EXTRACTS FROM SRIA Red Booklet Series No. 16

THE SECRET ART OF ALCHEMY

By

Robert M. Black, VIII° & 9°

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THE SECRET ART OF ALCHEMY

By

Robert M. Black

Being The Sixteenth a Series of Booklets on, divers Rosicrucian subjects for Fratres of S.R.I.A.
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1991 & 2000

EXTRACTS FROM

The Secret Art Of Alchemy

Robert M Black, VIII° & 9°
Past J.S.M., Past Recorder- General

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Three of the twenty-one Plates of the Rosarium Philosophorum are placed at the end of each Chapter (not include in this extract)
FOREWORD

UNLIKE previous Booklets in this Series, this has not been based upon Papers. I am concerned that the newcomer to the subject of Alchemy can so easily be discouraged, both by the strangeness of the terminology used, and by the clever propaganda of its detractors who, in the 17th century, had religious/political reasons for their writings. [See Frances Yates' the Rosicrucian Enlightenment.]

Our official Lecture on Alchemy, whilst excellent, assumes a certain familiarity with Alchemic terminology: 'The Black Dragon of Putrefaction' may roll nicely off the tongue, but it is as much jargon as 'Interlacing' used to describe a technique for scanning colour T.V., whilst the user is only concerned with the result. Alchemy however is one of the main areas of Rosicrucian study and there is a need to encourage newcomers to make its acquaintance. I therefore persuaded Robert Black, a keen student of the subject, to write a Paper which would explain it in language understandable to all Fratres.

The result has proved to be of greater length than I had envisaged. However it covers all the various aspects so that a study of it should provide a clear understanding. And he has included the set of twenty-one Illustrations from the Rosarium Philosophorum (1550) by Khunrath which, perhaps, are the key to the reason for our study of Alchemy. For it is not always appreciated that our Rosicrucian Founders published more than the Fama, the Confessio and Chymische Hochzeit Christian! Rosenkreutz (The Chemical Wedding). They maintained a prolonged silence after 1617, when the last editions of the manifestos were printed, until in 1785-8 at Altona, the Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer (The Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucian’s) was published after prolonged circulation in manuscript. [One part exists positively dated 1621.]

The 'Geheime' (trust us English to abbreviate German titles!) is the perfect follow-up to the Fama as it seeks to lead the student by enigmatic ways to a progressive initiation into the ineffable mysteries of God, Man and the Universe, combining the several main branches of Rosicrucian study - a combination to stagger the imagination. It consists of three separate treatises, a long poem, 36 full page coloured plates, with three smaller plates in the text.

Copies of the original are extremely rare. There have been editions in English but usually with the Illustrations in black & white. Even those having coloured plates should be treated with caution as the precise shades of the original Hand-painted Illustrations - an integral part for full comprehension - are yet beyond printing technology. Then the book measures 18" x 11 1/2", or Folio, a size not readily accommodated on your average bookshelf. I like to hope that computer technology will succeed in accurate reproduction of water-colours and reduce the price (and the size to standard A4) as to make a new
printing available, and at a price within the students pocket. We have a fresh translation of the text by the late Frater Norman Hackney waiting to be used.

Meanwhile it is hoped that this Booklet will arouse your interest in the subject. The Illustrations, three of which are placed at the end of each Chapter, will give you practice in studying Alchemical drawings. You are urged to accept their simple explanations as sufficient to satisfy your conscious mind whilst studying them as 'drawings' and allow your subconscious mind to dwell at length on the several messages they can convey. Perhaps too you will realise that there are not two distinct types of Alchemy, Material and Spiritual, but that these are interdependent ... and thus a vital part of Rosicrucian study.

A B Stephenson
1991

FOREWORD to the Second Impression

This has proved to be the most popular Booklet in the Series so that its limited edition of 250 copies rapidly became exhausted. As the demand for it continues, it has been necessary to consider a second, unlimited, printing. The opportunity provided by the latest computer technology to use a more suitable typeface has allowed a small reduction in the number of pages which, it is hoped, will overcome the tendency for the book to 'split' in use.

In part the continuing popularity of this Booklet is due to the amazing success of the children's book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, bought and read more by adults than by their children. The author, Joanne Rowling, mentions Nicholas and Perenelle Flamel as possessors of the 'stone', the Elixir of Life, and Frater Black has delivered a Paper to the Metropolitan Study Circle detailing what is known of that amazing couple. Work is in progress on producing that paper in this series. However an important part centres upon an Arch of the Church of the Holy Innocents, Paris (demolished in the 18= century) which Flamel had had painted with alchemical scenes, and this requires careful colouring, a slow process.

