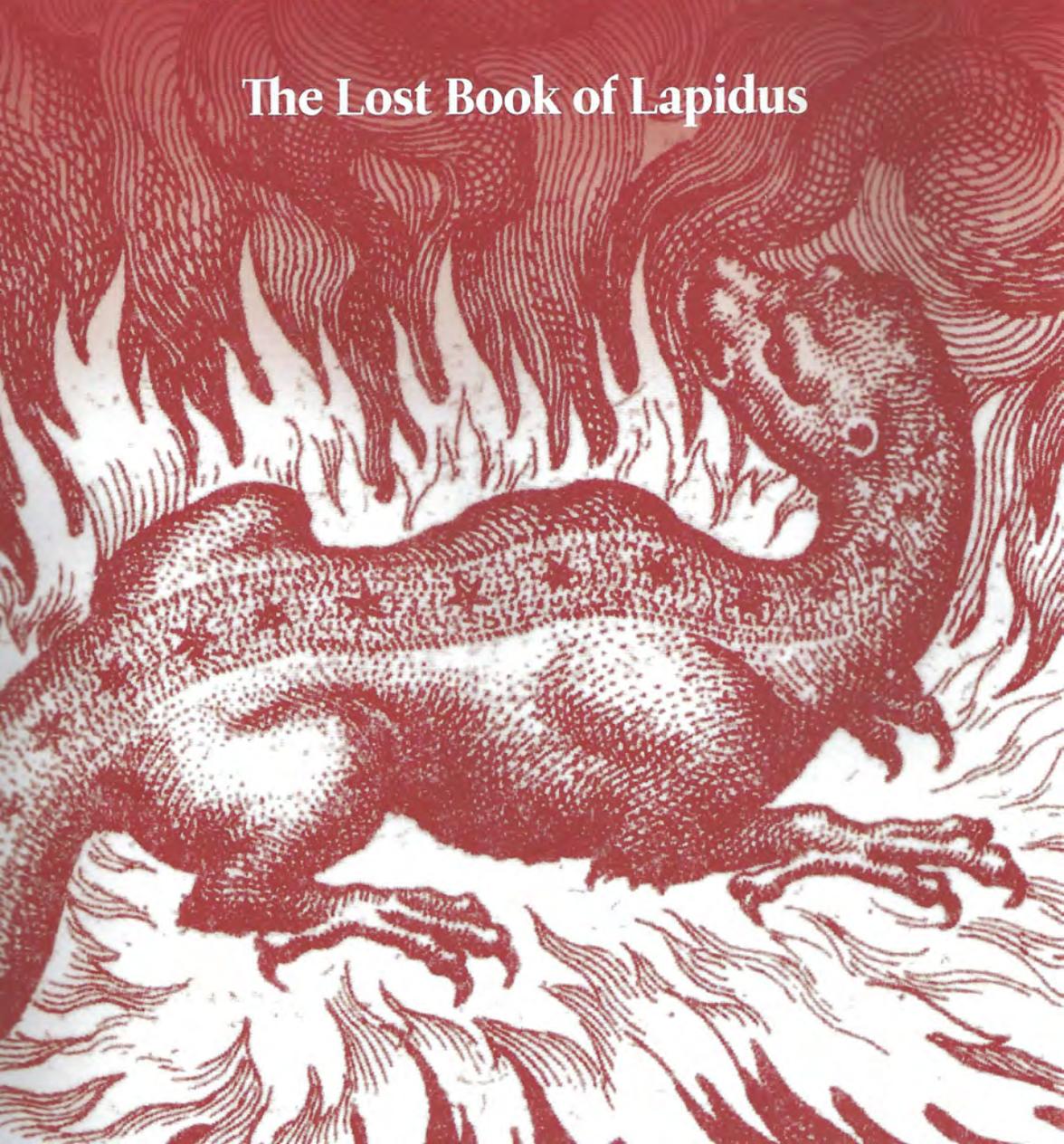


LAPIDUS

THE PASS-KEYS
TO ALCHEMIY

The Lost Book of Lapidus



LAPIDUS

THE
PASS-KEYS
TO ALCHEMY

The Lost Book of Lapidus

Edited and with a foreword by Paul Hardacre

Introductory essay by Tony Matthews



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AND SONS

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FOREWORD



THE EXISTENCE OF A MANUSCRIPT ENTITLED *THE PASS-KEYS TO ALCHEMY* was first brought to my attention by Andrew Kettle of the Restoration of Alchemical Manuscripts Society (R.A.M.S.) Digital, based in Brisbane, Australia. Andrew had a working relationship with a fellow by the name of Jamie Wilson, who had befriended Jeff Nintzel – one of the sons of the late esotericist and alchemist Hans Nintzel (1932–2000) – and was scanning significant quantities of documents unearthed from mountains of boxes stored in the Nintzel family home garage in Dallas, Texas. These documents were being scanned by Jamie for integration into the final version of the R.A.M.S. Digital collection, as collated by Andrew. It was while undertaking this monumental task that Jamie ‘found’ what had been ‘lost’. As he would later elaborate:

I first found the typescript during my trip to Jeff Nintzel’s during August 2010. I was very excited to see the title, since I was familiar with *In Pursuit of Gold* and knew there were no other titles by Lapidus at the time. It promised to expand on the former title, thus the excitement! Like a kid on Christmas morning. According to the letter from Hans to [an alchemist friend of Hans who resides today in North America, and has requested anonymity regarding his role in the preservation of the lost Lapidus manuscript] it came from Manuel Corbi.

Upon receipt of Andrew’s email, at the end of October 2011, I immediately contacted the noted occultist and author Stephen Skinner (editor of the first edition of Lapidus’ *In Pursuit of Gold: Alchemy Today in Theory and Practice*, published in 1976) and Tony Matthews (writer, editor, local historian, and grandson of Lapidus). Despite some mild skepticism, both expressed interest in sighting the manuscript, or manuscripts, as it eventuates that no fewer than three versions were extant. By early November, the manuscript of *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* – replete with extensive annotations in the hand of Lapidus, and what is presumably the hand of Hans Nintzel – had been reviewed by both Stephen and Tony,

and confirmed as legitimate and the work of Lapidus. On 11 November 2011 Tony Matthews wrote to me in an email:

Examination of the original shows that this was indeed my grandfather's work, albeit circulating some years after his death. We can only speculate as to why he seems to have sent it to the publisher in Madrid. After all, the Spanish language book published in 1980 has the original title rather than this one. Perhaps he wanted to strike while the iron was hot and assess the possibilities for a follow-up work there. At present we are not aware that Neville Spearman was offered this book as well as *In Pursuit of Gold*.

The three extant versions of *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* manuscript include one typed by Lapidus, and bearing extensive annotation in his hand, and what is presumably the hand of Hans Nintzel; one re-typed and edited by Nintzel; and one re-typed by the anonymous alchemist friend of Hans. It was with this anonymous fellow that, starting in November and continuing into December 2011, I enjoyed insightful correspondence regarding not only Lapidus, Nintzel and *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* manuscript, but a wide array of related individuals and areas of study including Frater Albertus Spagyricus and the Paracelsus Research Society (P.R.S.), Fulcanelli and the specific medicinal action of the Philosophers' Stone, Basil Valentine and the antimonial work, and Archibald Cockren and the widespread utilisation by alchemical authors of some form of internal cipher to guide / direct the student of the work, along with a technique for fathoming (at least to some degree) such subtle ciphers. *Grace and peace* to you, anonymous friend.

In his foreword to the second version of the manuscript, Hans Nintzel writes:

This document was presented to me for evaluation and editing by Manuel Agori Corbi of Madrid Spain. It was written by LAPIDUS who wrote *In Pursuit of Gold*. He wrote it to 'atone' for the paucity of intelligible data in that book. This then represents an elaboration of his last book plus introduction of new data. This book is not to be reproduced by ANY one in ANY way as it is scheduled for possible publication.

A subsequent email from Tony Matthews advised that, "It was certainly Manuel Algora (note correct spelling) Corbi who translated *In Pursuit of Gold*

into Spanish when it was published as *En persecucion del ORO* by Luis Carcamo.” This Spanish edition was published in 1980.

The contemporary Spanish alchemist José Antonio Puche Riart emailed me regarding Corbi, stating that “Manuel Algora Corbi published the *Round Table of the Alchemists* by Luis Carcamo editor.” I soonafter managed to establish contact with Luis Carcamo, who replied that he had lost contact with Corbi many years prior, and had no means of contacting him.

Later during November 2011, Rik Danenberg of Paracelsus College in Bendigo, Australia, emailed reminding me of Corbi’s splendid article entitled ‘The Dry Way’ which appeared in Frater Albertus’ *Essentia* Volume 3, Fall 1982, specifically the eighth endnote in which Corbi writes:

I would like to make use of this opportunity in order to state that Lapidus, whom I know well, is NOT Stephen Skinner (in spite of what was suggested in *Parachemy*).

This statement regarding the identity of Lapidus was in response to his successfully maintained anonymity, coupled with the ongoing assumption by many that Skinner – responsible for having provided “additions and extractions” to *In Pursuit of Gold* – and Lapidus were one and the same. Although an August 1997 dialogue between members of Adam McLean’s Alchemy Texts email group resulted in McLean’s assertion that the Lapidus *nom de plume* did not belong to Skinner (this based upon McLean’s own correspondence with Skinner during 1996), it was not until 2006 that the identity of Lapidus was disclosed – albeit rather discretely – in one of the more than 800 tables included in Skinner’s *Tabularum Magicarum* (or *The Complete Magician’s Tables*), where the pseudonym Lapidus was followed in brackets by the name David Curwen.

With its references to the published book *In Pursuit of Gold, The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* was evidently written by Lapidus sometime between 1976, when *In Pursuit of Gold* was published in English, and 1984. The exact date of when, specifically, the manuscript was written during this eight year period remains uncertain.

Paul Hardacre
Seattle, USA
September 2012

“Every delay that postpones our joys, is long.” So wrote the great Roman poet, Ovid, in his collection of letters by aggrieved Greek and Roman heroines, *Epistolæ Heroidum*. Ongoing delays have frustrated the presentation of *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* to readers, among them many dedicated students of alchemy. While such delays are to be abhorred, they are often, to some extent, unavoidable and it is my hope that in time it will be recognised that, in the context of a manuscript lost for more than three decades, the delays associated with bringing this invaluable alchemical text to the public were of little negative consequence. Indeed, the delays may eventually come to be perceived as beneficial to the publication as they not only enabled the integrity of the manuscript to be preserved, but significantly enhanced via the inclusion of extensive annotations, marginalia, authorial deletions, and footnoting. Further, the numerous delays ensured that Tony Matthews’ email of 21 November 2012 – with its scans of four letters between Lapidus (David Curwen), Manuel Algora Corbi and Neville Armstrong – was not in vain:

The earliest [letter], dated 24 May 1979, shows that my grandfather offered *The Pass-Keys* to his existing publisher, Neville Spearman, as a follow-up to *In Pursuit of Gold*. However, Neville Armstrong, the director, declined for personal reasons.

The other three letters reveal what happened to all of his alchemy ‘paraphernalia’ – the hot plates, books and so on. His Spanish publisher, Manuel Algora Corbi, paid him £150 sterling (multiply by ten perhaps for 2012 value) in advance and arranged to collect them by car in July 1980. Until now I was unaware of this date but, as I wrote in the biography, in his last years before my grandmother’s death in 1982 he had already switched from his esoteric work to more conventional landscape painting at home. We now know that the laboratory at Melcombe Street, still very active in 1979, ceased to exist a year later.

As *The Pass-Keys* manuscript came into Manuel Algora Corbi’s hands at some point it seems possible that my grandfather could have given it to him at the same time or soon afterwards. Since publication of the Spanish edition of *In Pursuit of Gold* was going ahead satisfactorily at the time it would have seemed the obvious thing to do.

This previously unseen correspondence helps to clarify that the writing of *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* was completed by May 1979 and that it was offered for publication in English; the fate of Lapidus' laboratory equipment and library, along with how the manuscript came to be in the hands of the Spaniard, Corbi – three matters that had puzzled us for some time.

Matthews' email also included a scan of the Certificate of Initiation into the United Grand Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England, Dalston Lodge No. 3008, belonging to David Cohen (later Curwen). Although Lapidus' involvement with Freemasonry was briefly articulated by Matthews in his biographical introductory essay, 'Lapidus Unveiled', in the revised and expanded edition of *In Pursuit of Gold* published during 2011, and a photograph of Lapidus' Masonic apron was included, Lodge particulars as detailed in the certificate were unknown until now. The certificate, and facsimiles of the correspondence between Lapidus, Corbi and Armstrong, follow this foreword.

I am privileged to have been entrusted the duty of publishing this 'lost book of Lapidus'. I am certain that, via the careful study of the pass-keys, the student of alchemy will gain invaluable insights into the Great Work of confecting the *Philosophers' Stone*, a labour described by Lapidus as "a natural simple process, carried out in metals."

Paul Hardacre
Chiang Mai, Thailand
December 2012

PROVIDERS OF THE PASS-KEYS



DAVID CURWEN (1893–1984) USED THE PSEUDONYM OF LAPIDUS TO RELAY his knowledge as one of the 20th century's few practising alchemists. He spent most of his life in London and progressed to laboratory experimentation after many years of esoteric study in fields ranging from theosophy and Freemasonry to Indian tantra, yoga, and the magick of Aleister Crowley. His book *In Pursuit of Gold: Alchemy Today in Theory and Practice*, which first appeared when he was 83 years old, crystallised decades of study as well as the practical application of the alchemical process. It is an iconic work and this sister book, *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy*, complements it with additional assistance to current students in the art (or science).

Both works reflect the influence that many great alchemical adepts over the centuries had upon Lapidus. His intensive studies at the British Museum Library, and via his own collection of rare works, led him to select those alchemists whose writings – although always complex and filled with hints rather than clear directions – he considered most closely revealed a meaningful route towards ultimate success in achieving the Philosophers' Stone.

Chief among those referred to in *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* are the 12th century Moorish alchemist Artephius, the 16th century figures Paracelsus of Switzerland and Sir Edward Kelly of England, and the mysterious Eirenæus Philalethes and Ali Puli, both said to have worked during the 17th century. He also mentions many others and refers to the bibliography provided in *In Pursuit of Gold* as a recommended source for wider study.

By adopting the name Lapidus for his writings – his family's own ancestral name, as it happened – David Curwen was following the age old tradition among alchemists of using pseudonyms to conceal their own identities. This applied to many of those he refers to in *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy*. There is no evidence, for example, that anyone called Eirenæus Philalethes actually ever existed, but it is believed that the colonial American George Starkey (1628–1665), who claimed to have met him, was the actual author of *Ripley Reviv'd*, a work he attributed to Philalethes. Either way, the book was a major source for Lapidus.

Ripley Reviv'd, or an Exposition upon Sir George Ripley's Hermetico-Poetical Works was based upon the work of Sir George Ripley (1415-1490), the Englishman who became the 15th century's most influential authority on the relevance of alchemy to lifestyle and medicine. This was of particular concern to Lapidus whose ultimate goal was to secure the precious Elixir of Life. Unlike others, Ripley seems not to have used a pseudonym and his reputation certainly outlived him, continuing to influence thinking up to and including the time when Eirenæus Philalethes supposedly wrote the eponymous work. Noone was clearer than Ripley in explaining that the principles involved in the transmutation of base metals to gold – like those for bodily health – were based upon the struggle between opposite forces, a struggle that eventually leads to renewal, invigoration and recovery as long as self-belief and self-sacrifice are also involved. In an age when the struggle for survival against plague affected every section of society and no cure was known, this was advice to be taken seriously.

Ripley, Augustinian Canon of Bridlington Priory, entered the service of King Edward IV of England and later George Neville, Chancellor and Archbishop of York, both of whom had a significant interest in alchemy. Ripley himself claimed when 63 years old to have begun the study of alchemy when aged just 18 and to have discovered the Philosophers' Stone finally in 1470. During the 1460s, with the permission of the crown to attend a foreign university, he studied theology at Louvain and Rome. He travelled abroad for some seven years and is said to have reached Malta and Rhodes where the Knights of Saint John apparently initiated him into the Hermetic arts. He is said to have donated a vast sum of money to help them fight the infidel Turks, although this may equally have been symbolic rather than actual wealth.

Ripley's alchemical ideas may originally have been applied to the service of the weak King Henry VI, but were transferred to support his replacement in 1461 by the younger, more vigorous Edward IV. In 1471 Ripley wrote the *The Compound of Alchemy, or, The Ancient Hidden Art of Alchemie; Containing the right and perfect means to make the Philosophers Stone, Aurum Potabile, with other Excellent Experiments, Divided into Twelve Gates*, dedicated to the king. It referred particularly to the laboratory process of heating and mixing base metals to produce gold or silver. The twelve gates or stages later quoted by Lapidus in *In Pursuit of Gold* involved calcination, dissolution, separation, conjunction, putrefaction, congealation, cibation, sublimation, fermentation, exaltation, multiplication, and finally projection or transmutation.

The complexity of such processes also mirrored the struggle between forces

leading to unhealthy or healthy lifestyles. While Ripley may also have been involved in the actual reminting of gold coinage under King Edward – alchemists were employed at the Royal Mint – he advised the king separately on a diet and lifestyle that would strengthen him personally and through his rule, the realm of England. Edward was urged to eat and drink only in moderation, take exercise and restrict his sexual activities. As a monarch he should be philosophical and prudent, bearing in mind those Biblical figures who had been undone by excess. However, the king was less attentive than he might have been, pressing Ripley and fellow physicians to provide him with purgative medicines that would allow him to carry on a lifestyle as he saw fit rather than heeding such advice. Indeed, he increasingly neglected the other beneficial aspects of alchemy, seeing it just as a means of acquiring material wealth.

By 1476 Ripley was out of favour with the king and retired from the court. So too was a desperately ill George Neville, and it was to him that Ripley dedicated *The Marrow of Alchemy*, making bold claims for an alchemical process that could “turn all bodies into pure gold” and “heal all infirmities.” Although greatly influenced by the writings of Ripley, as evidenced in *In Pursuit of Gold*, in *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* Lapidus lauds a different ‘Marrow of Alchemy’, this one a lengthy poem in three books penned by Eirenæus Philalethes. Pass-key number one, he says, is an extract from this poem, which he considers “the most outstanding and informative treatise on the art ever revealed so openly.”

Like Ripley – and Lapidus – the Swiss-born alchemist Philippus Theophrastus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim (1493–1541), widely known as Paracelsus, was concerned with the significance of alchemy for health rather than just material wealth. The son of a physician, he studied medicine from an early age and spent his life travelling throughout Europe applying his esoteric principles to healing the sick. His alchemical work, he said, was aimed at considering “only what virtue and power may lie in medicines,” not in simply creating gold or silver as such. Nevertheless, his particular significance for Lapidus lay in his explanation of the *Secret Fire* which we are told he learned from ‘an Arabian’.

Paracelsus introduced the concept of a cosmos fashioned from three spiritual substances – Mercury, Sulphur and Salt – which were also the broad principles behind the inner essence and outward form of every object. They were also, of course, central to the alchemical process of transmutation. Mercury was transformative, Sulphur a binding agent, and Salt a solidifying force. These *tria prima* respectively epitomised the spirit or imagination, the soul or emotions, and the body. By understanding their chemical nature, a physician could discover how

to cure disease. Health relied upon harmony between the different minerals within the body, reflecting the wider balance of the cosmos itself. Through the application of chemical remedies to this end, Paracelsus is sometimes seen as the founder of homeopathy.

Diseases were caused by poisons with astrological origins, he said, but it was the dosage that dictated whether or not these had negative effects. Indeed, poisons could have beneficial medical effects since they might be found in herbs, minerals and various alchemical combinations that would provide positive results if applied with the appropriate degree of harmony. Illness was caused by an imbalance of the four natural humours within the body: blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile. Such an imbalance was the result of attack by outside agents, but could be overcome.

Paracelsus' ideas may seem remote from modern medicine, but it is notable that he referred to the circulation of blood within the body long before this became the accepted norm. However, he may not have benefited personally from such medical diagnosis and probably never found the Elixir of Life himself. He was only aged in his forties when he died, although it has been suggested that he may have been poisoned by his enemies.

The 12th century Moorish alchemist known as Artephius was equally important to Lapidus. Among the most prominent of the mediæval alchemists, he flourished around 1126 in Al-Andalus, Spain. His real name may have been Al-Hafiz, Ibn al-Hafiz or Al-Tafiz, *Ibn al-Tafiz* meaning *one who has memorised the Koran by heart*. In the first of the seven pass-keys, Lapidus writes of *The Secret Book of Artephius*: "In fact no alchemists could ever succeed without close study of Artephius, who wrote the truth so clearly and plainly." It was this man, he says, who first mentioned the use of antimony in alchemy, a crucial point made in *In Pursuit of Gold*.

In fact Artephius was interested in many substances as well as antimony. Chief among these was mercuric oxide, and he also wrote of medicines extracted from saffron. He also referred to iron ore, thiosulphate, gold, alluvium, sal ammoniac, wax, brass, silver, black ash, metallic vapours, and magnesia; mentioned the methods used to make vinegar, saffron, cheese, pure milk, yogurt, cream, and butter, and wrote about the sublimation process and the bain-marie.

Also attributed to Artephius is *De Vita Propaganda* or *The Art of Prolonging Life*, a central priority for Lapidus. Alchemists of the 17th century looked to Artephius as well as Ripley for their ideas. In printed form, the Moor's works became well known as he was credited for his detail concerning the extraction of various

substances and apparent discovery of the Elixir of Life. Artephius himself claims in *The Secret Book* that the science of alchemy is more than 1,000 years old and originated in the Middle East.

In *In Pursuit of Gold*, Lapidus quotes him: "... it is wisely said, that the stone is born of the spirit, because it is altogether spiritual." Although David Curwen personally believed that his own fate and that of others was ultimately dependent upon karma, and had already been written by an unseen and uncontrollable spiritual force, he was in no doubt that a life of kindness, generosity and consideration of others was what the Supreme Being required of all men and women.

As for the alchemical process, he also quotes Artephius that the "operation or work is a thing of no great labour to him who knows and understands it; nor is the matter so dear, consideration how small a quantity does suffice, that it may cause any man to withdraw his hand from it. It is indeed, a work so short and easy, that it may well be called a woman's work, and the play of children." Artephius had advised "... think and meditate of these things profoundly ..." – Lapidus did so.

