

The Treasure of Treasures for Alchemists by Paracelsus

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By Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, Paracelsus the Great

NATURE begets a mineral in the bowels of the earth. There are two kinds of it, which are found in many districts of Europe. The best which has been offered to me, which also has been found genuine in experimentation, is externally in the figure of the greater world, and is in the eastern part of the sphere of the Sun. The other, in the Southern Star, is now in its first efflorescence. The bowels of the earth thrust this forth through its surface. It is found red in its first coagulation, and in it lie hid all the flowers and colours of the minerals. Much has been written about it by the philosophers, for it is of a cold and moist nature, and agrees with the element of water.

So far as relates to the knowledge of it and experiment with it, all the philosophers before me, though they have aimed at it with their missiles, have gone very wide of the mark. They believed that Mercury and Sulphur were the mother of all metals, never even dreaming of making mention meanwhile of a third; and yet when the water is separated from it by Spagyric Art the truth is plainly revealed, though it was unknown to Galen or to Avicenna. But if, for the sake of our excellent physicians, we had to describe only the name, the composition; the dissolution, and coagulation, as in the beginning of the world Nature proceeds with all growing things, a whole year would scarcely suffice me, and, in order to explain these things, not even the skins of numerous cows would be adequate.

Now, I assert that in this mineral are found three principles, which are Mercury, Sulphur, and the Mineral Water which has served to naturally coagulate it. Spagyric science is able to extract this last from its proper juice when it is not altogether matured, in the middle of the autumn, just like a pear from a tree. The tree potentially contains the pear. If the Celestial Stars and Nature agree, the tree first of all puts forth shoots in the month of March; then it thrusts out buds, and when these open the flower appears, and so on in due order until in autumn the pear grows ripe. So is it with the minerals. These are born, in like manner, in the bowels of the earth. Let the Alchemists who are seeking the Treasure of Treasures carefully note this. I will shew them the way, its beginning, its middle, and its end. In the following treatise I will describe the proper Water, the proper Sulphur, and the proper Balm thereof. By means of these three the resolution and composition are coagulated into one.

CONCERNING THE SULPHUR OF CINNABAR.

Take mineral Cinnabar and prepare it in the following manner. Cook it with rain water in a stone vessel for three hours. Then purify it carefully, and dissolve it in Aqua Regis, which is composed of equal parts of vitriol, nitre, and sal ammoniac. Another formula is vitriol, saltpetre, alum, and common salt.

Distil this in an alembic. Pour it on again, and separate carefully the pure from the impure thus. Let it putrefy for a month in horse-dung; then separate the elements in the following manner. If it puts forth its sign¹, commence the distillation by means of an alembic with a fire of the first degree. The water and the air will ascend; the fire and the earth will remain at the bottom. Afterwards join them again, and gradually treat with the ashes. So the water and the air will again ascend first, and afterwards the element of fire, which expert artists recognise. The earth will remain in the bottom of the vessel. This collect there. It is what many seek after and few find.

This dead earth in the reverberatory you will prepare according to the rules of Art, and afterwards add fire of the first degree for five days and nights. When these have elapsed you must apply the second degree for the same number of days and nights, and proceed according to Art with the material enclosed. At length you will find a volatile salt, like a thin alkali, containing in itself the Astrum of fire and earth². Mix this with the two elements that have been preserved, the water and the earth. Again place it on the ashes for eight days and eight nights, and you will find that which has been neglected by many Artists. Separate this according to your experience, and according to the rules of the Spagyric Art, and you will have a white earth, from which its colour has been extracted. Join the element of fire and salt to the alkalisied earth. Digest in a pelican to extract the essence. Then a new earth will be deposited, which put aside.

CONCERNING THE RED LION.

Afterwards take the lion in the pelican which also is found [at] first, when you see its tincture, that is to say, the element of fire which stands above the water, the air, and the earth. Separate it from its deposit by trituration. Thus you will have the true aurum potabile³. Sweeten this with the alcohol of wine poured over it, and then distil in an alembic until you perceive no acidity to remain in the Aqua Regia.

