inceration for the Red.

When they are thus fixed together, and thereby become one very fine Powder, incerate, that is imbibe it with the Red Oyl of our Stone, then congeal it again, and again imbibe, and congeal and iterate this work so often until it will flow in Fire as Wax; but not evaporate when it is put upon a Plate of Copper Fiery hot, which then congeal up until it be clear transparent hard, red in Colour like a Ruby or Jacinth, which is then the Medicine of the third Degree, and the perfect Red Stone, transmuting all Bodies, and especially Mercury, Lead and Silver into pure Gold, as any of the Natural Mine.

Thus have you the making of the Philosophers Stones, both White and Red, which is the great Secret of Philosophers. These Stones must be kept by themselves in several Glasses, or fair Boxes in a warm place, or dry at the least, as you would keep Sugar, because they are of so tender and Oily Substance, as they are apt to dissolve in every moist place which therefore preserve as is here shewed.

The Multiplication or Increase of the Vertue and Goodness of the aforesaid White and Red Stones.

If you list to exalt your Medicine or Stone in quantity or goodness, then put your aforesaid white or red Stone, or part of each into a several Vyol of Glass fit for the quantity, close well the Viol, then hang up your Glass or Glasses in Balneo Mariae vaporoso so that it touch not the Water, in this warm fume or breath, the Stone which was congealed before in the Glass will now be dissolved, which then congeal again upon warm Ashes, and again thus dissolve and congeal, and so iterate this work of dissolution and congelation until at last the Stone within the Glass dissolved will be congealed, as soon as he cometh out of the Pot or Balneo, and feeleth the cold Air, without any other manner of Congelation to be used, and note that how often in this work you do dissolve and congeal your said Medicine or Stone, so many times doth he increase his Vertue ten times in projection, so that if at the first one ounce will convert 100 ounces, after the second Solution, the same one shall convert 1000, after the third 10000, after the fourth time 100000, and after the fifth 1000000 parts of any imperfect Metal into pure and true Gold and Silver in all Examinations as any of the Natural Mine.

The way of Projection.

Because it is very combersom to melt a thousand thousand parts of any Body, when you will make Projection thus do. Take 100 ounces of Mercury first washed with Salt, and Vineger, and put it into a Crucible, and set it over the Fire, and when that doth begin to Wax hot, put in one ounce of your Elixir or Medicine thus prepared as afore taught you, upon that hundred parts of the cleansed Mercury, and all the said Mercury shall become Medicine, project, one ounce of that Medicine upon another 100 ounces, of other washed Mercury, and it shall all also be converted into Medicine, again the 3 time project one ounce of this congealed Mercury, upon another 100 ounces of washed Mercury, and all shall be converted into Medicine, then project, the 4th time 1 ounce of this, last congealed Mercury, upon another 100 ounces of other washed Mercury, and all that shall be converted into Gold or Silver, according as your Stone was prepared, to the white or red, praised be God.

Accurtation of the great Work which saved half the Work and Labour in the Work revealed by Sr. George Ripley.

The white Frosty Ryme or Powder whereof I told you in the beginning, being found in the Neck of the Retort, after the drawing of the Menstrue is like Sublimate, and is perfect Sulphur of Nature, and therefore needeth neither Putrifaction nor Digestion unto white, of this Sulphur take either the half, or the whole if you list, and also take so much of the Lune Ferment, when it is Firment of Ferments as may contain the 4th part of the said Sulphur, seal them up both together in a Chemia and fix them together under the Fire in a fixatory Vessel, which will be well done in three days, and when they are become one very fine White Powder, then Incerate, that is to say, Imbibe it with the White Oyl of our Stone, which is our Mercury, congealed, and imbibe and iterate this Work, and in all points do as you did in the White Work, in the great Elixir before, for this Sulphur is of the same Nature, and thus shall you have the white Work perfectly made, and the Stone in half the time, and with half the Labour; which is not only a precious Jewel, but a great secret also.

The like Accurtation of the Red-work done by the aforesaid Sulphur.

Take either the one half or the whole of this abovesaid Sulphur of Nature, and dissolve it once with our red Mercury congeal it again, and then Seal it up in Chymea and set it in Cinerition (or Ashes) till it be thoroughly digested, and until it hath put on his Purple Colour or Fiery Chariot, then put thereunto so much of the Ferment of Soll, when it is Ferment of Ferments, as may contain the 4th part of the said Sulphur, then fix them together under a Fire in a fixatory Vessel, which will be well done in 3 days, and when they be become one very fine Red Powder, then Incerate, that is, Imbibe it with the red Oyl of our Stone, which is our red Mercury and red Lunary, and Fire of the Stone, and continue in doing in all points as in the great Work aforesaid until the Stone be hard, transparent in Colour like a Ruby or Jacinth flowing in Fire, and not evaporating, then have you with less Labour and Expense of time the perfect Red-Stone for the which thank God.

This is the pleasant and dainty Garden of the Philosophers, which beareth the sweet smelling Roses white and red, abbreviated out of all the Work of the Philosophers, containing in it nothing superfluous or diminished, teaching to make infinitely Gold or Silver according as the Medicine was prepared, having Vertue to heal also all Grieffs and Sicknesses as well proceeding of cold as of hot Causes through the subtilty of his Nature, above all other Medicines of Physitians, for it comforteth the Healthy, strengthneth the weak, and maketh the Aged seem Young, and driveth away all Grief, and putteth venom from the Heart, it moysteth the Arteries and joynts it dissolveth all things in the Lungs, it cleanseth the Blood, it purgeth the Pipes, and keepeth them clean, and if the Sicknes be of one Months continuance, it healeth it in one day, if of one Years continuance, it healeth it in 12 days, and if the grief be very old, it healeth in one Month. To conclude, whosoever hath this Medicine, he hath an incomparable Medicine above all Treasures of the World, Praise God.

A short work of George Ripley

'A short Worke That beareth the Name... of George Ripley', is included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 1652, pages 393-396.

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Take Heavy, Soft, Cold, and Drye;
Clense him, and to Calx grind him subtilly:
Dissolve him in Water of the Wood;
If thou can do any good
Thereof, take a Tincture
And Earthly Calx good and pure.
Of this maist thou have with thy travaile,
Both Mercury, Water, and Oyle;
Out of the Ayre with Flames great,
Fire into the Earth doth Creepe;
In this Worke if thou wilt winn,
Take heed wherewith thou dost begin,
And in what manner thou dost work,
For loosing thy way in the darke;
And where, with what, and how, thy matter shal end;
I tell and Councell thee as my Frend:
Make Water of Earth, and Earth of Water;
Then art thou well onward in the matter.
For thou shalt find hid in the myre,
Both Earth, Water, Ayre, and Fire:
I tell thee my Brother, I will not flatter,
Of our Earth is made our Water:
The which is cleere white as Snow;
And makes our Earth Calcine and growe.
Blackness first to thee doth shew,
As by thy practise thou shalt know:
Dissolve and Calcine, oft, and oft;

With Congelation till the Body to whitnes be brought:
Make the Body fluxible, and flowing;
With the Earth, perfect, and teyning.
Then after Ferment is once done;
Whither thou wilt with Sunne or Moone,
Dissolve him with the Water of life,
Ycalled Mercury withouten strife:
Put the Soule with the Body, and Spirite
Together in one that they may meete
In his Dammes belly till he wax great,
With giving Drinke of his owne sweate:
For the Milke of a Cow to a Child my brother
Is not so sweete as the Milke of his Mother:
This Child that is so marveilously wrought,
Unto his Heritage must be brought:
His livelyhood is so worthy a thing,
Of abilitye to spend with a King:
He that beareth all this in minde,
And understandeth these Parables all;
With Seperation he may finde,
Poore and Rich, great and small;
With our Sulphur we make our Antimony, White and Red;
And thereof we make our Mercury quick, and dead.
This is a Mettall that I speake of one of the seaven,
If thou be a Clerk read what I meane.
There is no Plannet of six neither great nor small,
But if he be put to them, he will Calcine them all.
Unto red blood he must be brought;
Else of him thou gettest right nought:
Reach him then with the Wood Water,
Man, and Woman Clothed under one hatter,
In and of them is conceived a Child
Lovely of beauty, meeke and mild;
Out of the Earth with dropps stronge,
Nourish the Child in his Mothers wombe;
Till he be come to full age;
And then make thou a Mariage,
Betweene the Daughter, and the Sonne,
And then thou hast the Mastery wonn.
The beginning of this Worke, if thou wilt crave,
In holly Writ thou shalt it have:
Both in Masse Booke and in Psalter
Yea wrighten before the Preest at the Alter:
And what is Antimony that thou shalt worke,
I have written to thee if thou be a Clerke;
Looke about before if thou canst finde
Plainely written, which maketh men blind:
Our Werke is bringing againe our Mercury,
And that Philosophers call Solucion;
And if thou loose not the uncleane body,
Thou werkest without discretion;
The Inbibition of Water, is not the loosing;
But bringing the Body into water againe turning:
That is to say into such water,
That is turning the Body into his first Matter:
The second Werke is to bring,

Earth and Water to Congealing;
The cleansing of the Third is another
Unto Whiteness; my owne Brother;
With this Water of his owne,
That is full marvalous to be knowne:
The fourth werke is distilling
Of Water, and Earth upsweating.
And thus hast thou by one assent,
Earth, Ayre, Water, and Fire; the foure Elements:
The Ashes that are in the bottome of the Vessell,
Looke thou dispise them not though left,
For I tell thee right well,
There is the Diadem of our Craft.

Verses from the Ripley Scrowle

The verses from the *Ripley Scrowle* are included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, 1652.

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Verses belonging to an emblematicall scrowle:
Supposed to be invented by Geo: Ripley.

I shall you tell with plaine declaracion,
Where, how, and what is my generacion:
Omogeni is my Father,
And Magnesia is my Mother:
And Azot truly is my Sister:
And Kibrick forsooth is my Brother:
The Serpent of Arabia is my name,
The which is leader of all this game:
That sometyme was both wood and wild,
And now I am both meeke and mild;
The Sun and the Moone with their might,
Have chastised me that was so light:
My Wings that me brought,
Hither and thither where I thought
Now with their might they downe me pull,
And bring me where they woll,
The Blood of myne heart I wiss,
Now causeth both Joy and blisse:
And dissolveth the very Stone,
And knitteth him ere he have done;
Now maketh hard that was lix,
And causeth him to be fix.
Of my blood and water I wis,
Plenty in all the World there is.
It runneth in every place;
Who it findeth he hath grace:
In the World it runneth over all,
And goeth round as a ball:
But thou understand well this,
Of the worke thou shalt miss.
Therefore know ere thou begin,
What he is and all his kin,

Many a Name he hath full sure,
And all is but one Nature:
Thou must part him in three,
And then knit him as the Trinity:
And make them all but one,
Loe here is the Philosophers Stone.

The Bird of Hermes is my name,
Eating my wings to make me tame.

In the Sea withouten lesse,
Standeth the Bird of Hermes:
Eating his Wings variable,
And thereby maketh himself more stable;
When all his Fethers be agon,
He standeth still there as a stone;
Here is now both White and Red,
And also the Stone to quicken the dead,
All and sune withouten fable,
Both hard, and nesh and malliable
Understand now well aright,
And thanke God of this sight.

Take thou Phoebus that is so bright,
That sitteth so high in Majesty;
With his beames that shineth soe light,
In all places where ever that he be,
For he is Father to all living things,
Maynteyner of Lyfe to Crop and Roote,
And causeth Nature forth to spring;
With his wife being soote,
For he is salve to every sore,
To bring about thys precious worke;
Take good hede unto his lore,
I say to learned and to Clerk,
And Omogeny is my Name:
Which God shaped with his owne hand,
And Magnesia is my Dame;
Thou shalt verily understand,
Now heere I shall begin,
For to teach thee a ready way:
Or else litle shalt thou wyn,
Take good heed what I say;
Devide thou Phoebus in many a parte;
With his beames that byn so bright,
And thus with Nature him Coarte,
The which is mirroure of all light:
This Phoebus hath full many a Name,
Which that is full hard for to know;
And but thou take the very same,
The Philosophers Stone thou shalt not know,
Therefore I counsell ere thou begin:
Know him well what it be,

And that is thick make it thin;
For then it shall full well like the.
Now understand well what I meane,
And take good heed thereunto,
The worke shall else litle be seen:
And tourne thee unto mikle woe,
As I have said in this our Lore,
Many a Name I wiss it have,
Some behinde, and some before;
As Philosophers of yore him gave.

On the Ground there is a Hill,
Also a Serpent within a Well:
His Tayle is long with Wings wide,
All ready to fly on every side,
Repaire the Well round about,
That the Serpent pas not out;
For if that he be there agone,
Thou loosest the vertue of the Stone,
What is the Ground thou mayst know heere,
And also the Well that is so cleere:
And eke the Serpent with his Tayle
Or else the worke shall litle availe,
The Well must brenne in Water cleare,
Take goog heede for this thy Fyre,
The Fire with Water brent shalbe,
And Water with Fire wash shall he;
Then Earth on Fire shalbe put,
And Water with Air shalbe knit,
Thus ye shall go to Putrefaccion,
And bring the Serpent to reduction.
First he shalbe Black as any Crow,
And downe in his Den shall lye full lowe:
Iswel'd as a Toade that lyeth on ground,
Burst with bladders fitting so round,
They shall to brast and lye full plaine,
And thus with craft the Serpent is slaine:
He shall shew Collours there many a one,
And tourne as White as wilbe the bone,
With the water that he was in,
Wash him cleane from his sin:
And let him drink a litle and a lite,
And that shall make him faire and white,
The which Whitnes is ever abiding,
Lo here is the very full finishing:
Of the White Stone and the Red,
Lo here is the true deed.

The Mystery of Alchymists

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The Mistery of Alchymists,

**Composed by Sir Geo: Ripley
Chanon of Bridlington.**

When Sol in Aries and Phoebus shines bright,
The Elements reviving the new Year springing
The Son by his Vertue gives Nature & Light,
And moysture refresheth all things growing:
In the season of the Yeare when the Sun waxeth warme,
Freshly and fragrante the Flowers doe grow,
Of Natures subtile working we cannot discerne,
Nor yet by our Reason we can it not know,
In foure Elements is comprehended things Three,
Animalls, Vegetabills, Mineralls must be,
Of this is our Principle that we make our Stone,
Quality and Quantity is unknowne to many one.
Quality (Father) would I faine know, Son.
Of what nature it is and what it hath in his kinde.
As Colours divers which on the ground do grow, Father.
Keep well this secret (Son) and marke it in thy minde.
Without Proportion (Father) how should I it know, Son.
This working now is far from my minde
Nature and kinde (Son) together do grow, Father.
Quality by waight (Son) shalt thou never finde.
To Separate Elements (Father) I must needs know, Son.
Either in Proportion which be more or less.
Out of our Principle foure Elements thou shalt draw, Father.
Thou shalt neede nothing else that needefull is;
Our Principle in quality is so perfectly mixed,
By vertue of the Son and his quality,
So equally Joyned, so well mixed may be.
This Principle (Father) is but one thing, Son.
Good (Father) tel me where it doth grow.
In every place (Son) you shall him well finde; Father.
By Tast and by Colour thou shalt him well know;
Fowle in the Ayer with it doe fly,
And Fishes doe swim there with in the Sea,
With Reason of Angels you may it discerne,
Both Man and Woman to governe,
With our fixed Body (Son) we must thus begin.
Of him make Mercury and Water cleare,
Man and Woman is them within,
Married together by vertue of our Fire,
The Woman in he working is full wild,
Be well aware she goe not out;
Till she have conceived and borne a Chylde,
Then all his kin on him shal lout;
In their workes they be unstable,
The Elements they be so raw;
And their Colour so variable,
As sometyme like the head of a Crow,
When he is black ye may well like,

Putrefaction must go before,
After Blacke he wilbe White,
Then Thank ye God the Chyld is borne.
This Chyld is both King and Emperour,
Through his region both far and neere;
All the World doth him honour,
By the vertue he hath taken of the Fire:
His first Vertue is White and pure,
As any Christall shining cleere,
Of White tincture then be you sure;
By vertue taken of our Fire,
His first Vesture that is so White,
Betokeneth his Virginitie,
A similitude even thereto like,
And according to the Trinity:
Our Medicen is made of things Three,
Against which the Philosophers cannot say nay,
The Father, the Sone in one degree,
Corpus, Spiritus & Anima.
When Nature is with Nature, thou mayst fruite finde,
By proportion more or lesse,
In practice hereof many men be blinde,
Because they understand not what Nature is;
His second Vesture as Gold is Red,
In his Vessel bright shining,
A Daidem set on his head,
Richer than any earthly thing.
His third Vesture is Purple pure,
Like Sun-beames he shineth bright and clere,
Of Red tincture then be you sure:
By the vertue he hath taken our Fire.
My beloved Son I command thee,
As thou wilt have my love and blessing,
That unto God kneele on thy knee,
Unto him give laude and thankeing;
For theis guifts of grace geven unto thee,
To have trew knowledge of this worthy Scyence,
That many men seeke by land and sea,
And cannot finde it for any expence:
I shall shew thee my Son a hid Secret,
Beacause thou art vertuous in thy living,
Of me else shouldst thou never it weat,
And for thou art wife in thy Councell keeping,
And therefore I charge thee on my blessing,
Not to shew it to any man living,
For it is the first Principle of our blessed Stone,
Through which our noble worke is releevd,
Note well that I shew now to thee my Son,
If Sulphur be absent our worke is deprived;
Our Sulphur my Son is Water and Fire,
Constraining the Body till it be dead,
Oh hem thou hast never thy desire,
Till he be bloe as any Lead,
After all this he doth revive,
That in his Vessel before was dead;
I can no better in my reason contrive,

Then to figure him to the greate God head.
For as there dyedno more then One,
Howbeit that there be persons Three,
The Father, The Sone by might is one:
The holy Ghost make full our Trinity:
A similitude like unto our Stone,
In him ben things three which be concluded all in one,
Our Sulphur is likened to the holy Ghost,
For he is quick, called the Spirit of Slyfe,
In his working of might he is most.
He raiseth our Body from death to lyfe,
Many (my Son) with him do rife,
The holy Gospell therein is expert,
The number of my reason cannot contrive,
Multum & quantum fructum adsert:
I liken our Sulphur to the Adamant Stone,
That Steele drawes to him naturally,
So doth our Sulphur the woman,
When she from her husband would flye.
I muse greatly (Father) and mervaile in minde, Son.
Whereof this Stone is ingendered,
And also of what manner of kinde,
For I have traveled many a Country,
In vallies low and on hills high,
And spurred therefore of foes and freind,
Yet could I never that Sulphur see,
Nor in any place wat I where him to finde.
Son he is made of the Elements, Father.
That God hath given both soule and lyfe,
From Mettall he may never be absent,
For he rules both man and wife.
Father I pray you for charity, Son.
Where shall I this Sulphur finde,
For perfectly I know him not by quality,
Nor yet to fore know him by kinde.
In our Water Son keep this in minde, Father.
For there he will appear as white as snow.
Gramarcy Father to me ye be full kinde, Son.
For through your teaching full well I it know,
Now Father I pray you for charity,
The while it is in your minde,
To ken the red Sulphur that you will teach me,
And then I trust your Doctrine to finde.
White and Red Son be both one in kinde, Father.
Now hast thou all thy desire,
Keepe well this secret and close it in thy minde,
His tincture and growing is by vertue of our Fire,
For in our Fire our Stone will grow,
And there his riches he doth encrease,
And so doth no Stone that I do know,
That in the fire will put him in prease;
We liken him therefore unto the Sun,
That to all Elements giveth light.
Never sith the World was begun,
Was any but he of so much might,
Were he never of so high degree,

Saphir, Diamond or Emarald Stone,
The Turcas, or the rich Ruby,
Of all vertuous Stones set ower alone,
The greatest Carbuncle that is full of light,
May not with our Stone Compaire,
For if they in the Fire should fight,
The Carbuncle of vertue should be full bare,
To destroy our Stone, Son that will not be,
The Elements in him be so equall;
He is an Oyle incumbustible,
And of all things most imperiall.
In which Elements (Father) is our Sulphur in? Son.
Is he in all, or in any one?
In all (Son) he needes must be, Father.
For Separation of Elements make we none,
Sulphur in Elements Son we may not see,
By Nature in them he is so privily mixed,
In Elements he is a quality,
Our Stone will never else be perfectly fixed.
Quality (Son) growes also in fire,
Betwixt the White Stone and the Redd,
For many Colours there will appere,
While the tyme the Woman be dead.
Father must the Woman needes be dead? Son.
Our Stone else my Son will never be Redd; Father.
For whereas a Woman is in presence,
There is much moysture and accidence,
Wetnes and humours in her be,
The which would drown'd our Quality;
Perceive well (Son) by Noahs flood,
To much moysture was never good.
Like as quality is hid in quantity,
So must our Erth in Waters be,
The riches in him thou shalt finde,
After alteration of kinde,
His Oyle in him is congelate,
This makes our Body liquefact,
Sulphur and Oyle all of one kinde,
Which makes oure Stone rich and coloring,
I cannot tell thee Son a richer thing,
Then he is in the Fire during,
The Fire to him may do no wrong,
Sulphur of Nature makes him so strong.
How to make our Stone (Father) I would faine know. Son.
In soft heates my (Son) Elements will meete, Father.
Hast not to fast whilst they be rawe,
In the Vessell (Son) the better thou shalt him keepe,
Rule well the Fire and beware of the Lawe,
Shut well the Vessell for going forth of the Spirit;
Soe shall you all things the better keepe;
For how to get him againe it is strange to know,
It is hard for some men to make Elements meete,
Keepe well this Secret Son and God daily praise,
Put into tht Vessell Water cleare,
And set it in Fire full forty dayes,
And then in the Vessell blackness will appeare,

When that he is black he will change tye,
Many Colers in him then will appeare,
From coulour to colour till it be white,
The it is tyme Son to change the Fire,
And melt the heat to your desire,
And if you will have him White still,
Then must you your Medicine apply,
A dry Fire put him till,
And a moyst Fire naturally,
Till he be made fixed,
For to take Mercury before his flight,
As he is by nature privily mixed,
Of fusion then he shalbe light,
And if you to his proportion take,
Fine Luna then will he make,
So micle of piercing will he be,
Both fluxible with penetrabilitie;
And (Son) if thou wilt have thy Medicine Red,
In a dry Fire thou shalt him keepe,
Ever still in one steed,
That never your Vessell come to wet.
So hard, so heavy and so peircing, Son.
(Father) this a wonderous thing,
So hot, so moyst, so light, so wet,
This greate Secret Father will I keepe,
So white, so red, so profitable,
Of all Stones most incomparable.
He may do more than any King, Father.
He is so rich Son in his working,
Gould and Silver men would faine have,
Poore and rich for it do crave,
Thay that of it have most aboundance,
Of the people have most obaisance,
To serve them both day and night,
And in the feeld will for it fight,
Therefore Son upon my blessing,
Keepe secretly this precious cunning,
Of thy Councell make neither King nor Knight,
If they knew they would set it light;
For when they have what they will,
God's curse wil come they say the untill,
For had I wist and had I wend,
That commeth evermore behinde,
Our Mercury my (Son) is white and thin,
In our Vessell shining bright and cleere,
Our Sulphur is in him within,
Burning him more then our dry Fire,
He fixes him more in one yeare,
By his naturall working I understand,
Then doth the Sonne by his dry Fire,
The years a long thousand,
In short space we may have done,
When our Medicine thou wilt assay,
Thou maist make both Sol and Lune,
In lesse space then in one day.
Father is it Water in the well springing, Son.