In *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* he attributes the involvement of Salt in the alchemical process to Ali Puli's *Centrum naturae concentratum* or *Concentrated Centre of Nature*. Ali Puli, or Alipili, is another mysterious character who may or may not have actually existed under that name. He has been described as a 17th century Moorish Christian who wrote a number of alchemical and Hermetic texts in Arabic. In fact, only the Latin version of this book survived until it was translated into Dutch in 1694 and then English two years later. Its most noteworthy passage says: "I say to you, my disciples in the study of Nature, if you do not find the thing for which you are seeking, in your own self, much less will you find it outside your self." This wisdom was widely quoted by Madam Blavatsky, founder of the Theosophists, who had a significant influence upon David Curwen many years before he became involved in alchemical laboratory experimentation. But while Ali Puli receives this mention in *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy*, he is restricted to the bibliography alone in *In Pursuit of Gold*, unlike Ripley, Paracelsus and Artephius.

The same is true of Sir Edward Kelly and his 'Book of St. Dunstan', described in *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* as "the work of a true adept." Like Ripley, Kelly (1555–1597) was a real person. Believed to have been born in Ireland but brought up in England, he was a young notary employed by the great 16th century magus John Dee as a crystal gazer who would relay messages to Dee for interpretation. Although learned, Kelly had a dubious reputation for necromancy and had had his

ears cut off for forgery. He claimed to have found – rather than written – the ‘Book of St. Dunstan’ in the grave of a bishop at Glastonbury Abbey which also contained a red powder, the Philosophers’ Stone itself. Despite this background, he and Dee became inseparable companions and travelled together throughout Europe.

Kelly was taken on by Dee in 1582 and the following year they set off for Poland at the invitation of Count Albrecht Laski whom Dee had predicted would become king there. At an estate in Cracow, Kelly produced a small amount of gold for the Count in his alchemy laboratory. It was enough to obtain for them letters of introduction to the court of Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, then Europe’s centre for alchemical experimentation. They remained there for two years until being accused of Protestant heresy and fled to the castle of Bohemia’s wealthiest noble, Vilem Rozmberk, another alchemist who provided them with a laboratory.

There, in 1586, Kelly produced an ounce of the best gold which impressed their host at first, but then failed to build on his success by revealing the actual secret of the Philosophers’ Stone. Eventually he and Dee fell out and the magus returned to England. During 1589 Kelly was recalled to Prague by the Emperor to supervise a great alchemical work. Again he produced enough gold to impress Rudolf who knighted him, and in due course he was also given extensive property by Rozmberk. This included an area well known for its gold mines. Alchemy, therefore, literally made him a fortune and he published a number of treatises in traditionally obscure style. His reputation reached the court of Elizabeth I in England, but he refused offers to return to his home country to convey his secrets there.

His downfall came in 1591 when he was jailed following an illegal duel. While in custody he was pressed by the Emperor to reveal his alchemical secrets. Although he failed to do so, he was released before being re-imprisoned a few years later. There he wrote another treatise dedicated to Rudolf II, but left the Emperor none the wiser. In the end he may have died trying to escape from prison or possibly by suicide. Nevertheless his fate and reputation seem not to have undermined him entirely, as two further alchemical treatises attributed to him were published many years later during 1676.

Kelly may have been a charlatan, like so many other historical alchemists and esoteric writers. Unlike them, however, his writings included nuggets of genuine value. The challenge for later adepts like Lapidus, seeking a truthful pathway from within the morass of misleading literature over the centuries, was to distinguish the priceless from the worthless, whatever the source. In *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* he believes he has done so.

In selecting writings of every available origin, David Curwen set himself a lifelong task and only he himself could know at the end whether he had reached the destination he sought. Above all else, his message in *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* – and in *In Pursuit of Gold* – is to keep an open mind, have faith, and behave towards others as you would have them to you. In short, *the purest life is the purest gold of all.*

Tony Matthews
Wimbledon Common, United Kingdom
December 2011

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24 May 79

Dear Mr Curwen,

Thanks for yours of yesterday.

I am not as old or wise as you, but all the same I am now what I call an 'Ancient Briton'. And in view of this I am cutting down severely on my work and output of new titles each year. Why should I die with my boots on?

Really, therefore, I feel I must say no to your kind offer of Pass Keys to Alchemy.

Perhaps to make you feel happier you might care to put the idea up again say in 6 months time. Right now, I don't want to take on any further MSS.

I hope you are keeping well. Perhaps the summer helps all of us.

Yours sincerely,



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David Curwen
16 Rydal Close
Holders Hill Road
Hendon
London NW4

Manuel Algora Corbi
Velazquez 55
Madrid - 1
SPAIN

16th May 1980

Dear Mr. Curwen,

Thank you for writing to me in spite of being "the last thing you wish to do".

I'll try to make myself as clear as possible: I want to learn alchemy, as much as I can, am interested in your books and paraphernalia. You say you may give me all this for £ 150. *Yes.* If your offer is still up, i.e., if all the aforementioned is still available, just tell me and I will send you the money. *yes still available* Just answer yes or not, and, if the former, you will get your *OK.* money.

A friend of mine is going through Europe at June with a big car (those which allow for some people to live in), and he might pass on to London to pack the things and bring them to Spain in his car. Of course, I would accompany him in this affair. *good. good.*

Please notice that the paraphernalia interests me much, as this is necessary for an alchemical practice. Would the hot plates, and so on, be included for the £150? *yes.*

Suming up: Is your offer on knowledge, books & paraphernalia still available. Answer yes or not (please, don't bother yourself with a long letter), and if the answer is yes I will send you the money, going very soon (June) to visit you. *yes.*

Good Good news for you: your book is about to be published (it should not take longer than half a month to see days light). *your most work & tell me.* I'll keep you informed on this, and give you a copy.

From the depth of my heart, thank you very much for all your bothering with me,

M J

16, Rydal Close,
Holders Hill Road,
Hendon, N. W. 4.

May 19th 1980.

01-346 3385.

Dear Manuel,

Your letter dated 16th^{of} May arrived this morning and I reply at once, as requested.

You say in your letter that I quoted £150 in English money. O.K. My offer remains as I say, and your request for reply is YES. You are indeed very persistent, as an alchemist, and it must^{be} in this spirit that you try alchemy. without a doubt it is a true art. but you must have much patience to practice.

It is good news that a friend of yours could take back all the things I will give you including Equipment and books, hot-plates and how to use them? and I have often wondered, how you can get the hot-plates, etc, etc, ^{to Spain.} as it will be a bit too heavy to carry by handback to Spain. But ^{with} a car available, all will become easy.... *But I must know when*

You must let me know exactly (if your friend comes with his car,) the date, and also the time of the day, so that I shall be at home, to meet you.

It is good news to me, to hear that my book is published at last, and I will thank you for keeping me informed, as I hear very little from Neville Spearman, as he does not appear to be very interested in me.

Yours Sincerely,

16, Rydal Close,
Holders Hill Road,
Hendon, N.W. 4.

01-346 3385.

June 20th.1980.

Senor Manuel Algora Corbi.

Dear Manuel,

This letter is just to inform you that your money has arrived, this morning, and I thank you.

With this letter I wish to inform ^{you/} that what you send will not be touched ^{or used} until you arrive any time after the 10th of July, but please try and let me know the date when you will come to London.

You could telephone me, when arriving in London and fixed up where you will stay, and have had some food. I have to tell you this, my wife and I are getting on in years (well over 80, and getting on for 90.) so that supplying you with food is out of the question, Yes, a cup of coffee or tea, and a biscuit. I am sorry about this, but age makes it so.

I look forward to seeing you again, and I will do my best that you will be well satisfied.

Until then, I will touch your money.

I remain yours sincerely,

ILLUSTRATIONS



THE FACSIMILE OF THE CERTIFICATE OF INITIATION INTO THE UNITED GRAND Lodge of Antient, Free and Accepted Masons of England, Dalston Lodge No. 3008, belonging to David Cohen (later Curwen), is provided courtesy of Tony Matthews.

The facsimiles of correspondence between David Curwen and Neville Armstrong (during 1979) and Manuel Algora Corbi (during 1980) are also provided courtesy of Tony Matthews. The letters themselves are in the collection of Paul Hardacre and Marissa Newell.

This material appears here in print for the first time.

The engravings displayed in this book are taken from Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* of 1618. As Lapidus wrote at the beginning of *In Pursuit of Gold*, these engravings "are symbolic pictures of the different aspects of the art of alchemy, that are said to be *accommodated partly to the eyes, and partly to the understanding*. Only a few of these plates, the most helpful, have been introduced here. In the original work, the pictures are not in any special order, therefore a few guiding remarks have been added under each picture, by the present author, which may make them more useful to the interested student."

INTRODUCTION



THIS BOOK, ENTITLED *THE PASS-KEYS TO ALCHEMY*, IS INDEED THAT WHICH it claims to be, for it is the first time that such an alchemical treatise is written so clearly and truthfully. If not taken seriously now, it could remain a lost art forever. Probably the science of alchemy will never again be exposed so frankly, and if this art is not investigated, in the modern way by experiments, by taking advantage of the hints supplies in this book, then indeed it will forever remain a lost art.

While scientists are everywhere striving to discover new ideas which they hope will lead on to further knowledge, this remote subject of alchemy still remains a tangled problem and unsolvable; this position notwithstanding all the modern knowledge and aid which could be brought to help to disentangle these mysterious secrets that the adepts of old have used all their ingenuity to jumble up, so that the brightest brains are almost despairing of making sense. Yet it has often been said in those books on alchemy that the work is *child's play and women's work*, for it is a fact that when one is conversant with the subject, it amounts to a natural simple process, carried out in metals. It is safe to be professed that some time in the future, the art of alchemy will be called one of the greatest blessings to mankind in the form of a golden powder known as the *Elixir of Life* and the *Philosophers' Stone*, the cure of most diseases that afflict mankind and could heal anyone, even on the point of death.

This book has been produced in an effort to clear up the seeming gibberish that writers have formed, and so to pave the way to study, and rearrange into a clear picture. It is fair to say that with the help provided, one might be amazed at the simplicity of this wonderful art, when it is known.

After piecing together the great number of hints that the adepts left in their treatises, either on purpose or by accident, it has been found that although written from many angles, the mysteries and secrets of alchemy become clarified, and those hidden secrets no longer exist to mislead as stumbling blocks. No matter how many variations inserted to deter the researcher, they all arrived at the same result.

A vast amount of literature on this obscure art of alchemy lies resting in the great libraries, accumulated through hundreds of years, also in private hands, and there are treatises in all languages. The student should not find it too difficult to procure books to study, but he is warned not to indulge himself too much in any books he finds, otherwise, soon he will become one more of those frustrated, whilst trying to make sense of them. Most alchemical books commence as though written to be easily understood and digested, but it is a quite common occurrence to throw down the book in despair of learning anything.

This is the reason for this book of *pass-keys*, and this introduction will illuminate most of a number of books supplied in a very useful bibliography given in the latest book on alchemy entitled *In Pursuit of Gold*, published by Neville Spearman Limited.¹ In them you will find a great deal of useful information, but once again the student is warned against being misled, but yet by use and aid of much in the bibliography, the serious researcher may soon find his way, and know to recognise what is rubbish and what is true.

This science of alchemy has been claimed to be just *child's play and a woman's work*: no doubt it is so, when the processes are known, but this can come true with patience and perseverance, and by trial and error in the experiments, as is usual in scientific investigation, and patience to await changes taking place.

Today, it may be surmised that many minds are at work to dig out the hidden mysteries of alchemy, and experiments are carried out, secretly, alone and silently, thus not to attract the usual crowd who insist on speaking so learnedly on any subject about which they are completely ignorant, and often use ridicule to cover up their lack of knowing anything about it. There is no doubt that in the course of time, alchemy will be considered the most advanced knowledge of metal in existence, for there are many uncovered virtues in metals still to be found, and they will be discovered in the art of alchemy.

Therefore with close attention, patience and perseverance, in the experiments carried out, and with the teaching provided in this book, no serious researcher can fail to find the goal he is seeking.

It will always be wise to bear in mind that the whole of the work follows a purely natural process, and there it will be recognised when the tyro is working upon wrong lines. Indeed the truth may be stated in the axiom laid down by the successful alchemists of the past that *gold can only be transmuted from base*

1 *In Pursuit of Gold: Alchemy Today in Theory and Practice* was originally published by Neville Spearman Limited in 1976. A revised and expanded edition was published by Salamander and Sons during 2011.

metals, when produced with the seed of gold. And the axiom continues to raise the question: since everything in Nature is produced in this manner, why should Nature stop at metals? True, in this natural process, the greatest secret of all to be found is where from, and how to procure this mysterious seed of nature to gold, so that gold with this seed be enabled to multiply, and fulfil the power of transmutation, hoped for.

In the same manner, it may be claimed, that all base metals can do the same to produce themselves, if their seed is applied, the adepts say that all metals are progressing upwards while still in the Earth, and thus they further add to the above axiom, *what takes Nature a thousand years to do, the alchemist who has the 'know how' can accomplish within a year, and better still in a few months.* They have always, in all their treatises repeated *just set the conditions, and as in every other living thing, Nature will do the rest.*

To close this introduction, it is of interest to know, that unlike so many other discoveries, which cost so much to carry on, alchemy and all that is necessary to carry on the work is well within the cost that an average person can stand. Space to experiment, a small room, and all the equipment and materials required can be bought for a few hundred pounds at most; although heat is required, continuously, it need never rise above the boiling point of water, and far less to melt the metals in use, until the end. In the book *In Pursuit of Gold* much information will be found. What is disclosed there are great secrets, hidden for two thousand years, still awaiting some brave heart to gather up all that wonderful knowledge supplied in that book, and in this book, *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy*, and its introduction.

PASS-KEY NUMBER ONE



PASS-KEY NUMBER ONE IS AN EXTRACT CHOSEN FROM A LENGTHY POEM ON Alchemy by Eirenæus Philalethes entitled 'The Marrow of Alchemy', and may be considered the most outstanding and informative treatise on the art ever revealed so openly.

When understood after explanation by the present author, the verses supplied here¹ will be simple to follow; but where there are problems that are bound to arise, which have been confused on purpose to mislead, they will later on in this pass-key be clarified and amplified by what follows, by the comment of the present author.

The matter first which for our work we take
Is only gold and with it Mercury,
Which we decoct till neither will forsake
The other, in which work they both do die
And rot by putrefaction, after that,
Both are in glory then regenerate.²

It is of the greatest importance to know that the art of alchemy is commenced by gold and mercury. Right at the beginning however, the greatest stumbling block of all, is placed in the path of the student, and this is the metal mercury. This is the bugbear in which countless searchers have lost their way, for right at the start we are informed that common mercury is not used – in other words, quicksilver is no use at all in producing the result we hope for. Later on, we will

1 The stanzas presented here are taken from *The Marrow of Alchemy, Being an Experimental Treatise, Discovering the Secret and most hidden Mystery of the Philosophers Elixir, Divided into Two Parts: The first Containing Four Books chiefly Illustrating the Theory, the other Containing Three Books, Elucidating the Practique of the Art: In which the Art is so plainly disclosed as never any before did for the benefit of young Practitioners, and the convincing those who are in Errours Labyrinth*, by Eirenæus Philoponos Philalethes. LONDON, Printed by A.M. for Edw. Brewster, at the Signe of the Crane in Pauls Chruch-yard, 1654. The edition drawn upon here consists of a manuscript written, in a quarto size journal of 198 pages, in the hand of J.W. Hamilton-Jones, from the collection of Paul Hardacre and Marissa Newell.

2 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 6.

see that a different kind of mercury is an imperative ingredient, but it is not the common type.³ From this rule, countless researchers received the impression that there is only one mercury required in alchemy, and what this consists of is completely unknown. Throughout the ages, and right up to date, in despair, the common mercury has been tried in a thousand different ways, and always proved a failure.

Researchers, in feeling they have been misled by the treatises, have always gone back in the hopes that, notwithstanding the failures, somewhere in their experiments they have been mistaken.⁴ This great faith in common mercury, or the metallic kind, is on account of the fact that ordinary mercury will mix with most metals, base or precious, in ordinary room temperature, or heating, but quickly leaves them when⁵ a greater heat is applied. This makes quicksilver useless for our particular purpose, as stated in the third line of the above verse, where we are told that *mercury and the gold must ever more stay together* in the working of our experiments. Another fact: we are informed in most alchemical treatises that mercury does not wet the hand, which does not apply to that mysterious mercury that is used in alchemy. Nevertheless, past experimenters of alchemy still come back to trying the ordinary mercury, or quicksilver, and never believing that there might be two kinds of mercury, one of which is not mercury at all, and because this is another way of misleading those researchers who still persist not knowing there is another, which is falsely named mercury.

What is needed is a *liquid* which has been named in so many ways, including the metallic metal, that without a teacher one does not proceed far in the art. In hundreds of different ways this mysterious liquid-mercury has been described, but all adept books never mention its proper name.

We will mention some of the names for this liquid: *water, Philosophers' Mercury, metalline water, Secret Fire, Sophic Fire* – many more will be given as we proceed with this poem.

We will describe the nature of this *Sophic Fire*, so called, having the power to dissolve the strongest⁶ metals into water in a heat no more than that of a

3 Lapidus annotation: *and is not even mercury, but called mercury to mislead; in fact it is a liquid.*

4 Lapidus annotation: *and this can be found at last to be true.*

5 Lapidus annotation: *and if.*

6 Lapidus annotation: *OR HARDEST.*

hot Summer's day.⁷ For instance, gold, which would require 1,000 degrees Centigrade of heat to melt, and even IRON it melts quite easily, and there it is called by some adepts, our *Secret Fire*.⁸ It can do more: it can change them into a black liquid like mud in the short time of about 42 days, if left in a heat which must not fade out. And so this wrong name has bedeviled thousands of searchers throughout ages past, and continues to do so until the present day. A hint is given in the next verse, which will make plain that after all, only real mercury, or quicksilver, must be used.^{9 10}

For what in weight a metal equals not,
 In flux will never enter it, how then
 Hath Nature her strict Laws so much forgot,
 To please the fancies of these doting men:
 The poorest Metallurgist¹¹ knoweth well.
 Nought but metalline may with metals dwell.¹²

The last line of the above verse makes plain that only metals can mix with metals. The name *metalline* will often be given to the water that is used, but here it applies to metals, as the next verse will show.

True, Nature knows of water how to make
 A body metalline, when once the seed
 Of metals it inhabiting doth take
 Occasion to work, yet 'tis decreed,
 That Nature's self throughout her total race,
 Shall be confin'd unto her proper place.¹³

7 Lapidus annotation: 120 DEGREES FAHRENHEIT.

8 Lapidus annotation: *but is not a fire.*

9 Lapidus annotation: IN ADDITION TO THE SECRET FIRE WHICH ACTS AS A CATALYST.

10 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *Phil. Mercury = a medium.*

11 Lapidus has written *perfect metallurgist* where Eirenæus Philaethes wrote *poorest Metallurgist*.

12 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 20.

13 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 27.

The last two lines tell us that the metal mercury is indeed used,¹⁴ but only in conjunction with the *Philosophers' Mercury* which is the liquid *Secret Fire*. The above verse now introduces the water, which gives the secret that Nature can make from metals, into a metalline kind, so as to work upon metals, but this must be prepared, before use, and produced by distilling a certain clear water from certain metals. One more secret comes revealed: that this water, which by the way is not water at all, will not finally become a metal, but must be used again and again as a catalyst to bring forward the work. This *Secret Fire* has, therefore, lasting properties.

But when that Gold with its humidity¹⁵
Is tempted and within a fit glass closed,
And in a due heat digested, by and by
It doth begin to act, for thus disposed
'Tis like to good seed into good ground cast,
Which will augment itself in kind at last.¹⁶

As then each earth for each seed is not fit,
So each metalline water for our Art
Is not to be desired, they who hit
On our true Water have the hidden part
Of our rare Stone, which if they can espouse
And with the Sun digest, in its due house¹⁷

With a due fire, I may be bold to say,
That they may go to the Hesperian Tree,
And pluck its apples, these are such as may
Advance gold corporal to such degree,
That if all metals which imperfect are,
May enter, tinge, and fix to gold most rare.¹⁸

14 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): ? *This verse does not use the word mercury.*

15 Lapidus has written *with its own Metalline mercury* where Eirenæus Philalethes wrote *with its humidity*.

16 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 50.

17 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 56.

18 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 57.

These last verses should now be self-explanatory.

We can now go to investigate the great secret of the water. The water of our sea is of many more names: *our fire*, *the venomous burning water*, *the invisible fire*, *the mover*, *the first agent*, etc.

But of this Mercury¹⁹ if you desire
 The secret for to learn, attend to me,
 For this a water is which yet is fire,
 Which bodies conquers from their fixt degree,
 And makes them fly much like a spirit pure,
 This after fixing all flame to endure.²⁰

This water it doth flow from fourfold spring,
 Which is but three, which two, and which but one,
 This is the only bath to bathe our King,
 This is our Maydew, this our flying stone,
 Our Bird of Hermes in the mountains flying,
 And without voice or note is always crying.²¹

Three more names for the *Secret Fire*, you will come across. The student will guess what this water is, when he encounters them: *Maydew*, *flying stone*, *the Bird of Hermes*; and also the poet claims, it is always crying.

In the above verses, what follows may be described as the most important secret of the whole art of alchemy. When this is known, and understood, the secret method of preparation for use will be simple and plain. The fourfold spring above is the water in which metals are soaking up the water, in a gentle heat, continuously sending up a vapour, which is the *Secret Fire*. When these metals are melted, what is left, after proper distillation is only one thing, as speaks the verse above. Then the metals and the water will result in *One only thing*, a black liquid in 50 days.

In the above poem, *the Bird of Hermes* and the *flying stone* obviously is the vapour, which while distilling, must not be allowed to disappear into the air

19 Lapidus has written *secret mercury* where Eirenæus Philalethes wrote *Mercury*.

20 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 58.

21 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 59.

and be lost. The vapour named thus is said to be *always crying*, which is just another manner of speaking to hide revealing the fact of being distilled. The cooling vapour as it comes through the retort into the receiver comes along in a very clear shining water, which might be compared to tears. If these tears are allowed to evaporate into the air, its usefulness would be wasted. In the work, this distillation must be repeated four times to enhance the strength it must gain to do its work.

