

Thomas Norton.

The Chemical Treatise.

or The Ordinal of Alchemy.

J. Elliot and Co., London.

1893 .

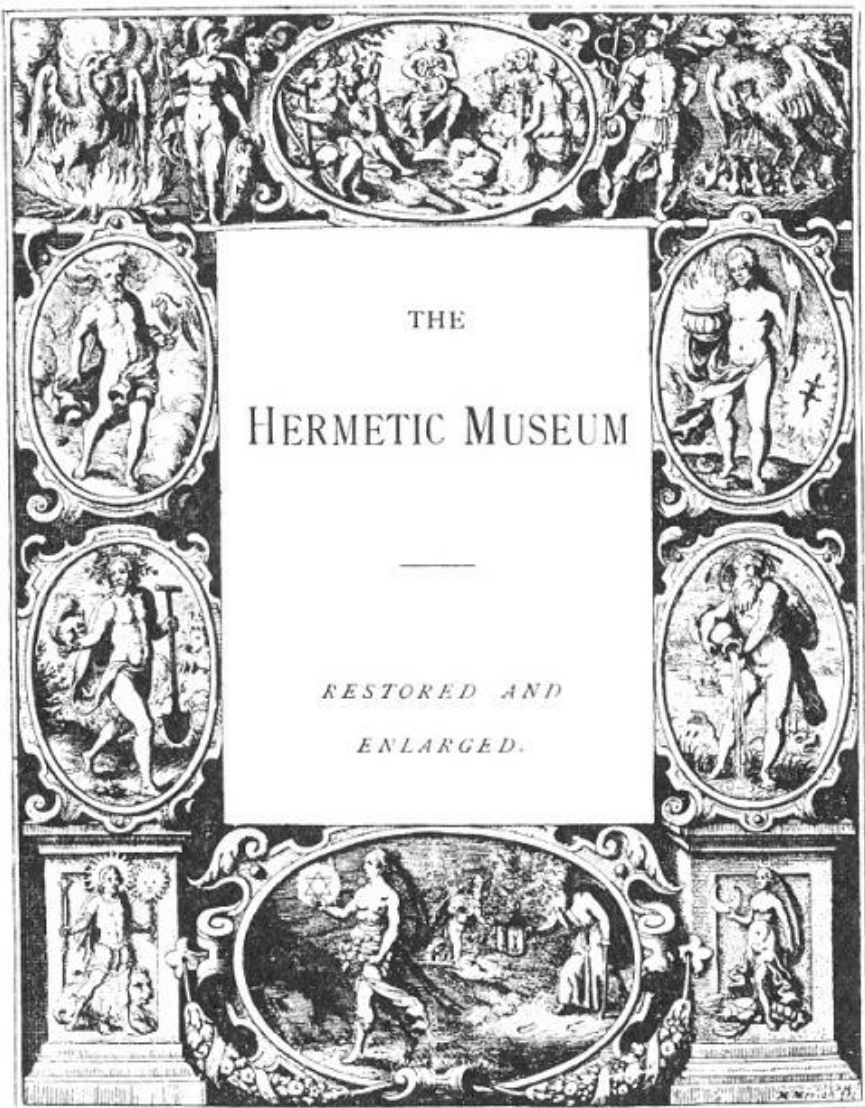
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THE

HERMETIC MUSEUM

—
*RESTORED AND
ENLARGED.*

THE GOLDEN TRIPOD

SECOND TRACT.

THE

CHEMICAL TREATISE

OF

THOMAS NORTON,

THE ENGLISHMAN,

CALLED

BELIEVE - ME,

OR

THE ORDINAL OF ALCHEMY.

AN EPIGRAM

WRITTEN BY M. M., ON NORTON'S CHEMICAL
TREATISE.

As the Nile with its overflowing waters floods the surrounding country, and covers it with fertilizing slime, bearing in it the promise of a rich and laughing harvest, so the genius of Norton overflows its banks far and wide, while he makes known to us the glorious works of Nature. He spreads himself abroad over an immensity of space, that he may fertilize the fields of Alchemy, and rejoice the hearts of its husbandmen. If you are fortunate you will catch beneath this wide expanse of waters a fish which will satisfy the longing of your heart. And if you fail of success, yet your mind will be stored with the precious treasures of knowledge, and you will in any case be richly rewarded for your labour. The treasures of Hermes are not laid open in *one* book: perhaps one writer may render clear to you what another fails to explain.

THE TREATISE, CREDE-MIHI, OR ORDINAL,
OF THOMAS NORTON.

P R E F A C E F I R S T .

(By the author himself.)

THIS Book shews to the initiated knowledge, but intensifies the ignorance of the vulgar. It is the book of honouring, increasing riches, and the book of the needy, putting to flight poverty. It is the book of confidence and truth, full of counsel for kings and of teaching for prelates, a book useful for sainted men, who wish to live unspotted of sin; a secret book, the Book of the Gift of God, to chosen men a pathway of true hope, a strength to those constant in firm faith, and who unwaveringly believe in my words. Alchemy is sought by the false and the true -- by false seekers without number, but they are rejected. Many are aflame with the desire of gain, but amongst a thousand thousand scarce three are chosen. There are many called to knowledge, noble and poor, learned and ignorant, but they will not submit to toil, or await the time; they do not attain to the goal because they are ungrateful. The Book of our Art is clear as light to the sons of knowledge, to whom God has freely given to understand this matter. Only let them believe this prophetic saying; to the thankful all flows forth from the fount of Divine love.

This noble science is bestowed only on those who love justice with a devout mind, but to the deceitful, the treacherous, and the violent it is denied, because their sins hinder the coming of God's gifts.

This knowledge would often have been the glory of England's Kings, if their hope had been firmly placed upon God.

One who shall have obtained his honours by means of this Art will mend old manners, and change them for the better. When he comes, he will reform the kingdom, and by his goodness and virtue he will set an everlasting example to rulers. In his time the common people will rejoice, and render praise to God in mutual neighbourly love. O King, who art to accomplish all this, pray to God the King, and implore His aid in the matter! So the glory of thy mind will be crowned with the glory of a golden age, which shall not then be hoped for as future.

P R E F A C E S E C O N D .

To the honour of the One God, who is Three Persons in One, this book has been written, in order that, after my death learned and unlearned men might see how every one who will follow my good counsel, and ponder it well before he begins the work, may obtain great treasure through the Art of Alchemy. But the book is also a storehouse of mighty secrets for the learned. Let me warn the unlearned that they must study this Art with fear and trembling, lest they be led astray by the false delusions of those who counsel many costly experiments and use high sounding words. For my part, I desire none of that fame which the world can give, but only your prayers to God for me, though you need not utter my name. Let no one trouble himself about the author, but rather let him diligently consider the contents of the Book. If you enquire into the motives of men, you will find many who are induced to give their minds to the study of Alchemy, only by the desire of gain and riches; and such men are found even among Cardinals of highest rank, Archbishops, and Bishops of lofty order, Abbots and religious Priors, also among hermits, monks, and common priests, and among Kings, princes, and lords of high degree.

For men of all classes desire to partake of our good things: merchants, and those who exercise their craft in the forge, are led captive by a longing to know this Art; nor are common mechanics content to be excluded from a share in it: they love the Art as dearly as great lords. The goldsmiths are consumed

with the desire of knowing -- though them we may excuse since they have daily before their eyes that which they long to possess. But we may wonder that weavers, freemasons, tailors, cobblers, and needy priests join in the general search after the Philosopher's Stone, and that even painters and glaziers cannot restrain themselves from it. Nay, tinkers presumptuously aspire to exalt themselves by its means, though they should be content with the colour with which glass is stained. Many of these workmen, however, have been deceived by giving credulous heed to impostors, who helped them to convert their gold into smoke, and though they are grieved and disappointed at the loss, they yet buoy themselves up with sanguine thoughts, and hope that they will after all reach the goal; alas, too many have I known, who, after amusing themselves with delusive hopes through a long life, have at last died in squalid poverty ! For them it would have been better if they had stayed their hands at once, seeing that they met with nothing but disappointment and vexation of spirit. For, surely, he who is not very learned will do well to think twice before he meddles with this Art. Believe me, it is by no means a light matter to know all the secrets connected with the science. Nay, it is a profound philosophy, a subtle science, a sacred alchemy. Concerning which I here intend to write in a style manly, but not curious. For he who desires to instruct the common people should speak to them in a language they understand. But though I must express myself in a plain and unassuming style, no candid reader should therefore contemn me. For all that before me have written on this matter have rendered their books obscure and unintelligible by an exaggerated use of poetical imagery, parables, and metaphors which grievously obstruct the path of those who first enter on this field of knowledge. This is the reason that a beginner, who strives to put their precepts into practice, only loses his trouble and his money, as is daily seen. Hermes, Rhasis, Geber, Avicenna, Merlin, Hortulanus, Democritus, Morienus, Bacon, Raymond, Aristotle, and many others, have concealed their meaning under a veil of obscurity. Hence their books, which they have handed down to us, have been a source of endless error and delusion to the vulgar and the learned, and, in spite of the beautiful conceits which abound in their writings, no one has been able to find a path

through the wilderness of their words; yea, many have been reduced to despair. Anaxagoras indeed acquitted himself better than the rest, in his book "Concerning Natural Changes." Of all the ancient Sages whose writings I have read, he lays open most plainly the foundation of our knowledge. For this very reason Aristotle is wroth against him, and attacks him most virulently in many passages, as I can shew, his purpose being to keep men from following him. For he (Anaxagoras) was full of wisdom and love: may God above reward him for his goodness and pardon the evil deeds of those who sow the seeds of enmity and hatred. To the latter class belonged that monk who set forth a pretentious book of A Thousand Receipts, from malice and the love of mischief -- which was copied in many places, and deceived and deluded numerous enquirers, and reduced them to beggary; moreover, he represented true and approved men as forgers and impostors. For this reason I am impelled by pity to set forth the truth in a few simple words, in order to warn you against false and deceitful teaching, if indeed, you will pay attention to me and to my words. Throw away your volumes of "Recipes," for they are full of falsehood and fraud. Do not believe them, but give diligent heed to the maxim, that nothing, is wrought without its own proper cause. This is the mistake into which those self-styled "Practical Sages" fall. They do not place knowledge on a firm foundation by enquiring into the cause of things. You should therefore constantly bear this momentous rule in mind: never to set about an experiment until you fully comprehend the why and the how. He who would make good progress in this Art should also diligently eschew all falsehood. For God is Truth, and it is He who shews this Art to men: therefore keep yourself above all things unspotted from the slightest taint of falsehood. Let it be fixed in your mind as an abiding principle, under no circumstances to procure for yourselves "adulterated" metals, like those who seek to accomplish albifications and citrinations, which cannot abide a searching test, and by which they produce false silver and false coin for the purpose of duping the credulous. But God has provided that no one should succeed in attaining to this Blessed Art, who loves that which is false rather than that which is true. If any man would obtain grace of God to discover the secrets of

this Art, he should be a lover of justice and truth; nor let him be too eager in his own mind to follow this Art on account of its outward advantages. He who would enjoy the fruit of his labour, should be satisfied with such wealth as is sufficient. Let him not waste time and trouble on divers methods of procedure, but let him follow the directions of this Book, which is called the "Ordinal of Alchemy," the *Crede-mihi*, an everlasting standard. For as the Ordinal instructs the presbyters concerning the ministry of the days which they must observe so all the true and useful teaching of ill-digested books on Alchemy is here set forth in proper order. Wherefore, this Book is of inestimable value for the acquisition of the precious science, nor can its truth ever be denied, though it be composed in an unassuming style. As I have received this Art by Divine Grace, so I set it forth to you in seven chapters as fully as my fealty will permit. For I remember what is said about the judgment of God at the last day.

The first chapter will shew what persons from among the common people can attain to this knowledge, and why the science of Alchemy was by the Ancients called blessed and sacred.

In the second chapter will be set forth the wise joy and the long labours of those who follow this Art.

The third chapter will, for the sake of my fellow-men, contain a faithful description of the substance of that Stone which the Arabians call the Elixir. There you will learn whence it is obtained.

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

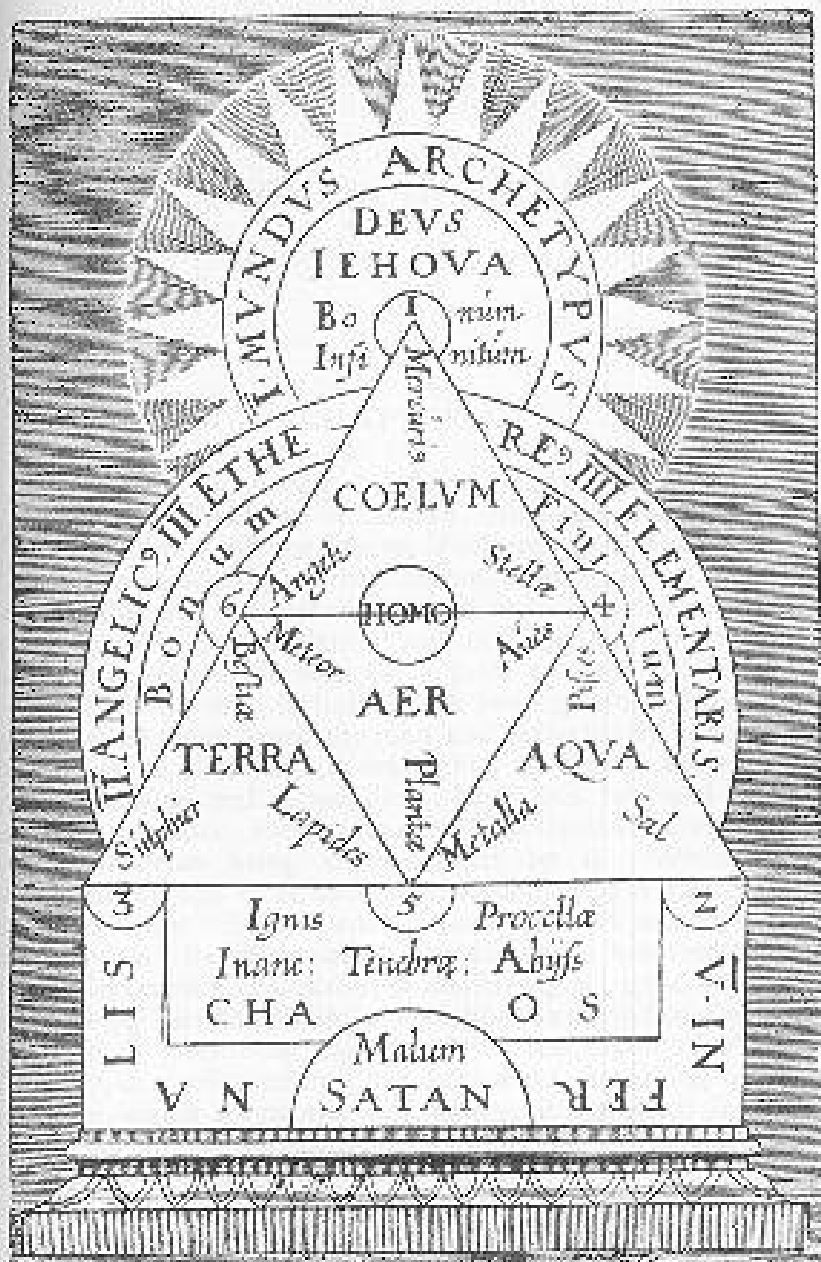
The fifth chapter is concerned with the subtle part of the process which God has ordained for the learned only, but which few of the learned ever comprehend; so that the secret is really possessed by very few.