Or is it the Water in the river running?
Other Water (Father) can I not finde.
Noe (Son) it is of another kinde,
Howbeit it is Water cleere,
Our Sulphur in him is soe cleaving,
He may not be departed by any fire,
I tell thee the throath in this thing.
By no fire (Father) how may that be? Son.
Fire he is ever brenning, Father.
Our Sulphur is made of the Sun and such humidity
That in the Fire he is ever during.
The tyme of our working would I know, Son.
In what space might be made our Stone,
By Corne and Frut (Son) thou maist it wel know.
Once in a yeare it is afore thee done;
The Sun in the Zodiak about doth gonne,
Though the twelve Signes once in a yeare,
Soe long it is ere we can make our Stone.
Haste not too fast but rule well thy Fire, Father.
The vertue of our Stone few men can tell,
The Elements in him be so mighty,
Aboundance of treasure in him do dwell;
For in riches all Stones exceeds he.

Finis.

George Ripley's Epistle to King Edward

This is included in *The compound of alchymy. Or the ancient hidden art of archemie: conteining the right and perfectest meanes to make the philosophers stone... Divided into twelve gates... Whereunto is adioyned his epistle to the king, his vision, his wheele, and his other workes... Set foorth by Raph Rabbards.* London, 1591.

[Back to Ripley's works.](#)

The Epistle by George Ripley Written to King Edward 4.

O Honorable Lord, and most victorious Knight,
With grace and vertue abundantly endewed,
The safegaurd of England, and the maintainer of right;
That God you loveth, indeed he that well shewed:
Wherefore I trust this land shalbe renewed
With joy and riches, with charitie and peace,
So that olde ranckors new understrewed,
Tempestuous troubles, and wretchednes shall cease.

And therefore sith I see by tokens right evident,
That God you guideth, and how that you be vertuous,
Hating sinne, and all such as be insolent,
How that also manslaughter to you is odious,
Upon the judgement also that you be piteous:
Me seemeth ruthe it were but that you should live long;
For of your great fortune you are not presumptuous,
Nor vengeable of spirit to revenge you of each wrong.

These considered with others in your most noble State,
Like as God knoweth, and people doo witnes beare,
So entirely me mooveth, that I must algate
Record the same, and therein be no flatterer:
And not that only, but also to write here
Unto your Highnes, humbly to present
Great secretts, which in farre countries I did learne,
And which by grace to me most unworthie are lent.

Once to your Lordship such things I did promise,
What time you did command to send unto me,
And sith that I wrote it in secret wise,
Unto your grace from the Universitie
Of Louaine, when God fortun'd me by grace to see
Greater secrets and much more perfite,
Which onely to you I will disclosed to be,
That is the great Elixer both red and white.

For like it you to trust that truly I have found,
The perfect was of most secret Alchymie,
Which I will never truly for marke nor for pound
Make common but to you, and that conditionally,
That to youre selfe you shall keepe it full secretly,
And only to use it as may be to Gods pleasure,
Else in time comming to God I should abyee,
For my discovering of his secret treasure.

Therefore be you well advised and with good deliberation,
For of this secret shall know no other creature,
But onely you as I make faithfull protestation,
For all the time that herein life I shall endure,
Whereto I will your Lordship me ensure, To my desire in this my oath for to agree,
Least I to me the wrath of God procure,
For such revealing of his great gift and privitie.

If God fortune you by me to win this treasure,
Serve him devowtly with more lawde and thanking,
Praying his Godhead in life that you may so endure,
His gifts of grace, and fortune to use to his pleasing,
Most especially intending over all thing,
To your power and cunning his precepts ten
So to observe, that into no danger your selfe you bring,
But that you in glory may see him hereafter, Amen.

And yet moreover I will your Lordship to pardon me,
For openly with pen I will it never it write,
But whensoever also this precious secret, most of delight,
By mouth also this precious secret, most of delight,
How may be made perfect Elixers both red and white,
Plaine unto your Lordship it shall declared be,
And if it please you, with easie expences and respite,
I will them worke by grace of the Trinitie.

But notwithstanding for perill that may befall,
If I dare not here plainly the knott unbinde,

Yet in my writing I will not be so misticall,
But that by studie the true knowledge you may finde,
How that each thing is multiplied in his kinde,
And how the likenes of bodies metaline be transmutable
I will declare, that if you feele me in your minde,
My writing you shall finde true and no fained fable.

As Philosophers in the metheors doe write,
The likenes of bodies metaline be not transmutable,
But after he added these wordes of more delight,
Without they be reduced to their beginning materiable,
Wherefore such bodies within nature be liquiable,
Minerall and metaline may be mercurizate,
Conceive you may this science is not opinionable,
But very true, by Raymond and others determinate,

In the saide booke the Philosophers speake also,
Therein if it please your Highnes for to reade,
Of divers sulphures, and especially of two,
And of two mercuries joyned to them indeed,
Whereby he doth true understanders leade,
To the knowledge of the principle which is onely trew,
Both red, moist, pure, and white, as I have espied,
Which be neverthesse found but of verie few.

And these two things be best, he added anone
For him that worketh the Alchymie to take:
Our golde and our silver therewith to make all one,
Wherefore I say who will our pearle and Ruby make,
The said principles looke he not forsake:
For at the beginning, if his principles be true,
And if so be by craft he can them also bake,
In th'end truly his worke he shall not rue.

But one great secret right needfull to be knowne,
That though the Philosophers speake plurally,
All is but one thing you may me well trowe,
In kinde which is our base principally,
Whereof doth spring both white and red naturally,
And yet the white must come first out of the red,
Which is not wrought manually,
But natually, craft helping out of our lead.

For all the partes of our most precious stone,
As I can prove, be coessentiall and concrete,
Moreover there is no true principle but one,
Full long is was ere I therewith could meete,
Who can reduce him and knoweth his heate,
And onely kinde with kinde can well redresse,
Till filthie originall be clensed from his seate,
He likely is to finde our secrets more and lesse.

Therefore worke kinde onely with his owne kinde,
And so your Elements joyne that they are not strive.
This poynt also for any beare in minde,
That passive natures you turne into active,

Of water, fire, and wind of earth make blive,
And of the quadrangle make a figure round,
Then have thou the honie of our bee-hive,
One ounce well worth one thousand pound.

The principall secret of secrets all,
Is true proportion which may not be behinde,
Wherein I counsell thee be not superficiall,
The true conclusion if you thinke to finde,
Turne earth into water and water into winde,
Therefore make fire and beware of the flood
Of Noah, wherein many men are so blinde,
That by this science they get liittle good.

I counsell you eate and drink temperately,
And beware well that Iposarche come not in place,
Neshe not your wombe by drinking immoderately,
Least you quench naturall heate in little space,
The colour will tell appearing in your face,
Drinke no more therefore than you may eate,
Walke up and downe after an easie pace,
Chase not your bodie too sore to sweate.

With easie fire after moving when you sweate,
Warme your bodie and make it drie againe,
By rivers and fountaines walke after meate,
At morning time visit the high mountaine,
That Phisick so biddeth I read certaine,
So high the mountaines yet doe you not ascend,
But that you may downwardes your way have plaine,
And with your mantle from colde ye you defend.

Such labour is wholesome your sweate for to drie,
With napkin, and after it see you take no colde,
For grosse humours be purged by sweate kindely,
Used Diacameron then confect with perfect golde,
Hermidocles for watery humors good I holde,
Use spericon perforat with milke of tincturiall,
And sperma Caeti with red wine, and when you wax olde,
And Goats milke sod with wine nourisheth moysture radicall.

But a good Phisitian who so intendeth to be,
Our lower Astronomie needeth well to know,
And after that to learne well urine in a glass to see,
And if it neede to be chafed the fire for to blow,
Then wittily it by divers wayes for to throw
After the cause to make a medicine bliue,
Truly telling the infirmities all on a row,
Who this can doe by his Phisick is like to thrive.

We have our heaven incorruptible of the quintessence,
Ornate with signes, Elements, and starres bright,
Which moysteth our earth by subtile influence,
And of it a secret sulphure hid from sight,
It fetcheth by vertue of his active might,
Like as the Bee fetcheth honey out of the flower,

Which thing could doe no other worldly weight.
Therefore to God be all glory and honour.

And like as yce to water doth relent,
Where it was congealed by violence of colde,
When Phoebus it shineth with his heate influent,
Even so to water minerall reduced is our golde,
As witnesseth plainly, Albert, Raymond, and Arnold,
By heate and moysture and by craft occasionate,
Which congelation of the spirits, loe now I have tolde,
How our materialls together must be proportionate.

At the dyers craft you may learne this science,
Beholding with water how decoction they make
Upon the wad or madder easily and with patience,
Till tinctures doe appeare are which then the cloth doth take,
Therein so fixed that they will never forsake
The cloth, for washing after they joynd be,
Even so our tinctures with the water of our lake,
We draw by boyling with the ashes of Hermes tree.

Which tinctures when they by craft are made perfite,
So dyeth mettles with colours aye permanent,
After the qualitie of the medicine, red or white,
That never away with anie fire wilbe brent:
To this example if you take good tent,
Unto your purpose the rather you shall winne.
And let your fire be easie, and not too fervent,
Where nature did leave what time you did beginne.

First calcine, and after that putrifie,
Dissolve, distill, sublime, discend, and fixe,
With Aqua vitae oft times both wash and drie,
And make a marriage the bodie and spirite betwixt,
Which thus together naturallie if you can mixe,
In loosing of the bodie the water congeald shalbe,
Then shall the bodie die utterlie of the flixe,
Bleeding and changing his colour, as you shall see.

The third day againe to life he shall arise,
And devoure birds, and beasts of the wildernesse,
Crowes, poppingaies, pies, peacocks, and mavois,
The Phoenix, with the Eagle, and the Griffin of fearfulnessse,
The greene Lion, with the red Dragon he shall distresse,
With the white Dragon, and the Antelop, Unicorn & Panther,
With other beasts and birds both more and lesse,
The Basiliske also, which almost each one doth feare.

In bus and nibus he shall arise and descend,
Up to the Moone, and sith up to the Sunne,
Through the Ocean sea, which round is withouten end,
Onely shippen within a little glassen tunne;
When he is there come, then is the mastrie wonne:
About which journey, great goods you shall not spend,
And yet you shall be glad that ever it was begunne,
Patiently if you list to your worke attend.

For then both bodie and spirite with oyle and water,
Soule, and tincture, one thing both white and red,
After colours variable it containeth, what souer men clatter;
Which also is called after he hath been dead
And is revived, our Markaside, our Magnet, and our lead,
Our Sulphur, our Arsinike, and our true Calx vive,
Our Sunne, our Moone, our ferment and our bread,
Our toad, our Basiliske, our unknowen bodie, our man, our wife.

Our bodie thus naturally by craft when he is renovate
Of the first order, is medicine called in our Philosophie;
Which oftentimes againe must be propertualicate,
The round wheele turning of our Astronomie,
And so the Elixer of spirits you must come: for why
Till the sonne of the fixed by the sonne of the fixer be overgone,
Elixer of bodies, named it is onely,
And this found secret poynt, deceaveth manie one.

This naturall proces by helpe of craft thus consummate,
Dissolveth Elixer spiritull in our unctuous humiditie,
Then in Balneo Mare together let them be circulate,
Like new honie or oyle, till perfectly they be thickened.
Then will that medicine heal all infirmitie,
And turne all mettals to Sunne and Moone perfectly,
Thus you shall make the great Elixer, and Aurum potable,
By the grace and will of God, to whom be all honour and glorie.

Amen. quod George Ripley.

FINIS.

George Ripley's Epistle to King Edward unfolded

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Sir George Riplie's Epistle to King Edward unfolded.

This Epistle as it was imediately written to a King, who was in his generation, both wise and valiant, so it doth comprise the whole secret, both learnedly described, and yet Artificially vailed, yet as the Author testifieth, that in this Epistle he doth plainly untie the main knot. So I can and do testifie with him, that there is nothing desirable for the true attaining of the mysterie, both in Theory and Practick of it, which is not in this short Epistle fully taught. This then I intend as a key to all my former writings, and assure you on my faithful word doubtfully or mystically, as I have in all my other writings, seeming to aver some things which taken without a figure, are utterly false, which we did onely to conceal this Art: This key therefore we intend not to make common; and shall intreat you to keep it secret to your self, and not to communicate it, except it be to a sure friend, who you are confident will not make it publick. And this request we make upon very good grounds, knowing that all our writings together, are nothing to this, by reasons of the contradictions wch we have woven into them, which here is not done in the least measure. I shall therefore in this Epistle take up a new method, and that different from the former, and shall first draw up the substance of the Philosophie couched in this Epistle, into several Conclusions, and after elucidate the same.

The first Conclusion is drawn from the ninth stave of this Epistle, the eight first staves being only complemental, and that is, That as all things are multiplied in their kind, so may be Mettals, which have in themselves a capacity of being transmuted, the imperfect to perfect.

The second Conclusion in the tenth stave is, That the main ground for the possibility of transmutation, is the possibility of reduction of all Mettals, and such Minerals as are of Metallick principles, into their first Mercurial matter.

The third Conclusion is in the eleventh stave, That among so many Metalline or Mineral Sulphurs and so many Sulphurs there are but two that are related to our work, which Sulphurs have their Mercuries essentially united to them.

The fourth conclusion from the same stave is, That he who understands these two Sulphurs and Mercuries aright, shall find that the one is the most pure red Sulphur of gold, which is Sulphur in manifesto and Mercurius in occulto, and that other is most pure white Mercury, which is indeed true quicksilver, in manifesto and Sulphur in occulto, these are our two principles.

The fifth Conclusion from the twelfth stave is, That is a mans principles be true, and his operations regular, his event will be certain, which event is no other than the true mystery.

These Conclusions are but few in number, but of great weight, the amplification, illustration, and ilucidation therefore of them will make a Son of Art truly glad.

For the first, Forasmuch as it is not for our purpose here to invite any to the Art, onely intending to lead and guide the Sons of Art; we shall not prove the possibility of Alchimy, by many arguments, having done it abundantly in another Treatise. He then that will be incredulous, let him be incredulous, he that will cavil, let him cavil; but he whose minde is perswaded of the truth of the Art, and of it's dignity, let him attend to what is in the Illustration of these five Conclusions discovered, and his heart shall certainly rejoyce.

We shall therefore briefly Illustrate this first Conclusion, and insist there are more largely, where the secrets of the Art are most couched.

For this first then which concluded in effect the truth of the Art, and its reality, he that would therein be more satisfied in it, let him read the Testimony of all Philosophers, and he that will not believe the Testimonies of so many men, being most of them, men of renown in their own time, he will cavill also against all other Arguments. We shall onely hold to Riplyes Testimony in this our key, who in the fourth stave, assures the King that at Lovain he first saw the greatest and most perfect secrets, namely the two Elixers; And in this following verse, craves his confident credit, that he hath himself truly found the way of secret Alchimy, and promiseth the discovery of it to the King, onely upon condition of secrecy.

And in the eighth stave, though he protests never to write it by pen, yet proffers the King at his pleasure, to shew him ocularly the red and white Elixer, and the working of them, which he promiseth will be done for easies costs in time. So then he that will doubt the truth of the Art, must account this famous Author, for a most simple mad Sophister, to write and offer such things to his Prince, unles he were able in effect to do what he promised, from which imputation his writings, and also the histories of him, of his fame, gravity, and worth will sufficiently clear him.

We now come to the second Conclusion, the substance of which is, that all Mettals and bodies of Metalline principles, may be reduced to their first Mercurial matter, and this is the main and chief ground for the possibility of transmutation. On this we must insist largely & fully, for (trust me) this is the very hinge on which our secrets hang.

First, then know that all the Mettals, and serveral Minerals have Mercury for their next matter, to which (for the most part, nay indeed always) there adheres, and is concoagulated an external Sulphur, which is not Metalline, but distinguishable from the internal kerne of the Mercury.

This Sulphur is not wanting even in common Argent vive, by the Mediation of which, it may be precipitated into the form of a dry powder. Yea and by a liqour (the Alchahest) well known to us, (though nothing helping of this Art of transmutation) it may be so fixed, that it may endure all fires, the Test and Coppel, and this without the addition of any thing to it, the liqour (by vertue whereof it is fixed) coming away intire, both in its Pondus and vertue.

This Sulphur in gold and silver is pure, in the other Mettals it is less pure, therefore in gold and silver it is fixed, in others it is fugitive, in all the Mettals it is coagulated; in Mercury or Argent vive, it is coagulable; in gold, silver and Mercury, this Sulphur is so strongly united, that the Antients did ever judge Sulphur and Mercury to be all one, but we by the help of the liqour, (the Alchahest) the invention of which, in these parts of the World we owe to Paracelsus (though among the Moors and Arabians it hath been and is (at this day) commonly known to the acuter sort of chemists) but this I say we know that the Sulphur which is in Mercury coagulable, and in the Mettals coagulated, is external to the nature of Mercury, and may be separated in the form of a tintured Metallick Oyle, the remaining Mercury being then void of all Sulphur, save that which may be called its inward Sulphur, and is now incoagulable of it self (Though by our Elixer it is to be coagulated) but of itself, it can neither be fixt nor precipitated, nor

sublimed, but remains unaltered in all corrosive waters, and in all digestions of heat. One way then of Mercury azating all Mettals and Minerals, is by the liquor Alcahest, which out of all such bodies as have Mercury in their constitution, can separate a running Argent vive, from which Argent vive all its sulphur is then separated, save that onely which is internal and central to the Mercury, which internal Sulphur of Mercury no corrosive can touch, Next to this way of universal Reduction, there are also some other particular wayes, by which Lead, Tin, Antimony, yea, even Copper, and Iron may be reduced into a running quicksilver, by the help of Salts, which because (being corporeal) they pierce not so radically as the forenamed liquor doth, they therefore do not spoile the Mercury of its Sulphur but that as much Sulphur as there is in common Mercury, so much also there is in this Mercury of the bodies, onely this Mercury hath specificated qualities according to the nature of the Mattal or Mineral, from which it was extracted, and from that reason (as to our work, which is to dissolve perfect species of Mettals) it hath no more vertue than common Argent vive: There is then but only one humidity, which is applicable unto our work, which certainly is neither Tin nor Copper, nor is drawn from any thing, which nature hath formed, but from a substance compounded by the Art of the Philosopher. So then, if a Mercury drawn from the bodies, have not onely the same deficiency of heat and superfluity of foeces as common Mercury hath, but also a distinct specificated form, it must (by reason of this its form) be so much the farther remote from our Mercury then common Argent vive is.

Our Art therefore is to compound two principles (one in which the salt, and another in which the Mercury of nature doth abound) which are not yet perfect, nor yet totally imperfect and (by consequence) may therefore (by our Art) be exalted which that (which is totally perfect) cannot be: and then by common Mercury to extract not the Pondus, but the celestial vertue out of the compound, which vertue (being fermental) begets in the common Mercury an offspring more noble than it self, which is our true Hermaphrodite, which will congeal it self, and dissolve the bodies; observe but a grain of Corn in which scarce a discernable part is sprout, and this sprout, if it were out of the grain, would dye in a moment; the whole grain is sowed, yet the sprout onely produceth the herb: So is it in our body, the fermental spirit that is in it, is scarce a third part of the whole, the rest is of no value, yet all is joyned in the composition, and the faeculent corporeous, part of the body comes away with the dreggs of the Mercury. But beyond the example given of a grain it may be observed that the hidden and spiritual vertue of this our body, doth purge and purifie its matrix of water, in which it os sowed, that is, it makes it cast forth a great quantity of filthy earth, and a great deal of Hydropical saline moisture. For instance thy washings (for a tryall) with pure clean fountain water, weigh first a pint of the same water, and take the exact weight of it, then wash thy compound eight or ten times, save all the faeces, weigh thy body and Mercury exactly, weigh thy faeces being very dry, then distill or sublime all that will sublime a very little quick Mercury will ascend; then put the Residue of the faeces in a crucible, set them on the coals, and all the faeculency of the Mercury will burn like a coal, yet without fume; when that is all consumed, weigh the remaining faeces, and thou shalt find them to be two thirds of thy body, the other being in the Mercury, weigh the Mercury which thou sublimedst, and the Mercury prepared by itself, and the weight of both will not recompence thy Mercury weight by farre. So then boile up thy water to a skin, in which thou madest thy Lotions, for that is a thick water: and in a cool place thou shalt have Christals, which is the salt of Mercury Crude, and no way fit for Medicines: yet it is a content for the Artists to see how the Heterogeneityties of Mercury are discovered, which no other Art save the liquor of Alcahest can do, and that in a destructive, and not a generative way as this is, for this operation of ours is made between male and female, within their own kind, between which there is a ferment which effecteth that which no other thing in the world could do. In all truth, I tell you, that if you should take our imperfect compound body, per se, and Mercury, per se, and them alone, though you might bring out of the one a most pure Sulphur, and out of the other a Mercury of Mercury, which is the nut of Mercury, yet with these thou couldst effect nothing, for fermental virtue is the wonder of the World, and it is by it, that water becomes Herbs, Trees, and Plants, Fruits, Flesh, Blood, Stones, Minerals, and everything, look then for it onely, and rejoyce in it as in a deservedly invaluable treasure; Now know that fermentation, works not out of kind, neither do salts ferment Mettals; Wilt thou know then whence it is that some fixt Alcalyes do extract a Mercury out of Minerals, and out of the more imperfect Metals, consider then, that in all these bodies the Sulphur is not so radically mixt and united, as it is in Silver and Gold. Now Sulphur is of Kin to divers Alcalyes, that are ordinarily dissolved or melted with it, and by this means the Mercurial parts are disjoyned, and the Argent vive is by fire separated. The Mercury thus separated, is spoyled of its Sulphur when as indeed there needs onely a depuration of the Sulphur by separating the impure from the pure; but these salts having separated the Sulphur do leave the Mercury worse, that is, more estranged from a Metallick nature, than it was before, for in its composition that Sulphur of Saturn will not burn, but though it be sublimed, calcined, made sugar, or vitrefied, yet by fire and fluxes it still returns to the same it was in before, but its Sulphur being (as is aforesaid) separated, will take fire, if joyned with Salt-peter, even as common Sulphur doth, so that the Salts act on the Sulphur of which they rob the Mercury; they act not on the Mercury for want of ferment which is not to be found, but onely among Homogeneall things. Therefore the ferment of bread leavens not a stone, nor doth the ferment of anyanimal or vigeable, ferment a mettal or mineral.