For the researcher, a new problem will arise, and here the artificer must learn which metal to take in hand for commencing the art of preparing the *Secret Fire* to enable the water to bring him results, and act that catalysis which will cause changes in other bodies, without itself changing or deteriorating.

'Tis Saturn's offspring who a well doth keep,
 In which cause Mars for to be drowned, then
 Let Saturn in this Well behold his face,
 Which will seem fresh, and young and tender, when
 The souls of both are thus together blended
 For each by other need to be amended;²²

Then lo, a Star into this Well shall fall,
 And with its lustrous rays the earth shall shine,
 Let Venus add her influence withall,
 For she is Nurse of this stone divine,
 The bond of all crystalline Mercury,
 This is the Spring in which our Sun must die.^{23 24}

When this poem was written, metals had planetary names: Saturn was lead, whose nature was dark and dirty; Mars was iron, magnetic, and not easy to overcome; Venus was copper; the Sun was gold, and the Moon was silver. In alchemical treatises, it was rare indeed to find the metal antimony mentioned; of crystalline texture, a beautiful shining effect given off. In the above poem, Saturn's offspring is mentioned, sometimes called Saturn's son, and in other

22 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 60.

23 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 61.

24 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *may be the Martial Regulus of antimony-iron, Bacstrom's Our Mercury.*

books, Saturn's daughter.²⁵ We may guess it meant that antimony was an extract of lead. Artepheus, however, writes that "Antimony is a mineral participating of saturnine parts" and agrees with gold, and gold is truly swallowed up by this *antimonial argent vive*; and *argent vive*, although meaning *quicksilver*, yet here is one more name for the *Secret Fire*.²⁶ Beware not to be misled when reading *argent vive*, and thinking this is common mercury.

This is our Lunar Juice, this is our Moon,
 This is th' Hesperian Garden, happy they
 Who know it to prepare, for they eft soon
 May climb the mountain tops where-ever day
 Darkness doth banish and obscurity,
 Of which the Art you shall hear by and by.²⁷

Lunar Juice is yet another name for the water, or the *Sophic Fire*. This is how the different masters of alchemy devised different names for that wonderful water which they found so important to hide.

Take thou that substance which is Saturn's child
 This is the Serpent which shall see devour
 Cadmus with his companions, though defil'd
 it be,²⁸ yet thou shalt with a gentle shower
 Wash off its blackness till a Moon appear,
 Shining most bright, know then the day is near.²⁹

Here the water is called *Saturn's child*, which again is a liquid.³⁰ It is well to introduce here a master of alchemy who lived a thousand years ago: Artepheus. His *The Secret Book* was extolled by an alchemist many years later who said, after many experiments, that *The Secret Book* was the most true, simple and wonderful

25 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *son or daughter is an off-spring*.

26 Lapidus annotation: *and is not MERCURY*.

27 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 62.

28 Lapidus has written *they be* where Eirenæus Philaethes wrote *it be*.

29 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 63.

30 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *BUT antimony isn't a liquid (unless in flux)*.

book that was ever written. In fact no alchemists could ever succeed without close study of Artephius, who wrote the truth so clearly and plainly. Artephius commences his treatise with the name of the metal antimony, and tells us it "is a mineral participating of saturnine parts." No other book has clarified this fact, and indeed it is *Saturn's offspring*. Thus we have a sure start in alchemy. Add to this antimony, Mars and Venus, and the *Secret Fire*, and you have the fourfold spring of Saturn's well.

There is an instruction here of which to be warned. It reads: "wash off its blackness till a Moon appear." This is misleading advice, and on no account should this be done, for this blackness will eventually turn into whiteness. If the truth be told, the advice should be: WHEN THE WATER IS ALL DISTILLED OFF, pour back the clear water, and repeat a few times, so that the distilled water becomes more powerful to act its part. Each time the black matter may be left fairly firm and be stirred up with a firm wire, so that the water enters in. Another useful hint is that all metals used could be purchased in powder form to expedite the work, for in the times past, the grinding of them was a sore bugbear for the artificer.

One more word of advice. When preparing the *Philosophers' Mercury*, see that enough water is prepared. For all through the working, this metalline mercury will be required. The Stone can only be dry as a metal, when made. Alchemy is Nature's work, and all things in Nature need water and heat of different degrees, when being brought to birth.

With reference to the above verse of the poem, the dictionary explains the word *defiled* as dirty, befouled, polluted, corrupted, unclean. The words in the poem are: "Cadmus and his companions, though defil'd it [they] be." In other words, brought to a dirty blackness.

This is a water shining very bright,
 Mix this with Sol with due proportion, next
 To learn the due heat fail not, then thy sight
 Shall teach the rest, the Lion being vext
 Shall with the Eagles make a bloody fight,
 And all shall end in a most dismal night.^{31 32}

31 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 66.

32 Lapidus has written in *perfect night* where Eirenæus Philalethes wrote in *a most dismal night*.

With all that has gone before, you have now uncovered³³ a good deal of the secrets of alchemy, for this last verse above clearly informs the searcher that having prepared the water, he may now mix it with the gold in due proportion.

Take then our Mercury (which is our Moon)
 And it espouse with the terrestrial Sun,
 (Thus man and wife are joined) and to them soon
 Add the reviving spirit, this when done
 A noble game you soon shall spy, because
 You have attended Nature's noble Laws.³⁴

Of the Red man one, of the White wife three
 Thou take, and mix (which is a good proportion)
 Then of the Water four parts let there be,
 This mixture is our Lead, which unto motion
 Will be moved, by a most gentle heat,
 Which must increased be until it sweat.³⁵

The red man, of course, is gold, and the white wife is the clear white water, the *Secret Fire*,³⁶ and soon add a little more of the metalline mercury, and later a little more, and this may only be learned by slow careful experiment.

But oh beware impatience do not cause
 Thee, through an itch of mind for to be bold,
 In this thy work to transgress Nature's Laws,
 For no man sooner errs through heat or cold,
 Than he who through impatience of mind,
 Cannot expect its time which he should find.³⁷

33 Lapidus annotation: *RED* / But the red colour is only the metals when first mixed, and goes away quickly.

34 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Second Book of the 2nd part, stanza 2.

35 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Second Book of the 2nd part, stanza 3.

36 Lapidus annotation: *prepared from the three metals*.

37 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 67.

Move not thy glass ne open, else thou wilt
Endamage nay destroy thy work, beside
Encrease not fire rashly, lest that spilt
Thy work thou see, there's nothing all the Tide
That this thy work doth stand, so much of fear,
As too much fire one hour will cost thee dear.³⁸

38 From *The Marrow of Alchemy*, The Fourth Book of the 1st part, stanza 68.

PASS-KEY NUMBER TWO



MOST BOOKS ON THE SUBJECT OF ALCHEMY ARE IN AGREEMENT THAT THE three main PRINCIPLES used to produce the Philosophers' Stone are gold, mercury and salt. The metals gold and mercury are well known, but no book gives any idea what kind of salt¹ is used, and rarely indeed where it may be found. However, one alchemist has ventured to disclose this, the greatest secret of the art. He has gone further by writing a treatise dealing only with this mysterious salt, and goes into much detail to describe it, and describes its virtue and power to act in the work to produce the Philosophers' Stone, and even hints how to prepare it for use.

He warns one to take notice however, *not to imagine* this is the Stone,² but he emphasises the fact that although its use in working is paramount, yet this salt is *not the Stone*, and without its aid, nothing can be achieved. Thus, this salt is the basis upon which everything depends from beginning to the end, and for use it is necessary to prepare it. This information may be found in a treatise by Ali Puli entitled the *Concentrated Centre of Nature*,³ translated from the Dutch and published by J.H. Watkins of Cecil Court.⁴ This treatise is included in a very useful bibliography in the latest book of alchemy, entitled *In Pursuit of Gold*, published by Neville Spearman Limited.⁵

Ali Puli poses the question: "Is it not wonderful that from plants, fruit and vegetables, all the things that go to build animal and human bodies, should be born and grow out of these, and even create living creatures, with the seed that

1 Lapidus annotation: *or what kind of mercury.*

2 Lapidus annotation: *it is only the principles.*

3 *Centrum naturae concentratum*, by Ali Puli, The Asiatic Moor (likely pseudonym for Johann Otto von Hellwig, or von Hellbig; M 78, formerly owned and used by J.W. Hamilton-Jones for his 1951 translation into English under the title, *The Epistles of Ali Puli*, and now in the Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam).

4 *The Epistles of Ali Puli (circa 1700 A.D.)*, Englished by J.W. Hamilton-Jones, by Ali Puli, The Asiatic Moor (John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London, W.C.2, 1951).

5 A revised and expanded edition of *In Pursuit of Gold: Alchemy Today in Theory and Practice* was published by Salamander and Sons during 2011.

can grow in them? Why then should Nature stop its work at metals?" These gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, antimony, and iron, the metals also used the salt of Nature. The alchemists of old certainly did not agree that Nature stopped at metals and worked on and laboured to prove it true, and so at length, succeeded, with the aid of the salt of Nature. With this knowledge they produced the Philosophers' Stone.

Search for this natural law, of salt of Nature, in your researches, for this is the greatest secret, and in all books of alchemy, hidden with the greatest care, and when found ONE IS advised to do likewise.

Thus it is that the Salt of Nature is found everywhere and in everything ... From all substances, however, it is not easily to be obtained, nor is it sufficiently powerful for all purposes (chiefly for the oft-mentioned Masterpiece of the Philosophers), yet it is as good *in* all things as it is *for* all things. Thus it is necessary to choose the best from all that can be found in Nature. No one wishes to labour in vain, and to attain the sought-for end is very desirable.

When the Artificer knows how to extract from the world, its inner central force or Salt of Nature, and also knows where to find an abundance of the Salt of Nature united to the astral focal seat in anything ... then the truth of Nature is resident in him, and with this, illumination he can perceive Nature throughout. If anyone should come to know the Little World properly, then nothing of the Greater World would remain unknown to him ...

I say to you, my disciples in the study of Nature, if you do not find the thing for which you are seeking, in your own self, much less will you find it outside your self. Understand the glorious strength resident in your own selves. Why trouble to enquire from another? In Man ... there are things more glorious than are to be found elsewhere in the whole world. Should anyone desire to become a Master, he will not find a better material for his achievement anywhere than in himself.

... from an eager heart, moved by my own experience, I will cry out to my beloved fellow men: "Oh! Man, know thyself!" *In you* resides the Treasure of all Treasures ... which by men of experience and intelligence, is

named the Great Wonder of the World.⁶ It is in reality a burning water, a liquid fire, more potent than all fire, air, earth, or water. In its crude state it dissolves and absorbs solid gold. It reduces it into a fatty blackish or blackish-grey earth, and a thick, slimy, salt water;⁷ without fire, or acid, and without any violent reaction, which no other thing in the world can accomplish. Nothing is excluded from it ... the Wise Men of old sought for and found it.

... he who desires to know more, should seek in Nature itself ...

Seek this, my friends, in every way and in everything, though may be you do not know the hidden source of its origin, and even if you should come to find it, yet you would not have any idea of the aspect of things to be seen within it.

... it is a Spiritual Water, a True Spirit, the Spirit of Life itself ... This is the Foundation Stone, in truth, which is rejected by the careless ignorance of the Builders ...

Friends, I have shewn you The Way, and now I will add with more sufficiency:

The World containing the highest and most immediate element of the Wise Men for the achievement of the Masterpiece is Man himself ...

The Ore is the best and also the worst. The most precious, is a most turbid water. These are like Earth and Water, yet neither one nor the other is any good by itself. From these two, a Son, or a Seed, emerges, and from the three bodies,⁸ there is formed the Spirit and Soul in Man ...

Note here three principles, three metals and a turbid water, and from terrestrial slime, there is made without actual fire, the great secret lies hidden.

6 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *MAYBE urine.*

7 Lapidus has written *It reduces it into a fatty grey earth, and blackish slimy salt water* where Ali Puli wrote *it reduces it into a fatty blackish or blackish-grey earth, and a thick, slimy, salt water ...*

8 Lapidus has written *three principles* where Ali Puli wrote *three bodies.*

If the Artificer could find this ... he could then separate the pure from the impure. *He could make, without fire* and without any extraneous matter, a Virgin Earth, *without odour and without colour*. He could divide and secure from it: *Sal Centrale, Vitriolum Microcosmi, the Venus of the Sages; Sal Astrale; Mercurium Microcosmi, and Lunam Philosophicam.*⁹ Once purified, he could produce a Son, better than his parents. Then he could perceive why Quick-Silver is illustrated in so striking a manner, namely: ☿ : below, by the sign for Copper, and above by the sign for Silver. The Astral or Uppermost Salt is very volatile; sweet and sparkling like silver. This is nothing else but the silver and saline mercurial spirit of the Wise. The Central Salt is a Vitriol of remarkable and inexpressible strength. By coagulating quicksilver, it can turn it into fine silver. But Venus lies covered by Saturn,¹⁰ which mantle can be cast from her, and then her beauty will be seen. From these two kinds of Salt, all metals are born¹¹ ... Here you have the Mine, in bodily form; and without any admixture you can make Gold and Silver from Quicksilver, Copper and Lead, etc.¹² ... There are many hundreds of books printed on this subject, but very little is said about the Regenerated Salt of Nature, whereby the baser metals can be transmuted into gold and silver ...

The Salt of Nature, from my Element, regenerated by the artificer, achieves just as much as anything done by the labours of the ancients, to produce a miraculous result ... The Elements of Nature will assist him by its own process, without his having to lift a finger, to enable him to come into possession of this Miraculous Earth. Let him be careful to observe the working of Nature which requires but little labour, is very easy and without expense. But for anyone wishing to go further than this ... to achieve the Miraculous Masterpiece, and to obtain possession of the True Mercury of the Philosophers (in striving after which so many err in thinking that the Philosopher's Mercury is really the Regenerated Salt of Nature, or *Lapis Philosophorum*, which is false), I will not trouble to write ... First

9 Lapidus has added *and produce the Philosophers' Stone* to the end of the sentence.

10 Lapidus annotation: *Saturn's son or daughter.*

11 Lapidus has crossed out *born* and written *quickenened*.

12 Lapidus annotation: *OR antimony, Mars and Venus, and Secret Fire.*

learn Wisdom for the sake of your own soul, and all will be well with you ... Wealth untold is brought to you. But first find the Natural Central Seat in Man;¹³ then your lawful labours shall prove as successful as you wish.

OF MERCURY AND VITRIOL¹⁴ OR SULPHUR

... This is the all-powerful¹⁵ which Hermes has praised in the *Emerald Table*. He is a true living Mercury, not to be named living, because he becomes a Quick-metal ... yet he is living because in him is the living seed of gold; little in weight it may be, but great in vigour, for it can make ordinary fine gold become living gold, and ten or twelve times heavier; it can also expand in a very pervasive way. The living gold is not born in it until, by the artifice of the Master, Vitriol is added to it, then it can make common gold living and fertile. Concealed in the centrum of the Mercury, there are minute grains of living gold, which constitute nothing but Tincture; after common gold is dissolved by the Mercury, the tincture passes into the gold, which assimilates the small grains and becomes living gold, capable of being multiplied out of the Mercury and water in the Vitriol, and increasing many hundreds or thousands of times, according to the labour expended upon it. For this reason my Mercury¹⁶ changes Silver into Gold, without the addition of ordinary gold, after some little time, by a process of assimilation duly accomplished, though slowly, because of the presence of living gold in its centrum. This is a masterly operation in metallic substances. After maturation, or fixation, as it is now termed, one part of the tincture will transmute ten times more into gold than the tincture from a combination of Mercury and common gold would do.

The statement that small grains of living gold are concealed in the Mercury is a statement of fact, and not a speculation *ex posteriori*. It is proved by experiments that the seeds of gold are obtained from mercury by an

13 Lapidus has written *Natural Central Salt of Nature* where Ali Puli wrote *Natural Central Seat in Man*.

14 Lapidus annotation: (EXTRACT FROM COPPER).

15 Lapidus annotation: *The Philosophers' Mercury*.

16 Lapidus has written *For this reason, Mercury, living* where Ali Puli wrote *For this reason my Mercury*

artificial method. If silver be added, together with gold, the whole will be transmuted and be made into fine gold. This living gold in the mercury, as we have already said, is born from Mercury and Vitriol, which soon changes into another Vitriol, the exception being that it can become White owing to a violent contraction of the Mercury in heat, which Mercury, however, still remains mild and without impurities.

I have made metals to mature through an ingression of Mercury, and this quick-metal, which transmutes into fine gold, i.e. 100 parts of silver into fine gold, or 100 parts of copper into silver, many have called the Sulphur in Mercury, *Sophorum* or *Universal*, because they employed it for other uses as a tincture, but they did not know its origin ... In order to make common gold pervasive, you must understand that Mercury alone provides the means for ingress for the Vitriol and the Sulphur into metals, and the contraction of this Mercury makes it mature. The moisture of the quick metal passes into the dryness of the Mercury and the whole becomes tincture.¹⁷ There is no such thing as a *wet* state in the world of Nature.¹⁸ Ignorant folk have understood the word *moist* to mean wet. A wet state destroys everything. Our water does not wet the hands, but it is moist. The saline liquors have nothing to do with this.

OF SALT

The ancients called Sulphur and Vitriol by many names, e.g. the atmosphere condensed into minerals: salt of mercury; the gold; the red lion; the Mercury; the White eagle; man and wife; fixed and fluid, etc., but I have not retained these names as they do not really and fundamentally throw any light upon our subject.

17 Lapidus has written *The moisture of the quick metal passes into the dryness of the GOLD, then the whole becomes tincture* where Ali Puli wrote *The moisture of the quick metal passes into the dryness of the Mercury and the whole becomes tincture.*

18 Lapidus has written *There is no such thing as a wet state in the world of metals* where Ali Puli wrote *There is no such thing as a wet state in the world of Nature.*

OF COLOURS

When the Mercury has dissolved the Gold lying in the vessel and made it fluid and expanded it, the mercurial gold has become united with the universal mercurial salt and vitriol, or universal sulphur of gold; that is, vitriol of gold or sulphur. Some authors have described this as a process of putrefaction, because in appearance the substance is black; yet it is not possible for a mineral or a metal to turn into a decayed matter ... Why it should be believed and asserted that the solution can take place through any process of decay, I cannot imagine. Though the colour of the substance be blackish, or to be more exact, grey-black turning to green-black, not really black, still less, to use the ridiculous current manner of speaking, blacker than black itself, yet this blackness of colour does not prove to me that decay is present ... for example, Vitriol or Sulphur and Quick-metal, and the chemical preparations thereof, are black and yet are not in a state of decay, though such substances often emit a stench. Besides which, no one can become aware, in the course of our labour, of any odour arising from these substances of ours, until the very end, nor pass an opinion upon any such possibility.

When we turn the Universal air-salt into Mercury, we bring the substance to a state of decay by our own methods, so that the animal part, through its magnetic power, becomes entirely detached; but after that, as soon as our substance turns into a mineral condition, we do not change it any more; all that we therefore perform, happens through the process of a simple dissolution and coagulation; nothing comes about through any process of decay, such as people generally believe to be the case. Decay changes the substance of a thing from its present form into another form, just as our human bodily substance is transformed, by air, through some artificial processes of decay ... to become mineral or metallic; it does not change back again into its original substance or state. A seed which one places in the soil does not decay. The vital salt sinks down into the soil with the dew and the rain penetrating through the shell of the seed into the kernel, which swells and turns to slime; then the *vital image*¹⁹ of the

19 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *hologram?*

plant or tree, which in its origin was impressed upon the seed, parts off in many shapes. Each of these small images acquires an existence in material form through its own vital salt, vitriol and water, which manifests in the course of time, and its own prime salt or vitriol is strengthened by the universal vitriol of the soil, which constantly flows towards it, and into it, from the watery vapours out of the soil. Thus, it is constantly fed by the penetrating vital salt from dew and rain; the vehicle, or ordinary water, percolates into the soil, and with this as a medium something becomes coagulated; water nourishes and increases its substance, through *appositionem particularum*; from this process there grows a large plant or a tall tree, provided the soil remains, wherein the nourishing *sal centrale* sustains and feeds it. This vital salt descends upon it through the action of dew and rain. Therefore, it is incorrect for anyone to say that, by experiment, he can improve anything through a process of decomposition in the realm of the animal, vegetable, mineral, or metallic Kingdoms, at the same time leaving it unaltered from its first original shape and its own peculiar substance, and then to find it, or see it, to be more beautiful ...

Now, I will say something concerning the power of the eye, about which some have written, and I will demonstrate to you of what it is constituted. That which they call *vis oogen* (power of the eye) is nothing more than this: When Mercury comes into motion, the substance sometimes rises in the air, looking like small hillocks, then the extinct gold-soil, slime, or that which one calls black, falls to the side and the elevated quick-gold stands green or pearly before the eye (*vis oogen*). The peacock's tail is red, yellow, green, and blue, but there is nothing more wonderful than the colours which are to be seen on the inside of the glass vessel. This is the effect of the Sal Universal Volatile and the Mercury, which happens sometimes without an operation, as in the case of your windows, where colours can be seen on the glass, through the action of the rain and the process of distillation. The substance sometimes appears to become changed inwardly and one may see this often on the surface in various colours, but, perhaps, it is the glass vessel which deceives one. Of this I cannot write much to you, the reason being that, when the gold has been dissolved, the *Terra Mortua* appears very quickly at the top, and then the mass becomes greenish right through. This one can know, only by the so-called *vis oogen* - then the black earth comes forth and leaves

the mass coated over. When the dissolving process of the gold has been completed and the separation of the water ends, the mass throws off all impure and extinct earth on to the edge of the glass vessel and appears white. Here it is to be noted that the substance does not change in one day, but requires much time, because each colour, in its growth, appears slowly, becomes strong, and gradually shades off. When the white colour begins to appear, the substance gradually turns into a powder, which means that our Vitriolum has overcome the Mercury and contracted it. Here the maturing process starts and subsequently proceeds to coagulation (commonly called fixation) and after the vitriol has exhibited its first strength and has turned the divine mercury along with the Gold into a white earth, a further process follows, and through a gradual motion mixes the Mercury, which coats each particle of vitriol with many parts of Mercury - the longer this process takes the better the result - until at last the small corpuscles become firm and compact, the yellow colour comes along, ending with a red, and our task is finished.

