William Wynn Westcott

COLLECTANEA HERMETICA

(Volumes 1-10)

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Hermetic Arcanum, The Divine Pymander, Egyptian Magic, Sepher Yetzirah

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Preface to the “Collectanea Hermetica”

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Hermetic students find great difficulty in securing copies of the old Rosicrucian tracts and other notable volumes of occult lore, and I have been urged by many earnest members of the Rosicrucian Society to undertake the Editorship of a series of small volumes, which are to provide some of the texts of the greatest value in Hermetic research. Among my personal friends and fellow-students are many who have made a long study of Occult Sciences, of the Kabalah, of Alchemy, and of the Higher Magic, and these have assured me of their support in this undertaking. The Notes which are added to each volume are partly taken from mediæval commentators, and are partly those of my coadjutors. The Societa Rosicruciana, as an Institution, is not answerable for the opinions expressed; all responsibility falling upon the actual writers.

The Notes are intended to assist those who have made some progress in the study of Hermetic Philosophy; to the casual reader they may be as incomprehensible as the text itself, and where the general reader finds a simple definite statement, such is probably a Reveiling and not a Revelation.

W.W.W.

Preface to the “Arcanum.”

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The Arcanum Hermeticum has been chosen for the first volume of the Collectanea Hermetica, because since its first publication in 1623, in the Latin language, no alchymic tract has been more widely read, and no other has been so often reprinted, alike in Latin, German, French and English.

The author, Jean d’Espagnet, was sometime President of the Parliament of Bordeaux, he flourished from 1600 to 1630, and obtained a great reputation as an Hermetic philosopher and alchymist. Two of his alchymic works are alone extant; Enchiridion Physicæ Restitutæ, and Arcanum Philosophiæ Hermeticæ; of these, the former treats of those theories of chemical constitution upon which the possibility of Transmutations of Metals depends, and the latter the Practice of Alchymy. The Arcanum was first published in 1623 in France; five subsequent French editions in the original Latin are known, and an edition in the French tongue was printed in 1651 from the translation of Jean Bachon. Several editions were also published at Geneva, Kiel, Lubeck, Tubingen and Leipzig. The works of Espagnet are also included in Manget’s Bibliotheca Chemic Curiosa and in the Bibliotheca Chemica of Albineus.

Jean d’Espagnet followed the usual Rosicrucian custom of using a motto instead of his name when publishing Hermetic books. The Hermetic Arcanum is signed “Penes nos unda Tagi;” he also at times added the motto, “Spes mea in Agno est.” These mottoes are anagrams. Each contains the letters of “Deus (IHVH with the Shin letter interposed) omnia in nos,” but there are two letters over, “A S.” The French

biographers says, in error, that only one letter, an “E”—his initial—remains over.

Espagnet was not only an Alchymist, but a Mystic as well; he contributed a preface and a sonnet to a work by Pierre de Lancre, entitled Tableau de l’inconstance des mauvaises Anges, the prosecution of persons who were supposed to be black magicians, living in the district called Les Landes and among the Pyrenees; but this action appears to have been the result of his position in the Parliament of Bordeaux.

He ornamented the façade of his house in the Rue de Bahutiers, at Bordeaux, with allegorical sculptures and devices; the house has been destroyed, but these ornaments are still to be seen preserved in the gardens of the mayoral residence.

As a natural philosopher, Jean d’Espagnet declined to be led by the notions of Aristotle, and preferred those of the Alexandrian schools. He postulated the ideal of one material universal basis, or Hyle, from which all varieties of matter have been evolved by stages of development, a necessary doctrine for one who taught the mutual convertibility of the so-called chemical elementary substances. He also insisted upon the importance of representing all manifestation as separable into three worlds, elementary, celestial, and archetypal; this division is related to the scheme of the Four Worlds of the Kabalists, by a concentration which is recognized by such philosophers. He taught the origin of created things from the chaos of the first matter, which under the energetic impulse of the Divine Force, proceeds from stage to stage of development into heterogeneity. He recognized three stages of matter, the subtle, the mean, and the gross: analogous to the airy, moist and earthy natures of the Hermetists. Upon these bases his Enchiridion is almost a text-book of Rosicrucian Philosophy.