So then, though our Gold thou mightest obtaine a Mercury by the help of the Liquor, of that first ens of Salt, yet that Mercury would never accomplish our work, whereason the otherside Mercury made out of Gold by our Mercury, though there be three parts of our Mercury to one of the Gold, This Mercury I say will (by continual digestion) accomplish the whole work; marvell not then, that our Mercury is more powerfull, which is prepared by Mercury; for certainly the ferment, which commeth between the compound Body and the Water, causeth a death, and a regeneration, it doth that, which nothing in the world can do, besides it severs from Mercury a terrestrity, which burns like a Coale, and an Hydropical humor melting in common water, but the residue is acuated by a Spirit of life, which is our true embryonated Sulphur of our water, not visible, yet working visibly. We conclude, that all operations for our Mercury but by common Mercury, and our body according to our Art are erroneous, and will never produce our mystery, although they be otherwise never so wonderfull. For as the Author of the Newlight saith, No water in any Island of the Phylosophers, was wholesome, but that which was drawn out of the reins of the Soll and Luna. Wilt thou know what that meanes? Mercury in its pondus and incombustibility is Gold fugitive, our Body in its purity, is called the Phylosophers Luna being farre more pure than the imperfect mettals and its Sulphur also as pure as the Sulphur of Soll, not that it is indeed Luna, for it abides not in the fire, now in the composition of these three (1) our common Mercury and the two principles of our compound there interceeds, the ferment of Luna, out of which though it be a Body, proceeds yet a specificating odor: yea and oft the pondus of it is diminished: If the compound be much washt, after it is sufficiently clean. So then the ferment of Soll and Luna interceeds in our composition, which ferment begets an offspring, more noble than it self a 1000 fold, wheas should'st thou work on our compound Body by a violent way of Salts, thou should'st have thy Mercury by farre less noble, than the Body, the Sulphur of the Body being separated and not exalted by such a process.

We now come to the third conclusion, which is that among all metaline and mineral Sulphur there are onely two, that belong to our work, which two have their Mercuries essentially united with them. This is the truth of our secrets, though we (to seduce the unwary) do seem to aver the contrary, for do not think that (because we do insinuatetwo waies, therefore) we really mean as we say, for verily (as witnesseth Ripley) There is no true principle but one. Nor have we but one matter, not but one regimen of heat, and one linear way of proceeding.

These two Sulphurs as they are principles of our work, they ought to be homogeneal, for it is onely Gold spiritual that we seek, first white, then red, which Gold is no other then that which the vulgar see, but they know not the hidden spirit that is in it. This principle wants nothing but Composition, and this composition must be made, with our other crude white Sulphur which is nothing but Mercury vulgar, by frequent cohobation of it upon our Hermaphroditical Body, so long till it be come a fiery water.

Know therefore that Mercury hath in its self a Sulphur, which being unactive, our Art is to multiply in it a living active Sulphur, which comes out of the loyns of our Hermaphroditical Body, whose father is a metal and his mother a mineral, Take then the most beloved daughter of Saturn, whose armes are a circle Argent, and on it a sable cross on a blackfield, which is the signall note of the great World, espouse her to the most warlike God, who dwells in the house of Aries, and thou shalt find the Salt of Nature, with this Salt acuate thy water, as thou best knowest, and thou shalt have the Lunary bath, in which the Sun will be ammended.

And in all truth I assure thee, that although though hadst our body Mercurialized (without the addition of Mercury of any of the metals) made per se, that is without the addition of Mercury, it would not be in the least profitable unto thee, for it is Mercury onely, which hath a Celestial form and power, which it receives, not onely, nor so much from the compound body, as from the fermental virtue which proceeds from the composition of both the body and the Mercury, by which is produced a wonderfull Creature: So then let all thy care be to marry Sulphur with Suphur, that is our Mercury which is impregnated, which Sulphur, must be espoused with our Sol then hast thou two Sulphurs married and two Mercuries of one off spring, whose father is the Sol, and Luna the mother.

The fourth Conclusion makes all perfectly plain, which hath been said before, namely that these two Sulphurs are the one most pure red Sulphur of Gold, and the other of most pure clean white Mercury.

These are our two Sulphurs, the one appears a coagulated body, and yet carries its Mercury in its belly: the other is in all its proportions true Mercury, yet very clean and carries its Sulphur within its self, though hidden under the form and fluxibilitie of Mercury.

Sophisters are (here) in a labyrinth, for because they are not acquainted with metalline love, they work in things altogether heterogeneal, or if they work upon metalline bodies they yet either joyne males with males, or females with females, or else they work on each alone, or else they take males, which are charged with natural inabilities, and females whose matrix is vitiated. Thus by there own inconsideration they frustrate their own hopes, and then cast the blame upon the Art, when as indeed it is onely to be imputed to their own folly, in not understanding the Phylosophers.

I know many pittifull Sophisters do dote on many Stones, vigitable, animal, and mineral, and some to those add the firey Angelical, Paradaical Stone, which they call a wonder working essence, and because the mark they aim at, is so

great, the Waies also, by which they would attain their Scope, they make also a double, one Way they call the Via Humida, the other, the Via Sicca, (to use their languages).

The latter way is the labyrinthian path, which is fit onely for the great ones of the earth to tread in, the other the dedalean path, an easie way of small cost for the poor of the world, to enterprize.

But this I know and can testifie that there is but one Way, and but onely one Regimen, no more Colours than ours, and what we say or write otherwise, is but to deceive the unwary, for if every thing in the world ought to have its proper causes, there cannot be any one end, which is produced from two waies of working on distinct principles. Therefore we protest and must again admonish the Reader that (in our former writings) we have concealed much, by reason of the two waies we have insinuated, which is the play of children, and the work of women, and that is decoction by the fire, and we protest that the lowest degree of this our work, is that the matter be stirred up, and may hourly circulate without feare of breaking the vessel, which for this reason ought to be very strong, but our linear decoction is an internal work, which advances every day and hour, and is distinct from that outward heat, and is therefore invisible and insensible. In this our work, our Diana is our body when it is mixed with the water, for then all is called the Moon, for Laton is whitened, and the woman beares rule, our Diana hath a wood, for in the first dayes of the Stone, our body after it is whitened grows vegetably. In this wood, are at the last found two Doves, for about the end of three weeks, the soul of the Mercury ascends, with the soul of the dissolved Gold, these are in folded in the everlasting armes of Venus, for in this season the confection are all tinted with a pure green colour, these Doves are circulated seven times, for in seven is perfecton, and they are left dead, for they can rise and move no more, our Body is then black like to a Crowes bill, for in this operation all is turned to powder, blacker than the blackest. Such passages as these we do oftentimes use, when we speak of the preparation of our Mercury, and this we do to deceive the simple, and it is also for no other end that we confound our operations speaking of one, when we ought to speak of another, for if this Art were but plainly set down, our operations would be contemptible even to the foolish. Therefore believe me in this, that because our workes are truly Natural, we therefore do take the liberty to confound the Phylosophers work, with that which is purely Natures work, that so we might keep the simple in ignorance, concerning our true Vinegre, which being unknown, their labor is wholly lost.

Let me then (for a close) say onely thus much; Take our Body which is Gold, and our Mercury which is seven times acuated by the marriage of it, with our Hermaphroditicall Body, which is in a Chaos, and is the splendor of the soul of the God Mars, in the earth, and water of Saturn, mix these two in such a pondus as nature doth require, In this mixture you have our invisible fires, for in the water of our Mercury is an active Sulphur or mineral fire and in the Gold a dead passive, but yet actual Sulphur now when that Sulphur of the Gold is stirred up and quickened, there is made between the fire of nature, which is as the Gold, and the fire against nature, which is in the Mercury, a fire partly of the one and partly of the other, for it partakes of both, and by these two fires thus united into one, is caused both Corruption (which is Humiliation) and generation (which is Glorification and Perfection:) Now know that God onely governs this way of the internal fire, man being ignorant of the progress thereof, onely by his reason beholding its operations, he is able to discern that it is hot, that is, that it doth perform the action of heat, which is decoction, In this fire there is no sublimation, for sublimation is an exaltation, but this fire is such an exaltation, as that beyond it, is no perfection.

All our work then is onely to multiply this fire, that is to circulate the body so long until the vertue of the Sulphur be augmented. Again this fire is an invisible Spirit, and therefore not having dimentions, is neither above nor below, but everywhere in the Sphere of the activity of our matter in the Vessel: So that though the material visible substance do sublime and ascend by the action of the elemental heat, yet this spiritual vertue is always as well as in that which remains in the bottom, as in that which is in the upper part of the Vessel. For it is as the soul in the body of man, which is everywhere at the same time, and yet bounded or termined in none.

This is the ground of one Sophismus of ours, (viz.) when we say that in this true Philosophical fire, there is no sublimation, for the fire is the life, and the life is a soul, which is not at all subject to the dimensions of Bodies, Hence also it is that the opening of the Glass or cooling of the same during the time of working kills the life or fire, that is in this secret Sulphur, and yet not one grain of the mettall is lost. The elemental fire then is that which any child knowes how to kindle and govern, but it is the Philosopher onely, that is able to discern the true inward fire for it is a wonderful thing, which acts in the body, yet is no part of the body. Therefore the fire is a celestial vertue it is uniformed, that is, it is alwaies the same until the period of its operation is come, and then being come to perfection it acts no more, for every Agent, when the end of its action is come then rests.

Remember then that when we speak of our fire which sublimes not, that thou do not mistake and think that the moisture of the compound which is within the Glass ought not to sublime, for that it must do uncesantly, but that the fire that sublimes not, is the metalline love, which is above and below and in all places alike. Now then for a close to all that hath been said, learn and be well advised what matter you take in hand, for an evil Crow laies an evil Egg, as the proverb hath it, let thy seed be pure, the shalt thou see a noble offspring, let the fire without be such, as in which

our confections may play to & fro uncessantly, & this (in a few daies) will produce that which thou most longest for, the Crows Bill.

Ripley's Treatise of Mercury and the Philosophers' Stone

This is contained in *Aurifontina Chymica: or, a collection of fourteen small treatises concerning the first matter of philosophers, for the discovery of their (hitherto so much concealed) Mercury. Which many have studiously endeavoured to hide, but these to make manifest, for the benefit of Mankind in general.* London, 1680.

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A Treatise of Mercury and the Philosophers Stone.

by Sir George Ripley.

I will, my dearest Son, instruct thee in this Blessed Science, Which was hid from the Wise of old, to whom God was pleased to shew so much favour. Know therefore, that our Matter is the chiefest of all things in the Earth, and of least estimation and account, as will hereafter more plainly appear. For if Water incorporate it self with Earth, the Water will be lowest of all, and will (if it be not kept down) with Fire, ascend higher; and thus it may be seen, how Water will be highest and lowest. Yet true it is, that it is of least estimation, for in our Earth and Water, and in that drossie Earth, you may find some very pure and clear, which is our Seed and fifth Essence, and then that foul and drosse Earth is good for nothing else, and of no estimation. But that Water, as I said, is the chiefest, will appear many ways: Know, Son, that without Water we cannot make Bread, nor anything else, which God hath created in Nature; and hence you may easily perceive, that Water is the first Matter of all things which are born or generated in the World: for certainly 'tis manifest unto thee, that nothing grows or receiveth increase without the four Elements; therefore whatsoever is Elemented by virtue of the four Elements, it must of necessity be, that original of all things that are born or grow, should be of Water: Yet ought you not to understand, this before spoken of Water, but of that Water which is the Matter of all things, out of which all Natural things are produced in their kind. Know therefore, that the first of all Air is engendered of Water; of Air, Fire; of Fire, Earth. Now will I more familiarly and friendly discourse with thee; I'll further manifest this Mystery unto thee by degrees, lest by too much haste it happen to us according to the Proverb, That he that makes too much haste, oftentimes comes home too late. Now therefore that I may satisfie thy desire, I will discourse of the first Matter, which Philosophers call, the fifth Essence, and many other names they have for it, by which they may the more obscure it. In it for certain are four Elements, pure in their Exaltation: Know therefore, that if you would have the fifth Essence, Man, you must first have Man, and you must have nothing else of that Matter; and see that you observe this well. This I say, that if you desire to have the Philosophers Stone, you must of necessity first have the fifth Essence of that same Stone, whether it be Mineral or Vegetative; joyn therefore species with species, and Gems with Gems, and not the one without the other, nor anything contrary, which may be other than the species or proper Gems; beware therefore of all that is not Essential: For of Bones, Stones cannot be made, neither do Cranes beget Geese; which if you will consider, you'll find the profit of it, by the help of the Divine Grace; by the assistance whereof let us father proceed to speak of this blessed Water, which is called the Water of the Sun and Moon, hidden in the concavity of our Earth. Concerning which Earth know, that all that is generated must of necessity have Male and Female, from which action and passion arise, without which Generation never is. But you will certainly never receive profit from things differing in kinds. Notwithstanding, if you have this Water of the Sun and Moon, it will draw other Bodies and Humours to its own kind, by the help of the virtue and the heat of the Sun and Moon, and will make them perfect. As an Infant in the womb of its Mother, decoction of temperate heat helping it, turneth the Flowers into its Nature and kind, that is, into Flesh, Bloud, Bones, and Life, with the other properties of a living Body, of which 'tis needless to say any more. And hence you may understand, that our water changeth it self into a perfect kind, which things of its own kind: For first it will congeal it self into a substance like Oyl; then it will change that Oyl, by the means of temperate heat, into Gum; and lastly, by the help of the perfect heat of the Sun, into a Stone. Now therefore know, that out of one thing

you have three, that is Oyl, Gum, and a Stone. Know also, that when the Water is turned into Oyl, then you have a perfect Spirit; when the Oyl is turned into hard Gum, then you have a perfect Spirit and Soul; and when the Spirit and Soul are turned into a Stone, then you have a perfect Body, Soul and Spirit together: Which as it is called the Philosophers Stone and Elixir, and a perfect Medicine of mans Body; so also that which is leavened with its genus, and the fifth Essence. Know, Son, that fifth Essences are divers, one whereof is to Humane Bodies, another to Elixir, and to the imperfect Bodies of Metals: For you must consider, that the generation and growth of Metals, is not as the growth of mans Body; for a genus agrees with its genus, and a species with its species. Moreover, know that the first Matter of man, which begetteth the Flesh, Bloud, Bones and Life, is a Spermatick Humour, which causeth generation, through a vital Spirit included therein: And when the Matter is generated and congealed into a Body, extract thence the fifth Essence of that Body, wherewith you may nourish the Body. Yet Son, will I tell thee moreover, that Water, or Matter, or Seed whereof Man is begot, is not the augments of the Body. Know, Son, that if the Body be fed with its Natural food, then its first Matter will be increased, and also the Body, (viz.) the first Matter in quality, and the Body in quantity; the first Matter is that which is called the fifth Essence. Yet Know, Son, that the fifth Essence is one thing, and that the Matter of augmentation is another: and, as I said before, the increase of Metals, is not like the increase of mans Body. Although the fifth Essence, which causeth the augmentation of the Metals, may be a fit Medicine for Humane Bodies; as also the fifth Essence, which causeth the augmentation of mans Body, may be a fit Medicine for the Bodies of Metals: and therefore, as before is said, the fifth Essence is one thing, and augmentation another. You see therefore for what reason our Water is called, the first Matter and the Seed of Metal; viz. because of it all Metals are generated. Therefore you will have need of it in the beginning, middle, and end, for as much as it is the cause of all generation, because by its Congelation, it is turned into all sorts of Metals, to wit, into the first Matter of the sorts. Thence it is called, the Seed of Metals, and the *Metallick Water of Life: [*So it is in the Latine, though perhaps the words should be Vita Metallica, that is, the Water of Metallick Life, that is, of the Life of Metals] because it affords Life and Bloud to sick and dead Metals, & joyneth in Matrimony the Red man and the White woman, that is, the Sun and the Moon. It is called also Virgins Milk; for as long as it is not joyned with the Sun and the Moon; nor with anything else, except only those which are of its own kind, so long it may be called a Virgin. But when it is joyned with a Male and Female, and married with them, then it is no longer a Virgin, because it adhereth to them, and becomes one with them to whom it is joyned with to generation. But as long as it remains a Virgin, it is called Virgins Milk, the Blessed Water, and the Water of Life, and by many other Names. And now, my Son, that I may say something of the Philosophers Mercury, know that when thou hast put thy Water of Life to the Red man, who is our Magnesia, and to the White woman, whose name is Albifica, and they shall all have been gathered together into one, then you have the true Philosophers Mercury. For after that in this manner all is joyned with a Male and Female, then it is called the Philosophers Mercury, the Philosophers Water of Life, the Bloud of Man, his red Flesh, his Body and Bones. Know therefore, that there are many sorts of Milk, (viz.) Virgins Milk, Womans Milk, and also Mans Milk: For when first they are joyned in one, and she is big, having conceived, then the Infant must be nourished with Milk: But then you may know, that this Milk is not Virgins Milk, but rather the man and the womans Milk, wherewith it is always to be nourished, till it is grown to that strength, that it may be brought up with stronger and fuller food. That food which I mean is the leavening of it which gives it form, that it may perform Virile work: For until the Infant, that is, this our stone, be formed and leavened with its like, the Bloud of the green Dragon, and the red Bloud of the Red Dragon, whether it be the white Stone or the red, it will never do a perfect work. Know therefore, Son, that the first Water is that Water Rebar, which God made of Nature, and it is the cause of Generation, as I said before; but when after the conjunction which ariseth from the Marriage, it begets the Water of Life, and the Philosophers Milk, with one of which, or both, you must augment and feed your Stone perpetually.

Much more could I say to thee, Son, concerning this first Matter, but let this suffice, that setting aside impertinencies of words, we may now, Divine Grace favouring of us, proceed to the practice it self of the Philosophick Stone. See therefore, my Son, that thou diligently putttest all these Matters (which though they are three things, yet are they but one only) in a Glass Vessel, and letttest them quietly putrefie: then put an Alembick upon your Vessel, and by distillation draw out all the Water, which may be thence distilled. Try this first in Maries Bath. Then place the the Vessel in Ashes, and make a gentle Fire for 12 hours: then take the Matter out of the Vessel, grind it well by it self, without the foresaid Water, then put it again into the Vessel with Water, and stop the Vessel close. Put it in the Bath for three days, and the distill the Water as before in the Bath, and the Matter will be more black than before. Do thus three times over, and then grind it no more; but afterwards as often as you distill it, so oft pour Water on the top: but between each distillation give it so much Fire fore six hours or more, till it become indifferent dry; then pour Water on the top again, and dissolve it again in the Bath under a blind Alembick. Also in every distillation separate the Flegm, by casting away six or seven drops of Water in the beginning of each distillation. And observing this order, cause it to drink its proper Water, till it hath drink of it seven times its weight which it had at the first. But then it

will be of a white colour, and so much whiter, by how much the more of its own Water it hath drank. This is white Elixir.

Moreover, this our Water is called Homogeneous, and by many other names. Besides, know that this Water and Matter generate as well the Red Stone, as the White: Know also, when this first Matter is brought to its compleat whiteness, then the end of one, is the beginning of the other; that is, of the Red Stone, which is our Red Magnesia, and Virgins Brass, as we said at first: Son, see thou well understand these words. Our Virgins Brass, is our Gold; yet

I do not say, that all Brass is Gold: also our Brass, is our live Brimstone; but all Brimstone, is not our live Brimstone: also Quicksilver, is Mercury; but I do not say, that common Quicksilver, is our Silver: as I said before, that Water of Life which is our Seed and first Matter, is our Mercury and our Spirit of Life, which is extracted out of the blessed land of Aethiopia, which is called Magnesia, and by many other names. Besides, my Son, know that there is no perfect generation, without corruption; for corruption causeth cleanliness, and cleanliness corruption. Consider therefore, Son, our dying poison, which dyeth and is dyed perpetually; and this is our Body, or Soul, and our Spirit, when they are joyned together in one, and become one thing, which with its parts ariseth also out of one thing, besides which there is not any other, neither ever shall be. Wherefore, my Son, great folly it is for any one to believe, that any other Medicine can be turned into Gold or Silver; which Medicine will little profit thee of it self, except it be mingled with a Body, for then shall it perfect its work according to its form which it is born: For it is never born that it may of it self become a Body. Moreover, know that there is as much difference between the first Matter, which is called the Seed of Metals, and the Medicine, as is between the Medicine and Gold: For the Seed will never be the Medicine without Body, neither will the Medicine ever be a Metal without a Body. Much difference also there is between Elixir and the Medicine, as between the Masculine and Feminine Seed, and also an Infant which is generated of those in the Matrice. Now you may see, that the Seed is one thing, and the Infant another; though they be one and the same in kind, one thing, one operation, the Vessel finally one, though it be called by divers names: For a Man and Woman, is an Infant born, when as yet the Man is one thing, and the Woman another, though they be one and the same in kind: which you ought to understand in our Stone. But what I said before, that corruption is the cause of generation, and of cleanliness, is true: For you must know, that every thing in its first Matter is corrupt and bitter, which corruption and bitterness is called dying poison, which is the cause of Life in all things, as will be sufficiently manifest, if you with right reason do weigh the Natures of things. Consider well, O Son, that when Lucifer the Angel of Pride, first rebelled against God, and prevaricated the Command of the most High, be assured that this was made corrupt, bitter, and harsh to him: No less was the fall and prevarication of our first Parents Adam and Eve, whom death and condemnation followed, made to them corruption and bitterness, and likewise to us in whom the same corruption is propagated. Many more like examples I could recite, if need were: But setting aside these, to come to what is proper to our discourse; consider well, that of all precious Fruits which grow out of the Earth, their first Matter is bitter and harsh, as still retaining some footstep of the former corruption and putrefaction; which bitterness, by the means of continual action of natural heat, is with great virtue turned into sweetness. Now therefor, Son, if thou wilt be ingenious, this little will suffice whereby to find out much more, and to perceive my meaning: Consider therefore well, Son, that according to the old Proverb,

He sweet deserves not, who no bitter tasts.