Our author is preparing an enlarged edition of *The Secret Art of Alchemy* to include details of other, mainly eastern. Alchemical practices with the intention of procuring a book to be available to the world at large.

A B Stephenson
A.D. 2000
ABOUT THE AUTHOR


He became interested in the history of chemistry in his schooldays, being much influenced by Professor John Read's Prelude to Chemistry.

After graduating from King's College, London, he became a research chemist with a leading manufacturer of electric wires and cables, and carried out a programme of part-time research on chemiluminescence at the Sir John Cass College in Aldgate. Subsequently he was seconded to the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell to work on the radiation chemistry of polymers.

In 1957 he joined the Society for the Study of Alchemy and Early Chemistry.

He is the author or co-author of over forty scientific and technical papers in the field of analytical and radiation chemistry and dielectric phenomena and is the author of the Science Museum booklet on Electric Cables in Victorian Times.

In the IEE History of Technology series of books he has contributed a definitive History of Electric Wires and Cables, published in 1983.

Following his retirement in 1987 he has been able to devote more time to the study of alchemy and, incidentally become Recorder-General of our Society.

Admitted into Metropolitan College on the 28th January 1975
Grade II 24/01/1977
Grade III 26/04/1978
Grade IV 17/10/1978
Grade V 20/04/1979
Grade VI 03/09/1981
Grade VII 18/02/1982
Grade VIII° 26/01/1988
Celebrant of Metropolitan College 1988 and Grade 8°
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By A.B. Stevenson with additional dates, A.M. Lees 2012
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Alchemy is popularly held to be the misguided search for the Philosopher's Stone, that enigmatic catalyst by which base metals could be transmuted into silver of gold with the promise of worldly riches beyond the dreams of avarice. At best it is considered to be a primitive form of that science which we know as modern chemistry. It is true that modern chemistry owes much to alchemy, as in the course of the search for the materials from which the Stone might be prepared, compounds were obtained and identified, often their medicinal properties were established, and gradually knowledge accumulated so that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the 'Age of Reason' could systematize this information into a materialistic science wholly unrelated to the 'Art' from which it is derived.

The study of alchemy is difficult because the concepts adopted by the alchemists are so different from those with which we are familiar. Much has been written on the subject, and these writings fall into a number of categories. There are the histories of science which regard the subject from the viewpoint of historical criticism, the popular books which attempt to explain in simple terms the romance of the alchemical quest and those books written by students of the occult who tend to place alchemy in one of two categories: either completely practical as a laboratory art or completely spiritual in terms of the allegories involved. Finally there are the writings of the alchemists, and pseudo-alchemists, themselves. These employ terms which, while understood by others working in the field, are intended to conceal and even mislead all other readers.

Where the alchemists appear to be most convincing they are often most obtuse. Their prose in many cases suffers from translation from the original Latin or Arabic, but even so their use of many different terms for the same material, and the same term for different materials, may appear confusing and, indeed, has led many to reject their writings out of hand. An important part of the contributions of the alchemists are their drawings and engravings, particularly those produced during the early seventeenth century, which are intended to stimulate an 'In depth' approach to the subject and to trigger psychological processes in the mind of the recipient and induce a state of enlightenment.

It is proposed in this introduction to the subject, first to define what alchemy appears to have been, and then to cover what would appear to be its principal aspects in some detail, quoting where appropriate from the reputable alchemical sources. The question of whether, in view of modern knowledge of the structure of matter, transmutation was possible or not will be left to a later stage.

Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of the English Language published in 1755, defined ALCHEMY as the more sublime and occult part of chemistry, which
proposes for its object, the transmutation of metals, and other important operations. This gives a rather different basis to alchemy from the definition given by the current Oxford English Dictionary as the chemistry of the Middle Ages and 16th century, now applied distinctively to the pursuit of the transmutation of the baser metals into gold, which (with the search for the alkahest or universal solvent, and the panacea or universal remedy) constituted the chief practical object of early chemistry.