The Arcanum describes at considerable length, and with obvious good faith, the procedure of one school of Alchymists in the search for the secret of the Stone Philosophical, and it formulates the stages of the work so that he or she who can read may run. Yet it must be confessed that he has well succeeded in reveiling, as well as revealing, the secret of what was meant by the Prima Materia and the real nature alike of The Sulphur, The Salt, The Mercury.

Such a work as the Arcanum, written by one who knows, is not sent to print, to teach the public, to show a cheap and easy way to wealth and luxury, or to assist coiners of spurious moneys, but is intended as a treasure house in which those who have devoted life and love to the quest may find stored up the data and experiences of such as have trodden the Path and have borne tribulation and persecution, counting all loss to be gain in their progress to success and to the possession of that Stone of the Wise, which when obtained can indeed transmute the things of the material world, but does also equally work upon all higher planes, and enables the Adept to soar unheeding into worlds of joy, wisdom, and exultation, which are unseen, unknown, and inconceivable to ordinary mortals, who have chosen the alternative of physical contentment and material happiness.

The original Latin title is given at the first page, together with an English translation.

The German edition of 1685, Leipzig, was entitled: Das geheime Werck der Hermetischen Philosophie, von Joannes d'Espagnet. Anagr-e-in u. mut. Penes nos unda Tagi. This has an additional preface, and cap. 138 is numbered 137. "Joannes" must be taken as "Joannus."

An English translation was made by James Hasolle, Qui est Mercuriphilus Anglicus; this is the anagram and pseudonym of Elias Ashmole, famous as an antiquary. Copies of his third edition of 1650 are not uncommon. The present editor of the Hermetic Arcanum had first intended to reprint Ashmole's version in its entirety, but a comparison with the original Latin has induced him to make a revision of Ashmole's translation, because he discovered many important inaccuracies, and also because in some places the language was more forcible and plain than our present delicate manners would appreciate.

S. A. is responsible for most of the Notes; a few are from Sigismund Bacstrom, Frater R.R. et A.C., and others are from the marginal references of an anonymous Adept writing in 1710.

Sapere Aude.

The Hermetic Arcanum

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

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

3. The Science of producing Nature's grand Secret, is a perfect knowledge of universal Nature and of Art concerning the Realm of Metals; the Practice thereof is conversant with finding the principles of Metals by Analysis, and after they have been made much more perfect to conjoin them otherwise than they have been before, that from thence may result a catholic Medicine, most powerful to perfect imperfect Metals, and for restoring sick and decayed bodies, of any sort soever.

4. Those that hold public Honours and Offices or be always busied with private and necessary occupations, let them not strive to attain unto the acme of this Philosophy; for it requireth the whole mans, and being found, it possesseth him, and he being possessed, it debarreth him

from all other long and serious employments, for he will esteem other things as strange, and of no value unto him.

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

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

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

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

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

10. As for the Authors of chiefest note, who have discoursed both acutely and truly of the secrets of Nature and hidden Philosophy, Hermes and Morienus Romanus amongst the Ancients are in my judgment of the highest esteem; amongst the Moderns, Count Trevisan, and Raimundus Lullius are in greatest reverence with me; for what that most acute Doctor hath omitted, none almost hath spoken; let a student therefore peruse his works, yea let him often read over his Former Testament, and Codicil, and accept them as a Legacy of very great worth. To these two volumes let him add both his volumes of Practice, out of which works all things desirable may be collected, especially the truth of the First Matter, of the degrees of Fire, and the Regimen of the Whole, wherein the final Work is finished, and those things which our Ancestors so carefully laboured to keep secret. The occult causes of things, and the secret motions of nature are demonstrated nowhere more clearly and faithfully. Concerning the first and mystical Water of the Philosophers he hath set down few things, yet very pithily.

11. As for that Clear Water sought for by many, found by so few, yet obvious and profitable unto all, which is the

Basis of the Philosophers' Work, a noble Pole, not more famous for his learning than subtilty of wit, who wrote anonymously, but whose name notwithstanding a double Anagram hath betrayed, hath in his Novum Lumen Chymicum, Parabola and Aenigma, as also in his Tract on Sulphur, spoken largely and freely enough; yea he hath expressed all things concerning it so plainly, that nothing can be more satisfactory to him that desireth knowledge.