But now to speak something more of our Brass; know, that Brass signifies continuance, or continuing Water: But what is farther to be considered in the nature of the name of Brass, you may easily gather from its English Tetragrammate name, that is, its name consisting of four letters, to wit, B.R.A.S. First therefore, by B. is signified the Body of our Work, which is sweet and bitter, our Olive and our Brass continuing in its form: by R. is signified the Root of our Work, and the Spring of continuing Radical Humours, which is our Red Tincture, and Red Rose which purifieth all in its kind: A. signifies our Father Adam, who was the first man, out of whom was born the first woman Eve; whence you understand, that therein is Male and Female. Know therefore, that our Brass is the beginning of our Work, our Gold and Olive, for it is the first Matter of Metals, as Man is the first Man and Woman. S. signifies the Soul of our Life, and Spirit of Life, which God breathed into Adam, and all the creatures; which Spirit is called the fifth Essence. Moreover, Son, by these four Letters, we may understand the four Elements, without which nothing is generated in Nature. They also signifie Sol and Lune, which are the causes of all Life, Generation, and augmentation of all things born in the World. In this name therefore of four letters, consisteth our whole Work: For our Brass is Male and Female, of which ariseth he who is called begot. Therefore, Son, take good notice what is signified by our sweet Brass, what is called our Sandiver, or the Salt of our Nitre, or Nitre; what also by the Bloud of the Dragon, what Sol and Lune, our Mercury, and our Water of Life, and many other things, concerning which Philosophers have spoken darkly, and in Riddles. Know therefore, Son, that our first Matter is neither Gold, nor common Silver, nor is it of corrosives, or such like outward things, which Denigrators groping in

the dark now-a-days do use. Take heed therefore, Son, that by no means you admit any thing contrary in kind; for be assured, that what a man shall have sowed, the same shall he reap. Moreover, know that when our Stone is compleated in its proper kind, then it will be a hard Stone, which will not easily be dissolved; yet if you add his Wife to him, he will be dissolved into Oyl, which is called Philosophers Oyl, incombustible Oyl, and by many other names. Know therefore, Son, that there are diverse leavenings, as well as Corporal as Spitual, (viz.) Corporal in quantity, and Spirtual in quality: Corporal leavening increaseth the weight and quantity of the Medicine, yet is not of so great power as the Medicine it self, as is Spirtual leavening; for it only encreaseth the Medicine in quantity, not in virtue: but Spirtual leavening increaseth it in both; and where the Corporal ruleth above an hundred, the Spirtual above a thousand. Moreover, as long as the Medicine is leavened with the Corporal substance, it is called Elixir. There is therefore a divers manner of leavening, and a difference between the Medicine, and the Elixir; for the Spirtual is one thing, the Corporal another. Know also, that as long as it is Spirtual leavening, it is liquid Oyl and Gum, which cannot conveniently be carried about from one place to another; but when it is Corporal, then it will be a Stone which you may carry about in your Pocket. Now therefore you see what is the difference between the Medicine, and the Elixir; nor is the difference less between Elixir, and Gold and Silver, for Gold and Silver are difficult to melt, but Elixir not so, for it easily dissovles at the flame of a Candle: thence you may easily perceive, how various the differences of our composition and temperament are. Lastly, that we may say something concerning their food and drink, know that their food is of airy Stones, and their drink is drawn out of two perfect Bodies, namely out of the Sun and Moon; the drink that is drawn out of the Sun, is called liquid Gold, (or Potable, that is, that may be drank;) but that out of the Moon, is called Virgins Milk. Now, Son, we have discoursed plainly enough with thee, if Divine Grace be not wanting to thee; for that drink that is drawn out of the Sun, is Red, but that out of the Moon, is white; and therefore one is called liquid Gold, but the other Virgins Milk; one is Masculine, the other Feminine, though both ariseth out of one Image, and one kind. Son, ponder my words, otherwise if thou wanderest in the dark, that evil befalls thee from defect of light: See therefore that thou beest diligent in turning the Philosophick Wheel, that thou mayst make Water out of Earth, Air out of Water, Fire our of Air, and Earth out of Fire, and all this out of one Image and Root, that is, out of its own proper kind, and natural food wherewith its Life may be cherished without end. He who hath understanding, let him understand.

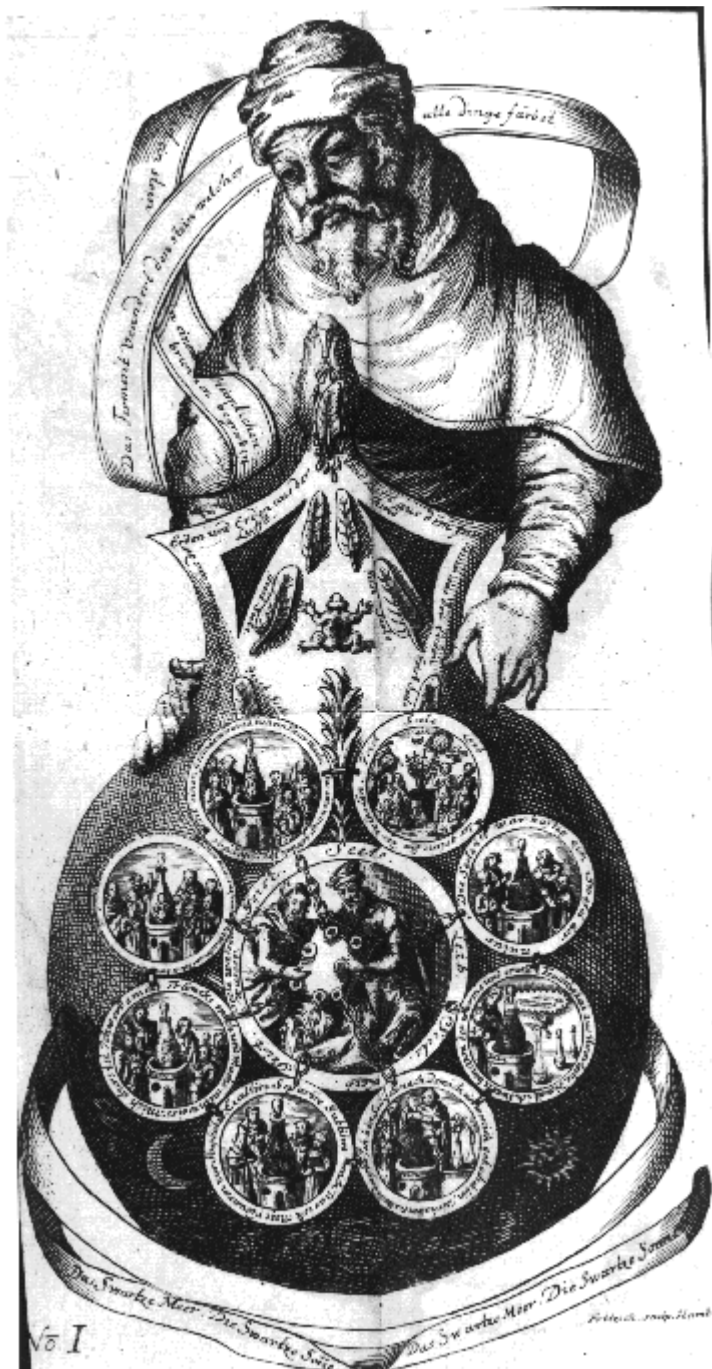
Glory to God Omnipotent.

FINIS.

The Ripley Scroll

The Ripley Scroll is an important 15th century work of emblematic symbolism. Twenty one copies are known, dating from the early 16th century to the mid-17th. There are two different forms of the symbolism, with 17 manuscripts of the main version, and 4 manuscripts of the variant form. There are very wide variations in the English text on the different manuscripts, and for the text here I have modernised and unified a number of versions. This is not a properly researched edition, but a reworking of the text into a modern readable form. I add the engravings of the Scroll printed in David Beuther, *Universal und Particularia...* Hamburg, 1718.

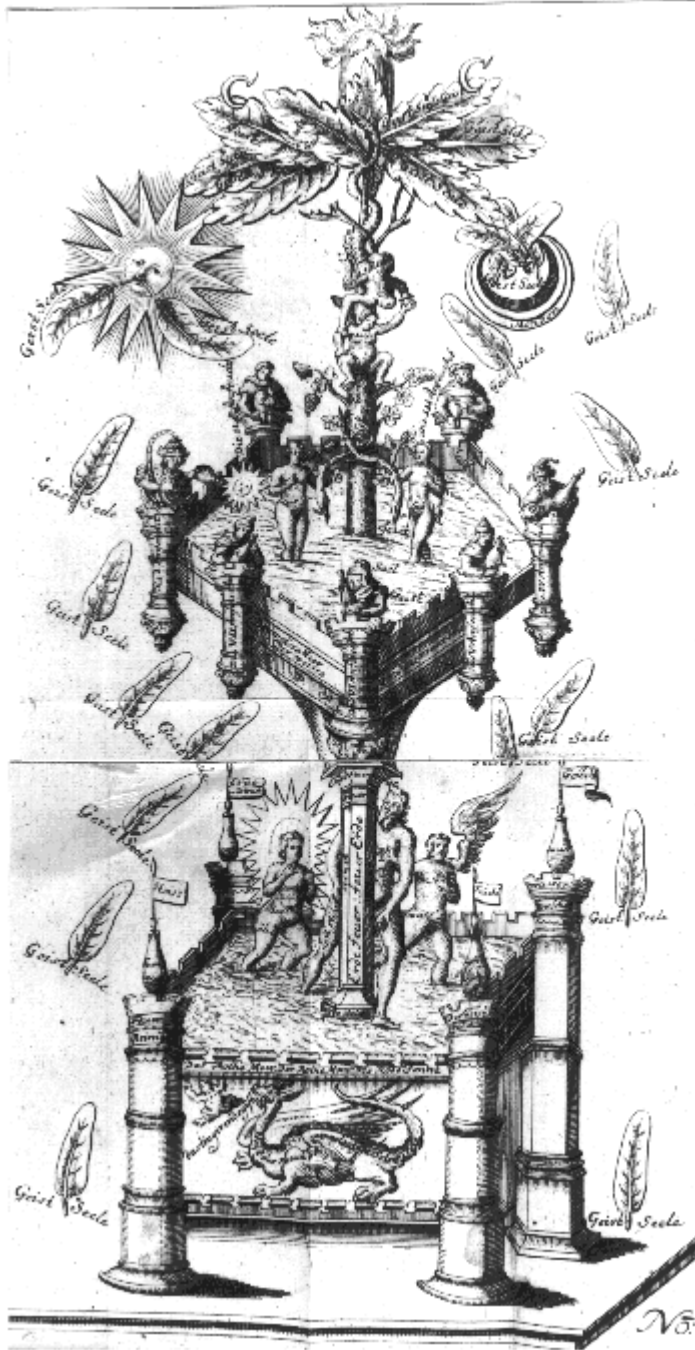
**You must make Water of the Earth, and Earth of the Air, and Air of the Fire, and Fire of the Earth.
The Black Sea. The Black Luna. The Black Sol.**



Here is the last of the White Stone and the begining of the Red.

Of the son take the light
 The Red gum that is so bright
 And of the Moon do also
 The which gum they both trowe
 The philosophers Sulphur vive
 This I call it without strife
 Kybright and Kebright it is called also
 And other names many more

Of them drawe out a tincture
And make of them a marriage pure
Between the husband and the wife
Espoused with the water of life
But of this water thou must beware
Or else thy work will be full bare
He must be made of his own kind
Mark thou now in thy mind
Acetome of philosophers men call this
A water abiding so it is
The maidens milk of the dew
That all the work doth renew
The Serpent of life it is called also
And other names many more
The which causeth generation
Betwixt the man and the woman
But looke thou no division
Be there in the conjunction
Of the moon and of sun
After the marriage be begun
And all the while they be a wedding
Give to them their drinking
Acetome that is good and fine
Better to them then any wine
Now when this marriage is done
Philosophers call it a stone
The which hath a great nature
To bring a stone that is so pure
So he have kindly nourishment
Perfect heat and decoction
But in the matrix when they be put
Let never the glasse be unshut
Till they have ingendred a stone
In the world there not such a one

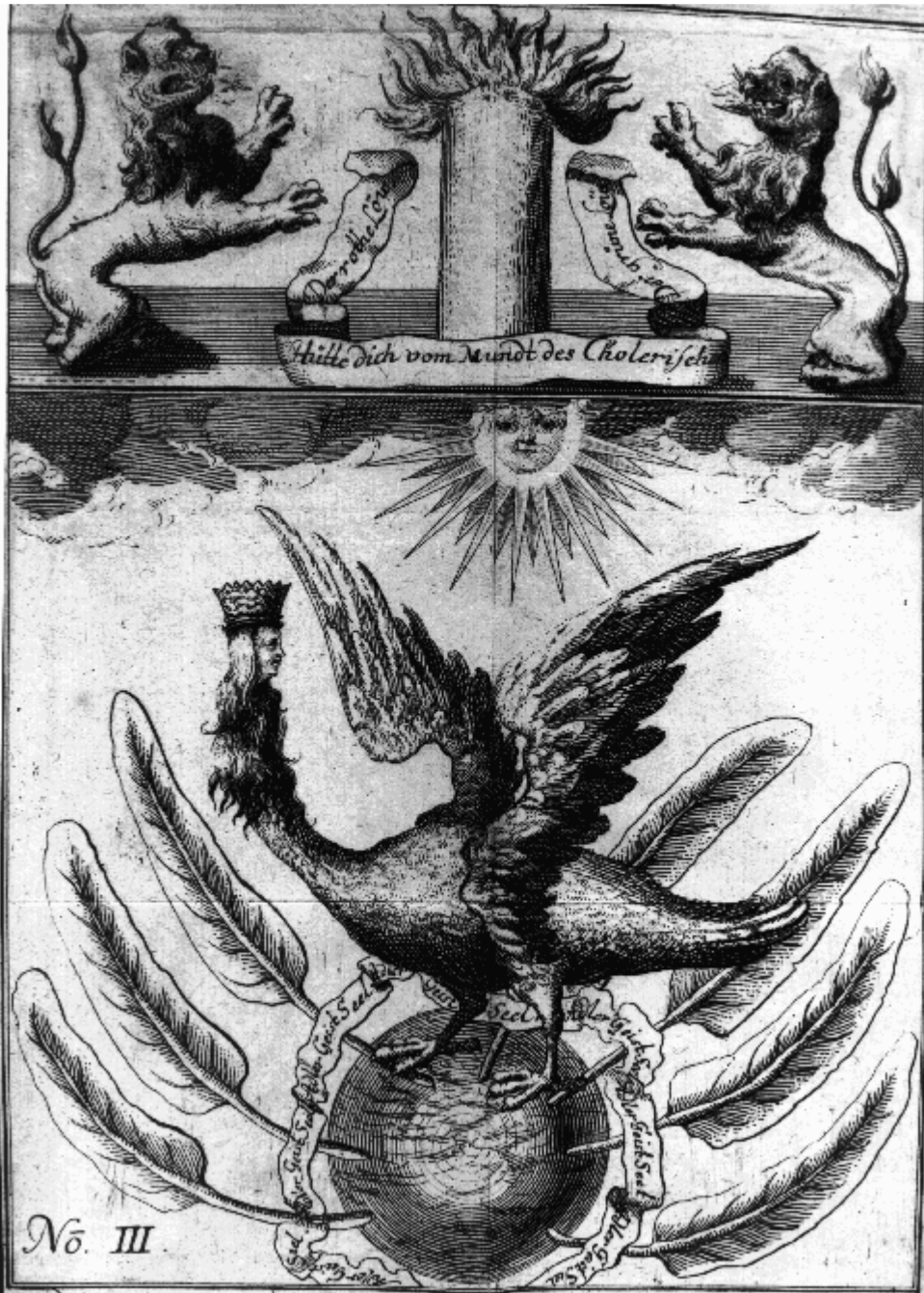


The Red Lune. The Spirit of Water. Red Sol. The Red Sea.

On the ground there is a hill
 Also a serpent within a well
 His tail is long with wings wide
 All ready to flee by every side
 Repair the well fast about
 That thy serpent pass not out
 For if that he be there a gone
 Thou lose the virtue of the stone
 Where is the ground you must know here

And the well that is so clear
And what is the dragon with the tail
Or else the work shall little avail
The well must run in water clear
Take good heed for this your fire
The fire with water bright shall be burnt
And water with fire washed shall be
The earth on fire shall be put
And water with air shall be knit
Thus ye shall go to purification
And bring the serpent to redemption
First he shall be black as a crow
And down in his den shall lie full low
Swelling as a toad that lieth on the ground
Burst with bladders sitting so round
They shall to burst and lie full plain
And this with craft the serpent is slain
He shall shine colors here many a one
And turn as white as whale's bone
With the water that he was in
Wash him clear from his sin
And let him drink a little and a light
And that shall make him fair and white
The which whiteness be abiding
Lo here is a very full finishing
Of the white stone and the red
Lo here is the very true deed.

The Red Lion. The Green Lion. The Mouth of Choleric beware.



Here is the last of the Red, and the beginning to put away the dead. The Elixir Vitae.

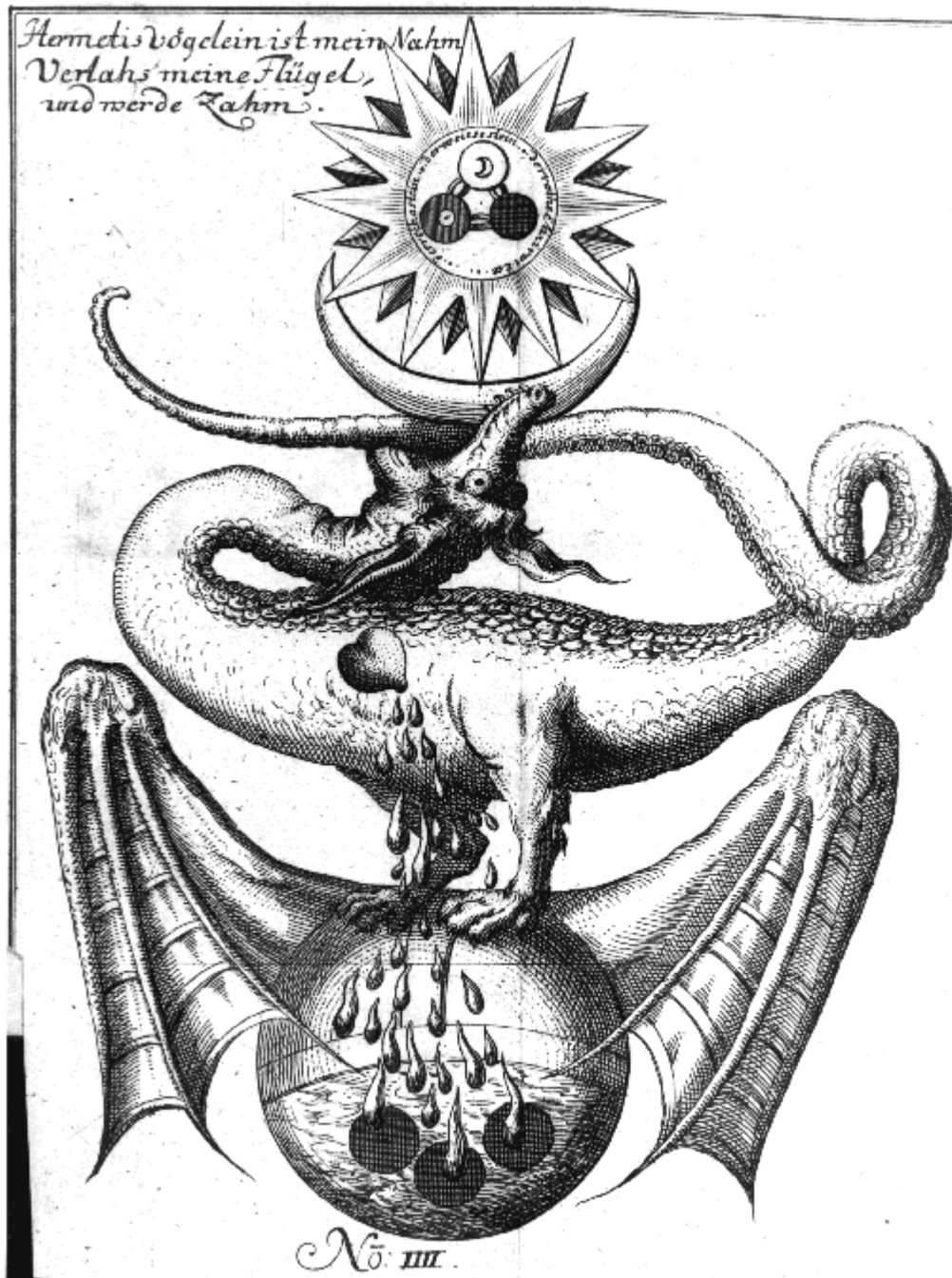
Take the father that Phoebus so high
That sit so high in majesty
With his beams that shines so bright
In all places wherever that he be
For he is father to all things
Maintainer of life to crop and root
And causeth nature for to spring
With the wife beginneth soothe
For he is salve to every sore

To bring about this prosperous work
Take good heed unto this lore
I say unto learned and unto clerk
And Homogenie is my name
Which God made with his own hand
And Magnesia is my dame
You shall verily understand.
Now I shall here begin
For to teach thee a ready way
Or else little shall thou win
Take good heed what I do say
Divide thou Phoebus in many parts
With his beams that be so bright
And this with nature him convert
The which is mirror of all light
This Phoebus hath full many a name
Which that is full hard to know
And but thou take the very same
The philosophers stone ye shall not know
Therefore I counsel ere ye begin
Know it well what it should be
And that is thick make it thin
For then it shall full well like thee
Now understand what I mean
And take good heed thereto
Our work else shall little be seen
And turn thee to much woe
As I have said this our lore
Many a name I wish he hath
Some behind and some before
As philosophers doth him give

In the sea without lees
Standeth the bird of Hermes
Eating his wings variable
And maketh himself yet full stable
When all his feathers be from him gone
He standeth still here as a stone
Here is now both white and red
And all so the stone to quicken the dead
All and some without fable
Both hard and soft and malleable
Understand now well and right
And thank you God of this sight

The bird of Hermes is my name eating my wings to make me tame.

**The Red Sea. The Red Sol. The Red Elixir Vitae.
Red Stone. White Stone. Elixir Vitae. Luna in Crescent.**



I shall you tell with plain declaration
Where, how, and what is my generation
Omogeni is my Father
And Magnesia is my Mother
And Azot truly is my Sister
And Kibrick forsooth is my Brother
The Serpent of Arabia is my name
The which is leader of all this game
That sometime was both wood and wild
And now I am both meek and mild
The Sun and the Moon with their might

Have chastised me that was so light
My wings that me brought
Hither and thither where I thought
Now with their might they down me pull,
And bring me where they will
The Blood of mine heart I wish
Now causeth both joy and blisse
And dissolveth the very Stone
And knitteth him ere he have done
Now maketh hard that was lix
And causeth him to be fix
Of my blood and water I wish
Plenty in all the World there is
It runneth in every place
Who it findeth he hath grace
In the World it runneth over all
And goeth round as a ball
But thou understand well this
Of the worke thou shalt miss
Therefore know ere thou begin
What he is and all his kin
Many a name he hath full sure
And all is but one Nature
Thou must part him in three
And then knit him as the Trinity
And make them all but one
Lo here is the Philosophers Stone



Various pieces of Nicolas Flamel

The Testament of Nicholas Flamel
The Summary of Philosophy [transcribed by Antonio Balestra.]
The Hieroglyphic Figures

[Chapters I-IX transcribed by Marcella Gillick.]

