
Alchemy in the English State Papers

Edward VI. Vol. IV. 64. [Undated. 1553?] Portion of a chemical treatise, giving directions for the transmuting baser metals to gold and silver, and describing the virtues of the Elixir vitae. [8 pages, imperfect, and much damaged.]

Mary Vol. VII. 46. [March 30th 1556.] Statement by Hennes that John Dethicke applied to him, as having skill in alchymy, to make experiments on a foreign coin called ealdergylders, to convert them into gold.

Elizabeth Vol. XXXVI. 12. [Feb. 7th 1565.] Memorial of Cornelius de Alneto, alias Lannoy, to the Queen. Offering to produce for Her Highness' use 50,000 marks of pure gold yearly, on certain conditions. Lat.

Elizabeth Vol. XXXVI. 13. [Feb. 9th 1565.] Cornelius de Lannoy, alias de Alneto, to the Queen. Shows that he has acquired great skill in the transmutation of metals, and repeats the offers made in the preceding. Lat.

Elizabeth Vol. XXXIX. 39. [March 7th 1566.] Armigall Waad to Cecill. A certain person has arranged the plan of his departure. First to speak with the Lady Cecilia?]. The medicine or elixir he carries with him. Proposes his arrest. The irons for casting ingots, and other things for projection, he takes with him.

Elizabeth Vol. XXXVI. 88. [May 1566.] A receipt for transmutation of metals into gold. Lat.

Elizabeth Vol. XL. 28. [July 15th 1566.] Arm. Waad to Leicester and Cecill. Has repaired to the Tower and examined Mr Cornelius [Lannoy?] as to delay in assays of metals, etc. Particulars of the conversation which took place.

Elizabeth Vol. XIII. 23. [July? 1566] [Cornelius Lannoy] to the Queen. I know how grievous this delay must be to you. I have nothing to offer you in this your kingdom but my life, which would be a heavy loss to my innocent wife. As to the business of transmuting metals and gems to greater perfection, either the work has been disturbed, or some wicked man has been present, or I have erred through syncopation. Pray permit me to write to my friends for help, for I can indubitably perform what I have promised. [1 page Latin.]

23. (1) Directions [by Cornelius Lannoy] for employing a certain medicine for converting base metals into gold. [1 1/4 pages.]

23. (2) Translation of the above. [2 1/2 pages, in the handwriting of Armigail Waad.]

Elizabeth Vol. XL. 32. [July 19th 1566. London.] Arm. Waad to the Earl of Leicester and Sir Wm. Cecill. The Lieutenant of the Tower has shewn him the letter enclosed. Explains the meaning of a passage. Cornelius has greatly abused the Queen. Incloses:-

32. (1). Cornelius de Lannoy to Leicester and Cecill. Long explanation of his proceedings. Begs for mercy from the Queen, and acknowledges his delinquency. Lat.

Elizabeth Vol. XL. 44. [August 3rd 1566. Tower of London.] Declaration, by Cornelius de Lannoy, that if it please the Queen to release him from confinement, he will without delay put in operation that wonderful elixir for making gold for Her Majesty's service. Lat.

Elizabeth Vol. XL. 49. [August 13th 1566. Tower of London.] Cornelius de Lannoy to Leicester and Cecill. Implores the Queen's mercy. Shews the impediments which he has encountered in the operations he undertook for the making of gold. Lat.

Elizabeth Vol. XL. 53. [August 26th 1566. Tower of London.] Sir Francis Jobson and Armigill Waad to Cecill. Have conference with Cornelius on the subject of his letter. Requisitions made by Cornelius for carrying on his

alchemical operations, for which a small sum of money will be required.

Elizabeth Vol. XLII. 30. [March 13th 1567.] Cornelius Alnetanus [Lannoy] to William Cecill. Promises to perform the things mentioned in his offers to the Queen. Lat. Incloses:-

30 (1). Cornelius Alnetanus to the Queen. Solemnly engages to produce gold and gems by a chemical process. 13 March 1567.