The sixth chapter deals with the question of proportion, and with the agreement of this world below with the sphere of heaven above, of which a right understanding greatly helps many learners, and proves of great assistance to them in our wonderful Art.

The seventh chapter will truly set forth to you the principles in accordance with which your fire should be regulated.

Now, O Lord, do Thou guide and assist me, for I desire to gird myself to my task! Everyone that shall happen to read this Book, I implore to offer up prayers for my soul, and not to alter that which I have written, for the better or for the worse, on the pain of my most greivous anathema. For where the sense is obscure this is for the purpose of secrecy; but if a single syllable be altered in a critical passage, it may destroy the value of the whole book. Therefore, see that which I have written be preserved intact, for though the language be humble, yet it conveys truths of most momentous importance, and it should be read not once or twice, but twenty times. Your best plan will be to read many books on Alchemy, and this one last of all.

THE ORDINAL OF ALCHEMY.



THOMAS NORTON'S
CHEMICAL TREATISE.

CHAPTER I.

A MOST wonderful Magistry and Archimagistry is the Tincture of sacred Alchemy, the marvellous science of the secret Philosophy, the singular gift bestowed upon men through the grace of Almighty God -- which men have never discovered by the labour of their hands, but only by revelation, and the teaching of others. It was never bought or sold for a price to any of those who sought after it; but it has always been granted through the grace of God alone to worthy men, and perfected by long labour and the lapse of time. It was given to relieve the estate of man; it puts an end to vainglory, hope, and fear, and removes ambition, violence, and excess. It mitigates adversity, and saves men from being overwhelmed by it. Whoever has perfect knowledge of it, eschews extremes, and is content with the middle way. Some disdain to call this Art sacred, because they say that Paynims sometimes acquire a knowledge of it, though God cannot be desirous of conferring any good thing upon them, seeing that their wilful and stubborn unbelief renders them incapable of possessing that which is the cause of all good. Moreover, it is affirmed that our Art produces nothing but gold and silver, which are coined into money, or fashioned into cups and rings, but are approved and accounted by wise men the least valuable and precious of all things which are upon the earth; and hence men of this school conclude that this science, if judged by its effects, cannot claim to be regarded as sacred.

To this objection, we answer what we know to be true, that the science of this Art has never been fully revealed to anyone who has not approved himself worthy by a good and noble life, and who has not shewn himself to be deserving of this gracious gift by his love of truth, virtue, and knowledge. From those who are otherwise minded this knowledge must ever remain concealed.

Nor can anyone attain to this Art, unless there be some person sent by God to instruct him in it. For the matter is so glorious and wonderful that it cannot be fully delivered to any one but by word of mouth. Moreover, if any man would receive it, he must take a great and sacred oath, that as we his teachers refuse high rank and fame, so he will not be too eager for these frivolous distinctions, and that he will not be so presumptuous as to make the secret known to his own son; for propinquity of blood, or affinity, should be held of no account in this our Magistry. Nearness of blood, as such, does not entitle anyone to be let into the secret, but only virtue, whether in those near to us or in strangers. Therefore you should carefully test and examine the life, character, and mental aptitude of any person who would be initiated in this Art, and then you should bind him, by a sacred oath, not to let our Magistry be commonly or vulgarly known. Only when he begins to grow old and feeble, he may reveal it to one person, but not to more -- and that one man must be virtuous, and generally approved by his fellows. For this Magistry must always remain a secret science, and the reason that compels us to be so careful is obvious. If any wicked man should learn to practise this Art, the event would be fraught with great danger to Christendom. For such a man would overstep all bounds of moderation, and would remove from their hereditary thrones those legitimate princes who rule over the peoples of Christendom. And the punishment of this wickedness would fall upon him who had instructed that unworthy person in our Art. In order, then, to avoid such an outbreak of overweening pride, he who possesses the knowledge of this Art, should be scrupulously careful how he delivers it to another, and should regard it as the peculiar privilege of those who excel in virtue.

But even if this Art could, on account of its effects, be

justly denied a claim to sanctity, it would still be sacred on account of its nature and essence. For as, on the one hand, no one can discover it except by the grace of God, so it is also holy, because it is a divine labour and work to change vile copper into the finest silver and gold. For no one could discover a method of producing such effects by his own thought, seeing that the substances are divers, and man cannot separate that which God has joined together. Nor could the course of Nature be quickened, unless God Himself had granted the aid of this mighty science to those whom He loves. Therefore, the ancient Sages have well called Alchemy a sacred science; and no one should be so presumptuous as to cast away the blessed gift of God. For let us only consider that God has hidden this knowledge from great and learned doctors, and out of His mercy has revealed it to men of low degree, who are faithful lovers of truth, and lowly of heart; and as there are only seven planets among the vast multitude of the stars of heaven, so amongst millions of millions of men hardly seven attain to this knowledge. As we watch men's lives, we see and learn that many scholars of profound erudition, with countless other enquirers, have striven to acquire our science, and yet that all their labour has produced as a net result -- nothing. Though they have spent all their substance in the search, it has nevertheless turned out a failure. They have again and again missed the mark at which they aimed; and at last they have given up the quest in despair, and have arrived at the bitter conclusion that the Art is nothing but rank fiction and imposture. As the outcome of their fruitless enquiries they have begun to denounce our Magistry for a vain and empty thing. Let me tell such men that they take too much upon themselves in thinking that that must be nought which their wisdom is not sufficient to compass. But we are not greatly troubled by their calumnies and injurious words; for those who are wise in their own conceits, while in reality they understand nothing, are not the guests for whom our feast is prepared. Though these men cannot understand our Magistry, yet, for all that, it must remain true; and though its truth be denied by some who are lifted up by the vain pride of empty wisdom, all wise men will admit that those who have confessedly never looked upon a thing cannot be allowed

to give an authoritative opinion about it. It would be foolish indeed to attach any value to a blind man's opinion about a painting; and though these men are so proud of their profundity and wisdom, I very much doubt whether they could build the tower of St. Paul's (London), or remove it from its foundations. But it is more difficult still to believe that they are keen enough to penetrate the most profound secret which this world contains. Well, now, we will say no more about them, but deliver them over to the wretchedness of their own ignorance.

Now, you who seek this wisdom, learn to distinguish the false from the true. All true enquirers into the Art of Alchemy should be well versed in the primary philosophy. Otherwise all their labour will be vain. The true seeker undertakes the search on his own account; for while he eagerly hopes to find our Delectable Stone, he does not wish to see others involved in any loss he may incur. He therefore conducts all the experiments at his own cost, nor does he grudge the expense which their labour requires. He consumes his substance and empties his coffers, and advances step by step with great patience, basing his hope on God's assistance alone. Impostors, on the other hand, wander in ragged gown from city to city, and set traps for the unwary whom they may dupe with their pretended knowledge and outwit by vain talk and perjury. They say that they can augment silver, and affirm with a false oath that they can multiply both gold and silver, and thus they ingratiate themselves with the covetous, producing the excellent conjunction of Fraud and Avarice. But in no long time the multiplier of gold is found to have deceived his credulous victim with his magnificent promises and his perjured assertions -- and the covetous man is reduced to beggary. This must be the result if one is not from the very first on his guard against the deceitful language of the multiplier. Of these persons I might speak at great length, but am afraid of encouraging men who are of themselves disposed to evil. I fear that by saying any more I might possibly do as much harm as good, and therefore I will only add one word to the wise: If these persons really possessed the knowledge to which they pretend, they would take good care not to make it known to others, nor would they have any need to go about boasting of their knowledge, and cheating the credulous out of

their money. If these impostors were punished according to their deserts in all places where they drive their fraudulent trade, there would not be so many of them. Now these fellows put forward lying assertions about Nature when they speak of the multiplication of metals. For of this one thing you may rest assured: Metals are never multiplied. Such a thing would be contrary to Nature's methods. Nature never multiplies anything, except in either one or the other of these two ways: either by decay, which we call putrefaction, or in the case of animate creatures, by propagation. In the case of metals, there can be no propagation, though our Stone exhibits something like it. Putrefaction destroys and corrupts, but in order to be fruitful, it must go forward in some convenient place. Metals are generated in the earth; for above ground they are subject to rust: hence above ground is the place of the corruption of metals and of their gradual destruction. The cause which we assign for this fact is that above ground they are not in their proper element, and an unnatural position is destructive to natural objects, as we see, for instance, that fishes die when they are taken out of the water; and as it is natural for men, beasts, and birds to live in the air, so stones and metals are naturally generated under the earth. Physicians and apothecaries do not look for aquatic flowers on arid hills. God in His wisdom has ordained that everything should grow in its own proper place. I know that some deny this principle, and assert that metals are multiplied. For, they say, the veins of silver, lead, tin, and iron which we find in the earth, are sometimes rich and sometimes poor; and such diversity would be totally inexplicable if the metals did not multiply or grow. This fact then is thought to prove that metals grow underground -- and if they grow underground, why, it is asked, should they not grow above ground, in a vessel which protects them from the influences of fire, water, and air? Our answer to this argument is that it proves nothing, because the conditions are not the same in the two cases. For the only efficient cause of metals is the mineral virtue, which is not found in every kind of earth, but only in certain places and chosen mines, into which the celestial sphere pours its rays in a straight direction year by year, and according to the arrangement of the metallic substance in these

places, this or that metal is gradually formed. Only few parts of the earth are suitable for such generation -- how, then, can they be multiplied above the earth ? Every person of average intelligence knows that in the case of congealed water, or ice, the water, before it becomes hardened, is more plentiful in some places than in others. Before its congelation, it exists in small quantities in brooks and ditches, while more considerable veins of it are found in lakes and rivers. Afterwards, large quantities of ice are seen where there was much water; but it would manifestly be absurd to say that the ice must have grown or multiplied in the lakes and rivers, because they contain greater masses of it than ditches or brooks. In the same way, the metals do not necessarily grow in the mountains, because in some places they exist in larger quantities than in others. A certain portion of any metal can never be increased in quantity by the action of an inherent principle; and herein minerals differ from vegetables and animals. A vegetable seed, such as an acorn, virtually contains within itself the trunk and the leaves of a tree, though they cannot at a given moment be discerned with the eye. But metals always remain exactly the same in their composition, though they be dissolved with strong waters. An ounce of silver can never become more or less than an ounce of silver. For nothing can be multiplied by inward action unless it belong to the vegetable kingdom, or the family of sensitive creatures. But the metals are elementary objects, and possess neither seed nor sensation. Hence we conclude that all multipliers of metals should be forbidden to exercise their fraudulent trade. For when a metal has once been generated, it is never added to by growth. Nevertheless, we have known one metal to be transmuted into another of a different kind by means of the cognate nature of their substances; so, for instance, iron has been changed into bronze. But nothing can produce real silver or gold except the Medicine of the Philosophers. Hence the falsehoods affected by the multipliers are eschewed and shunned by all true Sages. But all honour and reverence is due to the genuine Art of sacred Alchemy, which is concerned with the precious Medicine that has virtue to produce pure gold and silver. Of this an example exists in a certain city of Catalonia, which Raymond Lullius is supposed to have drawn up. It consists of a series of seven images, and is designed to

shadow out the way of truth. Three of these pictures represent matronly figures of solid silver, and four of them represent men of gold in flowing garb. On the hems of their garments appear certain letters, the meaning of which I will proceed to expound.

I was once an old iron horse-shoe "-- such is the inscription on the garment of one woman --" but now I am the purest silver." " I," says another woman, " was iron smelted from the ore, but now I am become pure and solid gold." " I," says a third, " was once a battered piece of copper: now I am all silver." The fourth figure says: " I was once copper, generated in a vile place, but at the bidding of God I have now become perfect gold." " I," says the fifth figure, " who was once fine and pure silver, am now more excellent gold." The sixth figure proclaims that it was during 200 years a leaden pipe, but is now known by all for honest silver. The seventh says: " A wondrous thing has happened to me -- I have become lead out of gold. But certainly my sisters are nearer than I."

This science derives its name from a certain King Alchymus of illustrious memory, who, being a generous and noble-hearted prince, first set himself to study this Art. He ceased not to question Nature by day and by night, and at last extorted from her a blessed answer. King Hermes also did a like thing, being deeply versed in every kind of learning. His " Quadripartite " deals with the four great branches of natural science: astrology, medicine, alchemy, and natural magic; and therein he expresses himself as follows: " Blessed is the man who knows things truly as they are, and blessed is the man who duly proves that which appertains to knowledge." It was his opinion that many are deceived in thinking that they understand that of which they do not know the cause. It is an old proverb that in a bushel of imagination there is often not even a grain of true knowledge. It is also true that by the habit of proving everything, and by wise discernment, learned men are even now adding to their stock of information. By knowledge men understand themselves and all things; without knowledge men are beasts, and worse than beasts. Lack of knowledge renders men fierce and wild, but instruction makes them mild and gentle. It is now the custom for nobles to despise those who desire to understand the secrets of Nature; but in olden times even Kings ordained that no one

should be instructed in the seven liberal sciences except those who were nobly born, and brilliantly endowed, and that he who had once devoted himself to knowledge should be bound to spend his life in its pursuit. Hence the Ancients called these sciences the seven liberal sciences, because those who wished to become perfect adepts in them should delight in them in a spirit of liberty. Freedom from all mundane cares is necessary for him who would apply himself thoroughly to the study of human law, and he who wishes to become a ripe scholar in many sciences, has much more solid reasons for turning his back on the world's toils and pleasures. This fact sufficiently shews the ground on which learned men are despised. Yet the glorious memory of the man who increases day by day in the knowledge of truth, can never perish. The man who loves wisdom, justice, and grace, may be rejected in many places, but time will circle his brow with a crown of gold. In the meantime, we must expect that those who love knowledge for its own sake shall be scorned by the ignorant multitude. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that though many devote themselves to this study for the sake of mere gain, yet avarice and science are incompatible yoke-fellows; he whose affections are set on mere lucre, will never discover the secrets of this Art. But he who delights in knowledge for its own sake approaches the study of our Art in the right spirit, and such a man is bound to succeed. There is no need to lengthen out this chapter any further, since we have already set forth who they are that may, with reasonable hope of success, apply themselves to the study of sacred Alchemy. Let me repeat that any such person should be a faithful Christian, and a man who is not easily moved from his purpose. He should be free from ambition, free from the necessity of borrowing from others, full of patience and endurance, and of unwavering confidence in God. He should be prepared to follow knowledge through good and evil report. His life should be free from guilt, falsehood, and sin. Such men alone possess mental aptitude for becoming proficients in this science. The next chapter deals with joy and sorrow.