Testament of Flamel

Testament of Nicholas Flamel. London: Printed by J. and E. Hodson... and sold only by the Editor. 1806. [In French and English on facing pages.]

This text is probably a late invention but it is nevertheless interesting for that. I cannot locate a manuscript of the 'Testament', though it was mentioned in Borel's bibliography of alchemy. It was probably written in France in the late 18th century, during the revival of interest in Flamel. It protests too much its authenticity, and gives an unlikely story about how it survived from Flamel's time. Perhaps if the editor (or writer) had just not mentioned anything about its origins they might have better persuaded us about its authenticity. In spite of this it is a clear statement of the alchemical process.

1. I Nicholas Flamel, a scrivener of Paris, in the year 1414, in the reign of our gracious Prince Charles the VIth, whom God preserve; and after the death of my faithful partner Perenelle, am seized with a desire and a delight, in remembrance of her, and in your behalf, dear nephew, to write out the whole magistry of the secret of the Powder of Projection, or the Philosophical Tincture, which God hath willed to impart to his very insignificant servant, and which I have found out, as thou also wilt find out in working as I shall declare unto you.
 2. And for this cause do not forget to pray to God to bestow on thee the understanding of the reason of the truth of nature, which thou wilt see in this book, wherein I have written the secrets word for word, sheet by sheet, and also as I have done and wrought with thy dear aunt Perenelle, whom I very much regret.
 3. Take heed before thou workest, to seek the right way as a man of understanding. The reason of nature is Mercury, Sun and Moon, as I have said in my book, in which are those figures which thou seest under the arches of the Innocents at Paris. But I erred greatly upwards of 23 years and a half, in labouring without being able to marry the Moon, that is quicksilver, to the Sun, and to extract from them the seminal dung, which is a deadly poison; for I was then ignorant of the agent or medium, in order to fortify the Mercury: for without this agent, Mercury is as common water.
 4. Know in what manner Mercury is to be fortified by a metallic agent, without which it never can penetrate into the belly of the Sun and of the Moon; afterward it must be hardened, which cannot be affected without the sulphureous spirit of gold or silver. You must therefore first open them with a metallic agent, that is to say with royal Saturnia, and afterward you must actuate the Mercury by a philosophic means, that you may afterward by this Mercury dissolve into a liquor gold and Luna, and draw from their putrefaction the generative dung.
 5. And know thou, that there is no other way nor means to work in this art, than that which I give thee word for word; an operation, unless it be taught as I now do, not at all easy to perform, but which on the contrary is very difficult to find out.
 6. Believe stedfastly, that the whole philosophic industry consists in the preparation of the Mercury of the wise, for in it is the whole of what we are seeking for, and which has always been sought for by all ancient wise men; and that we, no more than they, have done nothing without this Mercury, prepared with Sun or Moon: for without these three, there is nothing in the whole world capable of accomplishing the said philosophical and medicinal tincture. It is expedient then that we learn to extract from them the living and spiritual seed.
 7. Aim therefore at nothing but Sun, Moon and Mercury prepared by a philosophical industry, which wets not the hands, but the metal, and which has in itself a metallic sulphureous soul, namely, the ignited light of sulphur. And in order that you may not stray from the right path, apply yourself to metals; for there the aforesaid sulphur is found in all; but thou wilt easily find it, even almost similar to gold, in the cavern and depths of Mars, which is iron, and of Venus, which is copper, nearly as much in the one as in the other; and even if you pay attention to it, this sulphur has the power of tinging moist and cold Luna, which is fine silver, into pure yellow and good Sun; but this ought to be done by a spiritual medium, viz. the key which opens all metals, which I am going to make known to you. Learn therefore, that among the minerals there is one which is a thief, and eats up all except Sun and Moon, who render the thief very good; for when he has them in his belly, he is good to prepare the quicksilver, as I shall presently make known to you.
 8. Therefore do not stray out of the right road, but trust to my words, and then give thyself up to the practice, which I am going to bestow on thee in the name of the Father, of Son, and Holy Ghost.
- The Practice.

9. Take thou in the first place the eldest or first-born child of Saturn, not the vulgar, 9 parts; of the sabre chalibs of the God of War, 4 parts. Put this latter into a crucible, and when it comes to a melting redness, cast therein the 9 parts of Saturn, and immediately this will redden the other. Cleanse thou carefully the filth that arises on the surface of the saturnia, with saltpetre and tartar, four or five times. The operation will be rightly done when thou seest upon the matter an astral sign like a star.

10. Then is made the key and the sabre, which opens and cuts through all metals, but chiefly Sun, Moon and Venus, which it eats, devours and keeps in his belly, and by this means thou art in the right road of truth, if thou has operated properly. For this Saturnia is the royal triumphant herb, for it is a little imperfect king, whom we raise up by a philosophic artifice to the degree of the greatest glory and honour. It is also the queen, that is to say the Moon and the wife of the Sun: it is therefore both male and female, and our hermaphrodite Mercury. This Mercury or Saturnia is represented in the seven first pages of the book of Abraham the Jew, by two serpent encircling a golden rod. Take care to prepare a sufficient quantity of it, for much is required, that is to say about 12 or 13 lbs. of it, or even more, according as you wish to work on a large or a small scale.

11. Marry thou therefore the young god Mercury, that is to say quicksilver with this which is the philosophic Mercury, that you may acuate by him and fortify the said running quicksilver, seven or even ten or eleven times with the said agent, which is called the key, or a steel sharpened sabre, for it cuts, scythes and penetrates all the bodies of the metals. Then wilt thou have the double and treble water represented by the rose tree in the book of Abraham the Jew, which issues out of the foot of an oak, namely our Saturnia, which is the royal key, and goes to precipitate itself into the abyss, as says the same author, that is to say, into the receiver, adapted to the neck of the retort, where the double Mercury throws itself by means of a suitable fire.

12. But here are found thorns and insuperable difficulties, unless God reveals this secret, or a master bestows it. For Mercury does not marry with royal Saturnia: it is experient to find a secret means to unite them: for unless thou knowest the artifice by which this union and peace are effected between these aforesaid argent-vives, you will do nothing to any purpose. I would not conceal any thing from thee, my dear nephew; I tell thee, therefore, that without Sun or Moon this work will profit thee nothing. Thou must therefore cause this old man, or voracious wolf, to devour gold or silver in the weight and measure as I am now about to inform thee. Listen therefore to my words, that thou mayest not err, as I have done in this work. I say, therefore, that you must give gold to our old dragon to eat. Remark how well you ought to operate. For if you give but little gold to the melted Saturnia, the gold is indeed opened, but the quicksilver will not take; and here is an incongruity, which is not at all profitable. I have a long while and greatly laboured in this affliction, before I found out the means to succeed in it. If therefore you give him much gold to devour, the gold will not indeed be so much opened nor disposed, but then it will take the quicksilver, and they will both marry. Thus the means is discovered. Conceal this secret, for it is the whole, and neither trust it to paper, or to any thing else which may be seen. For we should become the cause of great mischief. I give it thee under the seal of secrecy and of thy conscience, for the love I bear thee.

13. Take thou ten ounces of the red Sun, that is to so say, very fine, clean and purified nine or ten times by means of the voracious wolf alone: two ounces of the royal Saturnia; melt this in a crucible, and when it is melted, cast into it the ten ounces of fine gold; melt these two together, and stir them with a lighted charcoal. Then will thy gold be a little opened. Pour it on a marble slab or into an iron mortar, reduce it to a powder, and grind it well with three pounds of quicksilver. Make them to curd like cheese, in the grinding and working them to and fro: wash this amalgama with pure common water until it comes out clear, and that the whole mass appears clear and white like fine Luna. The conjunction of the gold with the royal golden Saturnia is effected, when the mass is soft to the touch like butter.

14. Take this mass, which thou wilt gently dry with linen or fine cloth, with great care: this is our lead, and our mass of Sun and Moon, not the vulgar, but the philosophical. Put it into a good retort of crucible earth, but much better of steel. Place the retort in a furnace, and adapt a receiver to it: give fire by degrees. Two hours after encrease your fire so that the Mercury may pass into the receiver: this Mercury is the water of the blowing rose-tree; it is also the blood of the innocents slain in the book of Abraham the Jew. You may now suppose that this Mercury has eat up a little of the body of the king, and that it will have much more strength to dissolve the other part of it hereafter, which will be more covered by the body of the Saturnia. Thou has now ascended one degree or step of the ladder of the art.

15. Take the faeces out of the retort; melt them in a crucible in a strong fire: cast into it four ounces of the Saturnia, (and) nine ounces of the Sun. Then the Sun is expanded in the said faeces, and much more opened that at the first time, as the Mercury has more vigour than before, it will have the strength and virtue of penetrating the gold, and of eating more of it, and of filling his belly with it by degrees. Operate therefore as at first; marry the aforesaid Mercury, stronger one degree with this new mass in grinding the whole together; they will take like butter and cheese; wash and grind them several times, until all the blackness is got out: dry it as aforesaid; put the whole into the retort, and operate as thou didst before, by giving during two hours, a weak fire, and then strong, sufficient to

drive out, and cause the Mercury to fall into the receiver; then wilt thou have the Mercury still more acuated, and thou wilt have ascended to the second degree of the philosophic ladder.

16. Repeat the same work, by casting in the Saturnia in due weight, that is to say, by degrees, and operating as before, till thou hast reached the 10th step of the philosophic ladder; then take thy rest. For the aforesaid Mercury is ignited, acuated, wholly engrossed and full of the male sulphur, and fortified with the astral juice which was in the deep bowels of the gold and of our saturnine dragon. Be assured that I am now writing for thee things which by no philosopher was ever declared or written. For this Mercury is the wonderful caduceus, of which the sages have so much spoken in their books, and which they attest has the power of itself of accomplishing the philosophic work, and they say the truth, as I have done it myself by it alone, and thou wilt be enabled to do it thyself, if thou art so disposed: for it is this and none else which is the proximate matter and the root of all the metals.

17. Now is done and accomplished the preparation of the Mercury, rendered cutting and proper to dissolve into its nature gold and silver, to work out naturally and simply the Philosophic Tincture, or the powder transmuting all metals into gold and silver.

18. Some believe they have the whole magistry, when they have the heavenly Mercury prepared; but they are grossly deceived. It is for this cause they find thorns before they pluck the rose, for want of understanding. It is true indeed, that were they to understand the weight, the regimen of the fire, and the suitable way, they would not have much to do, and could not fail even if they would. But in this art there is a way to work. Learn therefore and observe well how to operate, in the manner I am about to relate to you.

19. In the name of God, thou shalt take of thy animated Mercury what quantity thou pleasest; thou wilt put it into a glass vessel by itself; or two or four parts of the Mercury with two parts of the golden Saturnia; that is to say, one of the Sun and two of the Saturnia; the whole finely conjoined like butter, washed, cleansed and dried; and thou wilt lute thy vessel with the lute of wisdom. Place it in a furnace on warm ashes at the degree of the heat of an hen sitting on her eggs. Leave this said Mercury so prepared to ascend and descend for the space of 40 or 50 days, until thou seest forming in thy vessel a white or red sulphur, called philosophic sublimate, which issues out of the reins of the said Mercury. Thou wilt collect this sulphur with a feather: it is the living Sun and the living Moon, which Mercury begets out of itself.

20. Take this white or red sulphur, triturate it in a glass or marble mortar, and pour on it, in sprinkling it, a third part of its weight of the Mercury from which this sulphur has been drawn. With these two make a paste like butter: put again this mixture into an oval glass; place it in a furnace on a suitable fire of ashes, mild, and disposed with a philosophic industry. Concoct until the said Mercury is changed into sulphur, and during this coction, thou wilt see wonderful things in thy vessel, that is to say, all the colours which exist in the world, which thou canst not behold without lifting up thy heart to God in gratitude for so great a gift.

21. When thou has attained to the purple red, thou must gather it: for then the alchymical powder is made, transmuting every metal into fine pure and neat gold, which thou maist multiply by watering it as thou hast already done, grinding it with fresh Mercury, concocting it in the same vessel, furnace and fire, and the time will be much shorter, and its virtue ten times stronger.

22. This then is the whole magistry done with Mercury alone, which some do not believe to be true, because they are weak and stupid, and not at all able to comprehend this work.

23. Shouldest thou desire to operate in another way, take of fine Sun in fine powder or in very thin leaves: make a paste of it with 7 parts of thy philosophic Mercury, which is our Luna: put them both into an oval glass vessel well luted; place it in a furnace; give a very strong fire, that is to say, such as will keep lead in fusion; for then thou has found out the true regimen of the fire; and let thy Mercury, which is the philosophical wind, ascend and descend on the body of the gold, which it eats up by degrees, and carries in its belly. Concoct it until the gold and Mercury do no more ascend and descend, but both remain quiet, and then will peace and union be effected between the two dragons, which are fire and water both together.

24. Then wilt thou see in thy vessel a great blackness like that of melted pitch, which is the sign of the death and putrefaction of the gold, and the key of the whole magistry. Cause it therefore to resuscitate by concocting it, and be not weary with concocting it: during this period divers changes will take place; that is to say, the matter will pass through all the colours, the black, the ash colour, the blue, the green, the white, the orange, and finally the red as red as blood or the crimson poppy: aim only at this last colour; for it is the true sulphur, and the alchymical powder. I say nothing precisely about the time; for that depends on the industry of the artist; but thou canst not fail, by working as I have shewn.

25. If thou are disposed to multiply thy powder, take one part thereof, and water it with two parts of thy animated Mercury; make it into a soft and smooth paste; put it in a vessel as thou hast already done, in the same furnace and fire, and concoct it. This second turn of the philosophic wheel will be done in less time than the first, and thy powder will have ten times more strength. Let is wheel about again even a thousand times, and as much as thou wilt. Thou

wilt then have a treasure without price, superior to all there is in the world, and thou canst desire nothing more here below, for thou hast both health and riches, if thou usest them properly.

26. Thou hast now the treasure of all worldly felicity, which I a poor country clown of Pointoise did accomplish three times in Paris, in my house, in the street des Ecrivains, near the chapel of St. Jacques de la Boucherie, and which I Flammel give thee, for the love I bear thee, to the honour of God, for His glory, for the praise of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

The French correspondent [who had provided the French version to the editor for translation into English for this publication of 1806] adds: "This is what I find at the end of the Manuscript"

They assert that the original of this work was written upon the margin of a vellum Psalm-book, in Nicholas Flamel's own handwriting in favour of his nephew. The process was written in cyphers, the better to conceal the secret. Each letter was shaped in four different ways, so that to make up the whole alphabet therewith 96 letters were employed. Father Pernetti and Monsieur de Saint Marc decyphered this writing with much difficulty. M. de St. Marc was on the point of giving it up; but Father Pernetti, who had already found out the vowels, encouraged him to go on with the work, which they at last overcame, with complete success, about the year 1758.

Flamel's Summary of Philosophy

Transcribed by Antonio Balestra.

The Summary of Philosophy

If you would know how metals are transmuted, you must understand from what matter they are generated, and how they are formed in the mines; and that you may not err, you must see and observe, how those transmutations are performed in the bowels or veins of the earth.

Minerals taken out of the earth, may be changed, if beforehand they be spiritualized, and reduced into their sulphureous and argent vive nature, which are the two sperms, composed of the elements, the one masculine, the other feminine. - The male sulphur, is nothing but fire and air; and the true sulphur is as a fire, but not the vulgar, which contains no metallic substance. The feminine sperm is argent vive, which is nothing but earth and water; these two sperms the ancient sages called two dragons or serpents, of which, the one is winged, the other not. Sulphur not flying the fire, is without wings; the winged serpent is argent vive, borne up by the wind, therefore in her certain hour she flies from the fire, not having fixity enough to endure it. Now if these two sperms, separated from themselves, be united again, by powerful nature, in the potentiality of mercury, which is the metallic fire: being thus united, it is called by the philosophers the flying dragon; - because the dragon kindled by its fire, while he flies by little and little, fills the air with his fire, and poisonous vapours. - The same thing doth mercury; for being placed upon an exterior fire, and in its place in a vessel; it sets on fire its inside, which is hidden in its profundity; by which may be seen, how the external fire does burn and inflame the natural mercury. - And then you may see how the poisonous vapour breaks out into the air, with a most stinking and pernicious poison; which is nothing else but the head of the dragon, which hastily goes out of Babylon. But other philosophers have compared this mercury, with a flying lion, because a lion is a devourer of other creatures, and delights himself in his voracity of every thing, except that which is able to resist his violence and fury. So also does mercury, which has in itself such a power, force, and operation, to spoil and devastate a metal of its form, and to devour it. Mercury being too much influenced, devours and hides metals in its belly; but which of them so ever it be, it is certain, that, it consumes it not, for in their nature they are perfect, and much more indurate. But mercury has in itself a substance of perfecting sol and luna; and all the imperfect bodies or metals, proceed from argent vive; therefore the ancients called it the mother of metals; whence it follows, that in its own principle and centre, being formed, it has a double metallic substance. And first, the substance of the interior; then the substance of sol, which is not like the other metals; of these two substances, argent vive is formed, which in its body is spiritually nourished. As soon then as nature has formed argent vive, of the two after-named spirits, then it endeavors to make them perfect and corporeal; but when the spirits are of strength, and the two sperms awakened out of their central principle, then they desire to assume their own bodies. Which being done, argent vive the mother must die, and being thus naturally mortified, cannot (as dead things cannot) quicken itself as before. But there are some proud philosophers, who in obscure words affirm, that we ought to transmute both perfect and imperfect bodies into running argent vive; this is the serpent's subtlety, and you may be in danger of being bit by it. It is true, that argent vive may transmute an imperfect body, as lead or tin; and may without much labour, multiply in a quantity; but thereby it diminishes or loses its own perfection, and may no more

for this reason be called argent vive. But if by art it may be mortified, that it can no more vivify itself, then it will be changed into another thing, as in cinnabar, or sublimate is done. For when it is by the art coagulated, whether sooner or later, yet then its two bodies assume not a fixed body, nor can they conserve it, as we may see in the bowels of the earth.

Lest anyone should therefore err, there are in the veins of lead some fixed grains or particles of fine sol and luna mixed in its substance of nourishment.

The first coagulation of argent vive is in the mine of saturn; and most fit and proper it is to bring him unto perfection and fixation; for the mine of saturn is not without fixed particles of gold, which particles were imparted to it by nature. So in itself it may be multiplied and brought to perfection, and a vast power or strength, as I have tried, and therefore affirm it. - So long as it is not separated from its mine, viz. its argent vive, but well kept, (for every metal which is in its mine, the same is an argent vive) then may it multiply itself, for that it has substance from its mercury, or argent vive, but it will be like some green immature fruit on a tree, which the blossom being past, becomes an unripe fruit, and then a larger apple. Now if any one plucks this unripe fruit from the tree, then its first forming would be frustrate, nor would it grow larger nor ripe; for man knows not how to give substance, nourishment, or maturity, so well as internal nature, while the fruit yet hangs on the tree, which feeds it with substance and nourishment, till the determined maturity is accomplished.

And so long also does the fruit draw sap or moisture for its augmentation and nourishment, till it comes to its perfect maturity. So is it with sol; for if by nature, a grain, or grains are made, and it is reduced to its argent vive, then also by the same it is daily, without ceasing, sustained and supplied, and reduced into its place, viz. argent vive, as he is in himself; and then must you wait till he shall obtain some substance from his mercury as it happens in the fruit of trees. For as the argent vive, both of perfect and imperfect bodies is a tree, so they can have no more nourishment, otherwise than from their own mercury.

If therefore you would gather fruits from argent vive, viz. pure sol and luna, if they be disjoined from their mercury; think not that you, like as nature did in the beginning, may again conjoin and multiply, and without change, augment them. For if metals be separated from their mine, then they, like the fruit of trees too soon gathered, never come to their perfection, as nature and experience makes it appear. For if an apple or pear be once plucked off from the tree, it would then be a great vanity to attempt to fasten it to the tree again, expecting it to encrease and grow ripe; and experience testifies, that the more it is handled, the more it withereth. And so it is also with metals: for if you should take the vulgar sol and luna, endeavoring to reduce them into argent vive, you would wholly play the fool, for there is no artifice yet found, whereby it can be performed. - Though you should use many waters, and cements, or other things infinitely of that kind, yet would you continually err, and that would befall you, which would him that should tie unripe fruit to their trees.

Yet some philosophers have said truly, that if sol and luna, by a right mercury, or argent vive be rightly conjoined, they will make all imperfect metals perfect; but in this thing most men have erred, who having these three vegetables, animals, and minerals, which in one thing are conjoined; for that they considered not, that the philosophers speak not of vulgar sol, luna, and mercury, which are all dead, and receive no more substance or increase from nature, but remain the same in their own essence, without the possibility of bringing others to perfection.

They are fruits plucked off from their trees before their time, and are therefore of no value or estimation. Therefore see the fruit in the tree, that leads them straight to it, whose fruit is daily made greater with increase, so long as the tree bears it. This work is seen with joy and satisfaction; and by this means one may transplant the tree without gathering the fruit, fixing it into a moister, better, and more fruitful place, which in one day will give more nourishment to the fruit, than it received otherwise in an hundred years.

In this therefore, it is understood, that mercury, the much commended tree must be taken, which has in its power indissolvably sol and luna; and then transplanted into another soil nearer the sun, that thence it may gain its profitable increase, for which thing, dew does abundantly suffice; for where it was placed before, it was so weakened by cold and wind, that little fruit could be expected from it, and where it long stood and brought forth no fruit at all.

And indeed the philosophers have a garden, where the sun as well morning as evening remains with a moist sweet dew, without ceasing, with which it is sprinkled and moistened; - whose earth brings forth trees and fruits, which are transplanted thither, which also receive descent and nourishment from the pleasant meadows. And this is done daily, and there they are both corroborated and quickened, without ever fading; and this more in one year, than in a thousand, where the cold affects them. - Take them therefore, and night and day cherish them in a distillatory fire; but not with a fire of wood or coals, but in a clear transparent fire, not unlike the sun, which is never hotter than is requisite, but is always alike; for a vapour is the dew, and seed of metals, which ought not to be altered.