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

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

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

15. Let the studious Reader have a care of the manifold significations of words, for by deceitful windings, and doubtful, yea contrary speeches (as it should seem), Philosophers wrote their mysteries, with a desire of veiling

and hiding, yet not of sophisticating or destroying the truth; and though their writings abound with ambiguous and equivocal words; yet about none do they more contend than in hiding their Golden Branch.

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

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

Knows Dame Venus Birds

And him to whom of Doves a lucky pair Sent from above shall hover 'bout his Ear.

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

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

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

In Gold the seeds of Gold do lie, Though buried in Obscurity.

19. Most Philosophers have affirmed that their Kingly Work is wholly composed of Sol and Luna; others have thought good to add Mercury to Sol; some have chosen Sulphur and Mercury; others have attributed no small part in so great a Work to Salt mingled with the other two. The very

same men have professed that this Clear Stone is made of one thing only, sometimes of two, or of three, at other times of four, and of five; and yet though writing so variously upon the same subject, they do nevertheless agree in sense and meaning.

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

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

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

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

sister to brother in firm union, that from thence he may receive Sol's noble Son.

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

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

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

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

28. He that seeks for a physical tincture without Sol and Luna, loseth both his cost and pains: for Sol afforded a most plentiful tincture of redness, and Luna of whiteness, for these two only are called perfect; because they are filled with the substance of purest Sulphur, perfectly clarified by the skill of nature. Let thy Mercury therefore receive a

tincture from one or other of these luminaries; for anything must of necessity possess a tincture before it can tinge other bodies.

29. Perfect metals contain in themselves two things which they are able to communicate to the imperfect metals. Tincture and Power of fixation; for pure metals, because they are dyed and fixed with pure Sulphur to wit both white and red, do therefore perfectly tincture and fix, if they be fitly prepared with their proper Sulphur and Arsenic: otherwise they have not strength for multiplying their tincture.

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

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

Vain hope, at last the hungry Plough-man cheats With empty husks, instead of lusty meats.

For it is impossible that Sol's Tincture can at all be severed from his natural body, since there can be no elementary body made up by nature more perfect than gold, the perfection whereof proceedeth from the strong and inseparable union of pure colouring Sulphur with Mercury; both of them being admirably pre- disposed thereunto by Nature; whose true separation nature denieth unto Art. But if any liquor remainingbe extracted (by the violence of fire or waters) from the Sun, it is to be reputed a part of the

body made liquid or dissolved by force. For the tincture followeth its body, and is never separated from it. That is a delusion of this Art, which is unknown to many Artificers themselves.

32. Nevertheless it may be granted, that Tincture may be separable from its body, yet (we must confess) it cannot be separated without the corruption of the tincture: as when Artists offer violence to the gold destroying by fire, or use Aqua fortis, thus rather corroding than dissolving. The body therefore if despoiled of its Tincture and Golden Fleece, must needs grow base and as an unprofitable heap turn to the damage of its Artificer, and the Tincture thus corrupted can only have a weaker operation.

33. Let Alchymists in the next place cast their Tincture into Mercury, or into any other imperfect body, and as strongly conjoin both of them as their Art will permit; yet shall they fail of their hopes in two ways. First, because the Tincture will neither penetrate nor colour beyond Nature's weight and strength; and therefore no gain will accrue from thence to recompense the expense and countervail the loss of the body spoiled, and thus of no value; so:-

Want is poor mortal's wages, when his toil Produces only loss of pain and oil.

Lastly, that debased Tincture applied to another body will not give that perfect fixation and permanency required to endure a strong trial, and resist searching Saturn.

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

35. In the Philosophers' work more time and toil than cost is expended: for he that hath convenient matter need be at little expense; besides, those that hunt after great store of money, and place their chief end in wealth, they trust more to their riches than their own art. Let, therefore, the too credulous tyro beware of pilfering pickpockets, for while they promise golden mountains, they lay in wait for gold, they demand bright gold (viz., money beforehand), because they walk in evil and darkness.