CHAPTER II.

In Normandy there once lived a monk, who deceived many persons of different ranks in life. When his mind had become

filled with the vain conceit that he had a perfect knowledge of this Art, he gave himself up to such violent joy that he almost went out of his senses. Whose preposterous zeal I will attempt to excuse by adding the following brief narrative for the sake of illustration:--

This monk had led a vagrant life in France, in forgetfulness of his vow, and in the indulgence of his low desires. At last he came to this kingdom, and attempted to persuade all men that he had a perfect understanding of the Art of Alchemy, which he said he had obtained from a certain " Book of Recipes." He was desirous of achieving a mighty deed, which should hand down the glory of his name to posterity, and for ever establish his reputation in this island. He was always thinking how he should spend the vast wealth which (he thought) he would soon be able to procure. At last he said to himself: " Behold, I know where I shall find a faithful man, who can aid me in this matter, and help me to the fulfilment of my wish: which is, to erect in a glorious manner on Salisbury Plain, fifteen magnificent Abbeys in a short space of time, and each within a mile of the other." In pursuance of this design, the monk came to me, and laid open his whole plan, at the same time requesting me to assist him with my counsel. I have promised before the shrine of Saint James not to divulge his name; but yet I may without prejudice to my vow speak about his foolish undertaking. After telling me of his proficiency in this glorious Art, he said that he wanted nothing but an opportunity of labouring for the King's good, and permission from the Council to buy land for the aforesaid Abbeys. As to the expense, he said it would be easy for him to make it good. But he was in great doubt, where, from whom, and how he was to purchase the land. After listening to the exposition of his lofty design, I desired to test his learning and his knowledge of scholastic science; and I found that in these branches of attainment he was sadly to seek. Yet I contained myself, and kept my own counsel, in order that I might learn more about his designs. So I told him that the matter was not of sufficient importance to be laid before the King, for everyone would look upon the same as an idle tale, if no proof of his pretensions was forthcoming. The monk answered that he had in the fire a substance which would supply

him with all that he needed, and that within forty days he could triumphantly demonstrate to me the truth of his words. I replied that I would not now press him any further, but that I would wait the allotted time. But when the date which he had fixed arrived, the monk's science evaporated, and all his Abbeys and lofty designs vanished into thin air; as the impostor had come, so he departed, not without great shame and confusion. But shortly afterwards I heard that he had deceived many kind-hearted people, and had then again returned to France. It seemed a great pity that fifteen abbeys seats of religion, sanctity, and learning, should so unceremoniously have vanished with him ! It was also wonderful that such a man could have deluded himself into the belief that he could erect fifteen abbeys, while he himself could not live true to his vow of obedience, and must needs wander about as an apostate vagabond for the purpose of obtaining a knowledge of this sacred Art. But I have already repeatedly said that just because it is sacred, no false or deceitful person can attain to it. In order to illustrate my meaning, I will now add another example. There was a man who thought that he was as deeply versed in this Art as Raymond Lullius or Friar Bacon, for which reason he was so presumptuous as to call himself peerless. He was the priest of a small town, not far from the city of London, and was thought by others to have little skill in preaching. This man felt sure that he had discovered the secret of our Art, and so, in order to advance his fame, he formed the design of throwing a bridge over the Thames for the benefit of travellers, and for the convenience of the whole neighbourhood. But nothing would serve him but he must set up a grand and lofty structure which should compel the admiration of all beholders. It was to have towers covered with flaming gold, and its pillars were to be such as had never been seen before. He frequently spoke of the new thing which he was going to accomplish, for his bridge was to be seen far and wide by night, and was to endure for ever; its glory was never to grow dim. Then he revolved different plans in his mind concerning the best manner of carrying out his design. At first he thought that flaming torches would answer his purpose, and elaborated a plan of setting them up in sufficient numbers. But soon he was seized with a fear that after his

death the trustees of his benefaction might neglect the torches, and apply the money allotted to that purpose in some other way, Thus he at length arrived at the conclusion that it would be best to light up his bridge by night with great flaming gems and carbuncles, such as should be visible far and wide, and radiate their splendour in all directions. But here again he was troubled with new misgivings, where such carbuncles could be found, and where he should meet with wise and reliable men, who would travel through all the countries of the world, and procure for him a sufficient number of these jewels. These thoughts caused him so much anxiety, that he wasted away to a mere shadow. All this time, of course, he was firmly persuaded that he had found the true secret of our Art. But when the year came to an end, his Art and all his substance vanished with it; for he had opened his glass vessel and found that it contained neither gold nor silver. Then he flew into a great passion, and cursed himself in the bitterness of his heart. For he had spent all his wealth, and passed the rest of his life in poverty. What more shall I say about him ? His case speaks for itself.

When learned scholars and those who frequent the schools hear of the melancholy fate of these foolish persons, they ought to take warning, and remember that the same things may happen to themselves, if they are not constantly on their guard. For many of them are but too ready lightly to receive all conclusions, however false, if they only find them boldly asserted in books. This easy and unquestioning confidence may bring in its train poverty and vexation of spirit. The hope afforded by such teaching is an empty delight and a veritable fools' paradise. But the true sons of our Art stay their hope on God alone, since they know that without Him everything is a delusion and a failure, for they know that a man who has not the Beginning of all Knowledge cannot conduct his enquiry to a successful end. No man, O God, can comprehend without Thee, and though the exposition of the Art be uttered in his ears, without Thee it is but idle breath to him! Of Thee, O God, comes all blessed and successful effort! Thou art of all good things both the beginning and the end. Now I have told you something of the joy which is caused by the vain hopes of foolish enquirers; hear now also about the sorrow, of which this Art has been

a source to many whose hopes have been grievously disappointed.

The first cause of sorrow is to see and realize that among the many who seek this Art only few ever find it, and that no one can attain this knowledge unless he be taught before he begins; and he is truly learned, and finely endowed, who can apprehend it by the teaching of another. The subtle shades of natural differences must be well known to the man who desires to be initiated in the most profound secret of the universe; and no form of words can be so accurate as to safeguard the learner against error. For many who have now departed this life have gone widely astray before they finally succeeded in their search after our Stone. Either at the very outset, or at a later stage of the work, all are liable to error, until they are enlightened by the teaching of experience, and hit upon the proper regulation of heat and cold. Nobody is more liable to error in respect to this matter than your bold and over-confident enquirer. Nobody sooner mars our work, than he who is in too great a hurry to complete it. The man who would bring this matter to perfection, should set about it cautiously and heedfully. The most grievous circumstance connected with our Art, is that if you make a mistake in any part of it, you have to do it all over again from the very beginning. Anyone who gives himself up to this search must therefore expect to meet with much vexation of spirit. He will frequently have to change his course in consequence of new discoveries which he makes. His experiments will often turn out failures, his mind will often be in a state of doubt and perplexity; and thus he will continue to be vexed by conflicting results, until at length he reaches the goal of his desire. Again, let me tell you a little more about the sorrows and troubles of the Alchemist, which may considerably moderate your desire to acquire the practice of this Art. At first it is most difficult, as the Sages say, to find out among so many impostors, the man who has a perfect understanding of our science. And when you have found a truly learned master, you have not yet by any means left all your trouble far behind you. If your mind is devoted to virtue, the Devil will do his utmost to frustrate your search by one or the other of three stumbling blocks,

namely, haste, despair, or deception. For he is afraid of the good works which you may do if you succeed in mastering this secret. The first danger lies in undue haste, which destroys and mars the work of many. All authors who have written about this Art, agree in saying, like the author of the little book of "The Philosopher's Feast," that undue haste is of the Devil. Hence he will the soonest make an end who tarries a little at the beginning; and those who act otherwise will discover to their cost the truth of the proverb which says that: "The greater haste we make, the less will be our speed." For he who is in a hurry will complete his work neither in a month, nor yet in a year; and in this Art it will always be true that the man who is in a hurry will never be without matter of complaint. Rest assured also that haste will precipitate you from the pinnacle of truth. It is the Devil's subtlest device to ensnare us; for this haste is an *ignis-fatuus* by which he causes us to wander from the right path. The man who has found grace stoutly sets his face against hurry; he does so as a matter of habit, for in a moment of time haste may mar your whole work. Therefore be on your guard against hurry, accounting it as a device of the Devil. Time will not allow me to caution you with sufficient vehemence of feeling against habits of hurried work. Many pierce themselves through with sharp sorrows, because they are always in a hurry, and full of impatience to reach the goal, which comes about through the temptation of Satan. I will say no more about hurry, but blessed is he who possesses patience. If the enemy does not prevail against you by hurry, he will assault you with despondency, and will be constantly putting into your minds discouraging thoughts, how those who seek this Art are many, while they are few that find it, and how those who fail are often wiser men than yourself. He will then ask you what hope there can be of your attaining the grand arcanum; moreover, he will vex you with doubts, whether your master is himself possessed of the secret which he professes to impart to you; or whether he is not concealing from you the best part of that which he knows. The Evil One will endeavour to fill your mind with these doubts, in order to turn you from your purpose by diffidence and despondency. Nor will anything avail against his assaults, except the calm confidence inspired

by virtue, and the sound conclusions of reason. Your fears will be scattered to the winds if you quietly consider the high character of your master and teacher; nor need you despair if you can call to mind that he was induced to instruct you by love, and by no selfish motive. It is difficult indeed to trust a man who offers you his services; for such a person stands more in need of you than you of him. But if your master be such a man as I have directed you to seek, and if he has waited for you to come to him, you ought to be strongly armed against the shafts of distrust. If your master be at all such a man as mine was, you can have no excuse for doubting him, for mine was noble and true, a lover of justice, and an enemy to deceit. Moreover, he was a good keeper of his secret, and when others ostentatiously displayed their knowledge, he held his peace as if he knew nothing. When others talked in his presence about the colours of the rose, he would listen in grave and impenetrable silence. Him I attended during many years; but he would not impart to me anything of moment, until he had made me submit to many tests for the purpose of proving my disposition; and when he had found me faithful and true, and had seen the great hope which I had conceived in my mind, I obtained favour in his eyes through the will of God, and his heart inclined to me. When at length he thought that I should not be put off any longer -- since my scholarly attainments and the generous aspiration of my soul had moved his heart, and made it go out to me -- he took up his pen, and wrote to me as follows: " My faithful friend and beloved brother, I am constrained to accede to your request, as no other person like you will ever come to me. The time has arrived for you to receive this favour of me on account of your manly character and firm faith, your approved virtue and wisdom your truthfulness, love, and perseverance, your constancy, and the generous aspiration of your soul. This your excellent mental condition I will now reward, to your lasting solace and comfort, by divulging to you the mighty secret. For this purpose it is necessary to converse with you by word of mouth if I laid open to you the secret in writing, I should be violating my oath. Hence it is necessary that we should meet, and when you come, I will make you the heir of my Art, and depart from

this land You shall be my brother and my heir in respect of this grand secret, which is the despair of the learned. For this reason give thanks to God for this message: it is better than to become heir-apparent to a crown. For only those whom God has chosen next to His own heavenly saints, ever receive this Art by which He is so highly honoured. I will write no more to you at the present time: mount on horseback, and come to me without delay. " When I had perused these lines, I set out at the very same hour, and at once hastened to my master, though the distance exceeded a hundred miles. I continued with him forty days, and learned all the secrets of Alchemy (although before I had understood philosophy as well as any other person in the kingdom). Yet it would be foolish to suppose that the work itself can be completed within forty days: I say that I was fully instructed within that time, but the work itself requires a longer period. Then all that had been dark became as clear as the light, when I beheld the secret gates of Nature unbarred; I saw so plainly the causes and the *rationale* of everything, that it was no longer possible for me to doubt or despair. If you are as fortunate in your master as I, you will never be assailed by despondency.

The third enemy against whom you must guard is deceit, and this one is perhaps more dangerous than the other two. The servants whom you must employ to feed your furnaces are frequently most untrustworthy. Some are careless, and go to sleep when they should be attending to the fire; others are depraved, and do you all the harm they can; others, again, are either stupid or conceited and over-confident, and disobey instructions; some have fingers retentive of other people's property, or they are drunken, negligent, and absent-minded. Be on your guard against all these, if you wish to be spared some great loss. If servants are faithful, they are generally stupid; those who are quick-witted, are generally also false; and it is difficult to say whether the deceitful or the stupid are the greater evil of the two. For when I had all my experiments in proper train, some thievish servants ran away with my materials and utensils, and left me nothing but the empty laboratory; and when I calculated the cost, time, and labour of beginning the work all over again, I had almost in the bitterness of my heart resolved to bid an

everlasting farewell to this Art of Alchemy. For it will hardly be believed how completely I had been stripped of all that I possessed, although ten trustworthy persons still survive to attest the fact. Indeed the blow was so great that it could hardly have been inflicted on me by human agency alone, without the instigation and co-operation of the Devil. I also made an Elixir of Life, of which a merchant's wife bereft me, and I procured a quintessence, with many other precious preparations, but of all these things I was robbed by wicked men, and thus found, to my smart, that in the sweetest cup of this world's joy, there is a liberal infusion of bitterness. Let me tell you a little more of what has fallen under my observation, concerning the perplexities of this work. The calamity of which I am thinking happened to a good and godly man; and I am the only person that can give a true account of it.