Fruits, if they be too hot, and without dew or moisture, they abide on the boughs, but without coming to perfection, only withering or dwindling away. But if they be fed with heat and due moisture on their trees, then they prove elegant and fruitful; for heat and moisture are the elements of all earthly things, animal, vegetable, and mineral. Therefore fires of wood and coal produce or help not metals; those are violent fires, which nourish not as the heat of the sun does, that conserves all corporeal things; for that it is natural which they follow. But a philosopher acts not what nature does; for nature where she rules, forms all vegetables, animals, and minerals, in their own degrees. Men, do not after the same sort, by their arts make natural things. When nature has finished her work about them; then by our art they are made more perfect. - In this manner the ancient sages and philosophers, for our information, wrought on luna and mercury her true mother, of which they made the mercury of the philosophers, which in its operation is much stronger than the natural mercury. For this is serviceable only to the simple, perfect, imperfect, hot and cold metals; but our mercury, the philosophers stone, is useful to the more than perfect, imperfect bodies, or metals. Also that the sun may perfect and nourish them without diminution, addition, or immutation, as they were created or formed by nature, and so leave them, not neglecting any thing.

I will not now say, that the philosophers conjoin the tree, for the better perfecting their mercury, as some unskilful in the nature of things, and unlearned chemists affirm, who take common sol, luna, and mercury, and so unnaturally handle them, till they vanish in smoak. These men endeavor to make the philosophers mercury, but they never attain it, which is the first matter of the stone, and the first minera thereof. If you would come hither and find good, and to the mountain of the seven, where there is no plain, you would betake yourself; from the highest, you must look downward to the sixth, which you will see afar off. In the height of this mountain, you will find a royal herb triumphing, which some have called mineral, some vegetable, some saturnine. But let its bones or ribs be left, and let a pure clean broth be taken from it, so will the better part of your work be done. This is the right and subtle mercury of the philosophers, which you are to take, which will make first the white work, and then the red. If you have well understood me, both of them are nothing else, as they term them, but the practice, which is so easy and simple, that a woman sitting by her distaff may perfect it. As if in winter she would put her eggs under a hen, and not wash them, because eggs are put under a hen without washing them, and no more labour is required about them, than that they should be every day turned, that the chickens may be the better and sooner hatched, concerning the which enough is said.

But that I may follow the example, first, wash not the mercury, but take it, and with its like, which is fire, place it in the ashes, which is straw, and in one glass which is the nest, without any other things in a convenient alembic, which is the house, from whence it will come forth a chicken, which with its blood will free thee from all diseases, and with its flesh will nourish thee, and with its feathers will clothe thee, and keep thee warm from the injuries of the cold and ambient air. For this cause I have written this present treatise, that you may search with the greater desire, and walk in the right way. And I have written this small book, this summary, that you might better comprehend the sayings and writings of the philosophers, which I believe you will much better understand for time to come.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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The Explication of the Hieroglyphic Figures.

Placed by me, Nicholas Flammel, Scrivener, in the Church-yard of the Innocents, in the fourth Arch, entering by the great gate of St. Dennis Street, and taking the way on the right hand.

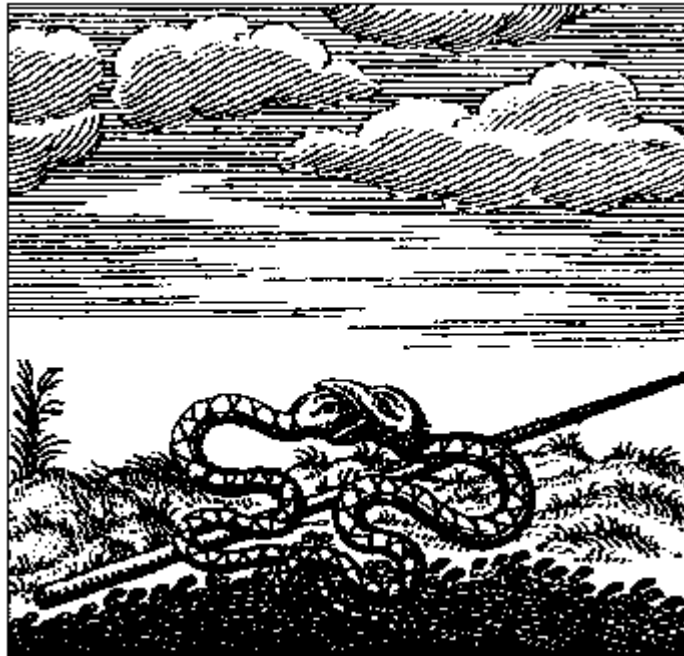
THE INTRODUCTION.

Although that I, Nicholas Flammel, Notary, and abiding in Paris, in this year one thousand three hundred fourscore and nineteen, and dwelling in my house in the street of Notaries, near unto the Chapel of St. James of the Bouchery; although, I say, that I learned but a little Latin, because of the small means of my Parents, which nevertheless were, by them that envy me the most, accounted honest people; yet by the grace of God, and the intercession of the blessed Saints in Paradise of both sexes, and principally of St. James of Gallicia,

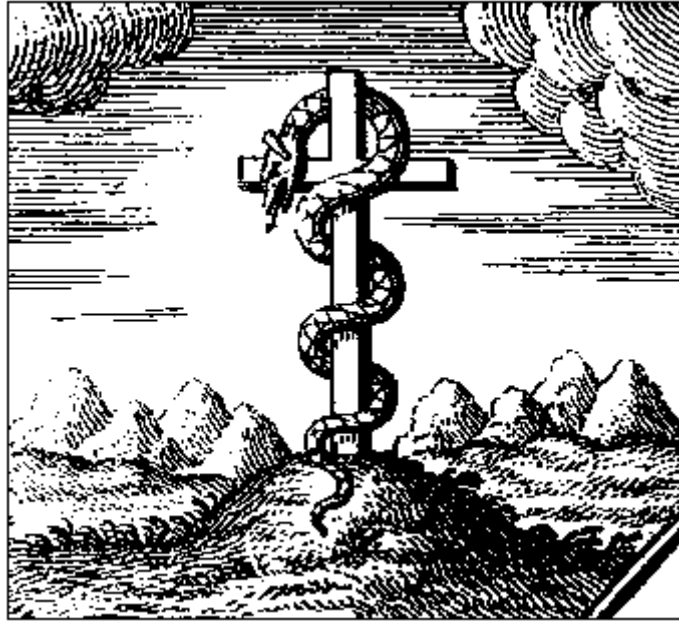
I have not wanted the understanding of the Books of the Philosophers, and in them learned their so hidden secrets. And for this cause, there shall never be any moment of my life when I remember this high good, wherein upon my knees (if the place will give me leave), or otherwise, in my heart with all my affection, I shall not render thanks to

this most benign God, which never suffereth the child of the just to beg from door to door, and deceiveth not them which wholly trust in his blessing.

Whilst, therefore, I Nicholas Flammel, Notary, after the decease of my Parents, got my living in our Art of Writing, by making Inventories, dressing accounts, and summing up the expenses of Tutors and Pupils, there fell into my hands for the sum of two florins, a gilded Book, very old and large. It was not of Paper, nor of Parchment, as other Books be, but was only made of delicate rinds (as it seemed unto me) of tender young trees. The cover of it was of brass, well bound, all engraven with letters, or strange figures; and for my part I think they might well be Greek Characters, or some-such-like ancient language. Sure I am, I could not read them, and I know well they were not notes nor letters of the Latin nor of the Gaul for of them we understand a little. As for that which was within it, the leaves of bark or rind, were engraven, and with admirable diligence written, with a point of Iron, in fair and neat Latin letters, coloured. It contained thrice-seven leaves, for so were they counted in the top of the leaves, and always every seventh leaf was without any writing; but, instead thereof, upon the first seventh leaf, there was painted a Rod and Serpents swallowing it up.



In the second seventh, a Cross where a Serpent was crucified;



and in the last seventh there were painted Deserts, or Wildernesses, in the midst whereof ran many fair fountains, from whence there issued out a number of Serpents, which ran up and down here and there.



Upon the first of the leaves was written in great Capital Letters of Gold: Abraham the Jew, Prince, Priest, Levite, Astrologer, and Philosopher, to the Nation of the Jews, by the Wrath of Cod dispersed among the Gauls, sendeth Health. After this it was filled with great execrations and curses (with this word Maranatha, which was often repeated there) against every person that should cast his eyes upon it if he were not Sacrificer or Scribe. He that sold me this Book knew not what it was worth, no more than I when I bought it; I believe it had been stolen or taken from the miserable Jews; or found hid in some part of the ancient place of their abode. Within the Book, in the second leaf, he comforted his Nation, counselling them to fly vices, and above all, Idolatry, attending with sweet patience the coming of the Messias, who should vanquish all the Kings of the Earth, and should reign with his people in glory eternally. Without doubt this had been some very wise and understanding man. In the third leaf, and in all the other writings that followed, to help his Captive nation to pay their tributes unto the Roman Emperors, and

to do other things, which I will not speak of, he taught them in common words the transmutation of Metals; he painted the Vessels by the sides, and he advertised them of the colours, and of all the rest, saving of the first agent, of the which he spake not a word; but only (as he said) in the fourth and fifth leaves entire he painted it, and figured it with very great cunning and workmanship: for although it was well and intelligibly figured and painted, yet no man could ever have been able to understand it without being well skilled in their Cabala, which goeth by tradition, and without having well studied their books. The fourth and fifth leaves therefore, were without any writing, all full of fair figures enlightened, or as it were enlightened, for the work was very exquisite. First, he painted a young man with wings at his ankles, having in his hand a Caducean rod, wherewith he struck upon a helmet which covered his head.



He seemed to my small judgment, to be the God Mercury of the Pagans: against him there came running and flying with open wings, a great old man, who upon his head had an hour-glass fastened, and in his hand a hook (or scythe) like Death, with the which, in terrible and furious manner, he would have cut off the feet of Mercury. On the other side of the fourth leaf, he painted a fair flower on the top of a very high mountain, which was sore shaken with the North wind; it had the foot blue, the flowers white and red, the leaves shining like fine gold: and round about it the Dragons and Griffons of the North made their nests and abode.



On the fifth leaf there was a fair Rose-tree, flowered in the midst of a sweet Garden, climbing up against a hollow Oak;



at the foot whereof boiled a fountain of most white water, which ran head-long down into the depths, notwithstanding it first passed among the hands of infinite people, who digged in the earth seeking for it; but because they were blind, none of them knew it, except here and there one who considered the weight.



On the last side of the fifth leaf there was a King, with a great Fauchion, who made to be killed in his presence by some Soldiers a great multitude of little Infants, whose Mothers wept at the feet of the unpitiful Soldiers the blood of which Infants was afterwards by other Soldiers gathered up, and put in a great vessel, wherein the Sun and the Moon came to bathe themselves. And because that this History did represent the more part of that of the Innocents slain by Herod, and that in this Book I learned the greatest part of the Art, this was one of the causes why I placed in their Church-yard these Hieroglyphic Symbols of this secret science. And thus you see that which was in the first five leaves. I will not represent unto you that which was written in good and intelligible Latin in all the other written leaves, for God would punish me; because I should commit a greater wickedness than he who (as it is said) wished that all the men of the World had but one head, that he might cut it off with one blow. Having with me, therefore, this fair book, I did nothing else day nor night but study upon it, understanding very well all the operations that it showed, but not knowing with what Matter I should begin, which made me very heavy and solitary, and caused me to fetch many a sigh. My wife Perrenella, whom I loved as myself, and had lately married, was much astonished at this, comforting me, and earnestly demanding if she could by any means deliver me from this trouble. I could not possibly hold my tongue, but told her all, and showed this fair book, whereof at the same instant that she saw it, she became as much enamoured as myself, taking extreme pleasure to behold the fan cover, gravings, images, and portraits, whereof, notwithstanding she understood as little as I; yet it was a great comfort to me to talk with her, and to entertain myself, what we should do to have the interpretation of them. In the end I caused to be painted within my Lodging, as naturally as I could, all the figures and portraits of the fourth and fifth leaf, which I showed to the greatest Clerks in Paris, who understood thereof no more than myself: I told them they were found in a Book that taught the Philosophers' Stone, but the greatest part of them made a mock both of me and that blessed Stone, excepting one called Master Anselme, who was a Licentiate in Physic, and studied hard in this Science. He had a great desire to have seen my Book, and there was nothing in the world he would not have done for a sight of it: but I always told him I had it not; only I made him a large description of the Method. He told me that the first portrait represented Time, which devoured all; and that according to the number of the six written leaves, there was required the space of six years, to perfect the Stone; and then, he said, we must turn the glass, and seethe it no more. And when I told him that this was not painted, but only to show and teach the first agent, (as was said in the Book) he answered me that this decoction for six years space was, as it were, a second Agent; and that certainly the first Agent was there painted, which was the white and heavy water, which without doubt was Argent Vive, which they could not fix, nor cut off his feet, that is to say, take away his volatility, save by that long decoction in the purest blood of young Infants; for in that, this Argent Vive being joined with gold and Silver, was first turned with them into an herb like that which was there painted, and afterwards, by corruption, into Serpents; which Serpents being then wholly dried, and decocted by fire, were reduced into powder of gold, which should be the Stone. This was the cause that during the space of one and twenty years, I tried a thousand broulleryes, yet never with blood, for that was wicked

and villaneous: for I found in my Book that the Philosophers called Blood the mineral spirit which is in the Metals, principally in the Sun, Moon, and Mercury, to the assembling whereof, I always tended; yet these interpretations for the most part were more subtil than true. Not seeing, therefore, in my works the signs at the time written in my Book, I was always to begin again. In the end, having lost all hope of ever understanding those figures, for my last refuge I made a vow to God and St. James of Gallicia, to demand the interpretation of them at some Jewish Priest in some Synagogue of Spain. whereupon, with the consent of Perrenella, carrying with me the Extract of the Pictures, having taken the Pilgrims' habit and staff, in the same fashion as you may see me without this same Arch, in the Church-yard in the which I put these Hieroglyphical Figures, where I have also set against the wall, on the one and the other side, a Procession, in which are represented by order all the colours of the Stone, so as they come and go, with this writing in French: Much pleaseth God procession, If it be done in devotion.

Which is as it were the beginning of King Hercules his Book, which entreateth of the colours of the Stone, entitled Iris, or the Rainbow, in these termes, The procession of the work: is very pleasant unto Nature: the which I have put there expressly for the great Clerks who shall understand the Allusion. In this same fashion, I say, I put myself upon my way; and so much I did that I arrived at Montjoy, and afterwards at St. James, where with great devotion I accomplished my vow. This done, in Leon, at my return, I met with a Merchant of Bologn, who made me known to a Physician, a Jew by Nation, and as then a Christian, dwelling in Leon aforesaid, who was very skilful in sublime Sciences, called Master Canches. As soon as I had shown him the figures of my Extract, he being ravished with great astonishment and joy, demanded of me incontinently if I could tell him any news of the Book from whence they were drawn! I answered him in Latin, (wherein he asked me the question) that I hoped to have some good news of the Book, if anybody could decipher unto me the Enigmas. All at that instant transported with great Ardor and joy, he began to decipher unto me the beginning. But to be short, he well content to learn news where this Book should be, and I to hear him speak; and certainly he had heard much discourse of the Book, but, (as he said) as of a thing which was believed to be utterly lost, we resolved of our voyage, and from Leon we passed to Oviedo, and from thence to Sansom, where we put ourselves to Sea to come into France. Our voyage had been fortunate enough, and all-ready since we were entered into this Kingdom he had most truly interpreted unto me the greatest part of my figures, where even unto the very points and pricks he found great mysteries, which seemed unto me wonderful; when arriving at Orleans, this learned man fell extremely sick, being afflicted with excessive vomitings, which remained still with him of those he had suffered at Sea, and he was in such a continual fear of my forsaking him that he could imagine nothing like unto it. And although I was always by his side, yet would he incessantly call for me; but, in sum, he died at the end of the seventh day of his sickness, by reason whereof I was much grieved; yet, as well as I could, I caused him to be buried in the Church of the Holy Cross at Orleans, where he yet resteth: God have his soul, for he died a good Christian. And surely, if I be not hindered by death, I will give unto that Church some revenue, to cause some Masses to be said for his soul every day. He that would see the manner of my arrival and the joy of Perrenella, let him look upon us two, in this City of Paris, upon the door of the Chapel of St. James of the Bouchery, close by the one side of my house, where we are both painted, myself giving thanks at the feet of St. James of Gallicia, and Perrenella at the feet of St. John, whom she had so often called upon. So it was that by the grace of God, and the intercession of the happy and holy Virgin, and the blessed Saints James and John, I knew all that I desired, that is to say, The first Principles, yet not their first preparation, which is a thing most difficult above all the things in the world. But in the end I had that also, after long errors of three years, or thereabouts; during which time I did nothing but study and labour, so as you may see me without this Arch, where I have placed my Processions against the two Pillars of it, under the feet of St. James and St. John, praying always to God, with my Beads in my hand, reading attentively within a Book, and poyising the words of the Philosophers: and afterwards trying and proving the divers operations, which I imagined to myself by their only words. finally, I found that which I desired, which I also soon knew by the strong scent and odour thereof. Having this, I easily accomplished the Mastery, for, knowing the preparation of the first Agents, and after following my Book according to the letter, I could not have missed it, though I would. Then, the first time that I made projection was upon Mercury, whereof I turned half-a-pound, or thereabouts, into pure Silver, better than that of the Mine, as I myself assayed, and made others assay many times. This was upon a Monday, the 17th of January, about noon, in my house, Perrenella only being present, in the year of the restoring of mankind, 1382. And afterwards, following always my Book, from word to word, I made projection of the Red Stone upon the like quantity of Mercury, in the presence likewise of Perrenella only, in the same house, the five and twentieth day of April following, the same year, about five o'clock in the evening; which I transmuted truly into almost as much pure Cold, better assuredly than common Gold, more soft and more plyable. I may speak it with truth, I have made it three times, with the help of Perrenella, who understood it as well as I, because she helped in my operations, and without doubt, if she would have enterprised to have done it alone, she had attained to the end and perfection thereof. I had indeed enough when I had once done it, but I found exceeding great pleasure and delight in seeing and contemplating the Admirable works of Nature within

the Vessels. To signify unto thee, then, how I have done it three times, thou shalt see in this Arch, if thou have any skill to know them, three furnaces, like unto them which serve for our operations, I was afraid a long time, that Perrenella could not hide the extreme joy of her felicity, which I measured by mine own, and lest she should let fall some word amongst her kindred of the great treasures which we possessed: for extreme joy takes away the understanding, as well as great heaviness; but the goodness of the most great God had not only filled me with this blessing, to give me a wife chaste and sage, for she was moreover, not only capable of reason, but also to do all that was reasonable, and more discrete and secret than ordinarily other women are. Above all, she was exceeding devout, and therefore, seeing herself without hope of children, and now well stricken in years, she began as I did, to think of God, and to give ourselves to the works of Mercy. At that time when I wrote this Commentary, in the year one thousand four hundred and thirteen, in the end of the year, after the decease of my faithful companion, which I shall lament all the days of my life; she and I had already founded, and endued with revenues, 14 Hospitals in this City of Paris, we had now built from the ground three Chapels, we had enriched with great gifts and good rents, seven Churches, with many reparations in their Churchyards, besides that which we have done at Bologne, which is not much less than that which we have done here. I will not speak of the good which both of us have done to particular poor folks, principally to widows and poor orphans, whose names if I should tell, and how I did it, besides that my reward should be given me in this World,

I should likewise do displeasure to those good persons, whom I pray God bless, which I would not do for anything in the World. Building, therefore, these Churches, Church-yards and Hospitals, in this City, I resolved myself, to cause to be painted in the fourth Arch of the Church-yard of the Innocents, as you enter in by the great gate in St. Dennis-street, and taking the way on the right hand, the most true and essential marks of the Art, yet under veils, and Hieroglyphical covertures, in imitation of those which are in the gilded Book of Abraham the Jew, which may represent two things, according to the capacity and understanding of them that behold them: First, the mysteries of our future and undoubted Resurrection, at the day of Judgment, and coming of good Jesus (whom may it please to have mercy upon us), a History which is well agreeing to a Church-yard. And, secondly, they may signify to them, who are skilled in Natural Philosophy, all the principal and necessary operations of the Mastery. These Hieroglyphic figures shall serve as two ways to lead unto the heavenly life: the first and most open sense teaching the sacred Mysteries of our salvation; (as I will show hereafter) the other teaching every man that hath any small understanding in the Stone the lineary way of the work; which being perfected by any one, the change of evil into good takes away from him the root of all sin, (which is covetousness) making him liberal, gentle, pious, religious, and fearing God, how evil soever he was before, for from thenceforward he is continually ravished with the great grace and mercy which he hath obtained from God, and with the profoundness of his Divine and admirable works. These are the reasons which have moved me to set these forms in this fashion, and in this place, which is a Church-yard, to the end that if any man obtain this inestimable good, to conquer this rich golden Fleece, he may think with himself (as I did) not to keep the talent of God digged in the Earth, buying Lands and possessions, which are the vanities of this world: but rather to work charitably towards his brethren, remembering himself that he learned this secret amongst the bones of the dead, in whose number he shall shortly be found; and that after this life he must render an account before a just and redoubtable Judge, who will censure even to an idle and vain word. Let him, therefore, who having well weighed my words, and well known and understood my figures, hath first gotten elsewhere the knowledge of the first beginnings and Agents, (for certainly in these Figures and Commentaries he shall not find any step or information thereof), perfect, to the glory of God, the Mastery of Hermes, remembering himself of the Church Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman; and of all other Churches, Church-yards, and Hospitals; and above all of the Church of the Innocents in this City, (in the Church-yard whereof he shall have contemplated these true demonstrations); opening bounteously his purse to them that are secretly poor honest people, desolate, weak women, widows, and forlorn orphans. So be it.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter I

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER I

Of the Theological Interpretations, which may be given to these Hieroglyphics, according to the sense of me the Author

I have given to this Churchyard, a Charnel-house, which is right over against this fourth Arch, in the midst of the Churchyard, and against one of the Pillars of this Charnel house, I have made be drawn with a coal, and grossly painted, a man all black, which looks straight upon these Hieroglyphics, about whom there is written in French: *It voy merveile done moult Je m'esbahi*; that is, I see a marvel, whereat I am much amazed: This, as also three plates of Iron and Copper gilt, on the East, West, and South of the Arch, where these Hieroglyphics are, in the midst of the Churchyard representing the holy Passion and Resurrection of the Son of God this ought not to be otherwise interpreted, than according to the common Theological sense, saving that this black man, may as well proclaim it a wonder of God in the transmutation of Metals, which is figured in these Hieroglyphics, which he so attentively looks upon, as to see buried so many bodies, which shall rise again out of their Tombs at the fearful day of judgement. On the other part I do not think it needful to interpret in a Theological sense that vessel of Earth on the right hand of these figures, within the which there is a Pen and Inkhorn, or rather vessel of Philosophy, if thou take away the strings, and join the Pen to the Inkhorne: nor the other two like it, which are on the two sides of the figures of Saint Peter, and Saint Paul, within one of the which, there is an N. which signifieth Nicholas, and within the other an F. which signifieth Flammel. For these vessels signify nothing else, but that in the like of them, I have done the Maistry three times. Moreover, he that will also believe that I have put these vessels in form of Scutchions to represent this Pen and Inkhorn, and the capital letters of my name, let him believe it if he will, because both these interpretations are true.