PASS-KEY NUMBER THREE



THIS IS PASS-KEY NUMBER THREE, IN WHICH WE MEET A MOST FAMOUS character of the period in which he lived. Paracelsus was born in Switzerland in the year 1494, and became one of the most well known men in Europe. His great knowledge in medicine, chemistry and occultism was outstanding. In addition, he was able to converse in many languages learned during his travels, and thus he learned the little known, obscure science of alchemy from an Arabian, who taught him how to prepare the *Secret Fire*; which is the first and principal opening key to the art, and its greatest secret.

From this reference, we may take it for granted, that with so much knowledge, his treatises in the subject were well founded, and reliable. He spoke quite familiarly of the salt, sulphur and mercury as anyone does who is quite sure of any subject with which he dealt. Paracelsus' system of alchemy has been described as follows: "In the first place is the *alcahest*, or *spirit of nature, un-compounded*; it is ONE *undecomposable, universal, mild attraction, passive and impotent*, until by an alchemical combination, with any other matter, it produces in the union, a new substance, of prodigious power, according to the nature of the matter with which it is combined; these preparations are *dissolvents, transmuters, and medicinal elixirs*."¹ This has already been explained in pass-key number one, when the fresh crude alkahest as it is first taken, and in this condition mixed with other² metals, each assists the others in forming other metals. But first it must become a volatile spirit, and attracting a liquid form.³ We will now

1 From *The Lives of Alchemistical Philosophers; with a Critical Catalogue of Books in Occult Chemistry, and a Selection of the Most Celebrated Treatises on the Theory and Practice of the Hermetic Art* (Lackington, Allen and Co., Finsbury Square, London, 1815: 52-53).

2 Lapidus has crossed out *other* and written *CERTAIN*.

3 From *The Lives of Alchemistical Philosophers, op. cit.*:53: "The mineral kingdom has the monad in the most powerful combination, forming an universal transmuting metal, that changes all other metals, minerals, and prepared elements, into gold. The binary class is gold and silver, distinct, by their perfection, from the other five ancient metals. They have their embryo *minerals*, antimony to lead, cinnabar to quicksilver, cobalt to iron, marcasite to gold, vitriol to copper, zinc to tin, white marcasite and arsenic to silver; each metal contains other metals, and each mineral assists the others in forming metals; their first being is a *volatile spirit*, attracting a *liquid form*."

proceed with Paracelsus, who is the author of the book⁴ which he has entitled *The Secrets of Alchemy*.⁵

The prime and chief subject of this art, which will always act in the same manner and will not receive life from anything else is fire.⁶ Therefore it has a condition and power as all fires that lie in secret things of life in the same way as possessed by the Sun, which heats the whole world, both secret and apparent.⁷ In this way antimony, Mars, Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury and Luna, and Gold can give no other light but what is borrowed from MATTER THAT CONTAINS HEAT. [It would be wise, at the start of experiments, not to consider fire at all, but just low degrees of heat]. Likewise, in this art, nothing can be brought forth without heat, or nothing can be produced without some degree of fire and no operation can be made without it. It is the greatest secret of this art, that nothing will take place even as other things which enjoy fire.⁸

4 Lapidus has crossed out *book* and written *ART*.

5 Paracelsus is here paraphrased at length from 'Concerning the Spirits of the Planets' collected within *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, edited with a bibliographical preface, elucidatory notes, Hermetic vocabulary, and index by Arthur Edward Waite (University Books Inc., New Hyde Park, New York, 1967).

6 Lapidus has crossed out *fire* and written *HEAT*.

7 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *hidden Fire / rays and waves*.

8 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, *op. cit.*: 74: "First and chiefly, the principal subject of this Art is fire, which always exists in one and the same property and mode of operation, nor can it receive its life from anything else. It possesses, therefore, a state and power, common to all fires which lie hid in secret, of vivifying, just as the sun is appointed by God, and heats all things in the world, both occult, apparent, and manifest, as the spheres of Mars, Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, and the Moon, which can shine only as they borrow their light from the Sun, and are in themselves dead. When, however, they are lighted up, as said above, they live and work according to their special properties. But the sun receives light from no other source than God Himself, Who rules it, so that in the sun God Himself is burning and shining. Just so is it with this Art. The fire in the furnace may be compared to the sun. It heats the furnace and the vessels, just as the sun heats the vast universe. For as nothing can be produced in the world without the sun, so also in this Art nothing can be produced without this simple fire. No operation can be completed without it. It is the Great Arcanum of Art, embracing all things which are comprised therein, neither can it be comprehended in anything else. It abides by itself, and needs nothing; but all others which stand in need of this can get fruition of it and have life from it, wherefore, first of all, we have undertaken that this shall be made clear."

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OR TINCTURE OF SOL



Now we come to the spirits of the planets or metals. The spirit or tincture of the Sun (GOLD) takes its beginning from a pure, subtle, and perfect fire, so that it excels all other spirits and tinctures of metals; for it remains constantly fixed ... out of which it does not fly; neither is it consumed, much less burnt, but rather appears more clear, fair and pure by it. Also no heat or cold can hurt it, nor other accident, as in the other tinctures or spirits of metals; and for this cause, the body which it once puts on, it defends from all accidents, and diseases, that it may be able to sustain fire without detriment. This body has not this power and virtue in itself, but from the spirit of the Sun which is contained in it. For we know that GOLD is the body of *mercury*,⁹ and that this body cannot sustain nor suffer this fire, but flies from it; when it does not fly from the fire and when it is in the Sun, but remains constant and fixed therein. This proves to us a most certain judgement, that it receives such a constancy from this spirit or tincture in the Sun.¹⁰

9 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *What does this mean? Gold is the body of mercury? That gold is congealed Phil. Mercury? And it is congealed by the power of the Sun. What is the power of the Sun?*

10 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I – Hermetic Chemistry*, op. cit.: 75-76: "Let us now come to the spirits of the planets, or of the metals. The spirit or tincture of Sol took its beginning from a pure, subtle, and perfect fire, for which reason it far surpasses all the other spirits and tinctures of the metals. It remains constantly and fixed in the fire, nor does it fly therefrom, nor is consumed by it, but rather by its agency it becomes clearer, purer, and more beautiful. Nothing either hot or cold can injure it, or any other accident, as they can injure the other spirits or tinctures of metals, and for this reason: that the body which it once assumes it defends from all accidents and diseases, and enables it to sustain the fire without injury. This body has not such power and virtue in itself; but derives it from the spirit alone which is shut up within it. For we know with regard to the body of Mercury that it cannot sustain or endure the fire, but flies from it; but when in Sol it does not fly off but remains fixed and constant, this affords a most certain proof that it receives such a constancy from the spirit or tincture of Sol."

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT AND TINCTURE OF LUNA



Now we come to speak of the spirit and tincture of the Moon, SILVER, the white tincture, which is also created of a perfect spirit, but less perfect than the spirit of the Sun. Nevertheless it excels the tinctures of all other metals following, both in purity and subtlety, which is very well known to all who treat of the Moon, and also to rustics, for it suffers not rust. This also is not consumed by the fire, as all other metals, as for example Saturn which flies from the fire. But this does not: from whence it may be gathered that this tincture is far more excellent than the others following, for it preserves its body that it assumes constantly in the fire without any accident or detriment. From whence it is sufficiently manifest, if this in his own corruptible body by himself makes Mercury, what will it be able to effect being extracted from its self into another body? Yes surely, if it makes this mercury in its own body, it will do the same in the bodies of other metals, extracted from itself.¹¹

11 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 76-77: "After having spoken with sufficient clearness concerning the tincture of Sol, it remains to put forward something about the tincture of Luna, and of the White Tincture which, in like manner, is produced from the perfect spirit, though it be less perfect than the spirit of Sol; but, nevertheless, it excels in purity and subtlety all the other tinctures of the metals which follow it in order. This, indeed, is well known to all who handle Luna, even rustics. It does not acquire rust, nor is it consumed in the fire like the other metals, all of which Saturn draws with himself when flying from the fire, but not this one. Hence it may be gathered that this tincture is far more excellent than those set down below, for it preserves in the fire the body it has assumed without any accident or loss. Hence it is quite clear that if this in its own corruptible body by itself produces Mercury, what it will be able to effect when extracted from it into another body. Will not that in the same way protect and defend from accidents and infirmities? Surely if it produces this Mercury in its own body, it will do the same in the bodies of men. And it not only preserves health, but causes long life, and cures diseases and infirmities, even those which are beyond its own special grade. For the higher, more subtle, and more perfect a medicine is, so much the better and more perfectly it cures ..."

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF VENUS



We have already made mention of a white spirit, or candid tincture. We will now speak of a *red* spirit, which is derived out of an elementary mixture, to which *also* it is joined and is of a *more* perfect substance, than the spirits and tinctures of the other subsequent metals, because it endures the fire longer than the other, and is not so soon melted, or dissolved as the other spirits which follow. Also the air and the humidity of the fire are not so affected by it, as to Mars; by reason of the fact that it longer endures the fire. This power and property has Venus, that is his body, from the spirit that is infused into it. This spirit also breaks the body of metals, so that they will endure the hammer. All this can be said of the spirit of Venus.¹²

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF MARS



We may now come to speak of the spirit of Mars, that is a more gross and combustible mixture of Elements than the other spirits before mentioned. But the spirit of Mars is ENDOWED with a greater hardness than the other metals; so that it does not easily melt and dissolve in the fire, as the others following. But IT suffers much hurt both by the water and the air, so that

12 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, op. cit.: 77-78: "We have before made mention of a White Spirit, or colourless Tincture. Now we proceed to speak of a red spirit, which is produced from a thick elemental mixture of the former, to which also it is subject, though, nevertheless, it is more perfect than the spirits and tinctures of the succeeding metals. On this account it remains in the fire more constantly than the rest, so that it is not so soon burnt, nor does it so soon pass away as the other spirits which follow. The air also and the moisture of water are not so injurious to it as to Mars, just as it remains more fixedly and for a longer time in the fire. Venus has this force and property, that is to say, its body has, on account of the spirit which has been infused into it. Since, then, it produces this effect in its own body, that is, in Venus, it accomplishes as much also in man as is by Nature conceded to it. It preserves wounds in such a way that no accident can affect them, nor can the air or the water injure them. It also drives away all such diseases as are under its degree. This spirit further breaks up the bodies of metals so that they lose their malleability ... So far we have said enough, and more than enough, concerning the spirit of Venus."

it is consumed by them, and is burnt by the fire, as experience makes appear. Therefore the spirit of Mars is more imperfect than any of the superior spirits; but in HARDNESS and dryness, it exceed all other metals, both superior, and inferior, for it does not only retain a perfect substance, and resists the hammer as does the Sun and Moon, but also those which are within itself, as Jupiter and Saturn and the like. Therefore it works as it does in metals. Therefore this spirit is not much less in power and virtue than one of the superiors, and those things for which it was by Nature ordained.¹³

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF JUPITER

4

We are now to learn of the spirit of Jupiter, that it is derived of a white and pale substance of fire, but it is of a frangible and brittle nature, not enduring the hammer the same as Mars. Because it is a brittle metal, and example of this appears, if it be mixed with the Moon, it can hardly be wrought to its first malleation without great labour. The same effect it has in all other metals, except in Saturn only.^{14 15}

13 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.*: 78: "Speaking of the Spirit of Mars, this comes from a more dense and combustible mixture of the elements than was the case with the others which precede. But Mars is furnished with greater hardness than the other metals, so that it is not melted in the fire as they are. True, it is hurt by the water and the air more than they are, insomuch that it is altogether destroyed by these influences, and it is also burnt in the fire, as experience proves. So, then, its spirit is less perfect than that of any of the above. But in hardness and dryness it exceeds all the metals above or below. For not only does it render the perfect metals, Sol and Luna, proof against the hammer, but even those which rank below itself, as Jupiter, Saturn, and the like. Since, then, it produces this effect on metals, this is a sign that it has the same effect on the bodies of men, that is, it produces a struggling; especially when it is taken for a disease to which it is not adapted, it contorts the limbs with great pain. But when it is used and applied for wounds which do not exceed its degree, it is of powerful cleansing qualities. So, then, this spirit is endowed with no less power and potency than are of those above, so far as regards those things for which it was appointed by God and by Nature."

14 Lapidus annotation: *Not much use in mixtures or Nature, but a must in alchemy.*

15 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.*: 78-79: "Concerning the spirit of Jupiter this should be known, that it is derived from the white and pale substance of fire, together with a nature of peculiar crepitation and fragility, not malleable like Mars. It, therefore, heats other metals, and renders them capable of being broken with hammers. An example of this may be seen when it is joined

CONCERNING THE SPIRIT OF SATURN



The spirit of Saturn is formed and created as a dry, cold, and black mixture of the elements; and therefore that amongst all other metals, it endures least in the fire.¹⁶

CONCERNING THE GROSS SPIRIT OF MERCURY



The spirit which is *alone subjected*¹⁷ to the other superior spirits is mercury, and has no certain determinate form or substance of itself. Hereby it comes to pass that it admits every other metal, even as wax receives the impression of all forms of seals. Thus this elementary spirit comes to be compared to the other spirits of metals. For if it receives into its self the spirit of the Sun (GOLD), this shall be made out of its self; if the Moon (SILVER), she is also made out of its self.¹⁸ The same effect the spirit

with Luna, for it can scarcely be brought to its former malleability, except with the greatest labour. The same effect it produces in all other metals, with the single exception of Saturn. If it produces this effect in the bodies of metals, it will do the same in human bodies. In these it corrodes the limbs with severe burnings and decay, so that they are completely cut off from their perfect workings, and lose them, so that they are unable to fulfill the necessary requirements of Nature. Nevertheless this spirit has in it the virtue of removing cancer, fistulas, and other similar ulcers, especially those which are of its own nature, and which do not exceed the degree which God and Nature have given to it."

16 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume 1 - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 79: "The spirit of Saturn is concrete and formed from a dry, dark, cold admixture of elements. Hence it results that, amongst all others, it has the least power of remaining and living in the fire. When, however, Sol and Luna have to be proved and purified, Saturn is added to them, and this has the effect of thoroughly purging them. Nevertheless, it is of that nature that it takes away their malleability. It has the same effect on men, with great pains, as Jupiter and Mars. Being mixed with cold, it cannot act mildly. It has the very greatest powers and virtues, whereby it cures fistulas, cancer, and similar ulcers, which come under its own degree and nature. It drives the same kind of diseases from man as it expels impurities from Luna. But if it does not go out altogether at the same time, it brings more harm than it does good. Consequently, whoever would use it must know what diseases it cures, against what it should be taken, and what effects Nature has assigned to it. If this be well considered it can do no harm."

17 Lapidus annotation: TAKE NOTE HERE.

18 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *a clue? meaning? indeterminate.*

of mercury works with all the other metals with whom it agrees, and receives their properties into its self. For this reason, according to its body, it is appropriated to the other spirits abovementioned, even as the male to the female. For *the Sun is the body of mercury*, except only that the Sun fastens and fixes the mercury;^{19 20} but the common mercury is inconsistent and volatile. Nevertheless it is subject to all the spirits mentioned above, and generates again, not only the metallick spirits and tinctures above spoken of, but the metal itself, by which the aforementioned tinctures do come into their operation. *But if the mean be not observed, it will be impossible ever to bring those kind of tinctures to perfection. For if the fire be too high, which should vivify this tincture, it does extinguish it, that it cannot operate; and the same effect is, if the fire be too weak,* therefore in this place it is necessary to be known what medium is to be observed in this art, and what are the strength and character of it, and also after what manner it is to be ordered, and how the tinctures are to be coloured, and to bring them to a perfect work, that they may germinate and appear.²¹

Thus does Paracelsus conclude and end his 'First Treatise, Concerning the Spirits of the Planets'. He continues with 'The Second Treatise, Concerning the Philosopher's Mercury, and the Medium of Tinctures':

Mercury (quicksilver) = Sun (gold) = Moon (silver)?

19 Lapidus annotation: *THE GREAT SECRET.*

20 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *a hot clue! but what does it mean?*

21 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 79-80: "The spirit of Mercury, which is only subjected to the spirits above, has no determinate or certain form in itself. Hence it happens that it admits every metal, just as wax receives all seals, of whatever form. So this dense elementary spirit may be compared to the other spirits of the metals. For if it receive into itself the spirit of Sol, Sol will be produced from it; if Luna, Luna; and in like manner it does with the other metals. It agrees with them and takes their properties to itself. For this reason, so far as relates to its body, it is appropriated to the spirits spoken of above, just as a woman to a man. For Sol is the body of Mercury, save only that Sol fixes Mercury and becomes fixed. The common Mercury is inconstant and volatile; nevertheless it is subject to all the abovementioned; and generates again not only the aforesaid metallic spirits and tinctures, but the metal itself by which the beforenamed tinctures arrive at their working. But if moderation be not observed it is impossible to perfect a tincture of this kind. If the fire which ought to vivify this tincture be too fierce, the operation will be fruitless; and so if it be too weak. Therefore it is necessary at this point to know what is the mean in this Art, and what powers and properties it has; also by what means it is to be ruled, and how to tinge the tinctures, or bring them to their perfect operation, so that they may germinate and become apparent. With these few words we would conclude this first tract."

In the first treatise we have written of the spirits and metals, etc. Declaring all their properties and natures, and what every metal generates. In this second we shall treat of the medium of tinctures, that is of the philosopher's mercury; whereby are made the tinctures and leavens of metals, in seven chapters.

FROM WHAT TINCTURES AND LEAVENS²² ARE MADE

Whoever Desires to have the tinctures of metals, he ought to take the philosophers' mercury, and let him cast the same into what he intends to make with it; and that is, Quick mercury,²³ from whence it emerges. It will come to pass, that the philosophers' mercury will be dissolved in the quick mercury, and shall receive its strength. Thus it will be that the Philosophers' mercury will kill the quick mercury, and make it so that it will remain fixed in the fire of the same condition as itself. For there is the like concordancy between these two mercuries, as is between Male and Female, or man and wife; for they thus are derived both from the gross spirits of metals, except that the body of Sol remains fixed in the fire quite firmly, but the quick mercury is *not* fixed; nevertheless they may be appropriated one to another, as a grain of corn or seed are to the earth. By example, if any one sow barley, the same he shall reap, if wheat or rye, the same he shall gather. If any sow gold, the same he will reap, and so also of the Moon, *and all other metals*. For this reason we may say, that the tinctures do spring out of metals, that is, out of the philosophers' mercury, and not from the quick mercury; but this produces the seed which first conceives.²⁴

22 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): Leaven = *ferment*.

23 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *What is Quick mercury?*

24 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 81: "Whoever wishes to have a tincture of the metals, must take Philosophers' Mercury, and project it to its own end; that is, into the quick mercury from whence it proceeded. Hence will ensue that the Philosophers' Mercury will be dissolved in the quick mercury, and shall receive its strength, so that the Philosophers' Mercury shall kill the quick mercury and render it fixed in the fire like itself. For there is between these two mercuries as much agreement as between a man and his wife. They are both produced from the gross spirits of metals, except that the body of Sol remains fixed in the fire, but the quick mercury is not fixed. The one, however, is appropriated to the other as grain or seed to the earth, which we will illustrate by an

CONCERNING THE CONJUNCTION OF THE MAN WITH THE WOMAN

It is first of all necessary to be known that the mercury of the philosophers, and the quick mercury are both to be joined and firmly united and fixed together. Also how much to be taken: neither more nor less than equal, is to be taken, or it will hinder the result, or altogether destroy the whole work. For the seed is suffocated with super fluity, that it cannot live so long until it is joined and fixed to the philosophers' mercury. But if there be too little, it cannot be dissolved into a body, and it is also destroyed, that it cannot be able to bring forth any fruit. Therefore the artificer ought certainly to know, how much of the one, and the other ought to be taken, if he would bring the work to its perfect end. The receipt thereof is this: take one part to two, or three to four, and one cannot make any mistake, but shall attain the desired end.²⁵

CONCERNING THE FORM OF THE GLASS INSTRUMENTS

The materials being rightly and duly prepared and mixt together, then you must have glass vessels of due proportions and fitness and capacity, neither too great nor too little, but fit: for if the vessels be too big, the female, that is the flegme, is disperced and lost. Thus it comes to pass that the seed cannot bring forth; where the vessels are too little, the growth is suffocated that it cannot come to fruit, not otherwise than as the seed

example, thus: If anyone has sown barley he will gather barley; if corn, corn, etc. None otherwise is it in this Art. If anyone sows Sol he will gather gold, while from Luna he will collect silver, and so with regard to the other metals. In this way we say here tinctures are produced from the metals, that is, from the Philosophers' Mercury and not from quick mercury. But this produces the seed which it had before conceived."

25 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 82: "In order that the Philosophers' Mercury and the quick mercury may be joined, and this latter united with the fixed, it must of necessity be known how much of it must be taken, since more or less than the proper quantity may hinder or altogether destroy the whole business. For by superfluity the seed is suffocated, so that it cannot live until it is fixed by the Philosophers' Mercury. But by defect, since the body cannot be altogether dissolved, it is also destroyed so that it is able to produce no fruit. Wherefore it should be clearly ascertained how much of the one and the other ought to be taken, if, indeed, the artificer would bring this work to its legitimate end. Let the receipt be as follows, namely: Take one part to two, or three to four, and you will not err, but will arrive at the desired end."

is sown under trees or under thorns, so that it cannot bud or spring up, but perishes without any fruit. This is no little error which may happen by the vessels. This error once committed, cannot be any more mended in the same work: neither can that work be perfected or brought to any good end. Therefore, take note that you take three and half ounces, and four pounds, to be right, and you shall preserve the matter that it be not dispersed, nor the generation impeded.^{26 27}

CONCERNING THE PROPERTIES OF FIRE

When you have placed the matter in fit vessels, you shall keep and maintain the natural heat, that the external heat does not overcome or abound over the internal. For if the heat be too much, there can be no conjunction made, by reason that the matter is dispersed and burnt by the vehemency of the heat, so that no good arises thereby. The spirits of the metals are dead of themselves and do rest, so that they cannot at all operate of themselves, unless they are quickened by the fire. It is not otherwise in the great universe of the world, where seed being cast into the earth is dead and cannot grow or increase of it self, unless it be quickened by the heat of the sun; it is chiefly necessary therefore in this work to erect and build the fire right and proportionally, neither too great nor too small; otherwise this work will never be brought the desired end.²⁸

26 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, loc. cit.: "When the matter has been rightly joined, it is necessary that you should have properly-proportioned glass vessels, neither larger nor smaller than is right. If they are too large, the woman, that is, the phlegm, is dispersed, whence it ensues that the seed cannot be born; where they are too small the germ is suffocated so that it cannot come to fruit, just as when seed is sown under a tree, or among thorns, it cannot germinate, but perishes without fruit. No slight error, therefore, may arise through the vessels; and when once this has occurred it cannot again be remedied in the same operation, nor can it arrive at a satisfactory issue. Wherefore note what follows, namely, that you take three ounces and a half and four pounds; thus, having proceeded rightly, you will save the matter from being dispersed, and prevent the phlegm, or the germination, from being impeded."