Thomas Dalton, a devout and religious servant of God, possessed a larger quantity of the Red Medicine than has ever been obtained by any other Englishman. Now a certain knight of King Edward's household, named Thomas Herbert, dragged this Dalton forth by violence from an abbey in Gloucestershire, and brought him before the King, where he was confronted with Delvis. For Dalton had been scribe (secretary) to this William Delvis, and Delvis had told the King about Dalton's skill in this Art. Delvis was a faithful servant, who always stood in the presence of King Edward, and he deposed that within an hour Dalton had made for himself one thousand pounds sterling of gold, fully equal to that of the royal coin: and he confirmed his testimony by a most sacred oath upon the Bible. Then Dalton looked full upon Delvis, and said: " O Delvis, thou hast perjured thyself! Thou hast foully broken the pledge thou gavest me, and hast betrayed me even as Judas betrayed his Master." " I did, indeed," rejoined Delvis, " once swear to thee that I would not betray thy secret; yet I do not consider myself as guilty of perjury, since the service of my King and country release me from my oath." Then Dalton soberly answered him thus: " This subterfuge does not excuse thy perjury; for if it did, how could the King himself trust thee, who hast confessed thy perjury in his presence ? And," he continued, turning to His Majesty, " I do admit that I possessed this Medicine for a long

time; but at length it was only a source of grief and anxiety to me -- and therefore after retiring to that abbey from which I was brought hither, I throw it into a tidal river which is daily renewed by the ebb and flow of the sea. Thus as much wealth has been lost as would have sufficed for the outfit and support of twenty thousand knights, who might have been willing to go forth and recover the Holy Sepulchre. For the love of God, I kept this Medicine many years, in order that through its means I might succour a King who should undertake this expedition. But as this sacred duty was forgotten, the Medicine is now irrecoverably lost." The King replied that it was a foolish act to destroy so wonderful a treasure, and demanded that Dalton should prepare some more of the Medicine. " No," said Dalton, " that can never be." " Why not ? " enquired the King. " How did you obtain it ? " Dalton replied that he had received it from a learned Canon of Lichfield, whose works he had diligently attended to during many years, until at length the Canon had bequeathed to him as much of the Medicine as he had ever possessed. Then the King gave Dalton four marks, with liberty to depart withersoever he desired; and, at parting, he expressed his grief and concern that he had not known Dalton before. But as it often happens that the worst tyrants are found in the retinues of kings, so Herbert now caused Dalton to be seized, robbed of the money which the King had given him, and carried off to Stepney, where he detained him a long time. Thence Dalton was conveyed by Herbert to a castle in Gloucestershire, cast into the dungeon thereof, and kept close prisoner for four years, during which period he was tormented by Herbert in every conceivable manner. At length he was led forth to execution, and when he saw the ministers of death, he said: " O blessed Lord Jesus, I have been separated from Thee too long: Thou didst give me this knowledge, and I have used it without overweening pride. I have not been able to find a fit person to whom I might have bequeathed my wisdom. Therefore, dearest Lord, I now resign Thy gift into Thy own hands." Then he poured forth a devout prayer, and thereupon turned to the executioner and said, with a smile, " Now thou mayest work thy will."

When Herbert heard these words, his eyes filled with tears,

because neither deceit, imprisonment, nor death could induce his victim to yield up the precious secret; and he bade his servants let the old man go, as his obstinacy was not to be overcome. Then Dalton arose, looked about him with sadness and disappointment depicted in his countenance, and departed with a heavy heart; for he had no desire to live even another year. This injury happened to him through the greed and cruelty of godless men. Herbert died not long after, and Delvis lost his life at Tewkesbury. Such are the sufferings which they who aspire to a knowledge of this Art, must lay their account with having to bear. Yet we also see how the greed of wicked men over-reaches itself. For if Herbert had treated Dalton with kindness and gentleness, instead of with cruelty, insolence, and violence, much advantage might have been reaped not only by the King, but also by the entire commonwealth. Yet we need not wonder that gracious means were not used, for sin reigns everywhere in this kingdom. Otherwise, the people might have obtained great relief from rates and taxes, and much money might have been bestowed in charity among knights, priests, and the common people. Hence we may learn that profligate violence is incapable of acquiring wisdom; for virtue and vice are contrary the one to the other, and men abandoned to the one cannot receive the reward of the other. If vicious persons could gain a full knowledge of this Art, their overbearing insolence would grow unendurable, and their ambition would overleap all bounds; they would by its means become worse men than they were before. Now this chapter respecting the delights and sufferings of our Art is finished. The next will declare the Matter of our Stone.

CHAPTER III.

Tonsilus had been engaged in the momentous search during more than sixty years. Bryan, too, and Halton, in the western parts, had been employed day and night in practical experiments; yet they did not find this noble science, because they did not know the Matter and root of the Art, but sought it by a mistaken method, until they had wasted their lives and goods. They were put to great expense, loss, and suffering, by the recipes according to which they worked. Then Tonsil

complained to me with tears that he was in great bitterness of soul, because he had spent the better part of his life on false receipts, vile substances, herbs, gums, roots, and grasses, of which he enumerated many species, as, for instance, crowfoot, celandine, mezerion, lunaria, and martagon -- also upon hair, eggs vervein, excrements, and urine -- upon antimony, arsenic, honey, wax, and wine -- on quicklime, vitriol, marchasita, and all kinds of minerals -- on amalgams, albifications, and citrinations. All had been reduced to nothing by his operations; for he had not well considered his purpose, and the due proportions of natural truth. After he had failed with all these substances he thought nothing could be better than to operate on human blood, until I told him that by a fierce fire blood was destroyed, and converted into smoke. Then he besought me by the love of Christ to declare to him the true substance of the Stone. " Tonsil," I replied, " what good would it do an old man like you ? Renounce this pursuit and give yourself up to prayer; for that is what your time of life requires. If you did know the substance of our Stone, you would fall a victim to old age before you could prepare it." But he bade me not to trouble myself about what might be the result to himself. " It would be a comfort to me at least to know the substance of the Stone which I have sought so long." " Tonsil," I said, " your request is more easily made than granted. For all the authors who deal with this subject write about it in obscure language, and not one of them declares it plainly; nay, they beseech God to remove them suddenly out of this world, if they ever write books about the grand secret. For many of them have been fearful of committing to paper more than was right about this science; and not one of them has given more than one or two plain hints respecting it. They did not write with the object of divulging their secret to the world, but in an obscurely allusive style, in order that they might be able to recognize those who understood their meaning as brothers and fellow adepts. Hence you must not be content with reading only one book, but you should study a variety of authors; because, according to the learned Arnold, one book opens up the understanding of another. The same thought is expressed by the learned Anaxagoras, who testifies that if a man will not take the trouble of reading many books,

he can never attain to a practical knowledge of our Art. But though I may not reveal to you for the sake of charity what has never yet been plainly set forth by the brethren of our Art, I may at least give you some comfort by answering as straightforwardly as I can, any questions which you may like to put to me." " Good Master," he replied, " tell me truly whether the substance be Sun (gold) and Mercury, or Sun and Moon (silver), or whether these three must be taken together; or whether it be Gold by itself, or Mercury by itself, or whether Sulphur with these two be the substance of the Stone? Or, is salt of ammonia nearer the truth, or is some other mineral the right thing to use in our Art ? " " The questions you have put, Tonsil, are wisely and astutely conceived nevertheless, you have not named the substance, except generically. For you must take a part of these, and of other things at various times, according to the requirements of the Art. Divers things are used in the preparation of our Stone, but there are two materials, and only one Stone. Between the two there is the same difference as that between a mother and her offspring; or, looking at the matter from another point of view, the difference resembles that which exists between male and female. These two substances will furnish you with all that you need. As for the white Tincture, if you are wise, one of these you shall find to be a Stone, which is rightly named, because, like a stone, it is indestructible by fire. Yet it is not like a stone to the touch or the sight, but is a fine earthy powder, of a dull red. In its separate form we call it our ground litharge; at first it is brown and ruddy, and then of a whitish colour. It is called our chosen Marcasite, and one ounce of it is worth more than fifty pounds. Yet is it not sold in the cities of Christendom, but he who desires it, must either get it made by someone else, or prepare it himself. There is this advantage concerning it, that to make it once well dispenses with all need of repeating the task. Ancient writers call it a thing of small price, because it is lightly esteemed by the merchants, and no one that finds it cares to pick it up, any more than if it were an ounce of dirt. Few will believe that it is a pearl of great price, for it is known to none but the wise. Thus have I laid bare to you a great secret, more plainly than any of the dead masters. Then,

Tonsilus, you must also have another Stone, or else you want your principal material. This Stone is most glorious, fair, and bright. It is sold as a stone, and looks like a stone of singular transparency and brilliance. One ounce of it may, in most places, be obtained for about twenty shillings. Its name is Magnesia, but its real nature is known to few. It is found on the tops of the highest mountains, and in the lowest depths of the earth Plato knew its properties and called it by its name. Chaucer says, in the Canon's Tale, that it is called Dytanos, thus defining an obscure term in language still more hopelessly obscure; but it is impossible to understand a thing if for one unintelligible term another still less intelligible is substituted. Nevertheless, my Tonsilus, I will endeavour to explain to you the meaning of Magnesia in our own tongue. *Magos* is Greek, and is equivalent to the Latin *mirabile*; *aes* is money, *ycos*, science, A is God; that is to say, it is a matter in which much divine knowledge is involved. Now you know what Magnesia is -- it is *res aeris*, and in it lies hidden a wonderful and divine secret. These two stones, my Tonsilus, you must take as your materials for the preparation of the Elixir. Although at first no further materials are needed, yet, as I have already hinted, divers other things are of great use in our Art. The great secret was never before so plainly expounded. But take my explanation in all its fulness; and I will pray God, lest my excess of frankness be reckoned to me for a crime -- for I fear that I have suffered my pen to run riot. Though few may understand what I have said, yet there are some students of this Art so subtle, cunning, and keen-witted, that still fewer data would suffice to them for the discovery of all that we know. Nevertheless, God shall provide that none shall find it except the man of a pure and virtuous life. It was with this end in view that the ancient writers concealed with so much solicitude the matters of our Stone, which I have here declared. You need no other substances but these two for the preparation of the white Stone, except salt of ammonia, and that kind of sulphur which is extracted from metals. These two substances suffice for the fulfilment of your desire; none but these two finally abide the test of the fire. Sulphur is burned, and loses its colour. But our Litharge is indestructible. Do not set about with any

metal or quicksilver. If you destroy its whole composition, some of its component parts will be of use to you. But the principal substances are the two which I have mentioned, namely, Magnesia and Litharge, its brother."

CHAPTER IV.

I will not attempt to escape from the task which I have undertaken to expound the great work: I will instruct you as fully as possible in this secret, and all my endeavour shall be to make known to you the truth. As far as I may do so without prejudice to my vow, I will be your guide, and shew you the way to the goal of your desire. If you consider into what a state of obscurity and confusion the different parts of this work have been wilfully thrown by the old writers, you will understand the difficulty of my task. None of them has declared more than one point of our experiment, and for this reason their writings, even if you understand them, will not enable you to practise the Art yourself. Arnold testifies in his books that the central secret of our Art is to know the substance on which it is based; and in his work "Multifary," where he shews how pure and simple essences are to be recognised, he says that our fundamental matter is of two kinds; but he does not tell us how they are to be found. Their names you have already learned in the last chapter. Friar Bacon dwells more fully on this point, where he says: "Divide all parts into their cognate elements. For the unearned do not proceed in this way; but they continue pertinaciously and senselessly to add more and more to a divisible substance -- and while they fancy that they are on the point of bringing to perfection the flower of our Art, all that they really effect is the multiplication of error." In this passage Bacon, like his predecessors, appears fearful of saying too much. Perhaps you also remember what Avicenna says, in his "Gate": "You must go forward to perfection by true teaching in accordance with the facts of Nature: you must eat to drink, and drink to eat, and in the mean season be covered with perspiration." Rhasis expresses himself to the same effect, but warns us against suffering the matter to consume its food too quickly: "Let it assimilate its aliment little by little." Of this rule the Prophet also makes mention, if you rightly comprehend his meaning: "Thou hast

visited the earth," he says, " and watered it: Thou hast multiplied its wealth: the fruitful land hast Thou turned into a dry place, and the arid land into a river of water." When it has plenty of meat and drink, it is needful to watch at a time when the body craves sleep. For our labour demands constant vigils and great diligence, and it must be nourished and fed with precious substances. " Therefore let all poor men eschew this experiment," says Arnold, " as this Art is for the rich of this world "-- and I myself can attest to ail poor men the truth of these words. " Moreover," he continues, " let the enquirer be patient and of an even temper, for those who are in a hurry will never reach the goal." The length of time required for the purification of the substance, is a stone of stumbling to many who will not believe in it. I advise you, therefore, ye poor, not to attempt the solution of this mystery, but to stay your hands before it is too late. One fourth of an ounce too much or too little may in a single hour mar and destroy the labour of weeks. The substance you must prepare with gentle heat, and so long as there is no violent effervescence, you may keep it over the fire: you should gradually consume it by gentle coction, but it must not be suffered to throw up great bubbles, as such a course would be indicative of haste. Gentleness and patience will mark out to you the safest method, and enable you to avoid the manifold dangers which beset the enquirer's path. One of the most difficult experiments in the gross work, is the classification of our intermediate minerals. The different media that are used must all be in a highly purified state, if the work is to be brought to a successful conclusion. For the pure and impure, the mature and immature, are by nature violently opposed to each other; that which is fixed naturally adheres to fixed substances, and volatile substances are sympathetically attracted by that which is volatile. Everywhere Nature strives to produce harmony by drawing like to like. Now you will find our gross work to be generically impure; and it is a matter of great difficulty and danger, requiring the utmost wisdom of the wise, and confounding the folly of the ignorant. to purge our Substance from all foreign matter. The learned as well as the simple are often led astray at this point, and prove the truth of the saying of Anaxagoras, that all men need to be taught discretion by bitter experience.