[In Cecill's diary, under the date 10 Feb. 1567, is the following entry: "Cornelius de la Noye, an alchymist, wrought in Somerset House, and abused many in promising to convert any metall into Gold".]

Elizabeth Vol. XIII. 122. [1567?]. Memorandum that the society of the new art to go forward as it is signed. Wm. Medley to be bound in 5000 l., that by colour of the society, he nor any other for him shall multiply or make any gold or silver contrary to law.

The society to be bound in 5000 l., that if the Queen has a mind to resume the same into her hands, and occupy the said new art by herself, or by any other, or otherwise think good that the said society should continue no longer than 21 years, upon warning given after 20 years, the society shall surrender at the end of 21 years their whole interest into her hands, and be dissolved.

If Her Majesty or any other shall be then minded to occupy the said art, the corporation shall be recompensed for their charges in building, leads, vessels, and other utensils. [1 1/4 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. LXXI. 63. [July 29th 1570.] John Southcot and Tho. Stanley, of the Mint, to the Council. Have examined John Bulkeley, student of Oxford, and William Bedo, prisoners in the Tower, and forward their depositions. Inclosing:-

63 (1). Examination of John Bulkeley, touching his communications with William Bedo as to casting a figure for recovery of lost money.

63 (2). Examination of Willam Bedo, stationer, touching certain conferences which he had with John Bulkeley, who undertook to shew him various alchemical secrets and practices for diminishing and lessening the coin of the realm by sweating, etc.

Elizabeth Vol. LXXV. 66. [1570?] Note of the contents of the letter to Her Majesty written from J. Peterson, native of Lubeck. On the subject of alchemy: offering to her three wonderful alchemical glasses; and of the undertaking by Robert Smythe, on the peril of his head, to bring 40,000 dollars into the Queen's coffers by their means.

Elizabeth Vol. CCXXXIX. 76. [July 3rd. 1591.] Thos. Page to [Lord Burghley]. Can show the crucibles and quicksilver in a box, delivered to one of his Lordship's attendants by a constable; it will answer for itself that it is raw mercury, and every shop affords the like; thought to have practised a conclusion at Prague, whence he brought it for the red powder, but the informer is mistaken; wishes he had a little quantity wherewith to present Her Majesty; his Lordship should most willingly have had the honour of presenting it and the writer. Hears that Mr. Dyar's men have come, those that departed from Prague the same day as Sir Edward, before the writer arrived.

Elizabeth Vol. CCXL. 149. [1592.] Paper, headed "Clavis Adversariorum Equitis Walteri Rhalegh", being arbitrary signs denoting certain chemical substances, drugs, spirits, etc.

Elizabeth Vol. CCXLIII. 9. [Sept. 12. 1592.] Clement Draper to the Queen... Has been detained in prison 12 years against all right, by practice of the Earl of Huntingdon... With religious observations, comparing the word of God to the philosopher's stone, and religion to the elixir of life. [2 3/4 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCXLIII. 122. [1592.] List of writings and books belonging to Stephen Trefulacke, relating to astrology, conjuring and alchemy.

Elizabeth Vol. CCXLV. 130. [Oct. 20. 1593. Lubec.] Roloff Peterson to the Queen. Clement Ouldfield, born in Kent, came to lodge in his house at Lubec, 11 Sept. 1587, and continued there until 6 Sept. 1593, when he died; he studied alchemy night and day, and had brought himself to such perfection that, if the Lord had spared his life six months longer, he believed he should have reaped his heart's desire. The day before he died, he secretly informed the writer that he had at last found out and long kept a secret of such value, and so far exceeding all other, that none but high and mighty Princes should participate, he then delivered to him three glass bodies, containing alchemical preparations, sol, luna, etc. and explained these, and sundry others. After this he told him he had a most wonderful