A recent Dictionary of the History of Science (Bynum, Browne and Porter), however, defines alchemy as The art of liberating parts of the cosmos from temporal existence to achieve perfection, which for metals, was gold, and for man, longevity, immortality and, finally, redemption. Material perfection was sought through the action of a preparation (for example, the Philosopher's Stone for metals; Elixir of Life for humans), while spiritual ennoblement could result from the receipt of inner revelation (gnosis or other mystical experience).

That alchemy was more than a primitive science is apparent from the esteem in which it was held by its practitioners. Thomas Norton spoke of alchemy as 'A wonderful Science, secrete Philosophie, a singular grace and gifte of th'almightie: which was never founde by the labour of Mann, but it by Teaching, or Revaladon begann.' He called it 'Holi Alkimy' and regarded it as an object of study akin to the Holy Scriptures and to be treated with reverence and devotion as should be given to a gift from God.

Having gone some way towards defining the subject, it remains to trace it to its source. Burckhart is of the opinion that alchemy has existed since at least the middle of the first millennium before Christ and probably since prehistoric times.

It would appear that there were two main sources of alchemy as we know it. Hellenistic Egypt, the source of all priestly knowledge and from where, it is believed, the word 'Khem' in alchemy derives as relating to the black soil of the Nile delta and to the Greek lamia'; found in the Decree of Diocletian against the old writings of the Egyptians which treat of the tranamutation of gold and silver, hence the word is explained by most as 'Egyptian Art' and identified with the Greek form of the native name of Egypt, the land of Khem, 'black earth' in contrast to the desert sand.

It should perhaps be mentioned that some of the surviving Egyptian papyri are concerned with the fabrication or imitation of gold-like materials. For example from the Papyrus of Leyden:

56. Asemos (a white alloy resembling silver) one stater (a measure of weight) of Copper of Cyprus three staters: four staters of gold; melt them together,

Or

87. To increase the weight of gold, melt it with a fourth part of cadmia. It will become heavier and harder.
From Egypt the techniques of early chemistry flowed out into the ancient world and combined with certain concepts from the Egyptian and Greek mysteries, to lend an esoteric side to the sacerdotal art. From Greece the knowledge passed into the Roman world, and later to Islam.

The other source, Chinese alchemy, which spread along the trade routes, brought a rather different, though complementary, concept, that of the Elixir of Life. This derives from Taoism. The alchemy of China flourished in the 2nd century B.C., but it is antedated by Indian Vedic texts dating from the 10th century B.C. onwards which stress the link between immortality and gold: 'gold is indeed fire, light and immortality.'

Although the first group of alchemists of which we have any knowledge lived in the Greek-speaking parts of the world about 300 B.C., the earliest manuscripts are no older than A.D. 1000.

In the West, the world of learning, in which alchemy could flourish, was largely centred around the Church and the Monasteries. Not only were clerics and monks given to the religious life, an apparent prerequisite for attempting the search for the Philosopher's Stone, but also they were to some extent protected from the attentions of greedy men.

To be an alchemist has always been a precarious occupation. If he was unsuccessful, as many were, there was the prospect of poverty, and if successful, it was necessary carefully to conceal that success; else such talent as had been developed would be requisitioned by the local prince or landowner to reimburse his coffers. Even the suspicion of success in this field could result in torture and death, or at best imprisonment until the alchemist parted with any quantity of the Philosopher's Stone that he might possess - or managed to escape.

Alchemy has suffered by being regarded as only the forerunner of chemistry, for it is properly a subject in its own right. 'Holi Alkimy', as Thomas Norton called it, seeks to comprehend the whole of creation, not just the reproducible part of it that has become the territory of natural science. The alchemist was very well aware of being himself a creature of the Divine Creator. He knew that even to start on the operations it was necessary to obtain divine help and guidance, and that without the personal instruction of a 'Father in Alchemy', a sort of chemical guru, inspiration or enlightenment from above as to the nature of the starting materials, the prima material, was essential.

A classical example of such a 'guru' is William Backhouse of Swallowfield who initiated Elias Ashmole into the secrets of alchemy on 3rd April 1651. As Ashmole recorded in his diary:

'oH, 30' P.M. Mr. Will: Backhouse of Swallow- field on Com. Berks, caused me to call him Father thence forward'. This alchemical initiation was intended to link Ashmole with a supposedly long chain of alchemical ancestry who, from Hermes onwards, transmitted their secrets by oral tradition to their spiritual sons.