Once I heard a wise man say that, at the present time, magnesia (in a pure state) is sold in Catalonia, together with the other intermediate minerals, so that the hands of a fastidious man need now no longer be defiled with this dirty work; and if this were really true, both the commencement and the consummation of your work would be a much easier matter than it is under ordinary conditions. For if you are compelled to do all that I have had to accomplish, you will be wearied out before you reach the work proper. The work of the Sages does not begin until all substances are pure, both without and within. Let us remember that as we are seeking a tincture which imparts perfection to all things else, we must remove from it all that is foul and vile. Of the different media, each has its own properties, and its own function to perform, according to its essential nature; of those media by which our experiment is advanced, some are of their own nature helpful, and others are harmful. Our Apothecaries do not understand the secret of their preparation, and we refuse to instruct them, because we know that they would adulterate them (for the purpose of deceiving their customers) rather than take diligent and conscientious pains to let their drugs be genuine and pure. It is their practice (as I know by bitter experience) to ask a high price, and to furnish an untrustworthy article. If a man would have materials on which he may rely, he must not be afraid of soiling his own hands, nor must he shun expense, though it may swallow up all his hoarded wealth. In the gross work that man is furthest from the goal who is in too great a hurry to reach it. If our great work, with all that belongs to it, could be accomplished in three years, artists might account themselves fortunate; for when it has once been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, there is no need to undertake it a second time, if indeed one is skilled in the art of augmenting his medicine; and the attainment of this skill is one of the great objects of our Magistry. There is no need for me to name in this place the different minerals which are required, seeing that Albertus has most fully discussed this point. I might say much about the properties of minerals; but the discussion would prove barren of results in the advancement of our Art. One of the most important conditions of success is the mechanical skill in the manipulation

of experiments; in regard to these it is possible to go astray in a thousand ways, the path being beset with all but insurmountable difficulties at every step. Therefore, believe that which the ancient writers tell us -- that nothing can be rightly done without experience. Consider all circumstances, and take care to secure uniformity in all that is required. Use one vessel which is simple both in material and in shape; beware of one made of mixed material, lest some accident happen at a critical moment. This general admonition will save me the trouble of laying down, and you the trouble of remembering, a hundred special cautions; and this instruction may suffice for him who is wisely intent on the practice of our Art. If your servants are faithful and true, you will be able to carry out your experiments without constant vexation. Therefore, if you would be free from all fear, over the gross work, follow my counsel, and never engage married men; for they soon give in and pretend that they are tired out, as I can assure you from my own experience. Hire your workmen for certain stipulated wages, and .not for longer periods than twenty-four hours at a time. Give them higher wages than they would receive elsewhere, and be prompt and ready in your payments. For your kindness will stir up in their hearts love and reverence, and a spirit of zeal in the conduct of the work committed to them; for they know withal that they are liable to be discharged at once if they are negligent in your service. Married men will not agree to be engaged for such short periods; therefore, give them a wide berth. If I had known and acted on this principle before, I might have been spared much loss and vexation. In the pursuit of our Art, you must preserve at all times your liberty of action; and you should also take care, from time to time, to unbend your mind from its sterner employments with some convenient recreation; otherwise your spirits might be weighed down with melancholy and despair, and you might lose heart for the continuation of your work. There is no need to add much to this chapter, for the ancient writers have already fully set forth all that I have not yet touched upon. But that which they have omitted is most plainly expounded in this Book. Hence it is called the Ordinal of Alchemy, the supplement of all other works on the subject. The following chapter is for the initiated, and

shews all the rules to be observed in the subtle part of the work.

CHAPTER V.

When Briseus was a money-changer, he caused loss to many persons, but to others his dealings were a source of delight and joy; and as this fact seemed at the time a wonder and marvel to all who heard of it, so in our own time -- not so very long ago -- an almost miraculous event was observed to take place: within the short space of ten days the same bed in a house near Leaden hall was successively occupied by three Masters of this Art, every one of whom possessed both the white and the red Tincture; though hardly one person amongst a million of men ever becomes possessed of the glorious prize. One of them, as I was told, was from the Duchy of Lorraine, the second hailed from the Midland Counties of England, the third was the youngest, and was born near a Cross, which stands at the boundary of three shires. Wise men had foretold from the conjunction of planets that prevailed at his birth, that he would be an ornament to England. Anyone might travel through the length and breadth of Europe without meeting with three such Masters. Two of them are about to depart, but the third will remain and do much good in this part of the world. Nevertheless, the sins of our rulers will delay the good which otherwise he might confer upon our country at once. The oldest of the three Masters prophesied concerning this young adept, that he would have to endure much suffering at the hands of those who owed him the greatest debt of gratitude. He also uttered many other prophecies, some of which were verified by the event, while the rest remain to be fulfilled. " One thing is most certain," he said, " after great sorrow there will be great joy in all parts of this country -- joy which will be experienced by all good men." The youth enquired when this thing should be, and the old man's answer was that it should come to pass when the Cross was honoured by night and by day in the land of God, and the land of Light: which thing will happen in due time, but is delayed by the greivous wickedness of men. But when the blessed hour arrives, this Art will be revealed to a King; and more glorious things will then be brought to pass

than it is possible for us to enumerate in this place, when he shall have reformed our manners and abolished all abuses. He will investigate this science in secret, and will be instructed in it by hermits, or monks. So King Calid, in his time of need, sought this knowledge of many, until it was imparted to him by Morienus, who succoured the King with his counsel, being removed thereto by his nobleness and virtue. But now we will speak of this subject no longer, but proceed to give an account of the subtle work. He that would understand it must be deeply learned. He should know elementary philosophy if he wishes to study Alchemy.

Now, let me tell you who are intent upon this Art, that when materials have by preparation been rendered fit for generation, they must by division be separated into four elements. If you cannot do this, go and learn of Hortulanus, who has written a special treatise on the subject -- in which treatise he shews how to divide wine into its elements. Moreover, you should know the effects of the four qualities -- heat, cold, moisture, and dryness -- of which all things are composed; and because in this Art you are specially desirous of obtaining a colour which abides the fire, you ought also to know, before you set about its production, how colours are generated. For every colour that can be named is seen in our work, before the white colour appears. Moreover, you must be able to melt your substance easily, like wax or gum. Otherwise, according to the Masters, it could not enter or penetrate metals. The substance should be both fixed and fluxible, and have abundance of colour. To conjoin these three contraries in one substance, is the great secret of our Art. Nevertheless, an apt learner may find it expounded in this chapter. And first -- to speak as briefly and concisely as possible concerning the aforesaid four primary qualities: heat and cold are active qualities; moisture and dryness, on the other hand, are qualities of a passive kind. For the latter are always passively subject to the former, as, for instance, stones when they become lime, and water when it is changed to ice. Whence you may easily see that nothing is fully wrought except by heat and cold. Yet the passive qualities have some power, as we find every day in mechanical operations, in the baking of bread, the brewing of beer, and other processes

brought about by the operation of moisture and dryness Aristotle, in his physical treatise, and many others, say that from action proceeds knowledge; thus they call practice the source and root of speculation and of all science. For the properties of all things are perceived by watching their operations, as, from the colour of urine we hear physicians draw conclusions in regard to the excess or lack of animal heat in the body. By means of those four primary qualities, we study the colours in the due order of their succession. But we can have no real assurance respecting the white colour, except in a very pure substance. You will be materially assisted in your task by a knowledge of the way in which colours are daily generated. Colour is the extremity of every transparent body; a clear substance is here beautifully consummated. If dryness dominates in a dry substance, its colour will most certainly be white. Of this fact you may convince yourself by ocular proof in the case of burned bones, or of quicklime made of stones. Where cold prevails in a moist and clear substance, a white colour will be the result, as is seen in the case of ice, or water indurated by frost. The cause has already before been declared in our philosophy, but here I do not speak of common philosophy, but only adduce these facts in illustration of alchemistic principles. And indeed one fact explains another, as the offspring may be known by looking at its mother. If heat operates on a thick and moist substance, a black colour will be the result.

If you desire an illustration of this principle, you need only put some green wood on the fire. When cold is brought to bear on a thick and dry substance, the colour which is produced will be black. The reason is that the substance is compact and very thick, and under the influence of cold which is destructive of life, the thickness causes obscurity and absence of light; and negation of colour is blackness. Thus you may accept it for an universal fact that a clear substance is a white substance. The efficient cause is not always the same; it is sometimes heat, and sometimes it is cold. But blackness and whiteness (as every one knows) are the two extremes of colour. Hence your work must begin with blackness, if whiteness is its final perfection. Red -- as the Sages say -- is an intermediate colour between black and white. Nevertheless you may believe what I say: Red

is the final colour in Alchemy. The Sages also tell us that pink and orange are colours intermediate between white and red; and that green and grey are intermediate colours between red and black. Flesh colour is seen in very pure substances. Physicians have discovered nineteen colours intermediate between white and black in urine; of these colours one is whitish, like that of the onyx stone. Magnesia appears to partake of this colour -- though Magnesia throws out a mild, pure splendour in the subtle stage of our Art; and here we behold all colours that ever were seen by mortal eye -- a hundred colours, and certainly a good many more than have been observed in urine; and in all those colours our Stone must be found in all its successive stages. In the ordering of your practical experiments, and in conceiving the different parts of the work in your own mind, you must have as many phases, or stages, as there are colours. If you do not know the different stages of this Art, you will find them in Raymond's "General Exposition of Alchemy." Gilbert Kymer has indeed left us a fanciful book, in which he describes seventeen proportions. But they do not suffice for this science, of which he was never able to discover the true secret, though he was profoundly learned in Medicine. Such, however, is the strength of the human constitution, that it often overcomes disease in spite of the doctor's physic: and the physician's art is praised in many cases where his remedies had nothing to do with the cure, or even retarded it. But the case is different with respect to our mineral medicine; for our Art is raised far above all generations, and exists only in the wisdom of the Artist, as any wise man may discover by experience. Thus, the true foundation of Alchemy consists in the proper graduation of the work, and in the correct adjustment of heat and cold, moisture and dryness; also in the knowledge that through these qualities others are generated, such as hardness and softness, heaviness and lightness, roughness and smoothness -- according to the addition of these primary qualities in certain proportions of weight, number, and measure. Under these three categories we may range everything that God has made. For God has created and ordered all things in accordance with certain proportions of number, weight, and measure; and if you depart from these proportions, you destroy the harmony of Nature. It is therefore a

wise caution which is given by Anaxagoras, that we should not proceed to join together our elements, until we have discovered the exact proportion of weight in which all the elements are found in the substances with which we have to deal. Bacon says that the Ancients have concealed nothing except these proportions, respecting which they give us no information. For when they speak of proportions, they bewilder the student with the most contradictory assertions. If you wish to know the truth about these proportions, you may obtain it by studying the works of Albertus, Raymond, Bacon, and Anaxagoras the Elder. You must collect your knowledge from the pages of these four writers, as one of them by himself will not afford it. Though you understand the secret of joining the four qualities together into one cohesive whole, yet the more difficult task of combining the different elements still remains to be accomplished. A proper union has to be effected between earth and water on the one hand, and air and fire on the other. Though the third and the second are the most noble of all, yet the first and the fourth cannot be excluded. Earth is the most useful element, and that of which we have the greatest need. Here lies latent the possibility of growth and the power of generation; it is the earthy litharge of our Stone. Without it there can be no generation and no fixation thereof. For there is nothing fixed save earth alone; all the other elements are volatile. Daily experience teaches you that this is true of fire, water, and air. Fire is the cause of expansion, and renders the substance capable of permixtion; but the transparent splendour and beautiful colour are produced through the influence of air. Moreover, when air is condensed, it produces substances which are easily melted, such as wax, butter, and gum; these are liquefied by a very slight degree of heat. Water purifies by ablution, and causes mortifying things to revive. There is nothing wonderful in the multiplication of fire, and it is greatly inferior to the power of multiplication inherent in earth. For earth daily produces fresh herbs, while one spark of fire is miraculously enlarged only when it is fed with plenty of combustible matter. Fire and earth are the only elements that are capable of multiplication, and they cause the power of multiplication inherent in our Stone. Of this earth Albertus the Great says, that among all mineral substances

lithargyrium (which he describes at some length) is the most suitable for our white Elixir. We will now proceed to discuss the conjunction of the elements; and, on this point, we may lay down the following rules: (1) Combine your elements grammatically, in accordance with their own proper rules. These rules are the principal instruments for aiding the learned in this work: for the two greatest contraries upon earth are fixedness and volatility. All the grammarians of England and France cannot skill to teach you this concord. But this Ordinal can shew you where you may learn it, namely, in the book called *De Arbore*. (2) Join them together also after the manner of the rhetorician, with purified and ornate essences. Inasmuch as your tincture must be pure and fair, take pure earth, water, fire, and air. (3) In accordance with logical methods, combine such things as admit of a true and natural union. Many learned men, by neglecting this precept, have lost all their labour and pains. (4) Combine them also arithmetically, in accordance with those subtle natural proportions, of which little was known when Boëthius wrote: "Bind together the elements by numbers." (5) Combine your elements musically, for two reasons: first, on account of melody, which is based on its own proper harmonies. Join them according to the rules which obtain in music in the proportions which produce musical consonance; for these musical proportions closely resemble the true proportions of Alchemy, at least, as far as the more general aspects of our Art are concerned. Its more subtle proportions you must learn from the writings of Raymond and Bacon. Bacon discusses them allusively in his three Epistles. Raymond expounds them more fully in his General Treatise. Many who read his words think that they understand them, but they are deceived. (6) Combine your elements also by means of Astrology, that all their operations may prosper, and that the simple, rude, and unformed substance may, in due course of time, and in the proper order of its development, be brought to perfection through the blessed influences of the Stars. (7) The science of perspective (optics) also affords much help to those who labour in our noble Art; and it is materially advanced by many other sciences, (8) as, for instance, that science which deals with the plenum and the vacuum. But, as

far as this Art is concerned, we must regard as the mistress of all sciences, (9) the science of Natural Magic. Now, when the four elements have been wisely combined, and each thing ordered in its own proper degree, then we shall behold in the various stages of coction, a constantly shifting succession of colours, until perfection is attained. For the substance is wrought upon from within by the natural warmth, which is found to exist intellectually in our substance, though it can be neither seen, nor felt, nor handled. Its operation is known only to few. When this inward natural heat is stirred up by the influence of outward artificial heat, Nature, having once been roused into activity, will go on to operate, and produce the various changes which the substance has to undergo; and this is one cause, as the Sages will tell you, why so many colours are seen in our work. Many mistakes arise in the study of this Art through ignorance o! the difference between outward and inward heat. In order that you may know how these two kinds of heat ought to aid and stimulate each other, and which of the two ought to predominate in our work, you should be guided by the analogy of animate creation, and more especially by the analogy of the coction which goes on in the human body. It was well said by Morienus, that the generation of our Stone exhibits a wonderful analogy to the creation of man, in whom, says Raymond, the four degrees of the four complexions are found together. On account of the close analogy which exists between the generation of man and that of our Stone, it has been said that there are in this world only two microcosms -- man and our Stone.