27 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): ? *What is this all about?*

28 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, op. cit.: 82-83: "After you have placed the matter in the proper vessels, you will cherish it with natural heat, so that the outside shall not exceed the inside. For if the heat be excessive, no conjunction will take place, because by the intense heat the matter is dispersed and burnt, so that no advantage arises from it. On this account the mid region of

CONCERNING THE SIGNS WHICH APPEAR IN THE UNION OF CONJUNCTION

The fire being moderately kept and maintained, the matter little by little will be moved to blackness; afterwards when the dryness begins to work upon the humidity, there will likewise arise in the glass, various flowers of diverse colours, such as appear in the tail of a peacock, and such as no man ever saw before. Also sometimes the glass appears as if it were almost drawn into gold; which being perceived it shows certainly that the seed of the male rules and operates upon the seed of the female, and that the same is fixed together. That is, this mercury is fixed and is working upon the quick mercury, and is beginning to be mixed with it. Afterwards, when the humidity begins to wear away by the dryness, those colours disperse, and the matter then begins at length to become white, and so proceeds until it becomes to the highest degree of whiteness. But specially it is to be noticed and to be noted, that the work is not to be hastened, according to their opinions who suppose such work to be like that which is discerned in the production of corn, and other things, for it is known, that every thing that is quickly or hastily made soon perishes.²⁹

the air has been arranged by Nature between heaven and earth; otherwise the sun and the stars would burn up all the creatures on the earth, so that nothing could be produced from it. Take care, therefore, that between the matter and the fire you interpose an airy part of this kind, or a certain distance. In this way the heat will not easily be able in any way to do injury, nor to disperse, and still less to burn. For if the heat be insufficient neither will the spirit rest acting in no way upon its own humidity; so it will be dried or fixed. For the spirits of metals are of themselves dead, and rest, and can effect nothing unless they are vitalised. None otherwise in the great world the seed cast into the earth is dead, and cannot grow of itself unless it be vitalised by the heat of the sun. In the very first place, therefore, is it necessary to build the fire for this work in just proportion, neither too large nor too small; otherwise this work will never be carried on to its desired and perfect end."

29 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.*: 83: "When the regimen of the fire is moderated, the matter is by degrees moved to blackness. Afterwards, when the dryness begins to act upon the humidity, various flowers of different colours simultaneously rise in the glass, just as they appear in the tail of the peacock, and such as no one has ever seen before. Sometimes, too, the glass looks as though it were entirely covered with gold. When this is perceived, it is a certain indication that the seed of the man is operating upon the seed of the woman, is ruling it and fixing it. That is, the fixed Mercury acts on the quick, and begins to embrace it. Afterwards, when the humidity has died out before the process of drying, those colours disappear, and the matter at length begins to grow white, and continues to do so until it attains the supreme grade of whiteness. In the very first place, care should be taken not to hasten the matter unduly, according to the opinion of those who think that such a process is in all respects like what is perceived in the growth of corn, or in the production of a human being, the latter process occupying nine months, the former ten or twelve. Sol and Luna do not ripen so soon, or are born so soon, as the child from its mother's womb, or the grain from the

CONCERNING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE PERFECT TINCTURE

In the foregoing chapter,³⁰ we have told how the matter its self works by degrees: but regarding this, by what means it may be known when it is perfect. Thus one should take the white stone of the moon, by which the white springs, and separate a little from it with a spoon, and put it on a plate of copper, heating it glowing hot in the fire: if it smoke, then it is not perfect, and therefore it must remain longer in the decoction, until the stone come to its degree of perfection. But if it do not smoke, then be assured it is perfect. The same is to be done with the red stone of the sun, in the degrees of the operation thereof.³¹

CONCERNING THE AUGMENTATION OR THE MULTIPLYING OF TINCTURES

When you would multiply or increase the tinctures you have found, mix it together again with common mercury,³² and work it in all things as at first, and double one part a hundred times more than it was coloured before. This do often-times over again until you have as much matter as you wish. By how much longer it remains in the fire, by so much higher and more sublime will the degrees thereof be; so that one part of it, will

womb of the earth. The higher and more perfect anything is and should be in its nature, the longer time is necessary for its production. For it should be known that everything which is born quickly perishes quickly. Both herbs and men afford a proof of this. In proportion as they are quickly produced or born is their life short. It is not so with Sol and Luna; but they have a more perfect nature than men; whence it ensues that they exhibit a long life for men and preserve them from many accidental diseases."

30 See 'Of The Signs Appearing In The Union Of Conjunction'.

31 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, loc. cit.: "In the preceding chapter we have said how the matter itself is graduated. In this we will make clear by what means it may be recognised when it is perfect. Do this: When the White Stone of Luna stands forth in its whiteness, separate a morsel from it with the forceps, and place it glowing over the fire on a plate of copper. If the Stone emits smoke it is not yet perfect, wherefore it must be left longer in decoction, until it comes to the grade of a perfect Stone. But if it emits no smoke, you may believe it to be perfect. In the same way proceed with the Red Stone of Sol in its due gradation."

32 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *Common mercury*.

change of quick mercury,³³ into the best and most perfect of Luna and sol. Now you have the whole progression from the beginning to the end.³⁴

Thus does Paracelsus conclude and end his 'Second Treatise Concerning the Philosopher's Mercury, and the Medium of Tinctures'. He continues with 'The Third Treatise, Concerning the building of the furnace and the Fire':

In the second treatise we told how the tinctures or leavens ought to be made. In this third we shall instruct and amply set out how the tinctures of the sun and moon are made; and after what manner Sol and the other planets ought to be made with the furnace and the fire.

CONCERNING THE BUILDING OF THE FURNACE, WITH THE FIRE

Here is set forth how to build the furnace and heat to be kept going in it ...³⁵

All this information is now obsolete, and is the most important reason why the operation and experimentation during past ages never gave the worker any hope of achieving any results. Therefore it is useless to describe, and deleted.

CONCERNING THE CONJUNCTION OF THE MAN WITH THE WOMAN

Now it is intended to write how the man and woman agree, and how they are joined together; that is to say, after this manner. Take the mercury

33 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *Quick mercury*.

34 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume 1 - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 84: "When you wish to augment or to multiply the tincture which you have found, join it again with the common mercury. Proceed in all respects as before, and it will tinge a hundredfold more than it did previously. You can repeat this as often as you wish, so as to have as much of the matter as you desire. The longer it remains in the fire, the more highly graduated it becomes, so that one part of it will transmute an infinite number of parts of quick mercury into the best Luna and the most perfect Sol. Thus you have the whole process from the beginning to the end. With these few words we will conclude this second treatise, and will now begin the third."

35 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *This is still from PARACELSUS.*

of the philosophers prepared and mundified³⁶ to its highest degree; this resolve with his wife, to wit, with quick mercury; as the woman receives the man, and as the man cleaves to the woman. Even as a man loves his wife, and the woman loves her husband, so do the philosophers' mercury and the quick mercury prosecute the greatest love, and are moved by nature with a great affection towards us. So therefore, the one and the other mercuries are conjoined each to the other, and one with another, even as a man with a woman and she with him, according to their bodies, that there is no difference between them; and they are congruent in their proprieties, save only, that the man is firm and fixed, but the woman is volatile in the fire. And for this reason, the woman is united to the man, so that she receives the man, and he fixes and fastens her firm and constant in any balance. They are to be so close luted and covered, that the woman may not evaporate or breathe out, otherwise will come to nothing.³⁷

CONCERNING THE COPULATION OF THE MAN WITH THE WOMAN, ETC.

When you have placed the man and the wife in the matrimonial bed: if you wish that he operate on her, so that she may bring forth, it is necessary and must be, that the man have his operation upon the woman, so that the seed of the woman may be coagulated and joined together into a mass, by the seed of the man; otherwise it produces no fruit.³⁸

36 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *What is mundified?*

37 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.*: 85-86: "Since we have treated of the furnace in which the tinctures are to be prepared, and of the fire, we now propose to describe more at length how the man and the woman meet and are joined together. This is the manner. Take Philosophers' Mercury, prepared and purified to its supreme degree. Dissolve this with its wife, that is to say, with quick mercury, so that the woman may dissolve the man, and the man may fix the woman. Then, just as the husband loves his wife and she her husband, the Philosophers' Mercury pursues the quick mercury with the most supreme love, and their nature is moved with the greatest affection towards us. So then each Mercury is blended with the other, as the woman with the man, and he with her, so far as the body is concerned, to such an extent that they have no difference, save as regards their powers and properties, seeing the man is fixed, but the woman volatile in the fire. For this reason, the woman is united to the man in such a way that she dissolves the man, and he fixes her and renders her constant in every consideration as a consequence. Conceal both in a glass vessel, thoroughly fastened, so that the woman may not escape or evaporate; otherwise the whole work will be reduced to nothing."

38 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim,*

CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHIC COITION OF THE HUSBAND WITH HIS WIFE

Afterwards if you see the woman to be of black colour, then certainly be assured that she hath conceived, and is made pregnant, and when the seed of the woman embraces the seed of man, this is the first sign and key of the whole art. Therefore careful continually to preserve the natural heat, and the blackness will appear, and be dispersed and consumed away by the natural heat; as one worm eats and devours another, and continues consuming so long, until there be no more blackness left.³⁹

CONCERNING THE BLACK COLOUR

The blackness manifestly appearing, then know that the woman is pregnant; but when the Peacock's Tail begins to appear, that is when many various colours will appear in the glass, it shows the working of the philosophers' mercury upon the vulgar mercury, and stretches out her wings until she has overcome it. Therefore when the dryness operates upon the moisture, these colours do appear.⁴⁰

called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.: 86: "When you have placed the husband and the wife in the matrimonial bed, in order that he may operate upon her and impregnate her, and that the seed of the woman may be coagulated into a mass by the seed of the man, without which she can bring forth no fruit, it is necessary that the man should perform his operation on the woman."

39 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, loc. cit.:* "As soon as you see the woman take a black colour, know for a certainty that she has conceived and become pregnant: and when the seed of the man embraces the seed of the woman, this is the first sign and the key of this whole work and Art. Therefore preserve a continuous natural heat, and this blackness will appear and disappear through being consumed, as one worm eats another, and goes on consuming until not one is still left."

40 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, loc. cit.:* "As soon as the blackness appears and is manifest, it may be known that the woman has become impregnated. But when the peacock's tail begins to appear, that is, when many and various colours shall be seen in the glass, it is a sign that the Philosophers' Mercury is acting on the common mercury, and extending its wings until it shall have conquered. When, therefore, the dry acts on the moist these colours appear."

CONCERNING THE BUD APPEARING IN THE GLASS

When you perceive these various colours, then be constant in your work, continuing the fire, until the colour of the Peacock's Tail be fully consumed, and until the matter of the Moon appear white and candid as snow, and the vessel has brought it to the very degree of its perfection. Then at last break a little piece of it, and put it on a copper plate in the fire. If it remain constant and firm and keep its tincture, it is then brought to the most perfect substance of Luna. This king has strength and power, not only to transmute and change all metals, but also to cure all diseases and infirmities. This king is laudable, and adorned with many virtues, and with such great power that he can transmute and change Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mercury into the most constant Luna, to every touchstone. Also frees and delivers the bodies of men from infinite diseases, as from fevers and leprosy, etc., also from a great many other diseases and infirmities, which no herbs, roots, or the like medicines can possibly cure, or take away. Whosoever makes daily use of this medicine, shall attain to, and preserve himself in a sound and long life.⁴¹

41 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 37: "When you have seen the different colours, it is necessary that you persevere in the work, by constantly continuing the fire, until the peacock's tail is quite consumed, while the matter of Luna becomes white and glittering as snow, and the vessel attains its degree of perfection. Then at length you may break off a morsel of the regulus, and place it on a heated copper plate. If it remains firm and fixed there, and tinges it, then it is a fermentation brought to the highest perfection of Luna. That King has strength and power, not only for transmuting metals, but also for healing all infirmities. He is a King worthy to be praised, and adorned with many virtues, and so great power, that he transmutes Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mercury into Luna, which will stand all tests. He also frees the bodies of men from an infinite number of diseases, as fevers, the falling sickness, leprosy, the gallic disease, and many mineral ailments which no herbs or roots, or anything of that kind, can remove. Whoever uses constantly this medicament, prepares for himself a fixed, long, and healthy life."

CONCERNING THE RED COLOUR

After this king is inducted with a perfect whiteness, the fire is constantly to be continued, until the whiteness is beginning to take a yellow colour, which colour follows next after the whiteness. For by how much the longer the heat works upon the white and dry matter, the more yellow and saffron-like grows the colours, until it comes to perfect redness, which by degrees the fire brings the matter to the highest degree of the red colour. Then is the substance of gold prepared, and there is born a king sitting on his throne, and ruling over all the princes of the world.⁴²

CONCERNING INCREASE AND MULTIPLICATION

The multiplication of this matter is to be done after this manner. Let the matter be resolved into its moisture, and then put the fire to it, to the heat as at first, and it will work upon its moisture oftener than before, and change the same into its own substance, turning the whole quantity of the matter into the substance of itself. Therefore the treasures of the earth are unspeakable, the world cannot compare to them.⁴³

42 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, loc. cit.: "After the King has assumed his perfect whiteness, the fire must be continued perseveringly, until the whiteness takes a yellow tint, this being the colour which succeeds the white; for so long as any heat acts on the white and dry matter, the longer such action lasts, the more is it tinted with yellow and saffron colour, until it arrives at redness, like the colour of a ruby. Then at last the fermentation is prepared for gold, and the oriental King is born, sitting in his seat, and powerful above all the princes of this world."

43 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, loc. cit.: "The multiplying of this fermentation should be noted, which is performed in the following manner. Let it be dissolved in its own moisture, and afterwards subjected to the regimen of fire as before. It will act on its own humidity more quickly than it previously did, and will transmute into its own substance, just as a little leaven seems to transmute into leaven the whole of a large quantity of flour. Wherefore it is an unspeakable treasure on the earth, of which the universe has not the equal, as Augurellus witnesses."

CONCLUSION

This secret was kept by the most ancient Fathers amongst their most hidden and occult secrets; who kept the same, lest it should fall into the hands of the wicked men, who might thereby be enabled, the more fully to accomplish their wickedness and evil ends. We therefore require you who shall ever attain to this gift of God, that you will imitate the Fathers, and secretly use and preserve this divine mystery. For if you tread it under your feet, or cast pearls before swine, you may later regret this. To the grace of God, let one only implore that he may use the same to his glory.⁴⁴

44 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry, op. cit.:* 87-88: "This secret was accounted by the old Fathers who possessed it as among the most occult, lest it should get into the hands of wicked men, who by its aid would be able more abundantly to fulfil their own wickedness and crimes. We, therefore, ask you, whoever have attained to this gift of God, that, imitating these Fathers, you will treat and preserve this divine mystery in the most secret manner possible, for if you tread it under foot, or scatter your pearls before swine, be sure that you will hear pronounced against you the severe sentence of God, the supreme avenger. But to those who, by the special grace of God, abstain most from all vices, this Art will be more constantly and more fully revealed than to any others. For with a man of this kind more wisdom is found than with a thousand sons of the world, by whom this Art is in no way discovered. Whoever shall have found this secret and gift of God, let him praise the most high God, the Father and Son, with the Holy Spirit. And from this God alone let him implore grace, by which he may be able to use that gift to God's glory and to the good of his fellow-man. The merciful God grant that this may be so for the sake of Jesus Christ His Son, and our Saviour!"

PASS-KEY NUMBER FOUR



THE GREATEST SECRETS OF ALCHEMY LIE DEEPLY BURIED, AND ARE ONLY TO be unearthed by empirical methods of trial and error. These pass-keys – drawn from many treatises by those who claimed that they had succeeded in the search, and reluctantly gave hints as to the truth – will certainly simplify information, and lead to an open door in the art.

First of all, they talked of a water which is not a water at all, and to hide this secret they called it *mercury* which indeed is not mercury either. Most of their books claimed that mercury, the metal, was not to be used at all. So in the past, this resulted that at very start of experiments, that researchers not knowing what water was meant, they were nonplussed. The sages said, by way of a description, that the water was as clear as a tear, and brilliant in appearance. This water could dissolve the hardest metals, and only with the heat of a Summer's day, and could reduce them to a black liquid, or black earth, that looked like melted pitch. This mercury was their *Secret Fire* and many other names, but mostly referred to as mercury.

But common mercury or quicksilver is certainly¹ used, for indeed without the aid of this metal, the Philosophers' Stone would be impossible to be produced. The author here explains this misleading blind by revealing that only when changes are developed in the processes of the alchemical work are they then admitted to be called *Our GOLD*, silver, and all the other metals in use.

We may now take up our PASS-KEY and give the student selected quotations from the books of the most famous past masters of alchemy.² The author explains and simplifies confused and knotty problems.³

1 Lapidus annotation: NOT UNTIL THE END.

2 With the exception of Eirenæus Philalethes and Geber, all of the quotations are taken from *The Stone of the Philosophers*, by Edward Kelly, in *Tractatus duo egregii, de Lapide Philosophorum, una cum Theatro astronomiæ terrestri, cum Figuris, in gratiam filiorum Hermetis nunc primum in lucem editi, curante J. L.M.C. [Johanne Lange Medicin Candidato]* (Hamburg, 1676).

3 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *Something missing here.*

Philalethes said: "There is in mercury whatever the wise man seeks."⁴ Mercury here is speaking of *both* mercuries⁵ mentioned above.

Geber said: "Praised be the MOST High who has created our mercury, and has given it a nature overcoming all things."

Elsewhere Philalethes says: "Our mercury is the salt of the wise man, without which, whoever operates, is like an archer who shoots without a bow-string, and yet it is nowhere to be found on earth, but is *formed by us, not by creation*, but by extracting it out of those things in which it is, nature co-operating in a wonderful manner, by a witty art."⁶

Philalethes here speaks only of the water mercury, which is also the *Secret Fire*, the catalyst which has been mentioned above.

In *The Turba Philosophorum* ... we find the following words: "In the estimation of all Sages, Mercury is the first principle of all metals."

Also it is said (in *The Turba Philosophorum*): "As flesh is generated from coagulated blood, so gold is generated out of coagulated Mercury."⁷

Here is meant metalline mercury, that is, common mercury.⁸

Arnold writes thus to the King of Aragon: "Know that the matter and sperm of all metals are Mercury, digested and thickened in the womb of the earth; they are digested by sulphureous heat, and according to the quality and quantity of the sulphur different metals are generated. Their matter is essentially the same, though there may be some accidental differences, such as a greater or less degree of digestion, etc. All things are

4 From *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Aureolus Philippus Theophrastus Bombast, of Hohenheim, called Paracelsus the Great, Volume I - Hermetic Chemistry*, op. cit.: 66: "For this reason it may be said that the Mercury of the Philosophers is none other than their most abstruse, compounded Mercury, and not the common Mercury. So then they have wisely said to the sages that there is in Mercury whatever wise men seek."

5 Lapidus annotation: TO MISLEAD.

6 Lapidus has written *but by extracting him out of those things in which he is, by a witty art* where Eirenæus Philalethes wrote *but by extracting it out of those things in which it is, nature co-operating in a wonderful manner, by a witty art*.

7 Lapidus annotation: METALLINE MERCURY.

8 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *This seems to be a contradiction! That gold comes from common mercury or vulgar quicksilver!*

made of that into which they may be resolved, e.g. ice or snow, which may be resolved into water; and so all metals may be resolved into quicksilver; hence they are made out of quicksilver.”

Bernard of Trevisan says in his book on the *Transmutation of metals*: “Similarly, quicksilver is the substance of all metals; it is as a water by reason of the homogeneity which it possesses with vegetables and animals, and it receives the virtues of those things which adhere to it in decoction.” A little further on, he affirms that “gold is nothing but quicksilver congealed by its sulphur” – which means that it is nothing but mercury congealed into gold by another sulphur, or another metal, and mercury is the solvent with any metal depending on the length of time it takes to digest.

Again (Trevisan): “The Sages have it that gold is nothing but quicksilver perfectly digested in the bowels of the earth, and they have signified that this is brought about by sulphur, which coagulates the Mercury, and digests it by its own heat. Hence the Sages have said that gold is nothing but mature quicksilver.”

The treatise *Way of Ways* leads to the same conclusion: “... understand that quicksilver is the sperm of all metals, perfect and imperfect, digested in the bowels of the earth by the heat of sulphur, the variety of metals being due to the diversity of their sulphur.” The variety of the sulphur means the character of the metal used, being worked with the quicksilver.

In the *Art of Alchemy*, we read: “All Sages agree that the metals are generated from the vapour of sulphur and quicksilver.”

So much for the above point in alchemy. I now propose to show another angle of the art – that is, that although mercury will easily mix with most metals, it will not stay with them, for as soon as a little more heat is applied. Therefore the most important thing to know is how to attain the catalyst which starts the work, and holds the mercury in the mixed metals, called *magnetia* by the adepts. This catalyst is the *secret water* talked of; the *Secret Fire*; *Saturn's son or offspring*, and great many more descriptive names which nevertheless is never revealed by its true name.

*The Turba Philosophorum*⁹ says: “Whoever joins quicksilver to the body of magnesia,¹⁰ and the woman to the man, extracts the hidden nature by which bodies are coloured. Know that quicksilver is a consuming fire which mortifies bodies by its contact.”

Magnetia is here mentioned, which merely means the mixed metals.¹¹

Aristotle calls mercury the first body, which acts on gross substances and changes them into its own likeness. He says: “If Mercury did nothing else than render bodies subtle and like itself, it would suffice us.”

The Book on the Art of Alchemy: “The Sages were first put upon attempting to clothe inferior bodies¹² in the glory and splendour of the perfect body when they discovered that metals differ only according to the greater or smaller degree of their digestion, and are all generated from Mercury, with which they extracted gold and reduced it to its first nature.”