Chapter 1 - Introduction
Ashmole himself attributed the greatest importance to this adoption and expressed his gratitude and joy in an ode with begins:-

From this blest Minute lie begin to date My Years and Happiness; (since you create What wise Philosophers call Lyfe;) & vow I ne'er perceived what Being was till now.

See how the power of your Adoption can Transmute imperfect Nature to be Man: Nay, with one Word may yet refine it more, Than all ye best digested Indian Oare.

Despite the secrecy which they practised, alchemists felt it incumbent upon themselves to set out an account of the process for the guidance of those who came after. As has been indicated, the writings of the alchemists are enigmatical in the extreme; not only is the nature of the starting material, the prima material, never disclosed, but also the path to the Stone is heavily veiled in allegory and illustrated by the most delightful and thought provoking symbols which might stand for one of more things, or operations, or concepts, or for any combination of those things, operations and concepts. It may perhaps be that the obscurity of their writings was in many cases a veil to hide their ignorance as to the real nature of the work.

On the other hand they would claim that it was imperative at all costs to prevent knowledge of the devastating forces they invoked from falling into the wrong hands.

Besides this secrecy, however, it is thought that the enigmas of the problem provided a challenge, the attempts to solve which by meditation and continual study might trigger off the process of self-enlightenment. Alchemy should therefore be studied with an open mind free from the confining restraints of a rigorous scientific and materialistic background.

The following chapters are not included in this extract from the original paper.

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CHAPTER 7 - SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

0. According to the laws of natural science, transmutation of one element into another is possible but has only been achieved on a very small scale by bombardment of targets of, for example, platinum with fast neutrons when an isotope of gold is formed. Chemical reactions, carried out in conventional apparatus, are concerned only with the valency electrons and are unable to affect the nucleus which determines the elemental properties.

1. A question which has not so far been answered is whether any gold was ever produced by the alchemists by treating base metals with the enigmatic catalyst, the Philosopher's Stone. In the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum there is a specimen described as 'alchemical gold', and medals struck from alchemical gold are displayed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna. Whether these samples of gold have been subjected to mass spectrometric analysis is uncertain, but in view of the claims for extreme purity such analysis would be of interest. The abundance of the various isotopes of gold in the specimens would also yield valuable information.

2. There is no doubt that the alchemists themselves believed that transmutation was possible and a number of accounts of transmutations, carried out by reliable scientific observers such as John Frederick Helveticus [1625-1709] and Johann Joachim Becher [1635-1682] can be found in the literature. Both Isaac Newton [1642-1727] and Robert Boyle [1627-1691] were firm believers in the possibility of transmutation and Newton in particular devoted much of his time to alchemical studies. Even as recently as 1922 Eugene Canseliet, using a minute quantity of the Stone given to him by Fulcanelli, was able to perform an alchemical transmutation of 100 of gold (in a gasworks laboratory at Sarcelles).

3. It would seem therefore that once the Philosopher's Stone had been prepared transmutation would follow in a repeatable manner. It was the preparation of and philosophy behind the Philosopher's Stone that appears to have been subject to rather different laws from those governing the behaviour of chemical change as
we know them. Transmutation could be carried out by anyone while the preparation of the Stone was limited to a very few individuals who had received enlightenment.

4. This enlightenment may have been brought about by certain exercises connected with the symbolism of the Work and by being directed onto the right lines by a father in alchemy. It may well have been a gift in the same way that some people have the ability to skry in a crystal or possess psychic powers which others do not have.

5. Alchemy was in the nature of a spiritual exercise carried out on a series of planes and governed by cosmic forces of which the alchemist had to take into account. It is for this reason that we cannot hope to understand alchemy for its nature transcends the purely intellectual. If we try to enclose it in a neat abstract thought structure we are doomed to failure. It is not possible to build a coherent thought picture of the alchemical process. It may well be that, as Jung has shown, some of the basic patterns of alchemy are buried in our individual subconscious, somewhere among the complex structure of body, mind and spirit that comprises human personality and the four planes of Assiah, Yetzirah, Briah and Atziluth. The concept of the common unconscious, limited access to which may explain certain of the phenomena of extra-sensory perception such as telepathy, psychokinesis and clairvoyance, may also be a factor in the spread of alchemical thought around the world over the centuries.