Now, we have described the conjunction or digestion of the elements, and we proceed to give an account of the nutrition of our substance. There is a solid humour rendered firm by dryness, well mixed in all its degrees; and the passive qualities are generated in due mixture by inward and outward heat. Hence our digestion is nothing but perfection produced out of a substantial humour. You must pardon my using these expressions, which to the unlearned must appear obscure and meaningless; but this Art of Alchemy, like all other arts and sciences, has its own proper terminology, from which it is not safe for me to depart. Digestion is sometimes quickened by

outward cold, as you may see from the fact that in winter men take a larger quantity of food than in summer, when their heat is more intense. For cold drives heat inward and increases its action, giving it greater virtue and power of digestion than it had before. The digestive quality in our Art is the virtual heat of a digestive organism. Nevertheless, the warmth of a digestible substance is also instrumental in aiding digestion. Fever heat digests nothing. Baths may both aid and cause destruction. Digested (fermented) wine has more natural heat than must. Coagulation is not a substantial form, but only a passive state of some material substance. Moreover, you should know when the colours appear, that the principal agent in the substance is either heat, or cold, or moisture, or dryness. To recognise the principal agent at any given stage requires the practised eye of the Master, and a quick observation of the manner in which the colours arise. The principal agent obtains royal power over the four qualities, and during its temporary predominance assimilates them to its own nature. This change is discussed by Anaxagoras in his book entitled "Natural Conversion," and its *rationale* is also given by Raymond. The discernment of your principal agent is not by any means such a simple matter as you may suppose; I will attempt to teach it you by means of four signs or symptoms, viz., colour, taste, smell, and fluxibility. The colour of your substance may guide you in recognising its principal agent, because that colour which a glance at your vessel exhibits as predominant is caused by that quality which, for the time being, is the principal agent. Of course, you will be able to moderate any excessive action of this principal agent, if you are aware of its nature; and its nature I will now enable you to tell, by giving you an account of the causes whereby the different colours which appear in our Art are produced. Whiteness is the effect of transparency in any object. Blackness arises when the clearness of a dense body is obscured by the thickness of its constituent parts: it is produced out of an earthy substance by combustion, particularly when the heat causes a greater hardness of the atoms. By the mixture of the dense and obscure with the clear and pure, we obtain all the intermediate colours. Any clear and transparent body arises out of the substance of air and water condensed in purified earth which

does not destroy their transparency. If in such clear and transparent bodies you do not perceive any special shades of colour, you may confidently conclude that they are the effect of intense cold, as is the case with the crystal, beryl, and other formations which you may thus distinguish from each other: Crystal is aeriform water, and is clear, transparent, and fair; but where the aqueous element predominates, it is more obscure, as in the case of beryl, or ice. Where the substance is essentially dry, it is dense, hard, and obscure, as may be seen in the diamond, and other substances of a like nature. In a clear substance light causes a brilliancy such as we behold in Magnesia; and a watery vapour produced by heat is instrumental in the formation of such bodies. Such are the causes of transparency, and of the extreme colours. As to the intermediate colours, that of the ruby is caused by a thin smoke in a clear body, which happens when much light and brilliancy prevail in such a body; and it is more or less brilliant in proportion to the quantity of light. The amethyst comes next in glory after the ruby, its obscurity being greater, and its transparency less; the shining substance of the chalcedony stands next to beryl. Green, or the colour of the emerald, is formed of pure water, mixed with a burned earthy substance, and the greater the transparency of the earth, the more marked is also the brilliant green of the emerald. Yellow is generated out of water and earth, and has the clearness of air dimmed by the obscurity of black vapour. Grey, or lead colour, is the result of and union of watery and earthy elements, and where these atoms are cold and dense, the grey colour is more intense, as is seen in very old lead; or in persons at the point of death. This colour is called livid, and is frequent in men of an envious disposition. It concentrates the natural colour and the blood in the heart, for the purpose of comforting it, and leaves the face cold and dry, as it has been forsaken by its warmth and blood. In the same way, when fevers have reached an extreme point, the finger nails are of a livid hue. The colour of the sapphire is an orient blue, not unlike that of the celestial firmament, and fairer to behold than the colour of lead, because it contains more air, water, and light. Moreover, the colour of the sapphire is esteemed more precious than other shades of light blue, which are more obscure because they contain more earth and

less air. Silver may easily be converted into the colour of the lazulite, because the transparency of the silver, produced by air, has a tendency to become assimilated to the colour of the sky; and the abundance of quicksilver which it contains, causes the brilliancy of the silver, while the splendour of the quicksilver, in its turn, is produced by subtle earth, pure water, and clear air. The orange colour, the shade of yellow which appears in gold, is a pleasing colour, and by many is even considered charming; it is generated by a strong and vigorous digestion, as its aqueous elements are exposed to a high degree of heat, which is seen in honey, urine, gall, and lye. The yellow colour of gold is the product of a pure and subtle water perspicuously condensed. For the more pure water is condensed, the more brilliant it becomes. The cause of a mirror is fixed humidity; and for this reason it is also smooth, because air receives no impressions, and is incapable of confining itself. It is the water which produces its clearness. If pure white and pure red be well mixed, the result is a beautiful orange colour. Thus all the different ways in which the elements may be combined, produce different colours in our substance, according to the different degrees of digestion. Observe well the proper colours of elements, that you may be the better able to judge of colours. Physicians say of certain herbs that they are cold without, and warm within at the root. If you wish for an illustration of this saying, observe the nature of fragrant violets. Common philosophy teaches us that the rose is cold within and red without. Anaxagoras says in his "Natural Changes," that the outward and the inward in all things are of a nature directly opposite to each other; and the rule holds true, except in the case of such things as are very plain and simple in their composition, as, for instance, the scammony and laurel, that do not nourish like vegetables. Bear in mind that in every mixture, one of the elements will strive to obtain the mastery. This insolent and greedy disposition is found in man, as in all things beside. But all sorts and conditions of men are placed on a footing of equality by death, which is God's means of laying low men of high degree, and of shewing the vanity of all ambitious thoughts and desires. Kings and beggars find their common level in the grave. It is thus that you must treat your principal agent, if it overleaps the proper bounds of equality.

In this sense Aristotle says: " Let there be perfect equality in the composition of your Stone, in order that unprofitable strife may be avoided." Let there be all the colours which we have enumerated, in their proper order, and then suffer Nature to bring about the process of generation in her own way, till among this great variety of colours one is found to predominate, which resembles the colour you are seeking to discover. In this way you may make use of the colours for the purpose of guiding you in this work. I might say much more about colours; but what has been said constitutes a satisfactory fulfilment of my promise, and will teach you how far the various colours may be made to serve your purpose in recognising your principal agent. Many learned men indeed will justly wonder that so great a variety of colours should appear in our Stone before the final stage of permanent and immutable whiteness is reached, seeing that the ingredients seem to be so few and simple. But I will explain the mystery in a few words: Those colours are due to the properties of magnesia, the nature of which is capable of change into any proportion and degree, just as crystal, for instance, exhibits the colour of any substance which is placed under it. Hence it is well and generously said by Hermes that " for performing the miracles of one thing, God has so ordained it that out of one thing all these marvels should spring forth." For this reason common philosophers cannot find this virtuous Stone, because it transcends their comprehension.

The sense of smell will also furnish you with indications whereby you may recognise the predominant element; and, in conjunction with the indications afforded by colour, it will teach you where to look for the principal agent. Now as white and black are the two extremes of colour, so stench and fragrance are the extremes of odour. But as fishes are incapable of distinguishing intermediate colours, because their eyes are without eye-lids and cannot be closed, so we cannot become aware of intermediate odours by the sense of smell, because our nostrils are incapable of being shut, like the eyes of fishes. On this account intermediate odours are not perceived by the nostrils as distinctly as intermediate colours are perceived by the eye. An unpleasant smell is not, in the opinion of the Sages, an intermediate smell, but only one less fetid. Yet they have noted it down in

their books as the result of their experience -- though I have no experimental knowledge of the fact -- that if you mix a sweet and fragrant odour with one of a penetratingly fetid character, the fragrant odour alone is smelt, while the fetid one is imperceptible; and the reason which they allege is that all fragrant things are more pure and spiritual than those which are fetid, and therefore penetrate the air more easily, and, being more grateful to the living organisms and more agreeable to nature, are more readily received than fetid smells. An odour is a vaporous steam dissolved by heat, of a substance resembling an exudation, which penetrates the air freely, and affects it and your sense of smell, as your palate is affected by food, your sense of hearing by sound, and your sense of sight by colour. Four things are required for the perfect apprehension of odours. First, it is necessary that a subtle substance should be affected by the operation of heat, and give out a vaporous similitude of itself, which evaporation must then be dispersed through thin, clear air, and act on the sense of smell. But this odorous vapour is not so readily given out by dense and hard substances which, like our Stone, are not easily affected by heat. Heat quickens odours, cold hinders them; manure is more fetid in summer than in winter. Grateful odours are generated out of a pure and vaporous substance, as in the case of ambergris, nard, and myrrh, which are specially pleasing to women. A pure substance under the influence of gentle heat, gives out moderate odours, such as the fragrance of violets; but when moderate heat acts on an impure substance, the result is a disagreeable odour, such as that of aloes and sulphur. When the natural heat of the substance is diminished, the fact is signalized by a most fetid smell, such as that of decomposed fish. Where a stench is produced by the putrefaction of natural heat, it is a vapour or steam issuing from decaying matter. If the juices only are corrupted, while the substance itself is not destroyed, the stench will be extremely disagreeable, yet not so fetid as in the former case. A putrid smell is caused only by the corruption of the substance itself. When an evil substance is decomposed, it gives out a horrible smell, and putrefying carcasses of human beings may often cause a pestilence. The smell of extinguished coals is destructive of health, and may occasion even a mare to miscarry.

When the qualities of a substance harmonize with your nature the odour will be pleasant; but if the substance be of a kind that does not sympathise with your nature, you will be disagreeably affected by the odour. Fishes love sweet smells, as is seen from the fact that they are more easily attracted by a fresh than by a stale bait. All fragrant matters have a corresponding degree of natural heat; and though camphor, roses, and other cold substances emit a pleasant fragrance, yet ancient writers tell us that the purity of their substance is equivalent to, and virtually represents, natural heat. You may take for granted the truth of the old saying, that one pleasant smell does not neutralize another. It is different, however, with fetid odours; for the smell of garlic overpowers that of dung. But now we have said enough for our present purpose about smells, and you will be easily able to tell when putrefaction begins to set in. The sense of smell will also enable you to distinguish between a subtle and a gross substance. You will also have knowledge of an intermediate substance which exhibits the corruption of natural heat, and of the difference between corrupted humour and corrupted substance. But our substance has been highly purified, and is conserved by the mean virtue; wherefore, you must not expect a fetid smell to arise from it, though it putrefies after its own proper kind.

The third sign and test by which you may know your principal agent is called taste, which always causes the diminution of the substance tasted. The test of the palate would be more certain than that of the eye or the nose, if it were not dangerous to taste our Stone, seeing that it is destructive of health and life, so penetrating is its quality; hence it is inexpedient and even dangerous to taste of it too often. It strengthens metals, as we know, but it is hurtful to human beings until the perfect red colour appears, which abides the test of fire. A common labouring man, who had devoted himself to the study of this Art, tasted a small piece of the white Stone in the hope that thereby he would be delivered from all pain and disease, instead of which he was suddenly struck down with the palsy. Him my master speedily cured with mineral Bezoar. Therefore, though the palate be the best judge of the progress which has been made in our Art, yet it is of little practical use, because the taste of our substance is both

horrible and hurtful. Nevertheless, certain parts may, without any risk, be tasted before they are joined together, for the purpose of discovering whether the operation has been rightly performed or not. At the same time the skilled artist will be able to discover all he wants to know by the colour and odour. Thus many judge of the quality of good wine, but new wine is best tested by the palate. For the sense of smell has only one organ, and is capable of distinguishing nothing but vaporous steam. The sense of taste, on the other hand, undoubtedly possesses six organs for the perception of material qualities. These organs Nature has ordained for the security and protection of living creatures. The ape tests the wholesomeness of his food by the sense of smell, men and parrots rely upon the verdict of the palate. For many things, though fragrant, touch the palate adversely, and repel by their acidity, bitterness, or sickly and nauseating sweetness; or they are poisonous, corrosive, or too highly seasoned. In all these cases it is unadvisable to appeal for a decision to the sense of taste. The ancient writers have distinguished nine different varieties of taste, viz., acrid, oily, and vinegary (indicative of a subtle substance), biting, salt, watery (characteristic of intermediate substances), bitter, acid, and sweet (inherent in substances of great thickness and density). These nine varieties of taste are of common occurrence: five of them are the product of heat -- the oily, the acrid, the salt, the bitter, and the sweet; the remaining four are produced by cold -- the sour, the acid, the watery or insipid, and the biting. Taste is determined by two things, viz., by diversities of substance, and diversities of quality. A thick substance is generally found to have a sweet taste; a substance which is moist, thick, and warm, produces an oily taste; while a substance of an intermediate quality, which is both hot and dry, is characterised by a salt or pungent taste. A thick substance, that is both hot and dry, is intensely bitter. A subtle substance, on the other hand, which is also hot and dry, is marked by a harsh and acrid flavour. In this way heat is the source of five different varieties of taste, but not of more. That which is cold and dry in the second degree, and at the same time exhibits a subtle substance, is sour -- as you may see by the face which a man makes who has tasted unripe apples. The same

qualities in the same degree, united to an intermediate substance produce, as you may easily suppose, a biting effect upon the palate, as, for instance, the rose. But the acid, less acid, and slightly acid flavours are the results of cold and dryness in different degrees. Cold and humidity in the first degree always produce a watery flavour, as is seen in the whites of eggs and in oysters; for these substances are both cold and humid, and have much superfluous moisture -- for which reason they are not greatly relished by the human palate. Isaac says that there are only seven varieties of taste, because the acid and the slightly acid, though different in degree, are yet in reality one and the same flavour, and because the watery or insipid variety simply represents negation of taste. We may also speak of compound flavours, such as bitter-sweet, and others of a like kind. Thus, by means of the palate, men may distinguish substances, qualities, and degrees. But if you do not care to subject our matter to the test of the palate, you may be guided by another class of symptoms, just as in medicine we do not rely upon the signs exhibited by the urine alone, but take them in conjunction with the state of the pulse, and the general condition of the body. He would be an ignorant physician indeed who should complete his diagnosis without availing himself of everything which may help him to a knowledge of the exact nature of the disease. Thus, if you would pursue the study of our Art, you should avail yourself of the indications afforded by the four methods of observation for the purpose of forming a correct judgment. Of three of these methods we have already spoken, the fourth is the fluxibility of the liquid. The liquid is the strength of our substance, and its condition affords the most striking evidence of the progress of the work; moreover, by its means the elements are both combined and dissolved. The liquid joins together the male and the female, and causes the dead to be restored to life. The liquid purges by ablution, and is the principal nutriment of our Stone. Without liquid there is no good food; the liquid carries the aliment to all the different parts of the human living body, and it performs the same function in Alchemy. But you should well consider the purity and the quantity of all your liquids, and also their consistency or thinness: otherwise you will make little progress. Now, because