Neither must you interpret in a Theological sense that writing which followeth, in these terms, *NICHOLAS FLAMEL ET PERRENELLE SA FEMME*, that is, Nicholas Flammel, and Perrenelle his wife, in as much as that signifieth nothing, but that I and my wife have given that Arch.

As to the third, fourth, and fifth Tables following, by the sides whereof is written, *COMMENT LES INNOCENTS FVRENT OCCIS PAR LE COMMANDEMENT DV ROY HERODES*, that is How the Innocents were killed by the commandment of King Herod. The theological sense is well enough understood by the writing, we must only speak of the rest, which is above.

The two Dragons united together to one within the other, of colour black and blue, in a field sable, that is to say, black, whereof the one hath the wings gilded, and the other hath none at all, are the sins which naturally are enserchayned, for the one hath his original and birth from another: Of them some may be easily chased away, as they come easily, for they fly towards us every hour; and those which have no wings can never be chased away, such as is the sin against the holy Ghost. The Gold which is in the wings signifieth that the greatest part of sins commeth from the unholy hunger after gold; which makes so many people diligently to harken from whence they may have it: and the colour black and blue showeth that these are the desires that come out of the dark pits of hell, which we ought wholly to fly from. These two Dragons may also morely represent unto us the Legions of evil spirits which are always about us, and which will accuse us, before the just judge, at the fearful day of Judgement, which do ask nor seek nothing else but to sist us.

The man and the woman which are next them, of an orange colour, upon a field azure and blue, signify that men and women ought not to have their hope in this World, for the orange colour intimates dispair, or the letting go of hope, as here; and the colour azure and blue, upon they are painted, shows us that we must think of heavenly things to come, and say as the roule of the man doth, *HOMO VENIET ADIVICIVM DEI*, that is, Man must come to the judgement of God may show mercy unto us.

Next after this in a field of Synephe, that is green, are painted two men and one woman rising again, of the which one comes out of a Sepulchre, the other two out of the Earth, all three of colour exceeding white and pure, lifting their hands towards their eyes, and their eyes towards Heaven on high: Above these three bodies there are two Angels sounding musical Instruments; as if they had called these dead to the day of Judgement; for over these two Angels is the figure of our Lord Jesus Christ, holding the world in his hand, upon whose head an Angel setteth a Crown, assisted by two others, which say in their roules, *O pater Omnipotens, o'jesu bone*, that is, O Father Almighty, O'good Jesu. On the right side of this Saviour is painted St. Paul, clothed with white & yellow, with a Sword, at whose feet there is a man clothed in a gown of orange colour, in which there appeared pleats or folds of black and white, (which picture resembleth me to the life) and demandeth pardon of his sins, holding his hands joined together, from between which proceed these words written in a roule, *DE LE MALA QVE FECI*, that is to say, Blot out the evils that I have done.

On the other side on the left hand, is Saint Peter with his Key, clothed in reddish yellow, holding his hand upon a woman clad in a gown of orange colour, which is on her knees, representing to the life Perrenelle, which holdeth her hands joined together, having a roule where is written, *CHRISTE PRECOR ESTO PIVS*, that is, Christ I beseech thee be pitiful: Behind whom there is an Angel on his knees, with a roule, that saith, *SALVE DOMINE ANGELORVM*, that is, All hail thou Lord of Angels. There is also another Angel on his knees, behind my Image, on the same side that St. Paul is on, which likewise holdeth a roule, saying, *O REX SEMPITERNE*, that is, O King

everlasting. All this is so clear, according to the explication of the Resurrection and future judgement, that it may easily be fitted thereto. So it seems this Arch was not painted for any other purpose, but to represent this. And therefore we need not stay any longer upon it, considering that the least and most ignorant, may well know how to give this interpretation.

Next after the three that are rising again, come two Angels more of an Orange colour upon a blue field, saying in the rowles, SVRGITE MORTVIVENITE AD IVDICIVM DOMINI MEI, that is, Arise you dead, come to the Judgement of my Lord. This also serves to the interpretation of the Resurrection: As also the last Figures following, which are, A man red vermillion, upon a field of Violet colour, who holdeth the foot of a winged Lion, painted of red vermillion also, opening his throat, as it were to devour the man : For one may say that this is the Figure of an unhappy sinner, who sleeping in a Lethargy of his corruption and vices, dieth without repentance and confession; who without doubt in this terrible Day shall be delivered to the Devil, here painted in form of a red roaring Lion, which will swallow and devour him.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter II

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER II

The interpretations Philosophical, according to the Maistry of Hermes.

I desire with all my heart that he who searcheth the secrets of the Sages, having in his Spirit passed over these Ideas of the life and resurrection to come, should first make his profit of them : And in the second place, that he be more advised than before, that he sound and search the depth of my Figures, colours, and rowles; principally of my rowles, because that in this Art they speak not vulgarly. Afterward let him ask of himself why the Figure of Saint Paul is on the right hand, in the place where the custom is to paint S. Peter? And on the other side that of Saint Peter, in the place of the figure of Saint Paul? Why the Figure of Saint Paul is clothed in colours white and yellow, and that of S. Peter in yellow and red?

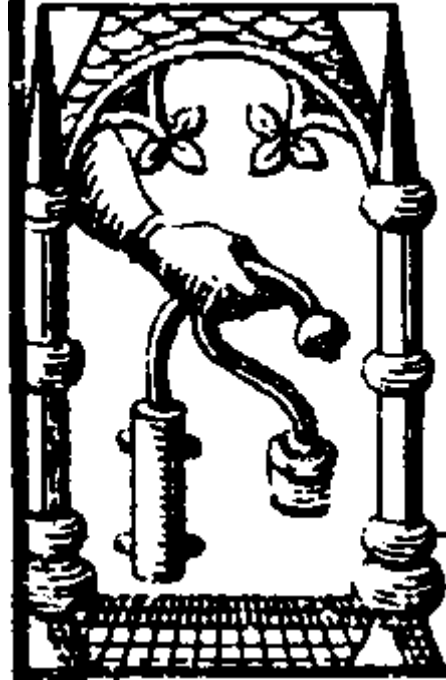
Why also the man and the woman which are at the feet of these two Saints praying to God, as if it were at the Day of Judgement, are apparelled in divers colours and not naked, or else nothing but bones, like them that are rising again? Why in this Day of Judgement they have painted this man and this woman at the feet of the Saints? For they ought to have been more low on earth, and not in heaven.

Why also the two Angels in Orange colour, which say in their rowles, SVRGITE MORTVI, VENITE AD IVDICIVM DOMINI MEI, that is Arise you dead, come unto the Judgement of my Lord, are clad in this colour, and out of their place, for they ought to be on high in heaven, with the two other which play upon the Instruments? Why they have a field Violet and blue? But principally why their roule, which speaks to the dead, ends in the open throat of the red and flying Lion?

I would then that after these, and many other questions which may justly be made, opening wide the eyes of his spirit, he come to conclude, that all this, not having been done without cause, there must be represented under this bark, some great secrets, which he ought to pray God to discover unto him. Having then brought his belief by degrees to this pass wish also that he would further believe, that these figures and explications are not made for them that have never seen the Books of the Philosophers, and who not knowing the Metallic principles, cannot be named Children of this Science; for if they think to understand perfectly these figures, being ignorant of the first Agent, they will undoubtedly deceive themselves, and never be able to know any thing at all.

Let no man therefore blame me, if he do not easily understand me, for he will be more blame-worthy than I, inasmuch as not being initiated into these sacred and secret interpretations of the first Agent, (which is the key opening the gates of all Sciences) he would notwithstanding, comprehend the most subtle conceptions of the envious Philosophers, which are not written but for them who already know these principles, which are never found in any book, because they leave them unto God, who revealeth them to whom he please, or else causeth them to be taught by the living voice of a Maister, by Cabalistical tradition, which happeneth very seldom.

Now then, my Son, let me so call thee, both because I am now come to a great age, and also for that, it may be, thou art otherwise a child of this knowledge, (God enable thee to learn, and after to work to his glory). Harken unto me then attentively, but pass no further if thou be ignorant of the foresaid Principles.



This Vessel of earth, in this form, is called by the Philosophers, their triple Vessel, for within it there is in the midst a Stage, or a floor, and upon that a dish or a platter full of lukewarm ashes, within which is set the Philosophical Egg, that is, a vial of glass full of confections of Art (as of the feumme of the red sea, and the fat of the mercurial wind) which thou see painted in form of a Penner and Inkehorn. Now this Vessel of earth is open above to put in the dish and the vial, under which by the open gate, is put in the Philosophical fire, as thou knowest.

So thou hast three vessels; and the threefold vessel: The envious have called an Athanor, a fiue, dung, Balneum Marie, a Furnace, a Sphere, the greene Lion, a prison, a grave, a urinal, a phioll, and a Bolts-head : I myself in my Summary or Abridgement of Philosophy, which I composed four years and two months past, in the end thereof named it the house and habitation of the Poulet, and the ashes of the Platter, the chaffe of the Poulet;

The common name is an Oven, which I should never have found, if Abraham the Jew had not painted it, together with the fire proportionable, wherein consists a great part of the secret. For it is as it were the belly, or the womb, containing the true natural heat to animate our young King : If this fire be not measured Clibanically, saith Calid the Persian, son of Iasichus; If it be kindled with a sword, saith Pithagoras; If thou fire thy Vessel, saith Morien, and maketh it feel the heat of the fire, it will give thee a box on the care, and burn his flowers before they be risen from the depth of his Marrow, making them come out red, rather than white, and then thy work is spoiled ; as also if thou make too little fire, for then thou shalt never see the end, because of the coldness of the natures, which shall not have had motion sufficient to digest them together.

The heat then of thy fire in this vessel, shall be (as saith Hermes and Rofinus) according to the Winter; or rather, as saith Diomedes, according to the heat of a Bird, which begins to fly so softly from the sign of Aries to that of Cancer : for know that the Infant at the beginning is full of cold phlegm and of milk, and that too vehement heat is an enemy of the cold and moisture of our Embrion, and that the two enemies, that is to say, our two elements of cold and heat will never perfectly embrace one another, but by little and little, having first long dwelt together, in the midst of the temperate heat of their bath, and being changed by long decoction, into Sulphur incombustible.

Govern therefore sweetly with equality and proportion, thy proud and haughty natures, for fear lest if thou favour one more than another, they which naturally are enemies, do grow angry against thee through jealousy, and dry Choller, and make thee sigh for it a long time after. Besides this, thou must entertain them in this temperate heat perpetually, that is to say, night and day until the time that Winter, the time of the moisture of the matters, be passed; because they make their peace, and join hands in being heated together, whereas should these natures find themselves but one only half hour without fire, they would become for ever irreconcilable.

See therefore the reason why it is said in the Book of the seventy precepts: Look that their heat continue indefatigably without ceasing, and that none of their days be forgotten. And Rafis, the haste, saith he, that brings with it too much fire, is always followed by the Diuell, and Error. When the golden Bird, saith Diomedes, shall become just to Cancer, and that from thence it shall run toward Libra, then thou mayst augment the fire a little. And

in like manner, when this faire Bird, shall fly from Libra towards Capricorn, which is the desired Autumn, the time of harvest, and of the fruits that are now ripe.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter III

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER III

The two Dragons of colour yellowish, blue, and black like the field.



Look well upon these two Dragons, for they are the true principles or beginnings of this Philosophy, which the Sages have not dared to show to their own Children. He which is undermost, without wings, he is the fixed, or the male; that which is uppermost, is the volatile, or the female, black and obscure, which goes about to get the domination for many months. The first is called Sulphur, or heat and dryness, and the latter Argent vive, or cold and moisture. These are the Sun and Moon of the Mercurial source, and sulphurous original, which by continual fire are adorned with royal habiliments, that being united, and afterward changed into a quintessence, they may overcome every thing Metallic, how solid hard and strong, soever it be.

These are the Serpents and Dragons which the ancient Aegyptians have painted in a Circle, the head biting the tail, to signify that they proceeded from one and the same thing, and that it alone was sufficient, and that in the turning and circulation thereof, it made it self perfect : These are the Dragons which the ancient Poets have fained did without sleeping keep & watch the golden Apples of the Gardens of the Virgins Hesperides. These are they upon whom Jason in his adventure for the Golden Fleece, powred the broth or liquor prepared by the fair Medea, of the discourse of whom the Books of the Philosophers are so full, that there is no philosopher that ever was, but he hath written of it, from the time of the truth-telling hermes Trismegistus, Orpheus, Morienus, and the other following, even unto myself.

These are the two Serpents, given and sent by Juno, (that is, the nature Metallic) the which the strong Hercules, that is to say, the sage and wise man must strangle in his cradle, that is, overcome and kill them, to make them putrify, corrupt, and ingender, at the beginning of his work. These are the two Serpents, wrapped and twisted round about the Caduceus or rod of Mercury, with the which he exerciseth his great power, and transformeth himself as he lifteth. He, saith Haly, that shall kill the one, shall also kill the other, because the one cannot die, but with his brother.

These two then, (which Auicen calleth the Corassene bitch and the Armenian dog) these two I say, being put together in the vessel of the Sepulcher, do bite one another cruelly, and by their great poison, and furious rage, they never leave one another, from the moment that they have seized on one another (if the cold hinder them not) till both of them by their slavering venom, and mortal hurts, all of a goare blood, over all the parts of their bodies; and

finally, killing one another, be stewed in their proper venom, which after their death, changeth them into living and permanent water; before which time, they loose in their corruption and putrifaction, their first natural forms, to take afterwards one only new, more noble, and better form. These are the two Spermes, masculine and feminine, described at the beginning of my Abridgment of Philosophy, which are engendred (say Rafis, Auicen, and Abraham the Jew) within the Reynes, and entrails, and of the operations of the four Elements.

These are the radical moisture of metals, Sulphur and Argent Vive not vulgar, and such as are sold by the Merchants and Apothecaries, but those which give us those two fair and dear bodies which we love so much. These two spermes, saith Democritus, are not found upon the earth of the living: The same, saith Auicen, but he addeth, that they gather them from the dung, ordure, and rottenness of the Sun and Moon. O happy are they that know how to gather them; for of them they afterwards make a triacle, which hath power over all griefs, maladies, sorrows, infirmities, and weaknesses, and which fighteth puissantly against death, lengthening the life, according to the permission of God, even to the time determined, triumphing over the miseries of this world, and filling a man with the riches thereof.

Of these two Dragons or Principles Metallic, I have said in my fore-alledged Summary, that the Enemy would by his heat inflame his enemy, and that then if they take not heed, they should see in the air a venomous fume and a stinking, work in flame, and in poison, than the envenomed head of a Serpent, and Babylonian Dragon. The cause why I have painted these two spermes in the form of Dragons, is because their stench is exceeding great, and like the stench of them, and the exhalations which arise within the glass, are dark, black, blue, and yellowish (like as these two Dragons are painted) the force of which, and of the bodies dissolved, is so venomous, that truly there is not in the world a ranker poison; for it is able by the force and stench thereof, to mortify and kill everything living. The Philosopher never feels this stench, if he break not his vessels, but only he judgeth it to be such, by the sight, and the changing of colours, proceeding from the rottenness of his confections.

These colours then signify the putrifaction and generation which is given us, by the biting and dissolution of our perfect bodies, which dissolution proceedeth from external heat adding, and from the Pontique fierieness, and admirable sharp vertue of the poison of our Mercury, which maketh and resolveth into a pure cloud, that is, into impalpable powder, all that which it finds to resist it. So the heat working upon and against the radical, metallic, viscous, or oily moisture, ingendereth upon the subject, blackness. For at the same time the Matter is dissolved, is corrupted, groweth black, and conceiveth to ingender; for all corruption is generation, and therefore ought blackness to be much disired; for that is the black sail with the which the Ship of Theseus came back victorious from Crete, which was the cause of the death of his Father; so must this father die, to the intent, that from the ashes of this Phoenix another may spring, and that the son may be King.

Assuredly he that seeth not this blackness at the beginning of his operations, during the days of the Stone; what other colour soever he see, he shall altogether fail in the Maistry, and can do no more with that Chaos: for he works not well, if he putrify not; because if he do not putrify, he doeth not corrupt, nor ingender, and by consequence, the Stone cannot take vegetative life to increase and multiply.

And in all truth, I tell thee again, that though thou work upon the true matter, if at the beginning, after thou hast put they Confections in the Philosophers Egg, that is to say, sometime after the fire have stirred them up, if then, I say, thou seest not this head of the Crow, the black of the blackest black, thou must begin again, for this fault is irreparable, and not to be amended; especially the Orange colour, or half red, is to be feared, for if at the beginning thou see that in thine Egg, without doubt, thou burnest, or hast burnt the verdure and jueliness of thy Stone.

The colour which thou must have, ought to be intirely perfected in Blackness, like to that of these Dragons in the space of forty days: Let them therefore which shall not have these essential marks, retire themselves betimes from their operations, that they may redeem themselves from assured loss. Know also, and note it well, that in this Art it is but nothing to have this blackness, there is nothing more easy to come by: for from almost all things in the world, mixed with moisture, thou mayest have a blackness by the fire: but thou must have a blackness which comes from the perfect Metallic bodies, which lasts a long space of time, and is not destroyed in less than five months, after the which followeth immediately the desired whiteness. If thou hast this, thou hast enough, but not all. As for the colour blueish and yellowish, that signifieth that Solution and Putrefaction is not yet finished, and that the colours of our Mercury are not as yet well mingled, and rotten with the rest. Then this blackness, and these colours, teach plainly, that in this beginning the matter, and compound begins to rot and dissolve into powder, less than the Atoms of the Sun, the which afterwards are changed into coator permanent.

And this dissolution is by the envious Philosophers called Death, Destruction, and Perdition, because that the natures change their form, and from hence are proceeded so many Allegories of dead men, tombs and sepulchres. Others have called it Calcinatin, Denudation, Separation, Erituration, and Assation, because the Confections are changed and reduced into most small pieces and parts. Others have called it Reduction into the first matter, Mollification, Extraction, Commixtion, Liquefaction, Conversion of Elements, Subtiliation, Division, Humation, Impastation, and

Distillation, because that the Confections are melted, brought back into seed, softened, and circulated within the glass.

Others have called it Xir, or Iris, Putrefaction, Corruption, Cymmerian darkness, a gulf, Hell, Dragons, Generation, Ingression, Submersion, Completion, Conjunction, and Impregnation, because that the matter is black and waterish, and that the natures are perfectly mingled, and hold one of another. For when the heat of the Sun worketh upon them, they are changed, first into powder, or fat and glutinous water, which feeling the heat, flyeth on high to the poulets head, with the smoke, that is to say, with the wind and air; for thence this water melted, and drawn out of the confections, goeth down again, and in descending reduceth, and resolveth, as much as it can, the rest of the Aromatical confections, always doing so, until the whole be like a black broth somewhat fat. Now you see why they call this sublimation and volatization, because it flyeth on high, and Ascension and Descension, because it mounteth and descendeth within the glass.

A while after, the water beginneth to thicken and coagulate somewhat more, growing very black, like unto pitch, and finally comes the body and earth, which the envious have called Terra Foetida, that is, stinking earth: for then because of the perfect putrefaction, which is as natural as any other can be, this earth stinks, and gives a smell like the odour of graves filled with rottenness, and with bodies as yet charged with their natural moisture. This earth was by Hermes called Terra foliata, or the Earth of leaves, yet his true and proper name is Leton, which must afterward be whitened. The Ancient Sages that were Cabalists, have described it in their Metamorphoses, under the History of the Serpent of Mars, which had devoured the companions of Cadmus, who slew him, piercing him with his lance against a hollow Oak. Note this Oak.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter IV

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER IV

Of the man and the woman clothed in a gown of Orange colour upon a field azure and blue, and of their rowles.



The man painted here doth expressly resemble myself to the natural, as the woman doth lively figure Perrenelle. The cause why we are painted to the life, is not particular to this purpose for it needed but to represent a male and a female, to the which our two particular resemblance was not necessarily required, but it pleased the Painter to put us there, just as he hath done higher in this Arch, at the feet of the Figure of Saint Paul and Saint Peter, according to that we were in our youth; as he hath likewise done in other places, as over the door of the Chapel of Saint James in the Bouchery near to my house (although that for this last there is a particular cause) as also over the door of Saincte Geneviesue des Ardans, where thou mayst see me. I made then to be painted here two bodies, one of a Male, and another of a Female, to teach thee that in this second operation, thou hast truely, but yet not perfectly, two natures

conjoined and married together, the Masculine and the Feminine, or rather the four Elements; and that the four natural enemies, the hot and cold, dry and moist, begin to approach amiably one towards another, and by means of the Mediators and Peace-makers, lay down by little and little, the ancient enmity of the old Chaos.

Thou knowest well enough who these Mediators and Peace-makers are, between the hot and the cold there is moisture, for he is kinsman and allied to them both; to hot by his heat, and to cold by his moisture: And this is the reason, why to begin to make this peace, thou hast already in the precedent operation, converted all the confections into water by dissolution. And afterward thou hast made to coagulate the water, which is turned into this Earth, black of the black most black, wholly to accomplish this peace; for the Earth, which is cold and dry, finding himself of kindred and alliance with the dry and moist, which are enemies, will wholly appease and accord them.

Doest thou not then consider a most perfect mixture of all the four Elements, having first turned them to water, and now into Earth? I will also teach thee hereafter the other conversions, into air when it shall be all white, and into fire, when it shall be of a most perfect purple. Then thou hast here two natures married together, whereof the one hath conceived by the other, and by this conception it is turned into the body of the Male, and the Male into that of the Female; that is to say, they are made one only body, which is the Androgyne or hermaphrodite of the Ancients, which they have also called otherwise the head of the Crow, or natures converted.

In this fashion I paint them here, because thou hast two natures reconciled, which (if they be guided and governed wisely) can form an Embrion in the womb of the Vessel, and afterwards bring forth a most puissant King, invincible and incorruptible, because it will be an admirable quintessence. Thus thou seest the principal and most necessary reason of this representation: The second cause, which is also well to be noted, was because I must of necessity paint two bodies, because in this operation it behoveth that thou divide that which hath been coagulated, to give afterwards nourishment, which is milk of life, to the little Infant when it is born, which is endued, by the living God, with a vegetable soul.