secret, which, in the hands of any man but meanly skilful in this art, would work wonderful things, and wished the writer to make profit thereby, in regard of his kindness; but inasmuch as the great and infinite treasures that might be attained by these means rather appertained to the majesty of kings and princes than to men of his estate, he bound him by an oath to present the same to the Queen of England, and wait her answer six months, before opening the matter to any other, or making profit thereof, which he might then do if she refused; after this he yielded up the ghost. If Her Majesty will send any skilful man to be further advertised, and to see the things, is ready to discharge his trust; but if he has no knowledge within six months, shall esteem himself freed from the covenant, and at liberty to dispose thereof. [2 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCXLVII. 36. [Feb. 2nd. 1594.] Promise by Rob. Smith of Great Yarmouth, that whereas he has delivered into the hands of Sir Thos. Wilkes, clerk of the Council, a letter to the Queen from Roloff Peterson, of Lubec, offering to present three glasses or bodies in alchemy, one of Sol, one of Luna, and the other of Mercury, as the gift of Mr. Ouldfield, born in Kent, and has offered Sir Thomas, at the peril of his head, to bring 40,000 dollars into Her Majesty's coffers for these glasses or bodies, without one penny of expense, if it will please her Majesty not to meddle with the receiving of them; and whereas doubts were moved as to how Her Majesty might consider the virtues of these glasses or bodies, as being without error or deceit, and whether she would accept them or the money; he confirms on his allegiance and life, the first two particulars, and offers to bring Roloff, if he lives, and the glasses or bodies, before Her Majesty, to be examined, after which, if she shall refuse the bodies, he will be bound as before, to procure the money at his own charge.

Elizabeth Vol. CCXLVII. 72. [Feb. 20th. 1594. Hampton Court.] Instructions to Rob. Smith, of Yarmouth, sent by the Queen to Lubec. He having received the Queen's reply to a letter from Roloff Peterson, of Lubec, is to repair thither, deliver the letter, receive the three glass bodies, and bring them to Her Majesty. He is to ascertain from Peterson whether the materials therein were considered by Ouldfield to be brought to full perfection, and if anything is lacking, what it is. Also to recover any books or papers of Ouldfield relating thereto, or other of his books which treat of alchemy; also a secret menstruum, without which the materials aforesaid can hardly be brought to perfection. All these things are to be brought to Her Majesty, in order to ascertain their value, and either detain them, or return them, on the consideration mentioned. [Copy. 1 1/2 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCL. 9. [Sept. 30th. 1594. Greenwich.] Declaration by the Queen, that whereas Clement Oldfield made a bequest, containing certain secrets of alchemy, to Roloff Peterson of Lubec, on condition of their being first offered on composition to Her Majesty, the said bequest shall be delivered unopened to the deputy of the Merchant adventurers at Stade, for Peterson; or if she is pleased to keep it, he shall receive 500 l. for the same within six months. [Copy.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCLI. 57. [March 13th. 1595.] Instructions for Rob. Smith, sent on Her Majesty's service into Germany. You shall repair to where you know the persons remain, with whom you are to confer on the service for which sent, and speedily bring to Her Majesty's coffers the sum which you promised, for the materials bequeathed to her by Clement Oldfield, deceased. As she has promised the said materials, or 500 l., before 20th April next, to Roloff Peterson, of Lubec, you are, if possible, to inform her before that time, whether you can compass the matter. If unable so to do, you are to tell Peterson that the person to whom the Queen sent for advice as to those materials is ill, and cannot attend before June, and to request a postponement till June 15, when the money or the goods will be delivered him by the governor of the Merchant Adventurers at Stade, who has received orders to that effect. If you conclude with the parties to whom you resort for the promised sum, it may be paid at Stade, part in hand, and part on bond, and the materials delivered, without trouble or alteration, as left by Oldfield, on June 10. All secrecy is to be observed, that it may not be supposed that the Queen has any other interest in the said materials than as a princess to whom, for their rareness and preciousness, they were offered; but that, there being now in the realm some acquainted with them, she has left them to the disposition of a servant of hers, by whom you are deputed to make such benefit as their value allows. Peterson is to be led to suppose that your journey to Germany is to bring to Her Majesty a person who can inform her about the materials. You are to send a speedy report of the result of your mission, that orders may be given accordingly. [2 1/2 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCLI. 58. [March 14th. 1595.] The Council to Alderman Saltonstall, governor of the Merchant Adventurers of London, resident at Stade. We send you three cases, two of wood, and one of black cotton, all sealed, with glass bodies therein, which you are to send to the company, to be safely kept until further orders. If before or about 24th April next, Roloff Peterson of Lubec shall claim, by a writing from Her Majesty, either the said cases or