our Elixir needs a twofold preparation, it exhibits more natural marvels than any other substance. Physicians say that the denser and more consistent urine is, the more humidity does it indicate; but with us the thickness betokens dryness, and that which is subtle humidity. Many liquids are needed for our Stone in accordance with its requirements. In the book entitled "The Crowd" Aristeus says that air is invisibly enclosed in water, which lifts up the earth by its aërial potency. Pythagoras remarks that if the matter were so, it would be a most fortunate circumstance. Plato expresses himself most circumspectly when he calls it (the liquid) "the gentle dropping of dew"; and the words are thoroughly applicable to Alchemy. But in the commonplaces of the primary philosophy it is said that condensed air is changed back into rain, and rarefied water into air. Some say that the month of May is the beginning of the year, when air is condensed into water. Others say that such water descends from the sky till the Sun enters the sign of Scorpio. Others, again, tell us that no liquids should be used that are affected by the cold, because, as the ancient writers state, their activity is chained up by the cold. Some Sages affirm that the liquid which you should employ in preparing the Elixir is milk; another expresses himself in the following mystical words: "No liquid is sufficient for the great work but the water of Litharge, which together with the water of Azoch produces virgin's milk." Democritus, on the other hand, states that the best liquid for the preparation of our Stone is permanent water, which is naturally capable of resisting the action of fire, and of enduring its heat. Rupescissa says that aqua vitæ is the liquid required, because it is spiritual and revivifying in its nature, and because it is the quintessence which restores dead things to life (concerning this quintessence Aristotle writes in his "Book of Secrets" that all perfection is in the fifth part). Rupescissa further calls this aqua vitæ the best of all liquids, for that it renders thick and dense substances spiritual. In the works of Pythagoras you will find our aqua vitæ spoken of in different language. He himself calls it the vivifying principle, and bids us volatilize that which is fixed, and fix that which is volatile, as by this strong method of compulsion the fixed materials will become easy to melt. Others say that

the best of all liquids is that which stirs up most desire and love. These are best found near islands, and in places that are washed by the ocean. Certain Sages tell us of yet another liquid which is colder than spring water, and has an icy taste; its quantity, however, is never diminished, nor is its substance consumed though it is in a state of constant activity in the preparation of our Stone. This water is called by Democritus the " shadow less light," or "the water of the rising Sun." Hermes says that no water is of such paramount importance as the water of crude mercury; " for," he says, " this water holds the high place of being the proper water of Alchemy." Thus, ye who pursue the study of this Art, may know by means of all these liquids our Stone must be perfected. A liquid is a shifting substance, of a watery and unstable nature; and all such things are more subject to lunar influences than those of a firmer structure. Of this every initiated Artist may behold a proof in the preparation of the white Tincture. Liquids wash and purify both extreme and intermediate substances. God created liquids for the use of man and for the cleansing of all impurities. Liquids doubtless possess the power of bringing hidden impurities to the surface of a body, as those will tell you who use this simple means for the purpose of cleansing soiled clothing. Liquids comfort and refresh the parched roots of grass and trees; for all natural liquids have the power of restoring any vital juices which have been lost. Liquids are also useful for the dividing and separating of qualities, and for the resolving of substances into their smallest parts. Liquids further cause the generation of our Stone by the conjunction of many things into one. They assist the fluxibility and motion of many things. Again, you should observe how liquids are to be gained from the different substances which exist on earth. Some are derived through incision, as, for instance, the juice of the terebinth; others, by crushing, as the juice of the grape and of the olive; others again, by distillation, like water; some, by combustion, like colophony; some by dissolution, according to the manner in which women prepare lye; others are produced in other ways; while some owe their origin to natural processes, as, for instance, urine, blood, milk, and sweat. Coagulatory substances, again, are of great use and profit in the making of cheese. In these and many other ways we seek and discover liquids which may

be useful to us in the preparation of our glorious Elixir, the most precious Philosopher's Stone, for which we daily bless God's name.

All the liquids that we have enumerated are of a more or less adhesive nature, with the solitary exception of quicksilver, which, though fluxible, will not adhere to any other matters but those in which it finds a sister or brother mixed of the same subtle substance; but with any other liquid it will not mingle, though they, too, are composed of the four elements, as milk contains whey, butter, and cheese. These four elements may be separated and put together again, to the great advancement of your experiment; but the manner in which cheese, butter, and whey are obtained is a simpler subject of investigation than are the liquids which exist in our Stone. Not one of them is simple and uncompounded except water alone. Of the several liquids of our Stone you should understand also the qualities and degrees, for thus you will be able to check the various superfluous activities of the principal agent, if this agent itself be permanent and durable. If the predominant quality be dryness, you may correct it by adding, according to your requirements, a greater or less quantity of humid moisture; and in the same way you may proceed with regard to the other qualities, thus compelling the principal agent to submit to the rule of your will. By the knowledge of the diversity, contrariety, and agreement of qualities, you may judge which quality ought to predominate. You will need great wisdom in so adding and diminishing your liquids that all the ingredients are placed on an equal footing. But do not believe that there is anything which has the qualities of heat and moisture in the same degree; for all that maintain the existence of two qualities of this kind, are deceived in their opinion, whoever they be. The commonplaces of philosophy, which set forth this proposition, are not true. Have done with this idea, and let a new one take its place in your mind. For all the ancient writers who have asserted that these two qualities could exist in the same degree, have been mistaken, or they have done so simply for the purpose of preventing enquirers from discovering the secret method of tempering the elements. Hence he who does not know graduations cannot be perfect in our work, seeing that God has allotted to each thing its own proper measure. Without due measurement of time no one can sing correctly; he

who errs in the measurement of time, errs in the very essence of the singer's Art -- and all that err inflict a wrong on Nature. Consider also that the purer your medium is, the greater will be the perfection which arises out of it. The media embrace the most important part of the virtue and potent essences of our Art. For the solid cannot become fluxible, nor the liquid firm, in the gradual process of preparing our substance, without the help of intermediate substances which partake of the nature of both the extremes. It is thus that, by means of a treble spirit, the soul is joined to the human body; of these three spirits one is called the vital spirit, the other the natural spirit, and the third the animal spirit. Let me also tell you where these spirits dwell. The vital spirit has his habitation in the heart, the natural spirit, according to the ancient writers, abides in the liver, while the animal spirit sojourns in the brain. Now, so long as these three spirits maintain a sound state of health in the human body, the soul dwells in the body without any jarring disagreements, and life is sustained. But when these spirits are unable to abide in man, the soul is also compelled to forsake the body. For the subtle, pure, and immortal soul can never dwell with the gross body, except the spirits act as media between them. In our work we ought also to distinguish between body, soul, and spirit; and our intermediate substances are the spirit which joins the body and soul together by partaking of the nature of both. Nature has no other way of binding extremes together except by intermediate substances, and these intermediate substances (media) are of different kinds. After all these things you should also know the seven circulations of each element, which agree with the number of the seven planets, and they are known to none except by grace Divine. Certain Sages of great learning tell us that these circulations are nine in number; and perhaps it is safer for us to follow their teaching. Nevertheless, the newest inventions made by modern philosophers, whose assertions are exalted beyond the possibility of doubt, enable us to dispense with two. Some learned men think that they may avoid every risk of a mistake if they go on in due order from fire to air, from air to water, and from water to earth, thus moving downward from that which is most exalted to that which is lowest; and they adduce in support of their assertion the alleged fact

that air is the food of fire. But, believe me, this kind of circulation is nothing but one method of rectification, which tends more to separation and correction than to transmutation. Moreover, the favourite food of fire, its own proper nutriment and fuel, is not air but earth, as both fire and earth are dry, and heat depends for its very existence on dryness, while the nature of air, on the other hand, is more humid. Yet it is also true that fire cannot operate without air, since the hand of God has linked together the elements in a bond of mutual dependence, which will not suffer them to be disunited by any human contrivance or device. Of this fact you may find an illustration in trumpets, where, after the ascent of air, you may often observe a deposit of water, the occurrence of which can only be explained on the supposition of the mutually inclusive nature of the elements. But our circulation begins with fire, the most exalted of all elements, and ends with water, which of all elements is the most unlike to fire. Another circulation begins with air and ends with earth. From earth to fire, thence to pure water, thence again to fire, and after this to a mean, passing to earth, finally once more recurring to fire -- by such circulations, the Red Tincture is perfected. Other circulations are more suitable for the production of the White Tincture. Now every circulation has its own proper time, according to the facility or difficulty of its execution. For as one planet is heavier and slower than another, so some circulations that are performed by the Sages take up a space of thirty weeks, while other circulations require a much shorter period of time; just as some planets are lighter and swifter than others. Thus, after all the gross and crude operations have been performed, our work may often still require twenty-six weeks. Ignorance of this fact has deceived many, and caused them to give up their labour at a point where the Sages are wont to begin. Other inexperienced students of this Art have imagined that it can be accomplished in forty days. They do not know that in Art as well as in Nature everything has its own time, and its own proper method. The elephant, for instance, being a huge and unwieldy animal, extends its period of gestation over two years, and is fifty years old before it can bring forth young. Anaxagoras says, in his "Considerations," that the generation of the metals

requires a thousand years, and that, in comparison to that period of time, our work occupies only a single day. You must therefore conduct your operation in a very subtle manner when you see the earth rise above the water; for as the earth which we tread with our feet supports the water, so, in our Art, you should frequently cause a gentle spring of water to well forth, in order that the same may flow softly, seeing that a violent out-pour is positively hurtful. Moreover, the student of Alchemy should be aware of the effects of the seven waters, concerning which you must seek instruction in the books of others; for you cannot expect me to expound our whole system in this brief treatise.

Some think that by means of these waters they can correct all metallic imperfections, and can find the effects of the four elements; for they are confident that all requisite properties are discovered in these waters, not only for the purpose of softening hard metals, but also for hardening those which are too soft, purifying them, and rendering them malleable. For the attainment of each one of these objects, the knowledge of these waters is said to be indispensable. Otherwise our Stone would not receive its proper nourishment. The ancient writers call our Stone a microcosm; and there can be no doubt that its composition greatly resembles that of the world in which we live, consisting as it does of elements, hot, cold, moist, and dry, hard, soft, light, and heavy, rough, smooth, fixed, volatile, and fluxible; and also because, in spite of the manifold variety of its component parts, it is not many things, but one thing. The transmutation of metals implies a change, not only of colour, but also of substance. The elements of the substance which undergoes a change must become the elements of the substance into which it is to be changed, and impress upon it their own character. All transmuted parts must be proportionately impressed in the transmuting elements, so that the thin elemented matter may permanently possess the substance of the one and the virtue of the other. As soon as a child is born, it can feed and cry; and so our Stone, when first prepared, has abundant power of imparting its colour to other substances. Again, as after three years the child walks and talks, so after a certain lapse of time, our Stone receives a still more intense power of colouring, so that it can

pervade with its own glorious nature a substance of a thousand times its own size. To this fact I myself can bear witness: for many a time have I seen well-purged metals transmuted into the finest silver and gold. Thus, our Stone may go on growing in quantity, and becoming more excellent in quality, during an infinite period of time; and in this respect it bears a marvellous analogy to the birth and growth of human beings. I must, however, take this occasion to state a truth which may be displeasing to some readers. The time when you first succeed in preparing your Stone should be well and wisely used, or you may even then lose all your pains, and miss your recompense for all the heavy outlay you have undergone.

For the purpose, then, of augmenting your Stone, you should at once divide it into two equal parts, carefully testing the correctness of your division by means of the balance. One-half is for the Red Tincture, and the other moiety for the White. Then, and not till then, will you begin to reap the profits of your labours. But it will be unadvisable to stop even here, seeing that you may go on augmenting your Tincture indefinitely. Miriam, the sister of Aaron, rightly says that life is short, and knowledge long; nevertheless, our Tincture, when it has once attained to the highest perfection of its excellence, has the virtue of greatly retarding old age. Some of our Sages have been so foolish as to give up the further improvement of our Stone at a point when they might have reached the final goal with little trouble and great advantage to themselves. This supine carelessness can only be explained by assuming that they were not aware of the full virtue of that Stone, and I see that I must point out to all its fortunate owners the full extent of their possession. For when I shall have departed out of this world, this testimony will remain behind as a witness, and on this account I am not slow to reveal the secrets of the Art, so far as I may do it without prejudice to my vow. I have instructed you with sufficient clearness how to prepare the White Tincture. But when my master had declared all these things to me, he said that many students have by patient and unwearied diligence independently discovered this our White Stone and Tincture, as if they had derived their knowledge from the wisest of masters; but that scarce one in fifteen kingdoms possesses our Red Stone. With these words, he fixed upon me

a steady and unfaltering gaze, and he saw that his speech had clouded my countenance with sorrow. I answered: " Alas, what shall I do ? for I love knowledge far beyond all earthly wealth moreover, the Red Tincture is said to be a most precious substance, which has the virtue of prolonging life. I should account the Red Stone a more glorious acquisition than all the gold of the whole world." I le replied that I was still a young man, and that youth was prone to insolence and excess. Could I expect to be enrolled among the Sages at the immature age of twenty-eight? I must be a much older man before I could expect to have this secret unfolded to me. " Alas, good master," I said, " though my body is still young and my years are few, I beseech you to prove me, and you will see that my mind has already attained the ripeness of mellow age." My master said no more at the time, but I soon found that he was trying and testing my character by a course of probationary training, after the manner of the Sages -- of which it would be both tedious and indiscreet to publish a lengthy account. Finally, however, by the grace of God, he accounted me worthy of this wonderful proof of his love and esteem, and imparted to me the true secret of preparing the Red Tincture. To inquire into the manner of its preparation would be an aimless quest before the White Tincture has been prepared. Both Medicines are composed from the same substance, in the same vessel, and by the same methods, until the living matters have been mortified. Then the material and shape of the vessel, and the degree of chemical treatment, must be changed. But my heart beats violently, and my hands tremble, when I speak of this glorious thing. Hermes said a true word when he exclaimed: " Fire and Azoth are sufficient." The expositor of Hermes and Aristotle, in the-treatise appended to their works, makes a most startling assertion, when he says that Albertus Magnus, and Bacon, the Minorite friar, had no knowledge of the manner in which the Red Stone is multiplied by augmentation. This writer was well aware what he was saying, as my master proved to me by incontrovertible arguments. I myself have never actually prepared the Red Tincture as yet, because I was disheartened by being robbed of my whole wealth of chemical materials and implements -- as I set forth at length in a preceding chapter. But I understand the method of its preparation per-

fectly, and am able to explain it to others. Those who have ventured to unfold this grand arcanum to their disciples say that the redness of this delectable Stone is contained in its whiteness, and may be brought out, and made to appear to the Artist's ravished gaze by the gently compelling heat of fire. Pandophilus, in " The Crowd " tells us that the white Tincture is the type and shadow of the red; and Miriam confirms his words by saying that the redness is concealed in the whiteness. An admirable book entitled *Laudabile Sanctum*, ascribed to Hermes, uses the following expression of the Red Tincture: " There lies the snowy wife wedded to her red spouse." That is to say, in the white Tincture you have a beautiful woman of snowy whiteness espoused to a red husband. If your white Stone is exposed to the heat, and through the action of the fire becomes red as blood, then the marriage is valid and perfect -- as in the act of copulation, if it be fruitful, the male seed obtains the ascendancy, and assimilates the female seed to its own nature. That this fact is so, those who have observed the nature of the embryo have been taught by experience. When this has been brought about, our Stone is perfected. The Sages say that it should be nourished with its own poison till it has had enough. When this has been done, you may go wherever you like, for it will defray all your expenses. Thus, then, I have expounded to you the subtle part of the work with all its appurtenances, and more I need not, cannot, and will not, reveal.