This is the metallic mercury.

The Correction of Fools: “Observe that crude Mercury dissolves bodies and reduces them to their first matter or nature. Being made of clear water, it always strives to corrode the crude, and especially that which is nearest to its own nature, viz., gold and silver.”

Here the clear water is mentioned, the *Secret Fire*, the other kind of so-called mercury, which is not quicksilver at all but is powerful enough to reduce all metals into blackness. This is the greatest secret of the art, and this stumbling block being called mercury, has been used in most treatises on alchemy. The book by Ali Puli will help identify where this water is to be found. Take good notice of what is given here. Right at the beginning of this pass-key, Philaethes,

9 Menalates in *The Turba Philosophorum*.

10 Lapidus annotation: *Magnetia*.

11 Lapidus annotation: MENTIONED IN PASS-KEY NUMBER ONE.

12 Lapidus annotation: *metals*.

in the first two items, tells the student what this *water* is.¹³

The Sounding of the Trumpet: “Common Mercury is called a spirit. If you do not resolve the body into Mercury, with Mercury, you cannot obtain its hidden virtue.”

The two kinds of mercury are used here, both the metalline, and the liquid clear water of the *Secret Fire*, which is also a catalyst to start operations.

The Art of Alchemy: “Who can sufficiently extol Mercury, for Mercury alone has power to reduce gold to its first nature?”

Ordinary mercury will amalgamate with gold, but cannot reduce it to the condition here referred to. Only the mercury which is the water, the *Secret Fire*, can reduce the gold to its first nature, which indeed is a liquid or slimy black condition.¹⁴

In short, the whole magistry consists in the union of the male and the female, or active and passive elements, through the mediation of our metallic water, and a proper degree of heat.

Rhasis: “Change the bodies into water, and the water into earth: then all is done.”

Galienus: “Prepare the bodies, and purify them of the blackness in which is corruption, till the white becomes white and red, then dissolve both, etc.”

Calid: “If you do not make the bodies subtle, so that they may be impalpable to touch, you will not gain your end. If they have not been ground, repeat your operation, and see that they are ground and subtilised. If you do this, you will be directed to your desired goal.”

13 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *This seems to be missing!*

14 Lapidus annotation: *CORRECT.*

Aristotle: "Bodies cannot be changed except by reduction into their first matter."

Ascanius: "The conjunction of the two is like the union of husband and wife ..."

The two mentioned are gold and mercury.

Thus I have shown you the number of bodies from which the Elixir is obtained. I will now show by quotations what these bodies are. Note first that the sun stands for gold, and the moon stands for silver. But ordinary silver is not used at all. It is quicksilver that is meant. Where silver is spoken of, understand it is once again mercury, or quicksilver, but that common silver is merely said to mislead.

The Sounding of the Trumpet: "The Sun only heats the earth and imparts to it his virtue through the mediation of the Moon, which, of all stars, most readily receives his light and heat."

Sun and moon here stand for gold and quicksilver.

The CORRECTION of FOOLS: "Sow gold and silver,¹⁵ and they will yield to your labour a thousandfold, through the mediation of that thing which alone has what you seek. The Tincture of gold and silver exhibits the same metallic proportions as the imperfect metals, because they have a common first matter in Mercury."

Senior: "I, the Sun, am hot and dry, and thou, the Moon, art cold and moist; when we are wedded together in a closed chamber, I will gently steal away thy soul."

This romantic way of speaking is merely done to mislead and frustrate the tyro in the art.

15 Lapidus annotation: *quicksilver as explained above.*

Rosinus (to Saratant): “From the living water we obtain earth, a homogeneous dead body, composed of two natures, that of the Sun and that of the Moon.”

In simple language, when gold and mercury are dissolved in the water known as the *Secret Fire*, it is like a dead black slime.

Again (Rosinus to Saratant): “When the Sun, my brother, for the love of me (silver) pours his sperm (i.e. his solar fatness) into the chamber (i.e. my Lunar body), namely, when we become one in a strong and complete complexion and union, the child of our wedded love will be born.”

Hermes: “Its humidity is of the empire of the Moon, and its fatness of the empire of the Sun, and these two are its coagulum and pure seed.”

THE Sage: “The foundation of our Art is gold and its shadow ... Whoever knows how to tinge sulphur¹⁶ and quicksilver has reached the great arcanum. Gold and silver must be in the Tincture, and also the ferment of the spirit.”

The Sounding of the Trumpet: “You want silver¹⁷ to subtilise your gold, and make it volatile by removing its impurity, since the silver¹⁸ has a greater need of the light of gold. Therefore Hermes, as also Aristotle in his treatise on Plants, says that gold is its father, and silver its mother; nothing else is needed for our Stone ... I am like seed sown in good and pure soil, which sprouts and grows and multiplies and yields great gain to the sower ...”

Take heed then, and operate only on gold and quicksilver, since all the profit of our art is derived from these three things.

Notice that at first two things are mentioned and in the same sentence three things. The third thing is the *Secret Fire* water, which is the mercury of the philosophers.

16 Lapidus annotation: *gold*.

17 Lapidus annotation: *quicksilver*.

18 Lapidus annotation: *quicksilver*.

The author may now add, by way of simplification, and repetition of all that has been said above, mercury is the water which the sages have used for the purpose of solution. I have shown that, in fact, there are two bodies known as mercury, one being a metal, and the other a liquid. Also they are no other than *our gold* and *our silver*, which is none other than quicksilver. Ordinary silver is never used in conjunction with gold. To REPEAT, where silver is mentioned, quicksilver is meant. It may be pointed out that this deviousness is one of the great stumbling blocks invented to mislead, and has been the cause of failure to generations of researchers.

Exeminus: "The water, with its adjuncts, being placed in the vessel, preserves them from combustion. The substances being ground with water, there follows the ascension of the Ethelia and the imbibition of water is sufficient by itself to complete the work."

Take note of what follows. The spirit is water. The name *spirit* is often used when the water is meant – *the water of the sages*.

Exercit: "The spirit guards the body and preserves it from fire, the clarified body keeps the spirit from evaporating over the fire, the body being fixed and the spirit incombustible. Hence the body cannot be burnt, because the body and spirit are one through the soul. The soul prevents them from being separated by the fire. Hence the three together can defy the fire and anything else in the world."

Calid: "Prepare the strong bodies¹⁹ with the dissolved humidity, till either shall be reduced to its subtle form. If you do not subtilise and grind the bodies till they become impalpable, you will not find what you seek."

Rosinus: "The Stone consists of body, soul, and spirit, or water, as the Philosophers say, and is digested in one vessel. Our whole Magistry is of, and by, our water, which dissolves the bodies, not into water, but by a true philosophical solution into the water whence metals are extracted, and is calcined and reduced to earth ..."

19 Lapidus annotation: *metallic bodies*.

Aristotle: "Take your beloved son, and wed him to his sister, his white sister, in equal marriage, and give them the cup of love, for it is a food which prompts them to union. All pure things must be united to pure things, or they will have sons unlike themselves. Therefore, first of all, even as Avicenna advises, sublime the Mercury, and purify in it impure bodies. Then pound and dissolve. Repeat this operation again and again."

Take heed now. Here follows the whole art of alchemy described in one short paragraph.²⁰

Ascanius: "Stir up war between copper and Mercury till they destroy each other and devour each other. Then the copper coagulates the quicksilver,²¹ the quicksilver congeals the copper, and both bodies become a powder by means of diligent imbibition and digestion. Join together the red man and the white woman²² till they become Ethelia, that is, quicksilver.²³ Whoever changes them into a spirit by means of quicksilver, and then makes them red, can tinge every body."

As to the nature of this copper, Gratianus instructs us in the following words: "Make Laton²⁴ white, i.e. whiten copper with Mercury, because Laton is an orange imperfect body, composed of gold and silver."

Take good note of these last two paragraphs.

"I advise all and sundry to follow my teaching, as to the correctness of which my quotations from the ancients can leave no doubt, which also has received further confirmation from my own experiments. Any deviation from this course leads to deception, except only the work of Saturn,²⁵ which must be performed by the subtilisation of principles."

20 Annotation in an unknown hand (presumably that of Hans Nintzel): *Yet another hot clue. Decipher it!*

21 Lapidus annotation: *Mercury.*

22 Lapidus annotation: *his white wife.*

23 Lapidus annotation: *mercury.*

24 Lapidus annotation: *latten.*

25 Lapidus annotation: *Saturn's OFFSPRING.*

The work of Saturn, which is [...] ²⁶ lead, used in alchemy, is ²⁷ the water to be prepared by extraction from imperfect metals. The extraction is done by distillation, from four common metals, by a liquid, which indeed is the greatest and darkest secret in alchemy. No alchemical books have ever revealed plainly what this water is, and it is *NOT* plain water. What this water is, known as the *Secret Fire*, has been plainly hinted at in hundreds of treatises, and is easy to be found. By its aid all doors to alchemy can be opened. Nature multiplies all living things, by the conditions of methods of time and patience, and will not stop at metals when the true and required conditions are set.

I conclude with the words of Avicenna: “The true principle of our work is the dissolution of the Stone, because solved bodies have assumed the nature of spirits, i.e. because their quality is drier. For the solution of the body is attended with the coagulation of the spirit. Be patient, therefore, digest, pound, make yellow as wax, and never be weary of repeating these processes till they are quite perfect. For things saturated with water are thereby softened. The more you pound the substance, the more you soften it, and subtilise its gross parts, till they are thoroughly penetrated with the spirit and thus dissolved. For by pounding, roasting, and fire, ²⁸ the tough and viscous parts of bodies are separated.” ²⁹ ³⁰

26 Lapidus has crossed out *not a metal*.

27 Lapidus annotation: *AN INGREDIENT OF*.

28 Lapidus annotation: *natural fire*.

29 Lapidus has written *For by pounding, roasting, and fire, the tough and viscous parts of bodies are joined* where Avicenna wrote *For by pounding, roasting, and fire, the tough and viscous parts of bodies are separated*.

30 Lapidus annotation: *CORRECT*.

PASS-KEY NUMBER FIVE



WHAT FOLLOWS IN MANY PRECISE STATEMENTS ARE RULES WHICH COULD BE invaluable and a help in experiments. After all the foregoing explanations,¹ they should be easily understood. These statements have been taken from a book many years old entitled *A Golden Casket of Nature's Marvels*, by Benedictus Figulus,² and are accompanied by the author's notes and explanations.

All the masters of alchemy have agreed that the final results have arrived successfully by many methods, so that it should never be taken for granted that whatever any of the adepts of the past have written, because of the endless blunders and stumbling blocks they have injected into their treatises in order that the art should never be found without great efforts and labour. Nevertheless, if the following is studied, it will be a good pass-key into the science of alchemy.

It is wholly impossible to render imperfect bodies fixed without the Sulphur and Spirit of the perfect ones.

The perfect ones are gold and silver; all metals are called sulphur, the spirit might be applied to liquid, or mercury, when mixed with gold or silver.

The Philosophers' *Cælum* (Heaven) reduces all metals to their primary matter, i.e. to Mercury.

Cælum is another name for the *Secret Fire*, to be prepared, without which nothing can be done.

Those attempting to reduce metals into Mercury without *Cælum Philosophicum* ... are greatly deceived ...

1 Lapidus annotation: *IN OTHER KEYS*.

2 See *A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels Concerning the Blessed Mystery of the Philosopher's Stone*, by Benedictus Figulus, of Utenhofen; translated into English by Arthur Edward Waite (James Elliott and Co., London, 1893 and Vincent Stuart Publishers Ltd., London, 1963).

Cælum is the mysterious water, the catalyst, and is a liquid. But metallic water, or metalline water is common mercury which must be used as well.

Silver cannot be transmuted into gold ... unless it be³ reduced to liquid Mercury.

Silver and gold should never be used, and mixed together in one flask. Each may be worked alone, but first injected with common mercury, then started off by the secret fire or liquid.⁴

Imperfect bodies, as well as silver, are endowed with perfection, and converted into pure gold; and this is done with white or red sulphur by virtue of a suitable fire.

Which means fermented with gold or silver.

Every imperfect body is brought to perfection by reduction into Mercury, after decoction with sulphurs in an appropriate fire. For out of the same are generated gold and silver; and they are deceived and labour in vain, who try to make gold and silver in any other way.

Nature compounds and prepares its minerals by a gradual process: and thus at length from one root it procreates all metals to the last limit of metals, which is gold.

Mercury corrupts gold, changing it into Mercury, and rendering it volatile.

Right at the start, gold and mercury are mixed without any heat.⁵

The Stone is composed of Sulphur and Mercury.

3 Lapidus annotation: *FIRST*.

4 Lapidus annotation: *Later, when the secret fire is prepared, only then should the liquid be put into the flask with the gold or silver.*

5 Lapidus annotation: *In equal quantities. This secret is most important. By weight.*

If the preparation of Mercuries be not taught by an experienced artificer, it cannot be learnt from books.

But it can be learnt by study and experiment, and above all nature's work demands patience.

What congeals and fixes Mercury also colours the same,⁶ in one and the same process.

Things radically mingled in their minutest parts afterwards become inseparable, like snow mixed with water.

Homogenous Sulphur is of that Mercurial Nature which produces gold and silver,⁷ not in the form in which they are perceived by the eyes, but in which Mercury is dissolved.

Without Philosophical Solution of Gold in Mercury,⁸ there cannot be extracted from gold the certain fixed unctuousity which acts the part of a ferment generating gold and silver.⁹

Different Simple Substances exposed to putrefaction give different products.

Sulphur and Mercury consist of the same homogenous nature.

Gold and silver contain in themselves a superabundance of riches, which – by preparation and digestion – should be changed into a ferment, whereby the mass may be multiplied.

Philosophers hold it as an axiom that every dry thing quickly drinks up the humidity of its own species.

6 Lapidus annotation: *in the same vessel.*

7 Lapidus annotation: *silver in appearance.*

8 Lapidus annotation: *both mercuries.*

9 Lapidus annotation: *When gold is to be the final metal, a ferment of gold must be added.*

Lime of Silver altered quickly drinks up its Mercury, the fundament of the minerals of the Philosophers.

Mercury, placed with the sulphur of imperfect bodies, is coagulated into an imperfect body, being transmuted into that imperfect metallic species, the sulphur of which is coagulated and concreted.

Take good notice of each word here, and how common dissolved metals are transmuted into ferment of fine gold.

Sulphur and Mercury are the ingredients of the stone. Hence a knowledge of Mercury is necessary, to select the best Mercury for the speedy perfecting of the Stone.

Both mercuries are necessary. The water liquid (*Secret Fire*) and the metallic mercury. All bodies are known as sulphur, so precipitated fine gold is used.

Mercury is the feminine seed and menstruum of all metals, suitably prepared by the good operator's Art. For, by the projection of the great work, it receives and transmits the qualities of all metals, even to gold.

Here is the plain statement that mercury, whether it be the liquid form, or metallic form, are both menstrooms to dissolve all metals and to later bring them to gold.

As Red Tincture is elicited by the ferment of gold alone, Mercury can be animated only by the white ferment of silver.¹⁰

The Philosophers' work can be carried on without much labour or expense at all times, in every place, and by all, if only the true and sufficient matter be forthcoming.

But proportion must never be overlooked.

¹⁰ Lapidus has written *Red tincture is elicited by the ferment of gold alone, and silver can be animated by the white ferment of mercury* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *As Red Tincture is elicited by the ferment of gold alone, Mercury can be animated only by the white ferment of silver.*

The sulphurs of gold and silver are the true seeds, feminine and masculine, of the Stone.¹¹

Those are deceived who accept Venus as sulphur.

True that copper or Venus is not considered sulphur, but this is a devious bit of information to cause a problem to the researcher. Philalethes has told us in his 'Marrow of Alchemy' that without this addition among the imperfect metals, in the work, nothing would be achieved: of course copper must be added with the other imperfect metals which are being mixed, for copper is an important ingredient for bringing them to blackness.

In abbreviating the work perfect bodies should be reduced to liquid Mercury and dry water,¹² when they will easily assimilate the ferment.

The preparation of Mercury effected by sublimation is the more excellent, and by it (after revivification)¹³ is amalgamation more easily and better carried out.

Here it is explained that first comes the preparation of the *Secret Fire*, or philosophers' mercury. When this is complete, then add the water to the mixture of gold and mercury with the *Secret Fire* liquid. A great deal of knowledge is revealed in this rule. What is given here is a method, by which the quickest and best result is attained.

Mercury receives the form of gold through the medium of the Spirit.¹⁴

Gold resolved into Mercury is Spirit and Soul.

11 Lapidus has written *The sulphurs of gold and PHILOSOPHERS mercury are the true seeds, and masculine of the stone* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *The sulphurs of gold and silver are the true seeds, feminine and masculine, of the Stone*.

12 Lapidus annotation: *Dry water is metallic mercury*.

13 Lapidus annotation: *after the distillation of the water*.

14 Lapidus annotation: *liquid dissolvent*.

This is the same repeated in a different manner, when in the form of mercury the appearance is white. When Gold is first mixed with the correct proportion of metallic mercury, and before the spirit is added, the gold will not be lost into the mercury, and become white, but until the spirit is joined, it is useless. If heat is applied at this point, before the spirit is joined, the heat will drive the mercury out. Therefore, *note well*: without the help of the spirit, or mysterious dissolvent, which permanently mixes the three principles, nothing will be achieved.

The Mercuries of all metals, by abbreviation of the work, are changed into gold or silver.

It is worthy to be noted that Luna is not the mother of common silver, but a certain Mercury endued with the quality of the celestial moon.¹⁵

The Metallic Luna (silver) is of masculine nature.¹⁶

But Gold demands mercury which when mixed with gold is male and female, and finally coalesce into one. Four parts of mercury to one of sol (GOLD), that is the ferment. The solution is completed when sol is resolved into mercury.

Without putrefaction is no solution perfected.

Putrefaction is the work of the first process which brings the metal to blackness, by the aid of the *Secret Fire*, in about 42 days. Or possibly more time. Remember it is a natural process, and does not always follow clock time. After this blackness turns into whiteness of its own accord, and in the same manner after being fermented as a baker with his bread with yeast, or as nature with fruit, the whole matter becomes that blood red which is the sign of completion of the whole art. Always keep in mind that alchemy is a natural art, set the necessary conditions correctly – such as the mixture of the metals, the temperature required must be gauged, the correct proportion of the ingredients – and then

15 Lapidus has written *It is worthy to be noted that the name luna is not common silver, but mercury endued with the quality or appearance of silver* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *It is worthy to be noted that Luna is not the mother of common silver, but a certain Mercury endued with the quality of the celestial moon.*

16 Lapidus has written *The metal silver is masculine* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *The Metallic Luna (silver) is of masculine nature.*

nature will do the rest.

Putrefaction extends and continues even unto whiteness.

Alchemy is a simple art, with natural simple rules which will be learnt easily in a short while. The greatest secret is the liquid or philosophers' mercury, as it is named, along with a number of other names, *the water*, *the catalyst*, etc. The pass-keys now give you the answers.

Ferment desiccates Mercury, rendering it heavier and stable.

Mercury transmuted into whiteness with gold, remains but a short ... in whiteness, and turns into gold.

The long method¹⁷ is the open secret of Philosophy,¹⁸ but it is a veil and an evasion.

There is a certain short method by which the Sulphur is removed from gold and silver, whereby every Mercury is permanently changed into gold and silver.

When matter attains blackness of colour, the second degree of heat must be applied.

Philosophers' Laton¹⁹ is the similitude of fire, for that alone perfects and excels all things.

Poison and stench are removed by fire, without other addition ...

Fire, by its penetrative and acute virtue, purifies and matures a hundred times more than any other water.

17 Lapidus annotation: *which time takes up over a year.*

18 Lapidus has written *alchemy* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *Philosophy*.

19 Lapidus has written *Water* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *Laton*.

Matter, when brought to whiteness, refuses to be corrupted and destroyed.

All corruption of matter is marked by deadly posion.

Mercury and the vapour of this liquid metal is poisonous.

The virtue of Sulphur is not extensive, except to a certain limit of proportion, neither can it exceed an unlimited weight.

Thou canst not hatch the chicken by breaking the egg-shell; similarly, thou canst have no result by opening the vessel and exposing the matter to the air.²⁰

The farmer does not pull up his crops to see how they are getting on. Remember, nature does the work, and patience is paramount virtue to the researcher.

The Philosophers' mode of speaking must be diligently noted. By sublimation they mean the dissolution of bodies into Mercury. By the first degree of fire they mean that which the second operation follows, viz., the inspissation (thickening) of Mercury with Sulphur. The third is the fixation of Mercury into a perfect and dissolved body.

Infinite is the number of the erring who admit not that Mercury, as regards its form, when mixed with amalgamated chalk of perfect bodies, is the subject and matter of the Stone.

This is true and although mercury is indispensable, they cannot accept it because they have²¹ yet found the secret of joining this mercury to gold. As said before, mercury will join up with most metals, but as soon as heat is added, it separates, and runs away. It is certainly not brought about by actual fire, but it can be done with the *Secret Fire*, which is not a fire, yet has a fiery nature. Again I explain, it is nature's work, and the adepts in the art have spoken openly of

²⁰ Lapidus has written *thou canst not have any worthwhile result by opening the vessel often where Benedictus Figulus wrote thou canst have no result by opening the vessel and exposing the matter to the air.*

²¹ Lapidus annotation: *NOT.*

the heat of a chicken on her eggs, or a Summer's day temperature, and may be added patience. Take note here, of the next rule, and how the above is explained in the rules.

White Medicine is brought to perfection in the third degree of fire, which must not be exceeded lest the work – for whiteness – be destroyed.

The fourth degree of fire produces a red matter, when appear divers colours.

It is necessary that whiteness, not yet brought to the highest redness, should remain imperfect, both as regards the white and the red tincture. Therefore it is left dead until it end in perfect redness.

At the point of blackness, it should here be told, that the temperature may be slowly and gradually raised a little higher, just a few Fahrenheit degrees at each change.

The work attains not perfection, unless the medicine has been incerated and rendered fusible like wax.

After inceration it suffices for the matter to remain in the form of pulp or paste.

If the Mercury, by which the Medicine is incerated, escapes as a vapour, the work has failed.

Sol – when converted into its primary water, or Mercury, by means of Mercury – if it become cold, causes the work to perish.²²

The Wise reduce years to months, months to weeks, weeks to days.