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

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

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

39. Again, in the Second preparation, that which by Authors is styled the First (because they omit the First) Sol being now made crude again, and resolved into his first matter, is called the Mercury of such like bodies, or the Philosophers' Mercury; then the matter is called Rebis, Chaos, or the Whole World, wherein are all things necessary to the Work, because that only is sufficient to perfect the Stone.

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

- Whom just and mighty Jove Advanceth by the strength of love;

Or such who brave heroic fire,

Makes from dull Earth to Heaven aspire.

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

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

One from on high a Golden Fleece displays Which shews the Entrance, another says How hard a task you'll find.

For the entrance is warded by horned beasts which drive away those that approach rashly thereunto, to their great hurt; only the ensigns of Diana and the Doves of Venus are able to assuage their fierceness, if the fates favour the attempt.

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

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

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

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

46. The Philosophers' Mercury hath divers names, sometimes it is called Earth; sometimes Water, when viewed from a diverse aspect; because it naturally ariseth from them both. The earth is subtle, white and sulphurous, in

which the elements are fixed and the philosophical gold is sown; the water is the water of life, burning, permanent, most clear, called the water of gold and silver; but this Mercury, because it hath in it Sulphur of its own, which is multiplied by art, deserves to be called the Sulphur of Argent vive. Last of all, the most precious substance is Venus, the ancient Hermaphrodite, glorious in its double sex.

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

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

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

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

50. Argent vive is so defiled by original sin, that it floweth with a double infection; the first it hath contracted from the polluted Earth, which hath mixed itself therewith in the generation of Argent vive, and by congelation hath cleaved thereunto; the second borders upon the dropsy and is the corruption of intercutal Water, proceeding from thick and impure water; mixed with the clear, which nature was not able to squeeze out and separate by constriction; but because it is extrinsic; it flies off with a gentle heat. The Mercury's leprosy infesting the body, is not of its root and substance, but accidental, and therefore separable from it; the earthly part is wiped off by a warm wet Bath and the Laver of nature; the watery part is taken away by a dry bath with that gentle fire suitable to generation. And thus by a threefold washing and cleansing the Dragon putteth off his old scales and ugly skin is renewed in beauty.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

59. Keep up and couple the Eagle and Lion well cleansed in their transparent cloister, the entry door being shut and watched lest their breath go out, or the air without do privily get in. The Eagle shall snap up and devour the Lion in this combination; afterwards being affected with a long sleep,

and a dropsy occasioned by a foul stomach, she shall be changed by a wonderful metamorphosis into a coal black Crow, which shall begin to fly with wings stretched out, and by its flight shall bring down mater from the clouds, until being often moistened, he put off his wings of his own accord, and falling down again he be changed into a most White Swan. Those that are ignorant of the causes of things may wonder with astonishment when they consider that the world is nothing but a continual Metamorphosis; they may marvel that the seeds of things perfectly digested should end in greatest whiteness. Let the Philosopher imitate Nature in his work.

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

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

62. The material means of the Stone are of divers kinds, for some are extracted out of others successively: The first are Mercury Philosophically sublimated, and perfect metals, which although the be extreme in the work of nature, yet in

the Philosophical work they supply the place of means: of the former the seconds are produced; namely the four elements, which again are circulated and fixed: of the seconds, the third is produced, to wit, Sulphur, the multiplication hereof doth terminate the first work: the fourth and last means are leaven or ointments weighed with the mixture of the things aforesaid, successively produced in the work of the Elixir. By the right ordering of the things aforesaid, the perfect Elixir is finished, which is the last term of the whole work, wherein the Philosophers' Stone resteth as in its centre, the multiplication whereof is nothing else than a short repetition of the previous operations.

63. The operative means (which are also called the Keys of the Work) are four: the first is Solution or Liquefaction; the second is Ablution; the third Reduction; the fourth Fixation. By Liquefaction bodies return into their first form, things concocted are made raw again and the combination between the position and negative is effected, from whence the Crow is generated lastly the Stone is divided into four confused elements, which happeneth by the retrogradation of the Luminaries. The Ablution teacheth how to make the Crow white, and to create the Jupiter of Saturn, which is done by the conversion of the Body into Spirit. The Office of Reduction is to restore the soul to the stone exanimated, and to nourish it with dew and spiritual milk, until it shall attain unto perfect strength. In both these latter operations the Dragon rageth against himself, and by devouring his tail, doth wholly exhaust himself, and at length is turned into the Stone. Lastly, the operation of the Fixation fixeth both the White and the Red Sulphurs upon their fixed body, by the mediation of the spiritual tincture; it decocteth the Leaven or Ferment by degrees ripeneth things unripe, and sweeteneth the bitter. In fine by penetrating and tincturing

the flowing Elixir it generateth, perfecteth, and lastly, raiseth it up to the height of sublimity.