CHAPTER VI.

With respect to concords, let me say that there should be no serious difference between those things which ought to agree. For difference produces discord, and discord would make all your labour of none effect. Whoever wishes to practise our Art, should be guided by five rules or concords. The first rule to be observed is, that the student's mind should be in perfect harmony with his work. The desire of knowing this Art should hold a dominant place in his mind; else all his labours will come to nothing. The second concord is, that he should know the difference between this Art and those who profess it. The third kind of harmony is that which should exist between the work and the instruments. The fourth concord assigns to the work

the place which is most suited to its execution. The fifth concord is the sympathy which should exist between your work and the celestial sphere. I will say something about each one of these five rules, and begin with the first. Few students possess the gift of perseverance. They are in a great hurry and the work seems too long. They wish you to do violence to Nature, and the zeal of some is so much like a straw fire that at the end of six months it has quite burned down. Many change their minds after a week, some after twenty-four hours. Some believe in our Art most fervently for a month; but at the end of the month they will have nothing more to do with it. For such persons it would be better to stay their hands at once than to waste their time with the study of our Art. Let these butterflies flutter whither they will. But let us, before we put our hands to this work, learn with our hearts the truth of the saying; " Let us do everything from beginning to end strenuously, and yet softly and gently." All foolish and double-minded people must necessarily be fickle and unstable; and it is natural that simple folk, who have been stripped of all their savings by heartless impostors, should conceive a deep-seated aversion to our Art. But only men of constant and persevering minds are fitted to be students thereof. If any such man undertakes the study of this science, whether he be a layman or a priest, a merchant, a knight, an abbot, or a gentleman, he is not likely to fail of success: for his mind is in harmony with his work. The second concord to which attention must be paid in the pursuit of this Art, is the securing of fit and suitable assistants. No assistant should be chosen that is not sober, discreet, and diligent, faithful, vigilant, a keeper of secrets, and a pure liver; a man of clean hands and of a delicate touch, obedient and humbly content to carry out your orders. Such ministers alone will give close heed to your work, and secure you against all avoidable accidents. Do not imagine, however, that two or three of these will be sufficient for the completion of your experiment. If the quantity of your substance be moderate, eight such servants will be required, but if the quantity be small, the work may be done by four. Of this number, one half should be on duty, while the other half sleep, or are at church; for this experiment cannot be brought to a successful termination, unless it is continually

attended to, by night as well as by day; and with the exception of the Sabbath, your men should relieve each other in the morning and in the evening. While they are on duty, they should carefully eschew every wicked word and deed; otherwise your work will most certainly be marred. For this reason your assistants ought either to be all men or all women, and persons of both sexes ought not to be set to work together. If your assistants are members of your own family, you should seek to inspire them with love for the work, and interest in its success; for nothing is more important than that the hearts of your workers should be in their work. Our third rule was, that the instruments should be of a kind suited to the labour to be performed. This rule is not fully apprehended by many students of our science. It means that the different parts of the experiment require their own proper utensils, of a substance and shape closely adapted to the particular purpose which they intended to serve. The divisions and separations of our substance are best carried out in small vessels; a broad vessel is required for humectation, while the process of circulation demands a vessel of still larger capacity. Those used for precipitation should be long; those which you employ for the purpose of sublimation may be both short and long, while narrow vessels, four inches high, are more appropriate in the process of correction. Some vessels are made of lead, and some of dead clay. Dead clay is that which has been carefully hardened, and having been mixed with sand and gravel, is capable of sustaining a high degree of fierce heat. Other kinds of clay burst when exposed to the fire, and you should reject vessels made of them. Other vessels, again, are made of stone, and endure the test of heat admirably; but vessels of this kind, which are both impervious to water and proof against fire, are now very rarely to be obtained in England; but where they can be had, they are invaluable for our purpose. All other vessels are made of glass, and are admirably adapted to prevent the volatile substance from escaping. In our country they are made of ashes and siliceous material, but elsewhere of little stones. The best kind of glass for our purpose is that made of cinders which have been left to glow in the hearth all night; a still harder and more durable kind is prepared out of smelted glass

sherds. What has been said will guide you in selecting the most suitable kind of vessel; as to its form or shape you must consult your own common sense: it is, however, clear that you should, in this case, as in all others, strive to follow as closely as possible in the footsteps of Nature. Moreover, the size and shape of your vessel should be in proportion to the quantity of your substance, and to all the other conditions of the experiment. The general principles which should determine your choice are well laid down by Albertus Magnus in his book on "Minerals." The whole secret was disclosed in a few words by my master, when he said: "If God had not given us a vessel, His other gifts would have been nothing worth -- and that vessel is glass." Some other instruments are also needed, such, for instance, as suitable furnaces. The ancients describe a special furnace for use in every stage of our Art, devised differently according to the bent of their minds. Many of these, however, are quite unsuitable, some being too broad, others too high, and others out of harmony with the requirements of Nature. Some of the furnaces described in these books may be used, but by far the greater number ought to be rejected, seeing that they are the inventions of men who only appeared to be, but were not really Sages. Of the furnace which can be most highly recommended, you will find a pictorial representation in this volume. One which was unknown to the Ancients, I am proud to call my own invention. I set it up, in the first instance, at a very considerable outlay. But its advantages more than make good its cost. It is so constructed that sixty different chemical operations, for which divers kinds of heat are required, may be carried on in it at the same time, and a very small fire of only a foot square supplies a sufficient degree of heat for all these processes. As all may not be sure of this instrument, it has not been represented in a picture. Another furnace will serve for sixty or more glasses, each of them standing in the same degree of heat, as you may see by the picture. I have also invented another furnace, which is of great use in the work of separation, exaltation, and disjunction or division, and is most admirably adapted for the processes of ablution or purging, desiccation, and preparation. These six operations may with great ease be performed in it at the

same time, and one fire suffices for them all. But it is a new invention, and I cannot afford to describe it more minutely. I might also set down a description of another furnace, which is more dangerous than all the rest. It was constructed by the Ancients for the preparation of our Magnesia; and they said that while it could not with impunity be touched for fear of the flame which rose from the wood, yet a linen rag might be placed on it without being scorched. This ingeniously constructed furnace I was fortunate enough to re-invent, and with its aid I was enabled to perform many wonderful experiments. This furnace and its structure must remain a secret for some years longer; but let me warn you, in conclusion, to be very careful in the selection and structure of your furnace. It must be so arranged as to enable you to regulate the supply of heat, and to abate the fierceness of the flame at any moment. If a man does not understand and know the use of his tools and instruments, all his work will be done in a casual, haphazard manner, and it will be impossible for him to anticipate success with any degree of certainty. Therefore, let me once more repeat my warning: See to your instruments, and test their quality before you set about your work. The fourth rule is also most important. The experiment cannot succeed unless it be performed in a suitable place. Some places must be always dry, free from air and excess of light such as is caused by the bright rays of the sun. Others cannot be too much illuminated. The places more fitted for other parts of the work, are humid and cold. But violent draughts should be carefully avoided throughout. Hence a spot must be wisely chosen to fulfil all the requirements of the different parts of the work. The Sages tell us, in their enigmatic style, that our substance should be prepared within nine bars. Astrologers say that it is a singular mark of Divine grace if a man can find the right place for our work. For many things produce wonderful effects in some places, but are entirely barren of results in others; and opposite consequences are often produced by the same thing in different places. The explanation of these facts is to be found in the knowledge that different places are differently influenced by the celestial bodies, just as a magnet, for instance, affects a needle differently in different latitudes. For this reason the Sages have declared that some places are well, and others ill,

suiting to our work. But the very worst of all possible places are those which have been defiled by lechery.

The fifth rule is well known to the learned. There should exist a certain harmony between the celestial spheres and our work. Nothing on earth is so simple or so easily influenced as the elements of our Stone; and when they are being prepared they obey their own proper constellations, as the needle yields to the influence of the magnet. In this amicable concord prevail, then, in a direct and fiery ascendent, and let your happy and favourable ascendent be in fortunate aspect with his Lord. The work should be sheltered from all adverse and evil influences; if these cannot be set aside, let them have a trine aspect. When you prepare the White Tincture, let the Moon be fortunate, as also the Lord of the Fourth House, which is the Treasure of Hidden Things according to the old Sages. The Sixth House must be favourable for the servants. Preserve your work from all great impediments and see that it be not affected by the adverse constellation of your Nativity. The virtue of the mover of the orb is the formal influence; the virtue of the eighth sphere is instrumental to it the virtue of the planet is proper and special; and that of the elements is material, and embodies the working of the other agents. The first resembles the genius of the operator, the second is analogous to his hands; the third corresponds to his instruments; and the fourth answers to the substance which is prepared. Let the things on earth correspond to things in heaven, and you will obtain the Elixir, and become a great Master. Do not trust to Geomancy, which is a superstitious Art; nor to all Astrologers, because this science is secret; like that of Alchemy. Necromancy God forbids, and the Church condemns; therefore, if you wish for success, let your hands be pure from all superstitious practices. Necromancy is of the Devil, and a lying Art. God will bless you if you give yourself wholly to the study of our own Blessed Art. In the next chapter I will speak about the regulation of the fire.

CHAPTER VII.

Would you know the perfect Master? It is he who understands the regulation of the fire, and its degrees. Nothing will

prove to you so formidable an impediment as ignorance of the regimen of heat and fire; for our whole Art may be looked upon as being concentrated in this one thing, seeing it is all important for the proper development of our substance that the degree of heat which is brought to bear on it should be neither too great nor too small. In regard to this point many learned men have gone grievously astray. (1) The degree of heat which is employed for the scalding of pigs and geese, is that which we require for our decoction of intermediate minerals, and for the purpose of covering the Litharge with sweat. (2) The degree of heat which is sufficient for drying thin linen is good for our air in thirty operations, for the purpose of division you may employ the degree of heat used by cooks in roasting meat. (3) A similar degree of heat with a circular fire will be found useful for the separation of the dividents. (4) But for the circulation of the elements you will require white heat, which must be maintained at an even temperature, without either increase or diminution, until the whole operation is accomplished. Moreover, there ought not to be in this fire any moisture that can be perceived by the touch. or seen with the eye. (5) There also is such a thing as a moist fire, though the expression sounds like a contradiction in terms. This fire should be used at a certain stage of the work, in order to remove the substances which adhere to the sides of the vessel. The same degree of heat is also employed to dilute thick substances. The Sages declare that, in its highest degree, it causes and generates an even dryness, and that its effect here coincides with that of dry heat in the first degree. (6) There is also another fire which is employed for the purpose of drying substances steeped in moisture. (7) Another variety of fire is that of conservation, because by its operation all things are parched up. (8) In the preparation of Magnesia we use the effusion of fire, which is full of danger, not only to the work, but also to the Master, who may even lose his life by its noxious effects. For this reason you should carefully protect your mouth, ears, eyes, and nose, as the smoke of this fire is ten times more baneful than poison. By neglecting this caution many students have sustained considerable injuries. (9) A corrosive fire answers the purpose of judiciously separating kindred

elements. One moment of excess, one moment of premature diminution, may mar the labour of months. He that regulates the fire aright is worthy of being hailed as a great Master of the Fire. It is exceedingly difficult to tell the exact degree of heat which any given fire will produce; and here the sense of sight is the only reliable test. No sound or intelligible directions can be given in writing: the only schoolmistress that can impart to you a thorough knowledge of this branch of our Art is experience. It is in regard to this variety of heat that Anaxagoras says: " Nobody is all at once an accomplished Sage." (10) The next kind of heat is of a consuming fierceness. It is employed to smelt very hard minerals. It cannot be too fierce or powerful, even though it may occasionally be necessary to keep it up for some length of time. (11) The next variety of heat is that of calcination, and is used for the purging of impure metals, the essential qualities of which would be impaired by smelting. (12) The kind of heat used for sublimation comes next, and by its means volatile minerals may be sublimed. (13) The last variety of heat is the most important of all. It should be employed at the time of the projection of our Stone. But experience is a good teacher, and I will say no more, except that he who makes a mistake at this point, must begin the work over again.

I have now told you all things as plainly as if I had been describing to you the way to this or that town. I have, as it were, named every county, river, bridge, and village that has to be passed, and, with this my guide-book in his hand, a judicious traveller may easily find his way. A wise and intelligent man may, by means of this Book, discover the secret of our science; for the foolish and dull-witted it was not intended, and it will not teach them anything. Our Science is the height of earthly knowledge, and is to be attained by neither Pope nor Emperor through their rank, influence, or power, but only by virtue, and by Divine grace. Our Stone cannot be discovered or perfected unless it be sought with intense devotion. In the works of the Ancients, understood in the light of this my Ordinal, the truth of the matter is fully set forth; the present Book, in particular, was written for the purpose of resolving all your doubts; here everything is in its proper place, and nothing is wanting. Time was when I would cheerfully have paid down a thousand pounds for

the contents of this volume; and this last chapter I would not have missed for three hundred pounds.

Do not wonder, Masters and Friends, that our Science is here so plainly expounded: I set pen to paper with the requirements of the common people in view. For just because the vulgar are not instructed in this knowledge, infinite wealth is annually wasted in this country, as all Sages know, and many others of all ranks are daily reduced to beggary. Study our Art, then, ye uninstructed, and scorn to abide in fatuous ignorance. It is better for you to take to this study late than never.

Let all that are benefited by the reading of this Ordinal offer up prayers for my soul, and for the living and the dead.

In the year of our Lord 1477 this Book was begun.

Glory be to God!