6. Alchemy was certainly not a science as we know it. Nor was it all an illusion based on ignorance of the nature of matter and chemical change. It was very much an activity based on the interaction of psychic forces, generated in the mind, and matter. As matter became more noble so also did the mind of the alchemist, but it would seem that in so doing the alchemist lost the material side of his nature becoming more spiritual and transcendent and practically, less a being of the material world. This might account for the mysterious longevity of such characters as Fulcanelli, Nicholas Flamel and the Comte de Saint-Germain.

7. Although there is a continuing interest in alchemy down to the present day, the scepticism of the scientific consensus has done much to ensure that it remains
hidden. Disbelief can affect even such well-known phenomena as water divining, and psychic phenomena of different kinds often refuse to manifest themselves under so-called strict laboratory conditions. Indeed the whole basis of modern science and technology would be undermined were the tenets of alchemy to be established beyond all reasonable doubt. That chemistry is a minor branch of alchemy would not be acceptable to a majority of chemists. The laws which govern the material world do not necessarily govern the other worlds, and causation, upon which material science depends, plays a less significant role in alchemy.

8. A common alchemical tenet is: When the pupil is ready, the Master will appear. This may account for the prevalence of alchemical works by both true alchemists and would-be alchemists. May they not have gone into print in the hope that a Master would contact them and confirm their path on the road to perfection?

9. From what has been said it would appear that the production of precious metals such as gold was not the sole purpose of the true alchemist. There is very little in the literature concerning the other forms of the Stone and in Western alchemy the Elixir of Life has only recently, with the work of Fulcanelli, received attention. The cure of disease and healing of the sick was, however, always prominent in Rosicrucian circles and Paracelsus was primarily concerned with this as a practising physician. It was the regeneration of the alchemist himself that became the target of Holy Alchemy.

10. On the physical plane the most important factor was the starting material, generally held to be an ore related to gold (not necessarily chemically related) and the identity of this material is nowhere mentioned specifically. On the spiritual plane the starting material is the alchemist himself, although linked in some way to the prima material.

11. This booklet has endeavoured to give some account of the principles of Holy Alchemy and the motivation of its practitioners. It has been found impossible to express the subject in conventional analytical terms because alchemy is not like that. The impression that alchemy gives is one of profound respect and adoration of the
creature for the creator and identification with the works of Nature, animal, mineral and vegetable.

In the language of Epigram XLII of *Atalanta Fugiens* of Michael Maier:

Let Nature be your guide, and with your art
    Follow her closely. Without her you will err.
Let reason be your staff: experience lend
    Power to your sight that you may see afar.
Let reading be your lamp, dispelling dark,
    That you may guard 'gainst throngs of things and words.
APPENDIX A
PHILALETHES RULES FOR THE SECRET ART

1. Whatever any Sophister may suggest unto you, or you may read in any Sophister Author, yet let none take you from this ground (viz) that as the end you look for is Gold: so let Gold be the subject on which you work, and none other.

2. Let none deceive you with telling you that our Gold is not common, but Philosophical; for common Gold is dead, which is true: but as we order it, there is made a quickening of it, as a grain of Corn in the Earth is quickened. So then in our work, after six weeks, Gold that was dead becomes quick, living and spermatical; and in our composition, it may be called Our Gold, because it is joyn'd -with an Agent that will certainly quicken it: So a condemned man is called a Dead Man, though at present living.

3. Besides Gold, which is the Body or Male, you must have another sperm, which is the Spirit and Soul; or Female, and this is Mercury, in Flux and Form like to common Argent Vive, yet more clean and pure. There are many, who instead of Mercuiy, will have strange waters or Liquors, which they stile by the name Philosophical Mercury; Be not deceived by them, for what a man sows, that he must look to reap: If thou shalt sow thy Body in any Earth, but that which is metalline and homogeneal to it; thou shalt instead of a Metalline Elisir, reap an unprofitable Caix, which will be of no value.

4. Our Mercuiy is in substance one with common Argent Vive, but far different in form; for it hath a Form Celestial, Fiery, and of excellent virtue: and this is the Nature which it receives by our Artificial Preparation.

5. The whole secret of our preparation is, that thou take that Mineral which is next of kin to Gold, and to Mercury; impregnate this with volatile Gold, which is found in the reins of Melts, with this purify your Mercury until seven times are past, then it is fitted to the King's Bath.

6. Yet know, that from seven times to ten, the Mercury is made better and better, and is more active, being by each preparation actuated by our true Sulphur; which if it exceeded in number of Preparations, becomes too fiery, which instead of dissolving the Body, will Coagulate itself.