²² Lapidus has written *Gold, when converted into its PRIMARY matter, or mercury, by means of mercury, if it becomes cold causes the work to perish* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *Sol – when converted into its primary water, or Mercury, by means of Mercury – if it become cold, causes the work to perish.*

... Mercury becomes multiplied in virtue tenfold beyond its primary nature.

But the Stone Mercury is produced by repeated decoctions and mixing with Sol. Therefore, for this cause, man and woman follow twice.²³

By addition of Sol to Mercury it is converted into sulphur, and then²⁴ by decoction into the Philosophers' Stone.

Every Mercury, of whatever origin, exhibits the matter of the Stone, when treated in the right manner.

Everything from which Mercury may be elicited is a subject of Philosophical Medicine.

One Mercury exceeds the other in greater heat, dryness, decoction, purity, perfection; it ought to be prepared without corruption or loss of form, and to be purged from superfluities. In this consists the treasure and mystery of the Stone.²⁵

If the preparation of Common Mercury were known to students of Philosophy, no other Philosophers' Mercury, nor Metallic *Aqua Vitæ*, nor other Mercurial Water of the Stone, need be sought, since the preparation of Common Mercury includes all these things.²⁶

23 Lapidus has written *Mercury becomes multiplied in virtue tenfold when decoction is carried out over again and male and female follow twice* where Benedictus Figulus wrote ... *Mercury becomes multiplied in virtue tenfold beyond its primary nature. But the Stone Mercury is produced by repeated decoctions and mixing with Sol. Therefore, for this cause, man and woman follow twice.*

24 Lapidus annotation: AFTER.

25 Lapidus has written *There are two mercuries: one exceeds the other in greater heat, dryness, decoction, purity, perfection; it must be prepared without corruption, or loss of form, and to be purged from superfluities. In this consists the treasure and the mystery of the stone* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *One Mercury exceeds the other in greater heat, dryness, decoction, purity, perfection; it ought to be prepared without corruption or loss of form, and to be purged from superfluities. In this consists the treasure and mystery of the Stone.*

26 Lapidus has written *If the preparation of the common mercury were known, in this art of alchemy, no other philosophers mercury, nor metallic mercury, nor other mercurial water of the stone need be sought, since the preparation of mercury produces all these things* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *If the preparation of Common Mercury were known to students of Philosophy, no other Philosophers' Mercury, nor Metallic Aqua*

This rule is written very artfully. *Common* mentioned here is not quicksilver, but a water, known under many names, one of which is *Secret Fire*. This water is indeed common, and many hints have already been given throughout this book. It must be prepared, and as soon as the word *prepared* is mentioned, the student should understand that quicksilver is not meant, but when distilled from other imperfect metals, its appearance is a brilliant water, and is called mercury to mislead.

Every Mercury of Metals and Minerals may, by successive stages, be raised, through the qualities of all other Mercuries, to the excellence of the Solar Body, and thence also be reduced to the degree and virtue of any metallic body one may please.²⁷

Common Mercury, before legitimate preparation, is not Philosophers' Mercury, but after preparation it is called Mer. Phil., containing within itself the true method and way of extracting Mercury from other metals – it is, as it were, the beginning of the great work.²⁸

Take good notice of what is explained here.

Prepared COMMON Mercury is held to be Metallic *Aqua Vitæ*.

Thus all the treatises on alchemy have puzzled researchers throughout the ages; by a play on these two mercuries, one of which is the metal quicksilver, and the other just liquid, or in appearance a brilliantly clear water extracted

Vitæ, nor other Mercurial Water of the Stone, need be sought, since the preparation of Common Mercury includes all these things.

27 Lapidus has written *Every mercury of both metals and minerals (which looks like water), by successive stages, may be raised, through the qualities of any of the mercuries to the excellence of the solar body (gold) where Benedictus Figulus wrote Every Mercury of Metals and Minerals may, by successive stages, be raised, through the qualities of all other Mercuries, to the excellence of the Solar Body, and thence also be reduced to the degree and virtue of any metallic body one may please.*

28 Lapidus has written *Common mercury (this has already been explained) ... where the word preparation is inserted is not metal or quicksilver; before legitimate preparation is not much good, but after preparation is called MER. PHIL.; containing within itself the true method and way of extracting mercury from other metals. This is really the beginning of the great work where Benedictus Figulus wrote Common Mercury, before legitimate preparation, is not Philosophers' Mercury, but after preparation it is called Mer. Phil., containing within itself the true method and way of extracting Mercury from other metals – it is, as it were, the beginning of the great work.*

from inferior metals, but take note, both are used. The water is a catalyst and the metal is the seed.

To compound and make Mercury of limpid water is in the power of Nature alone.²⁹

In the Great Physical Work, it is necessary that crude Mercury³⁰ resolve Sol into Mercury.

This can be carried out by just stirring into one part gold, and three parts mercury, but as much as the gold will accept, and no heat necessary to start with. But as mercury parts with all metals (except iron, with which it does not mix) as soon as heat is applied, it will in the same manner part or separate from them. This is the greatest mystery of all alchemy, how to mix gold and mercury so that they will never part, and this can only be done by the heat of a chicken on her eggs, and liquid mercury or *Secret Fire*. Knowing this, one can go ahead and dissolve the Philosophers' Stone. When the work has turned into black mud in 42 days and more, only then will it change into the white stage by nature.³¹

29 Lapidus has written *To compound and try to make mercury with limpid water is silly* where Benedictus Figulus wrote *To compound and make Mercury of limpid water is in the power of Nature alone*.

30 Lapidus annotation: *that is, the metal*.

31 Lapidus annotation: *Then red by fermentation / FERMENTATION*.

PASS-KEY NUMBER SIX



ALL THAT HAS BEEN REVEALED BY THE PREVIOUS PASS-KEYS SHOULD HAVE given ample proof that alchemy is a genuine science. From the many extracts from the masters of alchemy, it should be clear now that in spite of all the contradictions, and the villications that the art has suffered, in the main, the genuine adepts all agreed with one another in principle and method, in their treatises although written hundreds of years apart.

By now the researcher should have gained sufficient knowledge of the art to be enabled to recognise the difference between true and spurious writings, and gained the confidence to ignore those false books which talked of substances that had no relation to metallurgy, or were too often added to mislead experiments.

The next pass-key will display a poetical treatise, by Sir Edward Kelly, who gives a true account of the whole work that takes place in the operations of alchemy, and this effort from another angle. It comes in the form of a parable which the astute reader will recognise as being once more the same method of the processes to follow. Perhaps in this particular poem, the searcher may gain a few new clues to help him along the road to success.

Edward Kelly was an Elizabethan alchemist, who may be trusted to have possessed an actual knowledge of alchemy, although in his time, and with such knowledge, which one must remember was a dangerous thing to own to, he was considered a fraud, vilified, and slandered in some of the doubtful histories, of his comings and goings. Be it as it may, Kelly's work, given in this poem is the work of a true adept.

Expressed in the simple language of the time, Kelly gives us the whole art of alchemy in a whimsical form, that must not be mistaken as though he was really joking, for this is not so. There are no blinds and stumbling blocks here. His poem might be concluded with words such as *there is nothing more to be said.*

BOOK OF ST. DUNSTAN¹

by Sir Edward Kelly

All you that faine *Philosophers* would be,
 And night and day in *Geber's* kitchin broyle,
 Wasting the chipps of ancient *Hermes Tree*,
 Weening to turne them to a pretious Oyle,
 The more you worke the more you loose and spoile.
 To you I say, how learned soever you be,
 Goe burne your Bookes and come and learne of me.

Although to my one Booke you have red tenn,
 Thats not inough, for I have heard it said,
 The greatest Clarkes ar not the wisest men,
 A Lion once a silly Mouse obeyd,
 In my good will so hold your selves appaid:
 And though I write not halfe so sweete as *Tully*,
 Yet shall you finde I trace the steps of *Lully*.

Yt doth you good to thinke how your desire,
 And selfe-conceit doth warrantize vaine hope,
 You spare no cost, you want no coals for fier,
 You know the vertues of the Elitrope,
 You thinke your selves farr richer then the Pope.
 What thinge hath being either high or low,
 But their *Materia prima* you do know.

Elixir vitæ, and the precious *Stone*,
 You know as well as how to make an Apple;
 If'te come to the workinge then let you alone,
 You know the coullers black brown bay and dapple,
 Controwle you once then you begin to fraple.

1 Published as 'Sir Edward Kelle's Worke' in *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, containing Severall Poetical Pieces of our Famous English Philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language. Faithfully Collected into one Volume, with Annotations thereon, by Elias Ashmole, Esq. Qui est Mercuriophilus Anglicus. The First Part.* London. Printed by J. Grismond for Nath: Brooke, at the Angel in Cornhill. MDCLII (1652).

Swearing and saying, what a fellow is this?
 Yet still you worke but ever worke amisse.

No no, my friends, it is not vaunting words,
 Nor mighty oaths that gaine that sacred skill;
 It is obtained by grace and not by swords;
 Nor by greate reading, nor by long sitting still,
 Nor fond conceipt nor working all by will.
 But as I said by grace it is obtained,
 Seeke grace, therefore, let folly be refrained.

It is no costly thing I you assure,
 That doth beget *Magnesia* in hir kind.
 Yet is hir selfe by leprosie made pure:
 Hir eyes be cleerer being first made blind:
 And he that can Earths fastnes once unbind,
 Shall quickly know that I the truth have tould,
 Of sweete *Magnesia*, Wife to purest Gold.

Now what is meant by Man and Wife is this,
 Agent and Patient, yet not two but one,
 Even as was *Eva*, *Adams* Wife I wisse:
 Flesh of his Flesh and Bone of his Bone,
 Such is the unionhood of our precious *Stone*.
 As *Adam* slept untill his Wife was made,
 Even so our *Stone*, ther can no more be said.

By this you se how thus it came to passe,
 That first was Man, and Woman then of him:
 Thus *Adam* heere as first and cheefest was,
 And still remained a Man of perfect limme,
 Then Man and Wife were joynd together trimme.
 And each in love to other straight addressed them,
 And did increase their kind when God had blessed them.

Even so the Man our *Stone* is said to sleepe,
 Untill such time his Wife be fully wrought;

Then he awakes, and joyfully doth keepe
 His new made Spouse, which he so dearely bought,
 And when to such perfection they be brought,
 Rejoyce the beauty of so faire a bride,
 Whose worth is more then halfe the world beside.

I doubt as yet you hardly undertand,
 What Man or Wife doth truly signifie,
 And yet I know you beare your selves in hand,
 That out of doubt it *Sulpher* is and *Mercury*,
 And so yt is, but not the common certainly:
 But *Mercury* essentiall is trewly the trew Wife,
 That killes her selfe to bring her Child to life.

For first and formost she receaves the Man,
 Her perfect love doth make her soone conceive:
 Then doth she strive with all the force she can,
 In spite of love, of life him to bereave,
 Which being done, then will she never leave,
 But labour kindly like a loving Wife,
 Untill againe she him have brought to life.

Then he againe her kindnesse to requite,
 Upon her head doth set a Crowne of glory,
 And to her praise he Poems doth indite,
 Whose Poems make each Poet write a story,
 And that she slew him then she is not sorry.
 For he by vertue of his loving Wife,
 Not only lives, but also giveth life.

But here I wish you rightly understand,
 How heere he makes his Concubine his Wife,
 Which if you know not, do not take in hand,
 This worke which unto fooles is nothing rife,
 And looke you make attonement where is strife.
 Then strip the Man into his shirt of Tishew,
 And her out of her smock to ingender yssue.

To tell you troath he wanteth for no Wives
 In Land, or Sea, in Water, Air, or Fire,
 Without their deaths he waieth not their lives.
 Except they live he wants his cheif desire,
 He bindes them prentice to the rightest Dier ,
 And when they once all Sorrowes have abidden,
 Then finde they Joyes which from them first were hidden.

For then they finde the Joy of sweete encrease,
 They bring forth Children beautifull to sight.
 The which are able Prisners to release;
 And to the darkest Bodyes give true light,
 Their hevenly Tincture is of such great might.
 Oh! he that can but light on such a treasure,
 Who would not thinke his Joyes were out of measure?

Now by this question I shall quickly know
 If you can tell which is his Wife indeede:
 Is she quick footed, faire faced yea or no,
 Flying or fixed as you in Bookes do reade?
 Is she to be fed or else doth she feede?
 Wherein doth she joy, where's her habitation?
 Heavenly or Earthly, or of a strange nacion?

What is she poore? or is she of any wealth?
 Bravely of her attyre, or meane in her apparrell?
 Or is she sick? or is she in perfect health?
 Mild of her Nature? or is she given to quarrell?
 Is she a Glutton? or loves she the Barrell?
 If any one of these you name her for to be,
 You know not his Wife, nor never did her see.

And that will I prove to you by good reason,
 That truly noe one of all these is she,

This is a question to you that is geason:²
 And yet some parte of them all she must be,
 Why then, some parte is not all you may see.
 Therefore the true Wife which I doe meane,
 Of all these Contraries is the Meane betweene.

As Meale and Water joynd both together,
 Is neither Meale nor Water now but Dow;
 Which being baked, is Dow nor Water neither:
 Nor any more will each from other goe,
 The meane betweene is Wife, our Wife even so:
 And in this hidden point our seacret lyes,
 It is enough, few words content the wise.

Now by this simile heere I do reveale,
 A mighty Seacret if you marke it well;
 Call *Mercury* Water, imagine *Sulphur* Meale,
 What Meale I meane I hope the wife can tell:
 Bake them by craft, make them together dwell,
 And in your working make not too much hast,
 For Wife she is not while she is in Paste.

This lesson learn'd now give me leave to play,
 I shall the fitter be to learne another,
 My minde is turn'd cleane cam another way.
 I doe not love sweete secret thoughts to smother,
 It is a Child you know that makes a Mother.
 Sith so it is then must we have a Childe,
 Or else of Motherhood we are beguild.

What will you say if I a wonder tell you,
 And prove the Mother is Child and Mother too?
 Do you not thinke I goe about to sell you
 A bargaine in sport, as some are wont to do?

2 Lapidus annotation: *strange, rare.*

Ist possible the Mother, to weare her Infants shoe?
 In faith it is in our *Philosophy*,
 As I will prove by reason by and by.

Ripley doth bid you take it for no scorne,
 With patience to attend the true Conjunction,
 For saith he in the Aire our Child is borne,
 There he receiveth the holy Unction,
 Also with it a heavenly function-
 For after death reviv'd againe to lyfe,
 This all in all both Husband Child and Wife.

Whilst all is Earth *Conception* it is termed,
 And *Putrefaction* tyme of lying in,
 Perfect *Conjunction* (by artes-men is affirmd)
 The womans Childing where doth all Joy begin,
 Who knowes not this, his witts are very thin.
 When she is strong and shineth faire and bright,
 She's tearm'd the Wife most beautifull to sight.

Loe thus you see that you are not beguil'd;
 For if you marke it I have proved by Reason,
 How both is one the Mother and the Child,
 Conception, Breeding, Childing, every season:
 I have declared to you without all Treason,
 Or any false ambiguous word at all;
 And hewn you worke then finde it true you shall.

This is that *Mercury* essentiall truly,
 Which is the principall of the *Stone* materiall,
 And not those crude Amalgames began newly;
 These are but *Mercuries* superficiall,
 This is that Menstrue of perfect tincturiall:
 This is most truly that One thing,
 Out of the which all profit must springe.

If this content you not, abide displeas'd for me,

For I have done. If Reason take no place,
 What can be said, but that there doubts will be,
 Doe what one can, where folly wins the race.
 Let it suffice, this is the perfect Base,
 Which is the *Stone* that must dissolved be.
 How that is done I will declare to thee.

This is the *Stone* that *Ripley* bids you take,
 (For untill thus it be it is no *Stone*)
 Be rul'd by me, my counsell not forsake,
 And he commands, Let Crudities alone,
 If thou have grace to keep thee free from moan.
 Then stick to this, let Phansey not o'resway thee,³
 Let Reason rule, for Phansey will betray thee.

Take thou this *Stone*, this *Wife*, this *Child*, this *All*,
 Which will be Gummous, crumbling, silken, soft:
 Upon a Glasse or Porphire beat it small,
 And as you grinde, with *Mercury* feede it oft,
 But not so much that *Mercury* swim aloft,
 But equal parts, nipt up their seed to save;
 Then each in other are buried within their grave.

When thus and there you have it as is said,
 Worke in all points as Nature wrought at first,
 For Blacknes had thow needest not be afraid,
 It wilbe White, then art thou past the worst,
 Except thou breake thy Glasse and be accurst;
 But if through Blacknes thou to Whitenes march,
 Then will it be both White and soft as Starch.

This very place is cal'd by many names,
 As *Imbibition*, *Feeding*, *Sublimation*,
Clyming high Mountaines, also *Childrens Games*;

3 Lapidus annotation: *have patience*.

And rightly it is termed *Exaltation*,
 When all is nothing else but *Circulation*
 Of the foure Elements whatsoere fooles clatter,
 Which is done by heate upon Forme and Matter.

Earth is the lowest Element of All
 Which Black, is exalted into Water,
 Then no more Earth but Water wee it call;
 Although it seeme a black Earthy matter,
 And in black dust all about will scatter,
 Yet when soe high as to Water it hath clym'd,
 Then is it truly said to be *Sublym'd*.

When this black Masse againe is become White,
 Both in and out like snow and shining faire,
 Then this Child, this Wife, this Heaven so bright,
 This Water Earth sublimed into Aire,
 When there it is it further will prepare
 It selfe into the Element of Fire,
 Then give God thanks for granting thy desire.

This Black, this White, doe we call *Seperation*,
 Which is not manuell but Elementall;
 It is no crude Mercuriall Sublimation,
 But Natures true worke consubstantiall,
 The White is called *Conjunction* naturall,
 Secret and perfect Conjunction not grosse;
 Which bringeth profitt all other losse.

When thrice yee have turned this Wheele about,
 Feeding and working it as I have said,
 Then will it flow like Wax without doubt:
 Giving a Tincture that will not vade.
 Abiding all tryalls that can be made.
 If wisely Project you can and keepe free,
 Both profitt and credit to you it wil be.

Your *Medicine* fixed and perfectly flowing,
 White you must thinke will Whitenes increase;
 So Red begets Red as Seede in the sowing
 Begetteth his like or as kinde doth in Beasse,
 And fire must be the true maker of peace:
 For white or red *Ferment* your *Medicine* augmenteth,
 And perfectly tinckteth and soone it relenteth.

That is to say, your *Medicine* ended,
 If White melt downe Silver and thereon Project it,
 If Red melt downe Sol, for so it is intended;
 Like unto like in no wise reject it,
 And out of the purest looke you elect it.
Medicen one parte upon *Ferment* ten,
 That One on one Thousand of *Jupiter* then.

Your *Jupiter* standing red hot on the fyre,
 So soone as your *Medicine* upon him is cast,
 Presently standeth so hard as a Wyre,
 For then he is fixed and melteth by blast,
 And of all your working this is the last,
 Then let it by Test or strong water be tryde,
 The best Gold or Silver no better shall bide.

Mercury crude in a Crucible heated,
 Presently hardeneth lik Silver anealed;
 And in the high Throwne of Luna is seated,
 Silver or Gold as *Medicine* hath sealed:
 And thus our greate *Secret* I have reveled.
 Which divers have seene, and my selfe have wrought,
 And dearely I prize it, yet give it for nought.

FINIS.

How Sir Edward Kelly revealed it, and gives it for nought, as he says, at the last,⁴ it is up to the searcher in alchemy to discover, by work and experiment. Here in this poem, we again have a condensed account of the whole science of alchemy, in a nutshell as it were. Although in metaphor, the descriptive guidance is correct.

For the benefit of the reader who still feels that he is groping in the dark, here is further elucidation, taking verse by verse the most salient points will be explained.

Verses 1-5: These verses are really self-explanatory. Kelly says, in effect: *Listen to me; go and burn your books, and forget all you think you have learned about alchemy, and I will teach you in simple language all that is necessary. It is not always the wisest men who make the best teachers. You go the wrong way about it all: spending a great deal of money, reading many books, boasting and talking will get you nowhere, and you will achieve nothing.*

Verse 6: In verse six, Kelly commences to teach. He speaks the strict truth telling us the secrets in their proper sequence and progression, but he says little about which materials to take in hand, which is the manner in which most alchemical books are written. He does say, however, that the materials we need are not expensive to obtain, and tells us also that the amalgamated mixture of metals or chaos must be *made blind* – that is, decomposed or reduced to blackness, before it comes purified. When this dissolution takes place, “he that can Earths fastnes once unbind.” Then it may be called “sweete Magnesia, Wife to purest Gold.” This verse, number six, speaks of the first process, by aid of the *Secret Fire*, or philosophers’ mercury; the catalyst that will dissolve the metals and bring them to blackness.

Verse 7: In this dissolution, the matter becomes reduced to “what is meant by Man and Wife” ... “Even as was Eva, Adams Wife.” This happened as Adam slept which is the period of digestion, continued to the point of blackness or what is called in alchemy, putrefaction. This process as a rule will happen in 42 to 50 days.

Verses 8-10: “Then Man and Wife were joynd together trimme.” For then follows

4 Lapidus annotation: VERSE.

what is called conjunction, that is Gold and mercury. After putrefaction, Adam's wife is born anew in shining whiteness, which follows blackness. Man and wife are no other than Sulphur and mercury, or gold and mercury. Note here, that this is *mercury essential* or the metal mercury, quicksilver; "the trew Wife, / That kills her selfe to bring her Child to life." Of course she kills herself, because gold mixed with mercury metallic and the *Secret Fire* dies into blackness before being able to produce a child.

Verses 11–14: Here we have the whole story of alchemy elaborated with domestic details; the copulation, the bereavement, the bringing back to life and love for one another, and how they live happy ever after. It is feared not very helpful to the beginner, but still an interesting recital.

Verse 15: More details ending with the result of a beautiful shining whiteness like purest mercury. "Oh! he that can but light on such a treasure, / Who would not thinke his Joyes were out of measure?"

Verses 16–18: A teasing description in metaphor of *the wife*.

Verse 19: This analogy of meal and water becoming dough is very good indeed and should be easily understood. Joined together, the result is being called wife, or *Our mercury* about which we have already written much in former chapters. "And in this hidden point our seacret lyes, / It is enough, few words content the wise."