This Oil of the Sun, enclosed in a retort hermetically sealed, you must place for elevation that it may be exalted and doubled in its degree. Then put the vessel, still closely shut, in a cool place. Thus it will not be dissolved, but coagulated. Place it again for elevation and coagulation, and repeat this three times. Thus will be produced the Tincture of the Sun, perfect in its degree. Keep this in its own place.

CONCERNING THE GREEN LION.

Take the vitriol of Venus⁴, carefully prepared according to the rules of Spagyric Art; and add thereto the elements of water and air which you have reserved. Resolve, and set to putrefy for a month according to

instructions. When the putrefaction is finished, you will behold the sign of the elements. Separate, and you will soon see two colours, namely, white and red. The red is above the white. The red tincture of the vitriol is so powerful that it reddens all white bodies, and whitens all red ones, which is wonderful.

Work upon this tincture by means of a retort, and you will perceive a blackness issue forth. Treat it again by means of the retort, repeating the operation until it comes out whitish. Go on, and do not despair of the work. Rectify until you find the true, clear Green Lion, which you will recognise by its great weight. You will see that it is heavy and large. This is the Tincture, transparent gold. You will see marvellous signs of this Green Lion, such as could be bought by no treasures of the Roman Leo. Happy he who has learnt how to find it and use it for a tincture!

This is the true and genuine Balsam⁵, the Balsam of the Heavenly Stars, suffering no bodies to decay, nor allowing leprosy, gout, or dropsy to take root. It is given in a dose of one grain, if it has been fermented with Sulphur of Gold.

Ah, Charles the German, where is your treasure? Where are your philosophers? Where your doctors? Where are your decoctors of woods, who at least purge and relax? Is your heaven reversed? Have your stars wandered out of their course, and are they straying in another orbit, away from the line of limitation, since your eyes are smitten with blindness, as by a carbuncle, and other things making a show of ornament, beauty, and pomp? If your artists only knew that their prince Galen - they call none like him - was sticking in hell, from whence he has sent letters to me, they would make the sign of the cross upon themselves with a fox's tail. In the same way your Avicenna sits in the vestibule of the infernal portal; and I have disputed with him about his aurum potable, his Tincture of the Philosophers, his Quintessence, and Philosophers' Stone, his Mithridatic, his Theriac, and all the rest. O, you hypocrites, who despise the truths taught you by a true physician, who is himself instructed by Nature, and is a son of God himself! Come, then, and listen, impostors who prevail only by the authority of your high positions! After my death, my disciples will burst forth and drag you to the light, and shall expose your dirty drugs, wherewith up to this time you have compassed the death of princes, and the most invincible magnates of the Christian world. Woe for your necks in the day of judgment! I know that the monarchy will be mine. Mine, too, will be the honour and glory. Not that I praise myself: Nature praises me. Of her I am born; her I follow. She knows me, and I know her. The light which is in her I have beheld in her; outside, too, I have proved the same in the figure of the microcosm, and found it in that universe.

But I must proceed with my design in order to satisfy my disciples to the full extent of their wish. I willingly do this for them, if only skilled in the light of Nature and thoroughly practised in astral matters, they finally become adepts in philosophy, which enables them to know the nature of every kind of water.

Take, then, of this liquid of the minerals which I have described, four parts by weight; of the Earth of red Sol two parts; of Sulphur of Sol one part. Put these together into a pelican, congeal, and dissolve them three times. Thus you will have the Tincture of the Alchemists. We have not here described its weight: but this is given in the book on Transmutations⁶.

So, now, he who has one to a thousand ounces of the Astrum Solis shall also tinge his own body of Sol.

If you have the Astrum of Mercury, in the same manner, you will tinge the whole body of common Mercury. If you have the Astrum of Venus you will, in like manner, tinge the whole body of Venus, and change it into the best metal. These facts have all been proved. The same must also be understood as to the Astra of the other planets, as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Luna, and the rest. For tinctures are also prepared from these: concerning which we now make no mention in this place, because we have already dwelt at sufficient length upon them in the book on the Nature of Things and in the Archidoxies. So, too, the first entity of metals and terrestrial minerals have been made, sufficiently clear for Alchemists to enable them to get the Alchemists' Tincture.