7. This Mercury thus actuated, is after to be distilled in a glass retort twice or thrice; and that for this reason, because some Atoms of the Body may be in it, which were insensibly left in the Preparation of the Mercury. Afterwards
it is to be cleansed well with Vinegar and Salarmoniak, then it is fit for the work.

8. Chuse your Gold for this work pure and clean from any mixture: if it be not so when you buy it, make it so by Purgation; then let it be made fine, either by Filing, Malleating, Calcining with Corrosives, or any other way, by which it may be made most subtle.

9. Now come to your mixture, in which take of the aforesaid Body so chosen and prepared, one Ounce of Mercury, as is above taught animated, two Ounces or three at the most, mix them in a Marble which may be warmed so hot as water will heat it, grind both together till they be well incorporated, then wash the mixture with Vinegar and Salt till it be very pure; And lastly, Dulcifie it with warm water, and dry it carefully.

10. Know now, that whatever we may say out of envy, our way is none other, and we protest, and will protest, that neither We, nor any of the Ancients knew any other way; for it is impossible that our secret can be wrought by any other Principles, or any other disposition than this. Our Sophism lies only in the two kinds of Fire in our work: the Internal secret Fire, which is God's instrument, hath no qualities perceptible to man, of that Fire we speak often, and seem yet to speak of the External heat; and hence arise among the unwary many Errours. This is our Fire which is graduated, for the External heat is almost linear all the work, to the White Work, it is one without alteration, save that in the seven first days we keep the heat a little slack for certainty and security sake, which an experienced Philosopher need not do. But the Internal governing heat is insensibly graduated hourly, and by how much that is daily vigourated by the continuance of Decoction, the Colours are altered, and the Compound maturated; I have unfolded a main knot unto you, take heed of being ensnared here again.

11. Then you must provide a Glass Tun, in which you may perfect your work, without which you could never do anything; let it be either Oval or Spherical, so big in reference to your Compound, that it may hold about twelve times the quantity of it within its Sphere, let your glass be thick and strong, clear and free from flaws, with a neck about a Span or Foot long; In this Egg put your matter, sealing the neck carefully, without flaw or crack or hole, for the least vent will let out the subtle Spirit, and destroy the work. You may know the exact sealing of your Glass thus, when it is cold, put the neck where it is sealed into your mouth and suck strongly; if there be the least vent, you will draw out the Air, that is in the Vial, into your month, which when you take the Glass from your mouth, is again suckt into the Glass with a hissing, so that your ear may perceive the noise: this is an undoubted trial.

You must then provide yourself with a Furnace, by wise men called an Athanor, in which you may accomplish your work; nor will any
one serve in your first work. But such a one in which you may give a heat obscurely red at your pleasure, or lesser, and that in its highest degree of heat, it may endure twelve hours at the least.

This if you would obtain; Observe first, that your nest be no bigger them to contain your dish with about an Inch vacancy at the side where the Vent-hole of your Athanor is, for the Fire to play.

Secondly, let your dish be no bigger than to hold one Glass with about an Inch thickness of Ashes between the Glass and side, remembering the word of the Philosopher, One Glass, One Thing, One Furnace; for such a Dish standing with the bottom level to the Vent-hole, which in such a Furnace ought to be but one, about three Inches Diameter, sloping upwards, will with the stream of Flame, which is always playing to the top of the Vessel, and round about the bottom, be kept always in a glowing heat.

Thirdly, if your Dish be bigger, your Furnace vent must be within a third part, or a fourth as big as your Platter in Diameter, else it cannot be exactly, nor continually, heated.

Fourthly, if your Tower be above six inches square at the Fire-place, you are out of proportion, and can never do rightly as to the point of heat; For if you cause it (if above that proportion) to stream with flame, the heat will be too big; and if it stream not, it will not be big enough, or very hardly.

Fifthly, let the top of your Furnace be closed to an hole which may but just serve for casting in of Coals about three Inches Diameter or Square, which will keep down the heat powerfully.