This is a secret most admirable and secret, which for want of understanding, it hath made fools of all those that have sought it without finding it, and hath made every man wise that beholds it with the eyes of his body, or of his spirit. Thou must then make two parts and portions of this Coagulated body, the one of which shall serve for Azoth, to wash and cleanse the other, which is called Letch, which must be whitened: He which is washed is the Serpent Python, which, having taken his being from the corruption of the slime of the Earth gathered together by the waters of the deluge, when all the confections were water, must be killed and overcome by the arrows of the God Apollo, by the yellow Sun, that is to say, by our fire, equal to that of the Sun.

He which washeth, or rather the washings which must be continued with the other moiety; these are the teeth of that Serpent, which the sage workman, the valiant Theseus, will sow in the same Earth, from whence there shall spring up armed Soldiers, which shall in the end discomfit themselves, suffering themselves by opposition to resolve into the same nature of the Earth, and the workman to bear away his deserved conquests.

It is of this that the Philosophers have written so often, and so often repeated it. It dissolves itself, it congeals itself, it makes itself black, it makes itself white, it kills itself, and it quickens itself. I have made their field be painted azure and blue, to show that I do but now begin to get out from the most black blackness, for the azure and blue is one of the first colours, that the dark woman lets us see, that is to say, moisture giving place a little to heat and dryness: The man and woman are almost all orange-coloured, to show that our Bodies, or our body which the wise men here call Rebis, hath not as yet digestion enough and that the moisture from whence comes the black blue and azure, is but half vanquished by the dryness.

For when dryness bears rule, all will be white, and when it fighteth with, or is equal to the moisture, all will be in part according to these present colours. The envious have also called these confections in this operation, Nummus, Ethelia, Arena, Boritis, Corfufle, Cambar, Albar aris, Duenech, Randeric, Kukul, Thabricis, Ebisemech, Ixir, &c which they have commanded to make white.

The woman hath a white circle in form of a rowle round about her body, to show thee that Rebis will begin to become white in that very fashion, beginning first at the extremities, round about this white circle. Scala Phylosophoru, that is the Book entitled The Philosophers Ladder, saith thus: The figure of the first perfect whiteness is the manifestation of a certain little circle of hair, that is passing over the head, which will appear on the sides of the vessels round about the matter, in a kind of a cierende or yellowish colour.

There is written in their Rowles, Home veniet ad judicium Dei, that is, Man shall come to the judgement of God: Vere (saith the woman) illa dies terribilis erit, that is, Truly that will be a terrible day. These are not passages of holy Scripture, but only sayings which speak according to the Theological sense, of the judgement to come. I have put them there to serve myself of them towards him, that beholds only the gross outward and most natural Artifice, taking the interpretation thereof to concern only the Resurrection, and also it may serve for them that gathering together the Parables of the Science, take to them the eyes of Lynceus, to pierce deeper then the visible objects. There is then, Man shall come to the judgement of God: Certainly that day shall be terrible. That is as if I should

have said; It behoves that this come to the colour of perfection, to be judged and cleansed from all his blackness and filth, and to be spiritualized and whitened. Surely that day will be terrible, yet certainly, as you shall find in the Allegory of Aristeau, Horror holds us in prison by the space of four-score days, in the darkness of the waters, in the extreme heat of the Summer, and in the troubles of the Sea. All which things ought first to pass before our King can become white, coming from death to life, to overcome afterwards all his enemies.

To make thee understand yet somewhat better this Albification, which is harder and more difficult than all the rest, for till that time thou mayest err at every step, but afterwards thou canst not, except thou break thy vessels, I have also made for thee this Table following.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter V

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER V

The figure of a man, like that of Saint Paul, clothed with a robe white and yellow, bordered with gold, holding a naked sword, having at his feet a man on his knees, clad in a robe of orange colour, black and white, holding a roule.



Mark well this man in the form of Saint Paul, clothed in a robe entirely of a yellowish white. If thou consider him well, he turns his body in such a posture, as shows that he would take the naked Sword, either to cut off the head, or to do some other thing, to that man which is on his knees at his feet, clothed in a robe of orange colour, white and black, which saith in his roule, DE LE MALA QVAE FECI, that is, Blot out all the evil which I have done, as if he should say, TOLLE NIGREDINEM, Take away from me my blackness; A term of Art: for Evil signifieth in the Allegory blackness, as it is often found in Turba Phylsophorum: Seeth it until it come to blackness, which will be thought Evil. But wouldest thou know what is meant by this man, that taketh the Sword? It signifies that thou must cut off the head of the Crow, that is to say, of the man clothed in divers Colours, which is on his knees.

I have taken this portrait and figure out of Hermes Trismagistus, in his Book of the Secret Art, where he saith, Take away the head of this black man, cut off the head of the Crow, that is to say, Whiten our black. Lamspring, that noble German, hath also used it in the Commentary of his Hieroglyphics, saying, In this wood there is a Beast all

covered with black, if any man cut off his head, he will loose his blackness and put on a most white colour. Will you understand what that is? The blackness is called the head of the Crow, the which being taken away, at the instant comes the white colour: Then that is to say, when the Cloud appears no more, this body is said to be without a head. These are his proper words. In the same sense the Sages have also said in other places, Take the Viper which is called De rexa, cut off his head, &c. that is to say, take away from him his blackness. They have also used this Periphrasis when to signify the multiplication of the Stone, they have fained a Serpent Hydra, whereof, if one cut off one head, there will spring in the place thereof ten; for the stone augments tenfold, every time that they cut off this head of the Crow, that they make it black, and afterwards white, that is to say, that they dissolve it anew, and afterward coagulate it again.

Mark how this naked Sword is wreathed about with a black girdle, and that the ends thereof are not so wreathed at all. This naked shining Sword is the stone for the white, or the white stone, so often by the Philosophers described under this form. To come then to this perfect and sparkling whiteness, thou must understand the wreathings of this black girdle, and follow that which they teach, which is the quantity of the imbibitions. The two ends which are not wreathed about at all, represent the beginning and the ending: for the beginning it teacheth that you must imbibe it at the first time gently and scarcely, giving it then a little milk, as to a little Child newborn, to the intent that Ifir, as the Authors say, be not drowned: The like must we do at the end, when we see that our King is full, and will have no more. The middle of these operations is painted by the five whole wreathes, or rounds, of the black girdle, at what time, (because our Salamander lives of the fire, and in the midst of the fire, and indeed is a fire, and an Argent vive, or quicksilver, that runs in the midst of the fire fearing nothing), thou must give him abundantly, in such sort that the Virgins Milk compass all the matter round about.

I have made to be painted black all these wreaths or rounds of the girdle, because these are the imbibitions, and by consequence, blacknesses: for the fire with the moisture (as it hath been often said) causeth blackness. And as these five whole wreathes or rounds show that you must do this five times wholly, so likewise they let you know that you must do this in five whole months, a month to every imbibition: See here the reason why Haly Abenragel said, the Coction or boiling of the things is done in three times fifty days: It is true that if thou count these little imbibitions at the beginning and at the end, there are seven. Whereupon one of the most envious hath said, Our head of the Crow is leproous, and therefore he that would cleanse it, he must make it go down seven times into the River of regeneration of Jordan, as the Prophet commanded the leproous Naaman the Syrian.

Comprehending herein the beginning, which is but of a few days, the middle, and the end, which is also very short. I have then given thee this table, to tell thee that thou must whiten my body, which is upon the knees, and demandeth no other thing: for Nature always tends to perfection, which thou shalt accomplish by the apposition of Virgins milk, and by the decoction of the matters which thou shalt make with this milk, which being dried upon this body, will colour it into this same white yellow, which he who takes the Sword, is clothed withall, in which colour thou must make they Corfulle to come. The vestments of the figure of Saint Paul are bordered largely with a golden and red citrine colour.

Oh my Son, praise God, if ever thou seest this, for now hast thou obtained mercy from Heaven; Imbibe it then, and teine it till such time as the little Infant be hardy and strong, to combat against the water and the fire: In accomplishing the which, thou shalt do that which Demagoras, Senior, and Haly have called, The putting of the Mother into the Infants belly, which Infant the Mother had but lately brought forth; for they call the Mother the Mercury of Philosophers, wherewith they make their imbibitions and fermentations, and the Infant they call the Body, to teine or colour the which this Mercury is gone out. Therefore I have given thee these two figures, to signify the Albifications, for in this place it is that thou hast need of great help, for here all the World is deceived.

This operation is indeed a Labyrinth, for here there present themselves a thousand ways at the same instant, besides that, thou must go to the end of it, directly contrary to the beginning, in coagulating that which before thou dissolvedst, and in making earth that which before thou madest water. When thou hast made it white, then hast thou overcome the enchanted Bulls that cast fire and smoke out of their nostrils. Hercules hath cleansed the stable full of ordure, of rottenness, and of blackness. Jason hath powred the decoction or broth upon the Dragons of Colchos, and thou hast in thy power the horn of Amalthea which (although it be white) may fill thee all the rest of thy life with glory, honour, and riches. To have the which, it hath behoved thee to fight valiantly, and in manner of an Hercules, for this Achelous, this moist river, is indewed with a most mighty force, besides that he often transfigures himself from one form to another. Thus hast thou done all, because the rest is without difficulty.

These transfigurations are particularly described in the Book of the Seven Egyptian Seals, where it is said (as also by all Authors) that the Stone, before it will wholly forsake his blackness, and become white in the fashion of a most shining marble, and of a naked flaming sword, will put on all the colours that thou canst possibly imagine, often will it melt, and often coagulate itself, and amidst these divers and contrary operations (which the vegetable soul which is in it makes it perform at one and the same time) it will grow Citrine, green, red (but not of a true red) it will

become yellow, blue, and orange colour, until that being wholly overcome by dryness and heat, all these infinite colours will end in this admirable Citrine whiteness, of the colour of Saint Pauls garments, which in a short time will become like the colour of the naked sword; afterwards by the means of a more strong and long decoction it will take in the end a red Citrine colour, and afterward the perfect red of the vermillion, where it will repose itself forever. I will not forget, by the way, to advertise thee, that the milk of the Moon, is not as the Virgins milk of the Sun; think then that the inhibitions of whiteness, require a more white milk than those of a golden redness; for in this passage I had thought I should have missed, and so I had done indeed had it not been for Abraham the Jew; for this reason I have made to be painted for thee the Figure which taketh the naked sword, in the colour which is necessary for thee, for it is the Figure of that which whiteneth.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter VI

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER VI

Upon a green field, three resuscitants, or which rise again, two men and one woman, altogether white: Two Angels beneath, and over the Angels the figure of our Saviour coming to judge the world, clothed with a robe which is perfectly Citrine white.



I have so made to be painted for thee a field vert, because that in this decoction the confections become green, and keep this colour longer than any other after the black. This greenness shows particularly that our Stone hath a vegetable soul, and that by the Industry of Art it is turned into a true and pure tree, to bud abundantly, and afterwards to bring forth infinite little sprigs and branches. O happy green (saith the Rosary) which doest produce all things, without thee nothing can increase, vegetate, nor multiply. The three folk rising again, clothed in sparkling white, represent the body, soul, and Spirit of our white Stone.

The philosophers do ordinarily use these terms of Art to hide the secret from evil men. They call the Body that black earth, obscure and dark, which we make white: They call the Soul the other half divided from the Body, which by the will of God, and power of nature, gives to the body by his inbibitions and fermentations a vegetable soul, that is to say, power and vertue to bud, encrease, multiply, and to become white, as a naked shining sword: They call the Spirit, the tincture & dryness, which as a Spirit hath power to pierce all Metallic things. I should be too tedious, if I

should show thee how good reason they had to say always and in all places, Our Stone hath semblably to a man, a Body, Soul, and Spirit. I would only that thou note well, that as a man indued with a Body, Soul and Spirit, is notwithstanding but one, so likewise thou hast now but one only white confection, in the which nevertheless there are a Body, a Soul, and a Spirit, which are inseparably united.

I could easily give very clear comparisons and expositions of this Body, Soul, and Spirit; but to explicate them, I must of necessity speak things which God reserves to reveal unto them that fear and love him, and consequently ought not to be written. I have then made to be painted here, a Body, a Soul, and a Spirit, all white, as if they were rising again, to show thee, that the Sun and Moon and Mercury are raised again in this operation, that is to say, are made Elements of air, and whitened: for we have heretofore called the blackness, Death; and so continuing the Metaphor, we may call Whiteness, Life; which commeth not, but with, and by a Resurrection. The Body, to show this more plainly, I have made to be painted lifting up the stone of his tomb, wherein it was inclosed: The Soul, because it cannot be put into the earth, it comes not out of a tomb, but only I have made it be painted amongst the tombs, seeking its body, in form of a woman, having her hair dischevelled; The Spirit which likewise cannot be put in a grave, I have made to be painted in fashion of a man coming out of the earth, not from a Tomb. They are all white; so the blackness, that is death, is vanquished, and they being whitened, are from henceforward incorruptible. Now lift up thine eyes on high, and see our King coming, crowned and raised again, which hath overcome Death, the darkneses, and moistures; behold him in the form wherein our Saviour shall come, who shall eternally unite unto him all pure and clean souls, and will drive away all impurity and uncleanness, as being unworthy to be united to his divine Body. So by comparison (but first asking leave of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, to speak in this manner, and praying every debonaire soul to permit me to use this similitude) see here our white Exilir, which from henceforward will inseparably unite unto himself every pure metallic nature, changing it into his own most fine silvery nature, rejecting all that is impure, strange, and Heterogeneous, or of another kind. Blessed be God, which of his goodness gives us grace to be able to consider this sparkling white, more perfect and shining than any compound nature, and more noble next after the immortal soul, than any substance having life, or not having life; for it is a quintessence, a most pure silver, that hath passed the Coppel, and is seven times refined, saith the royal Prophet David.

It is not needful to interpret what the two Angels signify, that play on Instruments over the heads of them which are raised again: These are rather divine spirits, singing the mervails of God in this miraculous operation, than Angels that call to judgement. To make an express difference between these and them, I have given the one of them a Lute, the other a haultboy, but none of them trumpets, which yet are wont to be given to them that are to call us to Judgement. The like may be said of the three Angels, which are over the head of our Saviour, whereof the one crowneth him, and the other two assisting, say in their Rowles, O PATER OMNIPOTENS, O JESU BONE, that is, O Almighty Father, O good Jesu, in rendering unto him eternal thanks.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter VII

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER VII

Upon a field violet and blue, two Angels of an Orange colour, and their Rowles.



This violet and blue field showeth that being to pass from the white stone to the red, thou must inbibe it with a little virgins milk of the Sun, and that these colours come out of the Mercurial moisture which thou hast dried upon the Stone. In this operation of rubifying, although thou do imbibe, thou shalt not have much black, but of violets, blue and of the colour of the Peacocks tail. For our stone is so triumphant in dryness, that as soon as thy Mercury toucheth it, the nature thereof rejoicing in his like nature, it is joined unto it, and drinketh it greedily, and therefore the black that comes of moisture, can show itself but a little, and that under these colours violet and blue, because that dryness (as is said) doth by and by govern absolutely.

I have also made to be painted for thee, these two Angels with wings, to represent unto thee, that the two substances of thy confections, the Mercurial and the Sulphurous substance, the fixed as well as the volatile, being perfectly fixed together, do also fly together within thy vessel: for in this operation, the fixed body will gently mount to heaven, being all spiritual, and from thence it will descend unto the earth, and whethersoever thou wilt, following everywhere the Spirit, which is always moved upon the fire: Inasmuch as they are made one selfsame nature, and the compound is all spiritual, and the spiritual all corporall, so much hath it been subtilized upon our Marble, by the precedent operations. The natures then are here transmuted into Angels, that is to say, are made spiritual and most subtle, so are they now the true tinctures.

Now remember thee to begin the rubifying, by the apposition of Mercury Citrine red, but thou must not pour on much, and only once or twice, according as thou shalt see occasion; for this operation ought to be done by a dry fire, and by a dry sublimation and calcination. And truely I tell thee here a secret which thou shalt very seldom find written, so far am I from being envious, that would to God every man knew how to make gold to his own will, that they might live, and lead forth to pasture their fair flocks, without Usury or going to Law, in imitation of the holy Patriarchs using only (as our first Fathers did) to exchange one thing for another; and yet to have that, they must labour as well as now.

Howbeit for fear to offend God, and to be the instrument of such a change which prove evil, I must take heed to represent or write where it is that we hide the keys, which can open all the doors of the secrets of nature, or to open or cast up the earth in that place, contenting myself to show the things which will teach everyone to whom God shall give permission to know what property the sign of the Balance or Libra hath, when it is inlightened by the Sun and Mercury in the month of October.

These Angels are painted of an orange colour, to let thee know that thy white confections have been a little more digested, or boiled, and that the black of the violet and blue hath been already chafed away by the fire: for this orange colour is compounded of the fair golden Citrine red (which thou hast so long waited for) and of the remainder of this violet and blue, which thou hast already in part banished and undone. Furthermore this orange colour showeth that the natures are digested, and by little and little perfected by the grace of God.

As for their Rowle, which saith, SVRGITE MORTVI, VENITE AD IUDICIUM DOMINI MEI, that is, Arise you dead, and come unto the judgement of God my Lord; I have made it be put there, only for the Theological sense, rather than any other: It ends in the throat of a Lion which is all red, to teach that this operation must not be discontinued until they see the true red purple, wholly like unto the Poppy of the Hermitage, and the vermillion of the painted Lion saving for multiplying.

Flammel's Hieroglyphics Chapter VIII

From *His Exposition of the Hieroglyphicall Figures which he caused to bee painted upon an Arch in St. Innocents Church-yard, in Paris.* London, 1624.

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CHAPTER VIII

The figure of a man, like unto Saint Peter, clothed in a robe Citrine red, holding a key in his right hand, and laying his left hand upon a woman, in an orange coloured robe, which is on her knees at his feet, holding a rowle.



Look upon this woman clothed in a robe of orange colour, which doth so naturally resemble Perrenelle as she was in her youth; She is painted in the fashion of a suppliant upon her knees, her hands joined together, at the feet of a man which hath a key in his right hand, which hears her graciously, and afterwards stretcheth out his left hand upon her.

Wouldest thou know what this meaneth? This is the Stone, which in this operation demandeth two things, of the Mercury of the Sun, of the Philosophers (painted under the form of a man) that is to say Multiplication, and a more rich Accoustrement; which at this time it is needful for her to obtain, and therefore the man so laying his hand upon her shoulder accords and grants it unto her. But why have I made to be painted a woman? I could as well have made to be painted a man as a woman, or an Angel rather, (for the whole natures are now spiritual and corporal, masculine and feminine), but I have rather chosen to cause paint a woman, to the end that thou mayest judge that she demands rather this than any other thing, because these are the most natural and proper desires of a woman.

To show further unto thee that she demandeth Multiplication, I have made paint the man, unto whom she addresseth her prayers in the form of Saint Peter, holding a key, having power to open and to shut, to bind and to loose, because the envious Philosophers have never spoken of Multiplication, but under the common terms of Art, APERI, CLAVDE, SOLVE, LIGA, that is, Open, shut, bind, loose, opening and loosing, they have called the making of the Body (which is always hard and fixt) soft fluid, and running like water: To shut and to bind, is with them afterwards by a more strong decoction to coagulate it, and to bring it back again into the form of a body.

It behoved me then, in this place to represent a man with a key, to teach thee that thou must now open and shut, that is to say, Multiply the budding and encreasing natures: for look how often thou shalt dissolve and fix, so often will these natures multiply, in quantity, quality, and vertue, according to the multiplication of ten; coming from this

number to an hundred, from an hundred to a thousand, from a thousand to ten thousand, from ten thousand to an hundred thousand, from an hundred thousand to a million, and from thence by the same operation to Infinity, as I have done three times, praised be God. And when thy Elixir is so brought unto Infinity, one grain thereof falling upon a quantity of molten metal as deep and vast as the Ocean, it will teine it, and convert it into most perfect metal, that is to say, into silver or gold, according as it shall have been imbibed and fermented, expelling and drying out far from himself all the impure and strange matter, which was joined with the metal in the first coagulation: for this reason therefore have I made to be painted a Key in the hand of the man, which is in the form of Saint Peter, to signify that the stone desireth to be opened and shut for multiplication, and likewise to show thee with what Mercury thou oughtest to do this, & when; I have given the man a garment Citrine red, and the woman one of orange colour. Let this suffice, lest I transgress the silence of Pythagoras, to teach thee that the woman, that is, our stone, asketh to have the rich Accoustrements and colour of Saint Peter. She hath written in her Rowle, CHRISTE PRECOR ESTO PIVS, that is, Jesu Christ be pitiful unto me, as if she said, Lord be good unto me, and suffer not that he that shall become thus far, should spoil all with too much fire: It is true, that from henceforward I shall no more fear mine enemies, and that all fire shall be alike unto me, yet the vessel that contains me, is always brittle and easy to be broken: for if they exalt the fire overmuch, it will crack and flying a pieces, will carry me and sow me unfortunately amongst the ashes.

Take heed therefore to thy fire in this place, and govern sweetly with patience, this admirable quintessence, for the fire must be augmented unto it, but not too much. And pray the sovereign Goodness, that it will not suffer the evil spirits which keep the Mines and Treasures, to destroy thy work, or to bewitch thy sight, when thou considereth these incomprehensible motions of this quintessence within thy vessel.

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CHAPTER IX

Upon a dark violet field, a man red purple, holding the foot of a Lion red as vermillion, which hath wings, for it seems would ravish and carry away the man.



This field violet and dark, tells us that the stone hath obtained by her full decoction, the fair Garments, that are wholly Citrine and red, which she demanded of Saint Peter, who was clothed therewith, and that her complete and perfect digestion (signified by the entire Citrinity) hath made her leave her old robe of orange colour. The vermillion red colour of this flying Lion, like the pure and clear scarlet in grain, which is of the true Granadored, demonstrates that it is now accomplished in all right and equality. And that she is now like a Lion, devouring every pure metallic nature, and changing it into her true substance, into true and pure gold, more fine than that of the best mines.

Also she now carrieth this man out of this vale of miseries, that is to say, out of the discommodities of poverty and infirmity, and with her wings gloriously lifts him up, out of the dead and standing waters of AEGypt, (which are the ordinary thoughts of mortal men) making him despise this life and the riches thereof, and causing him night and day to meditate on God, and his Saints, to swell in the Emperial heaven, and to drink the sweet springs of the Fountains of everlasting hope.

Praised be God eternally, which hath given us grace to see this most fair and all-perfect purple colour; this pleasant colour of the wild poppy of the Rock, this Tyrian, sparkling and flaming colour, which is incapable of Alternation or change, over which the heaven itself, nor his Zodiac can have no more domination nor power, whose bright shining rays, that dazzle the eyes, seem as though they did communicate unto a man some supercelestial thing, making him (when he beholds and knows it) to be astonished, to tremble, and to be afraid at the same time.

Oh Lord, give us grace to use it well, to the augmentation of the Faith, to the profit of our Souls, and to the encrease of the glory of this noble Realm. Amen.