64. The Means or demonstrative signs are Colours successively and orderly affecting the matter and its affections and demonstrative passions, whereof there are three special ones (as critical) to be noted; to these some add a Fourth. The first is black, which is called the Crow's head, because of its extreme blackness whose crepusculun? sheweth the beginning of the action of the fire of nature and solution, and the blackest midnight sheweth the perfection of liquefaction, and confusion of the elements. Then the grain putrefies and is corrupted, that it may be the more apt for generation. The white colour succeedeth the black wherein is given the perfection of the first degree, and of the White Sulphur. This is called the blessed stone; this Earth is white and foliated, wherein Philosophers do sow their gold. The third is Orange colour, which is produced in the passage of the white to the red, as the middle and being mixed of both is as the dawn with his saffron hair, a forerunner of the Sun. The fourth colour is Ruddy and Sanguine, which is extracted from the white fire only. Now because whiteness is easily altered by another colour before day it quickly faileth of its candour. But the deep redness of the Sun perfecteth the work of Sulphur, which is called the Sperm of the male, the fire of the Stone, the King's Crown, and the Son of Sol, wherein the first labour of the workman resteth.

65. Besides these decretory signs which firmly inhere in the matter, and shew its essential mutations, almost infinite colours appear, and shew themselves in vapours, as the Rainbow in the clouds, which quickly pass away and are expelled by those that succeed, more affecting the air than the earth: the operator must have a gentle care of them,

because they are not permanent, and proceed not from the intrinsic disposition of the matter, but from the fire painting and fashioning everything after its pleasure, or casually by heat in slight moisture.

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

67. The Stone is exalted by successive digestions, as by degrees, and at length attaineth to perfection. Now four Digestions agreeable to the four abovesaid Operations or Governments do complete the whole work, the author whereof is the fire, which makes the difference between them.

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

69. In the second digestion the Spirit of the Lord walketh upon the waters; the light begins to appear, and a separation of waters from the waters occurs; Sol and Luna are renewed; the elements are extracted out of the chaos, that being perfectly mixed in Spirit they may constitute a

new world; a new Heaven and new Earth are made; and lastly all bodies become spiritual. The Crow's young ones changing their feathers begin to pass into Doves; the Eagle and Lion embrace one another in an eternal League of amity. And this generation of the World is made by the fiery Spirit descending in the form of Water, and wiping away Original sin; for the Philosophers' Water is Fire, which is moved by the exciting heat of a Bath. But see that the separation of Waters be done in Weight and Measure, lest those things that remain under Heaven be drowned under the Earth, or those things that are snatched up above the Heaven, be too much destitute of aridity.

Here let slight moisture leave a barren Soil.

70. The third digestion of the newly generated Earth drinketh up the dewy Milk, and all the spiritual virtues of the quintessence, and fasteneth the quickening Soul to the body by the Spirit's mediation. Then the Earth layeth up a great Treasure in itself, and is made like the coruscating Moon, afterwards like to the ruddy Sun; the former is called the Earth of the Moon, the latter the Earth of the Sun; for both of them are beget of the copulation of them both; neither of them any longer feareth the pains of the Fire, because both want all spots; for they have been often cleanseth from sin by fire, and have suffered great Martyrdom, until all the Elements are turned downward.

71. The Fourth digestion consummateth all the Mysteries of the World, and the Earth being turned into most excellent leaven, it leaveneth all imperfect bodies because it hath before passed into the heavenly nature of quintessence. The virtue thereof flowing from the Spirit of the Universe is a present Panacea and universal medicine for all the diseases of all creatures. The digestions of the first work being repeated will open to thee the Philosophers secret Furnace.