12. These things thus ordered, set in your Glass with your matter, and give Fire as Nature requires, easie, not too violent, beginning there where Nature left. Now know, that Nature hath left your Materials in the Mineral Kingdom; therefore though we take comparison from Vegetables and Animals, yet you must understand a Parallel in the Kingdom, in which the Subject you would handle is placed. As for Instance, if I should Analogize, between the generation of a Man, and the Vegetation of a Vegetable, you must not understand, as though the heat for one, were to be measured by the other; for we know, that in the ground Vegetables will grow, which is not without heat, which they in the earth feel, even in the beginning of the Spring; yet would not an egg be hatche d in that heat, nor could a man feel any warmth, but rather to him a numbing cold.

13. Since then you know that by our work appertains all to the Mineral Kingdom; you must know what heat is fit for Mineral Bodies, and may be called a gentle heat, and not violent. First, now consider, where Nature leaves you, not only in the Mineral Kingdom, but in it to work on Gold and Mercury, which are both incombustible. Yet Mercury being tender, will break all vessels, if the Fire be over extreme; Therefore though it be
incombustible, if the Fire be over extreme; Therefore though it be incombustible, and so no Fire can hurt it, yet also it must be kept with the Male Sperm in one Glass, which if the fire be too big, cannot be, and by consequence the work cannot be accomplished. So then from the degree of heat what will keep Lead or Tin constantly molten, and higher, so high as the Glass will endure without danger of breaking, is a temperate heat; and so you begin your degrees of heat according to the Kingdom in which Nature hath left you.

As then the highest degree of heat which the root of a Tree feels in the bowels of the Earth; is not by far comparable to the lowest degree of heat of an Animal bath; So the highest degree of heat a Vegetable will endure without burning, is too low for the first degree of Mineral Heat as to our work.

14. Know, that all your progress in this Work is to ascend in Bus & Nubi, from the Moon up to the Sun; that is in Nubilis, or in Clouds. Therefore I charge thee to sublime in a continual vapour, that the Stone may take Air and live.

15. Nor is this enough, but for to attain our permanent Tincture, the water of our Lake must be boyled with the Ashes of Hermes Tree, I charge thee then to boyle night and day without ceasing, that in the troubles of the stormy Sea, the Heavenly Nature may ascend, and the Earthly descend.

For verily, if we did not boyl, we would never name our work Decoction, but Digestion; for where the Spirits only Circulate silently, and the Compound below moves not by an Ebullition, that is only properly to be named Digestion.

16. Be not over hasty, expecting Harvest too soon, or the end soon after the beginning: For if thou be patiently supported in the space of fifty days at the farthest, thou shalt see the Crows Bill. Many (saith the Philosophers) do imagine our solution to be an easie work; But how hard it is, they only can tell who have tryed and made Experience: Seest thou not a Grain of Corn, sow it and after three Days thou shalt only see it swell'd; which being dry'd. is the Corn it was before. Yet thou canst not say it was not cast into its due Matrix, for the Earth is its true place, but only it wanted its due time to vegetate.

But things of a harder Kernel lie in the ground a far longer time, as Nuts and Plumbstones, for each thing hath its season; And this is a true sign of a Natural Operation, that it stays its season, and is not Precipitate. Dost think then, that Gold the most solid body in the world will change its form in a short time; Nay, thou must wait and wait until about the 40th Day utter blackness begins to appear; when thou seest that, then conclude thy Body is destroy'd, that is, made a living Soul, and thy Spirit is dead, that is Coagulated with the Body; But till this sign of Blackness, both the Gold and the Mercuriy retain their Forms and Natures.
17. Beware that thy Fire go not out, no not for a moment, so as to let thy matter be cold, for so Ruin of the Work will certainly follow. By what has been said, thou mayst gather that all our work is nothing else but an uncessant boyling of thy Compound in the first degree of liquefying heat, which is found in the Metalline Kingdom, in which the Internal Vapours shall go round about thy matter, in which fume it shall both die, and be revived.

18. Know, that when the White appears, which will be about the end of Five Months, that then the accomplishment of the White Stone approacheth; Rejoice then, for now the King hath overcome Death, and is rising in the East with great Glory.

19. Then continue your Fire until the Colours appear again, then at last you shall see the fair Vermillion, the Red Poppy; Glorifie God then, and be thankful.

20. Lastly, you must boyl this Stone in the same Water, in the same proportion, with the same Regimen (only your Fire shall be a little slacker), and so you shall increase Quantity and Goodness at your pleasure. Now the only God the Father of Light, bring you to see this Regeneration of the Light, and make us to rejoice with Him forever hereafter in Light. AMEN.
APPENDIX B BIBLIOGRAPHY

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