a sum of money in lieu thereof, he is requested to postpone his claim till June 10, since a person for whom Her Majesty sent to judge to quality of the things contained in the glasses could not hitherto come to England because of sickness, but she has now sent into that country a special messenger for him. You are to keep your having the glasses a secret from Peterson, Rob. Smith, and all others, and only to deliver them on order from [Sir] Thos. Wilkes. [1 1/2 pages. Copy.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCLIV. 46. [Oct. 1595.] Protest to be made by the deputy governor of the Merchant Adventurers at Stade. In Sept. 1594, the Queen received from Roloff Peterson of Lubec certain material of alchemy, sealed up in glass cases, and promised that they should be returned safe and unopened in six months, to the Merchant adventurer's deputy at Stade, for restoration to Peterson, or else that he should be paid 500 l. Before the time appointed, the Queen, as she could not obtain information in time of the virtues supposed to be in the materials, returned them to the said deputy, requesting Peterson to wait an answer till Rob. Smith had procured a person from Germany to inform her of their qualities. Peterson promised to wait till Sept. 30, when he declared he could wait no longer, and demanded the 500 l. Sent the Queen word, and received her directions, that as Peterson will not be content to wait till she can procure a skilful person - who is not easily to be found - to test the value of the materials, Her Majesty returns them. Thereupon, I, the deputy, hereby tender to him the three glass bodies, to see that they have been unopened, and am ready to deliver them to him on his delivery of the Queen's note thereon.

Peterson having refused to receive the same, I, the deputy, protest my freedom from any charge or damage relating to the said goods, and declare that neither I nor Her Majesty is bound to pay the 500 l., unless she had retained the goods. I think Peterson forgets the high state of the sacred person he deals with, in claiming the money without having intimated his mislike of the delays. [6 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCLXXII. 1. [August 1st. 1599. London.] John Chamberlain to Dud. Carleton, attending on the Lord Governor of Ostend. [Sundry news.]... Scory, the alchymist, who has been so long tampering for the philosopher's stone, is committed to the Gatehouse for coining. [2 pages.]

Elizabeth Vol. CCLXXXII. 51. [Dec? 1601.] Dan. Doryn, Dutchman, to [Sec. Cecil?]. Going over to Emden last April on family business, I became intimate with Peter Lubrighte, a German, who showed me a powder which would turn silver and quicksilver into gold, and he did it before my face. I got some of the powder, came to England, stayed till Midsummer, thence backwards and forwards to Calais about family matters. I showed Hans Ghammell of Dunkirk my powder, and he told the governor of Gravelines; they did it themselves, and asked if I could make the powder. I said not, but a friend of mine could; they offered me money to get my friend thither, which I promised to try to do, but have never been there since. [1 page.]

James I. Vol. XIX. 83. [March 26th. 1606.] Hen. Wright to the Earl of Salisbury. Sends him a "theorike with an overture"; having served him in small matters, offers his services in great. Can do something in scholarship. Incloses,

83. (1). Account of his theorike; has discovered the mode of distilling the water of life, and of turning metals into gold. Begs that in compensation for his services "in discovering of villainous practices", he may have a place that will bring him in money to supply his furnaces, etc. Promises Salisbury and the King the benefit of his discoveries. Clerkenwell, March 26.