This work, the Tincture of the Alchemists, need not be one of nine months; but quickly, and without any delay, you may go on by the Spaygric Art of the Alchemists, and, in the space of forty days, you can fix this alchemical substance, exalt it, putrefy it, ferment it, coagulate it into a stone, and produce the Alchemical Phoenix⁷. But it should be noted well that the Sulphur of Cinnabar becomes the Flying Eagle, whose wings fly away without wind, and carry the body of the phoenix to the nest of the parent, where it is nourished by the element of fire, and the young ones dig out its eyes: from whence there emerges a whiteness, divided in its sphere, into a sphere and life out of its own heart, by the balsam of its inward parts, according to the property of the cabalists.

HERE ENDS THE TREASURE OF THE ALCHEMISTS.

NOTES

1 The *Sign* is nothing else than the mark left by an operation. The house constructed by the architect is the sign of his handicraft whereby his skill and art are determined. Thus the sign is the achievement itself. - *De Colica*.

2 The earth also has its Astrum, its course, its order, just as much as the Firmament, but peculiar to the element. So also there is an Astrum in the water, even as in the earth, and in like manner with air and fire. Consequently, the upper Astrum has the Astra of the elements for its medium and operates through them by an irresistible attraction. Through this operation of the superior and inferior Astra, all things are fecundated, and led on to their end. - *Explicatio Totius Astronomiae*. Without the Astra the elements cannot flourish. ... In the Astrum of the earth all the celestial operations thrive. The Astrum itself is hidden, the bodies are manifest. ... The motion of the earth is brought about by the Astrum of the earth. ... There are four Astra in man (corresponding to those of the four elements), for he is the lesser world. - *De Caducis*, Par. II.

3 *Aurum Potabile*, that is, Potable Gold, Oil of Gold, and Quintessence of Gold, are distinguished thus. *Aurum Potabile* is gold rendered potable by intermixture with other substances, and with liquids. Oil of Gold is an oil extracted from the precious metal without the addition of anything. The Quintessence of Gold is the redness of gold extracted therefrom and separated from the body of the metal. - *De Membris Contractis*, Tract II., c. 2.

4 If copper be pounded and resolved without a corrosive, you have Vitriol. From this may be prepared the quintessence, oil, and liquor thereof. - *De Morbis Tartareis*. Cuprine Vitriol is Vitriol cooked with Copper. - *De Morbis Vermium*, Par. 6. Chalcantum is present in Venus, and Venus can by separation be reduced into Chalcantum. - *Chirurgia Magna*. Pars.

III., Lib. IV.

5 There is, indeed, diffused through all things a Balsam created by God, without which putrefaction would immediately supervene. Thus in corpses which are anointed with Balsam we see that corruption is arrested and thus in the physical body we infer that there is a certain natural and congenital Balsam, in the absence of which the living and complete man would not be safe from putrefaction. Nothing removes the Balsam but death. But this kind differs from what is more commonly called Balsam, in that the one is conservative of the living, and the other of the dead. - *Chirurgia Magna*, Pt. II., Tract II., c 3. The confection of Balsam requires special knowledge of chemistry, and it was first discovered by the Alchemists. - *Ibid.*, Pt. I., Tract II., c. 4.

6 It is difficult to identify the treatise to which reference is made here. It does not seem to be the seventh book concerning The Nature of Things, nor the ensuing tract on Cements. The general question of natural and artificial weight is discussed in the *Aurora of the Philosophers*. No detached work on Transmutations has come down to us.

7 Know that the Phoenix is the soul of the Iliaster (that is, the first chaos of the matter of all things). ... It is also the Iliastic soul in man. - *Liber Azoth*, S. V., *Practica Lineae Vitae*.