Verse 20: In some verses, Kelly has been so explicit, that the present writer finds it difficult to elaborate his meaning. The last line tells us something fresh though: just mixing is not enough, the matters must be joined and amalgamated into their smallest parts, and this can only be done by digestion. In carrying this out, Kelly advises, "make not too much hast, / For Wife she is not while she is in Paste."

Verse 21: Now Kelly proceeds to tell us a secret that most adepts have tried to hide as much as possible; some have just slurred over it, while others have completely ignored the matter. The mystery is how the child is to be born, who will grow up into the warrior, the king, or the Philosophers' Stone. "... so it is then must we have a Childe."

Verse 22: In the usual metaphor of the adepts, the mother becomes the child herself. In other words, she changes into a nobler metal, or child by metempsychosis. In the processes of alchemy, we can observe many changes that seem almost magical and incredible. For example, we may see a very fine dusty soot, dry and apparently an end product, change by natural means into a liquid, bright, and shining mercury.⁵

Verse 23: The secret mentioned in verse 21 is that “in the Aire our Child is borne” – that is, born of vapour. Paracelsus calls it a white smoke. This child, and vapour falls down into a coagulated form, and the child is born. When this stage is finished, husband, child and wife all die again and “after death reviv’d againe to lyfe.”

Verse 24: This verse makes clear that until all your elements have vapourised and become a shining whiteness, you have not yet the *Wife* or *our mercury*.

Verse 25: Here Kelly claims that he has spoken the naked truth. “And hewn you worke then finde it true you shall.”

Verse 26: This is the *mercury essential*, which contains the tincture, and which can turn all metals into gold and silver. The crude common mercury is not really useless, but as explained previously, until this mercury has been processed, it is not *mercury essential* or as expressed in other treatises, *our mercury*. This is “most truly that One thing, / Out of the which all profit must springe.” The amalgamated mass becomes one substance although arising from many.

Verse 27: “Let it suffice, this is the perfect Base.” In effect, Kelly says, I have told you all I dare, if now one cannot follow my teaching, what more can I say?

Verse 28: He further advises, do not add crude or undigested substances to those already advanced in the processes. “... let Phansey not o’resway thee, / Let Reason rule, for Phansey will betray thee.”

Verse 29: “Take thou this Stone ... / Which will be Gummous, crumbling, silken,

5 Lapidus annotation: *This takes place in the mixture of the metals.*

soft.” Here you have a fine description of what your substance should be like in appearance at a certain stage; and this is a great help to know, and rather important. This may not agree with what has been said previously, but the mercurial shining matter is changing all the time, and will arrive at this condition by continual digestion. This verse indeed hints at what is known in alchemy as IMBIBITION. It will be wise to remember this hint.

From here onwards to verse 32, you have a really useful instruction on how and when to turn the black matter to white by imbibition.

In Ripley’s ‘Twelve Gates’⁶ exaltation is mentioned. Here you may find more useful instruction in the working, and raising the matter in virtue and quantity. Here Kelly has ceased to tell us more, and is speaking of substances used in the Art.

In this treatise, fermentation, projection and transmutation are all dealt with, and to obtain a clearer grasp of these changes, one must turn to the verses in the poem and study them.

⁶ See *The Compound of Alchemy, or, The Ancient Hidden Art of Alchemie; Containing the right and perfect means to make the Philosophers Stone, Aurum Potabile, with other Excellent Experiments, Divided into Twelve Gates*, by Sir George Ripley, Canon of Bridlington.

PASS-KEY NUMBER SEVEN



IT IS WELL APPRECIATED THAT THE PRACTICE OF ALCHEMY HAS ALWAYS BEEN considered a difficult undertaking. So that, although in many treatises, it has been claimed to be *child's play*, this only becomes the truth when the methods and processes are well known as in every other science. There must be a fair knowledge of the nature and virtues of metals, and only then will it be brought home to the student that there is a possibility that alchemy is a true art, for he may then guess that metals, having a built-in nature of their own, when joined permanently together, might form a new nature and character, just as every other living creature does.

However, the student having waded through the other pass-keys will have learnt that there is a very important item of knowledge first to be mastered. Before commencing it is important to know how to prepare the *Secret Fire* or the fiery secret water without which nothing can be achieved. This water indeed is the bugbear and the greatest hidden mystery found in all the many treatises that were ever written throughout the ages, yet it is a simple matter, to be found, yet never named. The reason for this secrecy is that it is this liquid which reduces all the metals together, dissolves them, purifies them, and does all the work *without any laying on of hands*, as it has been described in books. It can melt the hardest metals with a heat no hotter than a Summer's day.

This *Secret Fire* is a liquid which has been referred to in their treatises as *Philosophers' Mercury*, or just mercury, never mentioning that there are two mercuries used in alchemy, and the other is¹ common mercury or quicksilver which they say is not used but indeed, without this², the researcher is lost. This has been the bedevilment of thousands of would-be alchemists who believed them, and finally gave up in despair. The use of the *Secret Fire* turns the mixed metals in correct proportions into a shining black mud, in about 42 days, and is the first process; the second process turns the conglomerate mixture white,

1 Lapidus annotation: *NOT*.

2 Lapidus annotation: *KNOWLEDGE*.

AND then in time a bloody red, and this is completion. You have pass-keys, study them all carefully.

In most alchemical books, one will be sure to meet the three principles frequently mentioned in the art. They are salt, sulphur and mercury. These must not be understood to be ingredients that are required to be included to produce the Philosophers' Stone, and the student must be careful how he interprets them.

First the *Salt*. This has to be extracted in the form of a beautiful, clear, shining water drawn by distillation from the metals used. This water has been referred to by many names; among them the *Secret Fire*, *Philosophers' Mercury* and a number of others. It is to be prepared before any work is commenced, for with this water from start to finish, all the processes are carried out. Neither the water, nor the salt, is the ordinary kind, and it may be repeated that this *Secret Fire*, which is not a fire, is the greatest secret in alchemy and is a paramount necessity in the working.

The *Sulphur* of the masters is not the sulphur that is known today, but it is the name given to all the metals as a generic term used in the service of alchemical operations.

Mercury is the third principle necessary to the art. And here lies a great stumbling block over which researchers have nearly always been lost; and the reason is that the fiery water is very often referred to as mercury. In the great number of treatises extant, the writings are so framed that one would never guess that, indeed, there are two mercuries to be used. One is the *Secret Fire*, a liquid; and the other is a metal, namely mercury or quicksilver.

In fact, the adepts have gone further in their efforts to mislead, for they have seriously claimed that the metallic mercury may not be used, but without this liquid metal, real mercury, the Stone could never be produced. The Philosophers' Mercury melts or reduces all metals³ and the metalline mercury⁴ builds them up. The Tyro in the art must always be on guard as to which mercury is mentioned, and in fact both must be used all the way through; the snag is that

3 Lapidus annotation: *INTO LIQUID*.

4 Lapidus annotation: *OR METAL*.

heat causes⁵ mercury to run⁶ and separate⁷ in heat, and joins with nearly all metals in blood heat.⁸

After all that has been explained in this pass-key number seven, one should read over all the keys provided, and find a straight path to success. The repetition regarding mercury yet again is explained merely to emphasise the importance of this knowledge in alchemical work.

Whole paragraph quotations are now taken from a wonderfully clear treatise by an unknown French adept, and comprise the whole processes necessary to produce the Philosophers' Stone.

The first key is that which opens the dark prisons in which the sulphur is shut up. This is which knows how to extract the seed out of the body, which forms the stone of the adepts, by the conjunction of the spirit with the body, sulphur and mercury, male and female. In the caverns of the metals, there is hidden the stone, bright in colour, and an open sea. It is this union which makes manifest that which before was hidden.

It is a truth, that in each work, the wise artist ought to dissolve the body with the spirit; he must cut off the raven's head, whiten the black, and rubify the white. This is the whole art. Yet it is in the first operation, that the head of the black dragon is cut off. It is in this first process, the purification of the stone, and at this shining water, that the first key is ended.⁹

5 Lapidus annotation: COMMON.

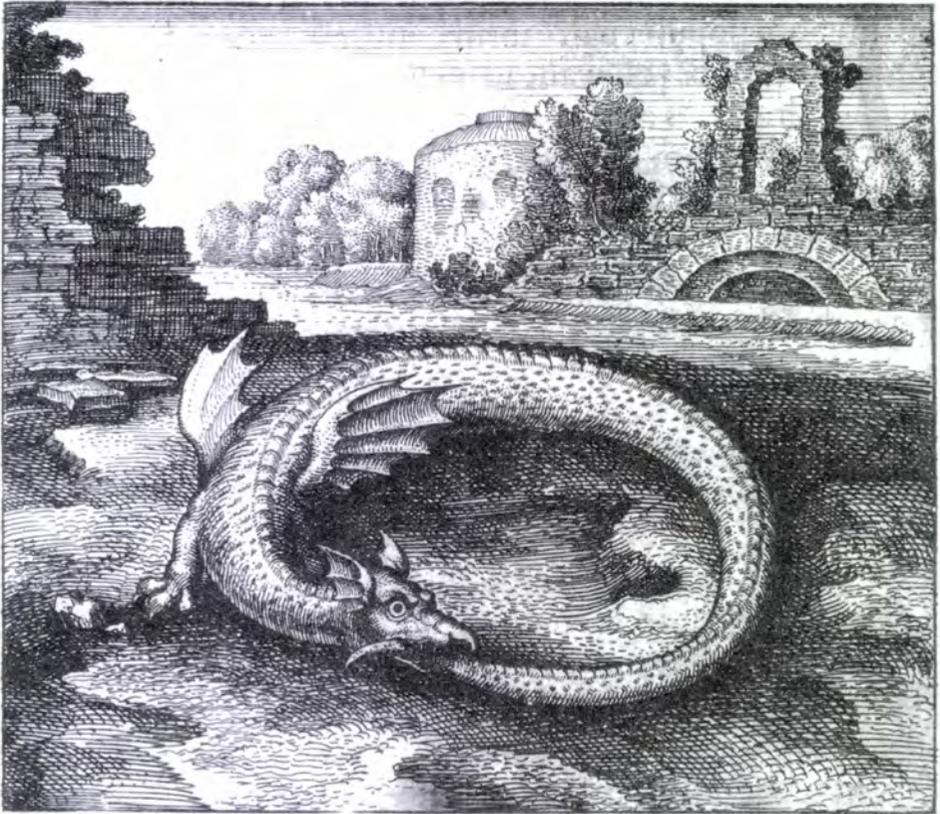
6 Lapidus annotation: VAPOURISE.

7 Lapidus annotation: FROM METALS.

8 Lapidus annotation: OR MERELY WARMTH, ordinary room heat.

9 From *A letter to the true Disciples of Hermes, containing Six Principal Keys of the Secret Philosophy, by a French Adept, whose name is concealed in the anagram, Dives sicut ardens S-* (a work more commonly referred to by the title *The Six Keys of Eudoxus, opening into the most Secret Philosophy*): "The first key is, that which opens the dark prisons, in which the sulphur is shut up; this is it which knows how to extract the seed out of the body, and which forms the stone of the philosophers, by the conjunction of the male with the female; of the spirit with the body; of sulphur with mercury. Hermes has manifestly demonstrated the operation of this first key, by these words: in the caverns of the metals there is hidden, the stone which is venerable, bright in colour, a mind sublime, and an open sea. This stone has a bright glittering, it contains a spirit of a sublime original, it is the sea of the wise, in which they fish for their mysterious fish. The same philosopher does still more particularly take notice of the nativity of this admirable stone, when he says: the king shall come out of the fire, and shall rejoice in his marriage, and the hidden things shall be laid open. It is a king crowned with glory, who has his nativity in the

fire, who is pleased with the union of the spouse, which is given to him. It is this union which makes manifest that which before was hidden. But before I go any further, I have a counsel to give you, which will be of no small advantage to you; that is, to reflect, that the operations of each of the three works, having a great deal of analogy and relation to one another; the philosophers do designedly speak in equivocal terms, to the end that those who have not lynx's eyes, may pursue wrong, and be lost in this labyrinth, from whence it is very hard to get out. In effect, when one imagines, that they speak of one work, they often treat of another; take heed, therefore, not to be deceived herein; for it is a truth, that in each work the wise artist ought to dissolve the body with the spirit; he must cut off the raven's head, whiten the black, and rubify the white; yet it is properly in the first operation, that the wise artist cuts off the head of the black dragon, and of the raven. Hermes says, that it is from thence that our art takes its beginning. What is born of the crow, is the beginning of this art. Consider, that it is by the separation of the black, foul, and stinking fume of the blackest black, that our astral, white, and resplendent stone is formed, which containeth in its veins the blood of the pelican; it is at this first purification of the stone, and at this shining whiteness, that the first key of the first work is ended."



1. The dragon is the water (Mercury); in the darkness the dragon devours his own tail.

Emblem XIV of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Here is the Dragon that devours his own tail."
Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



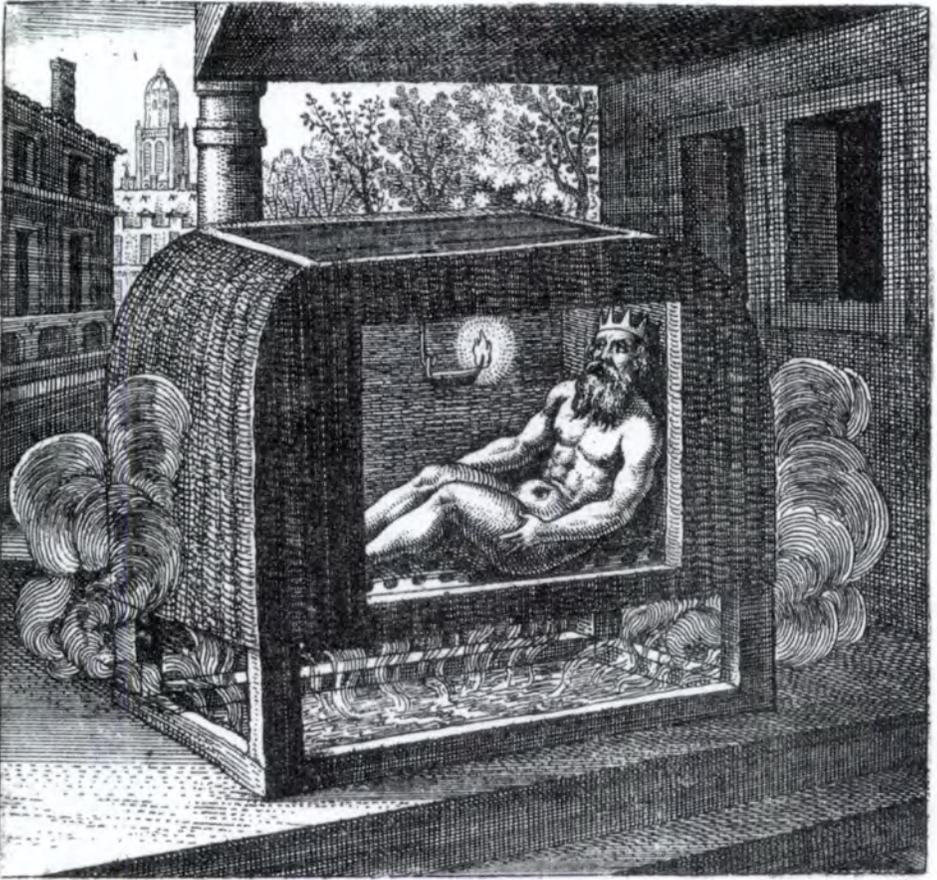
2. Amid the dark waters dwell the King (Gold) and his eagles. The eagles are the flying vapour.

Emblem XLVI of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Two Eagles, one from the east, one from the west, come together." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



3. The test: the dragon must be able to live in the fire.

Emblem XXIX of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "As the Salamander lives in the Fire so does the Stone." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



4. The King in his chamber must be able to bear the heat and the steam of the moist fire.

Emblem XXVIII of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "The King is bathed, sitting in the Laconian bath, and is freed from his black bile by Pharut." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



5. The first signs of black on the mountain (in other words, on the surface).

Emblem VII of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "There appears a fledgling flying from the nest, which falls into the nest again." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



6. The white eagle and the Black raven: the black which becomes white.

Emblem XLIII of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Hark to the speaking vulture, who in no wise deceives thee." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



7. Our contrarious principles are at war.

Emblem XLI of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Adonis is killed by a wild boar; Venus, rushing to his side, dyes the Roses with blood." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



8. Our principles are at peace and a child is born.

Emblem XXXIX of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Oedipus, having overcome the Sphinx and slain his father Laius, takes his mother to wife." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



9. Kelly: "As Adam slept until his Wife was made ..."

Emblem L of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "The dragon destroys the woman, and she him, and at once they are drenched in blood." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



10. Kelly: "Rejoyce the beauty of so faire a bride ..."

Emblem XXXVIII of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "The Rebis, like Hermaphroditus, is born from the twin mountains of Mercury and Venus." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



11. The red man and his white wife. Kelly: "For first and foremost she receives the Man ..."

Emblem V of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Place upon the woman's breasts a toad, so that she may feed it and die, and the toad grows fat with milk." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.

In the earliest extant manuscript of *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy*, this emblem is reversed, i.e. the red man is to the left of his white wife, approaching her.



12. Kelly: "As Imbibition, Feeding, Sublimation, Clyming high Mountaines ..."

Emblem XXXV of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "As Ceres made Triptolemus – and Thetis made Achilles – able to stay in the fire, so the Artist makes the Stone." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



13. The Red man and his White wife.

Emblem IV of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Unite the brother with the sister and offer them the cup of love." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



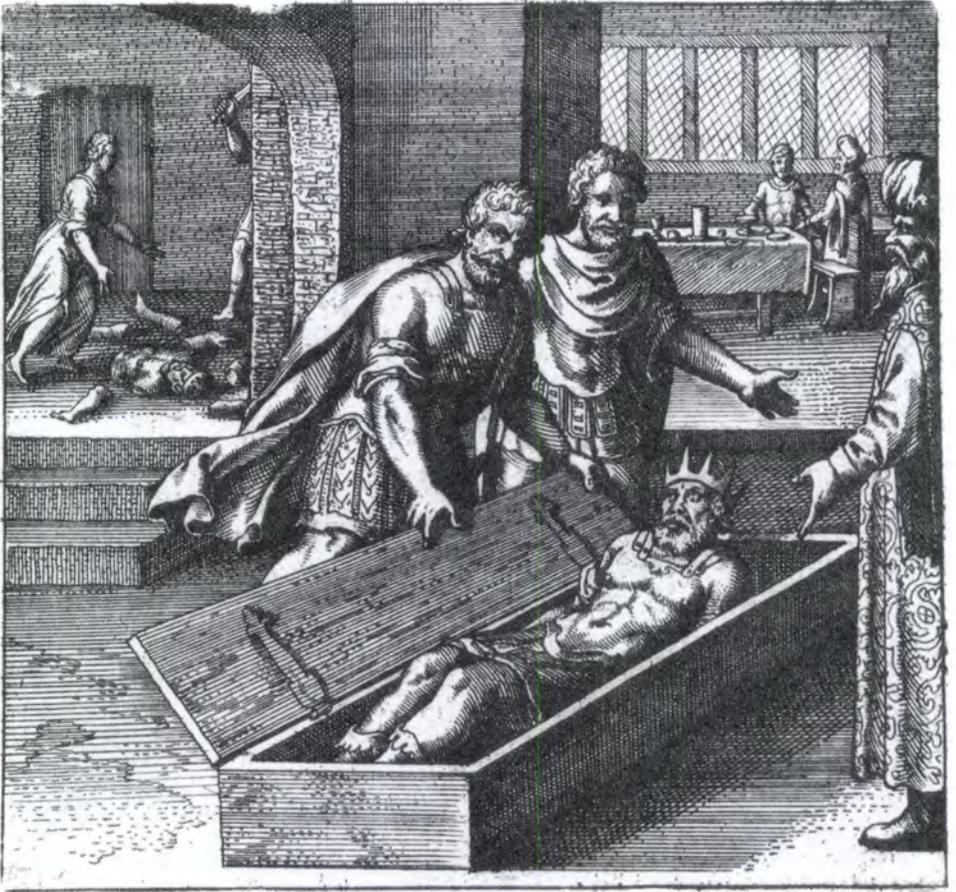
14. A synopsis of the second and third processes.

Emblem XXIII of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Gold rains down, while Pallas is born in Rhodes and Sol lies with Venus." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



15. Devoured by a wolf, the King emerges from the flames.

Emblem XXIV of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "The wolf devoured the King and, cremated, restored him to life." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.



16. Cut into pieces, the King emerges whole from death.

Emblem XLIV of Michael Maier's 1618 *Atalanta Fugiens*. "Typhon slays Osiris and scatters his limbs abroad, but majestic Isis reassembles them." Engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry.

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THE PASS-KEYS TO ALCHEMY

ALSO BY LAPIDUS

In Pursuit of Gold: Alchemy Today in Theory and Practice (Salamander and Sons, 2011)

This edition is limited to 500 copies, including 119 copies numbered by hand.

This is copy number _____

Lost for more than three decades, the companion volume to *In Pursuit of Gold* has been found.

For decades students of alchemy have believed that *In Pursuit of Gold* – hailed upon its 1976 publication as a rare work by one of the few practicing laboratory alchemists writing in English during the mid-to-late 20th century – constituted the sole alchemical text penned by the enigmatic alchemist Lapidus. The truth is that Lapidus – real name David Curwen – wrote a second text which, unknown to most, he secreted away with a trusted Brother in the Art. Throughout the intervening years this remarkable book, *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy*, has passed through just a few select and trusted hands.

Each of the chapters of *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* details one pass-key to the successful confection of the Philosophers' Stone, as identified by Lapidus. Drawing upon the writings of Eirenæus Philalethes and Ali Puli, *The Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus the Great*, Benedictus Figulus' *A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels*, Sir Edward Kelly's 'Book of St. Dunstan', and Michael Maier's *Atalanta Fugiens* among other canonical texts, this lost alchemical masterpiece includes the kind of profound insights into alchemical theory, laboratory processes and practical methods that only derive from a lifetime of quiet alchemical work.

A rare alchemical gem in print for the first time, *The Pass-Keys to Alchemy* also includes an introductory essay by Tony Matthews, grandson of Lapidus, and 16 of Theodor de Bry's masterful engraved emblems from *Atalanta Fugiens* with accompanying commentary by Lapidus.



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