

Crasselame - The Light coming out of the Darkness

This work, *La Lumière sortant par soi-même des Ténèbres*, consists of a "poem" written by Crasselame, with extensive contemporary comments (over 200 pages) by Bruno de Lansac. The translation below has been made by Peter van den Bossche.

THE LIGHT COMING OUT OF THE DARKNESS BY ITS OWN

First Song

I

The dark Chaos had come out as a confused mass from the depth of the Nothing, on the first sound of the almighty Word, and one would have said that disorder made it, and that it could not be the work of a God, formless as it was. All things in it were in a deep rest, and the elements in it were confused, because the divine Spirit did not yet distinguish them.

II

Who could now tell in which way the Heavens, the Earth and the Sea have been formed so light in themselves, and so vast, taking into account their wide spread? Who could explain how the Sun and the Moon have received the movement and the light, and how everything we see down here, has its form and its being?

Who could eventually understand how every thing has received its own denomination, has been animated by its proper spirit, and while coming out of the impure and unordered mass of the Chaos, has been regulated by a law, a quantity and a measure?

III

O you, children and imitators of the divine Hermes, to whom the science of your father showed the nature discovered, only you, only you know how this immortal hand has formed the Earth and the Heavens out of this formless mass of the Chaos; since your Great Work shows clearly that God has created all things in the same way that your Philosophical Elixir is made.

IV

But it does not belong to my weak pen to draw such a great picture; I am only a puny child of the Art, without any experience. It is not that your savant writings didn't make me perceive the real goal one should go for, nor that I don't know this Ilias, which has in it all we need, as well as this admirable composite through which you could bring the virtue of the elements from power to act.

V

It's not that I do not know your secret Mercury, which is no other than a living, universal and innate spirit, which, in the form of airy vapour, comes down ceaselessly from heaven to earth in order to fill its porous belly, which then is born in the middle of impure sulphurs, and while growing, changes nature from volatile to fixed, giving itself the form of a radical fluid.

VI

It is not that I do not know yet, that if our oval Vessel is not sealed by Winter, it will never be able to keep the precious vapour, and that our beautiful child will die at birth, if it is not promptly rescued by an industrious hand and by the eyes of a lynx, since otherwise it will not be able to feed on its first humour, to the example of man, who, after feeding on impure blood in the mother's womb, lives on milk when he comes on earth.

VII

Even if I know all these things, I do not dare yet to prove them to you, the errors of others always making me uncertain. But if you are more touched by pity than by envy, dare to remove from my mind all doubts which embarrass it, and if I can be happy enough to explain distinctly in my books all which concerns your magistracy, make, I conjure you, that I have from you as an answer: Work hard, since you know what has to be known.

Second Song

I

How much are men, who are not advanced in Hermes's School, wrong, when, with a greedy spirit, they attach to the sound of the words. It is ordinarily believing those vulgar names of Quicksilver and Gold they go to work, and it is with common gold that they imagine, through a slow fire, to eventually fix this fugitive Silver.

II

But if they could open the eyes of their mind to understand well the hidden sense of the authors, they could clearly see that the Gold and the Quicksilver of the vulgar are destitute of this universal fire, which is the real agent; this agent or spirit leaves the metals when they are in the furnace, exposed to the violence of the flames; this makes that the metal, outside of its mine and with this spirit removed, is only a dead and immobile corpse.

III

It is another Mercury and another Gold that Hermes heard about: a humid and warm Mercury, always constant in the fire. A Gold which is all fire and all life. Such a difference allows easily to distinguish them from those of the vulgar, which are dead and mindless corpses, while ours are bodily spirits, always alive.

IV

O great Mercury of the philosopher! it is in you that Gold and Silver are together, after they have been pulled from power to act. Mercury, all Sun and all Moon, triple substance in one, and one substance in three. O admirable thing! Mercury, Sulphur and Salt make me see three substances in one only substance.

V

But where is that gold-making Mercury, which, dissolved in Salt and Sulphur, becomes the humid radical of metals, and their animated seed? It is locked up in a prison so strong that even Nature itself could not remove it, if the industrious art would not ease its means.

VI

But what does the art? Ingenious minister of the diligent nature, it purifies, through a vaporous flame, the paths leading to the prison, not having a better guide nor a more sure means than a soft and continuous heat to help nature, and to allow it to cut the threads which tie our Mercury.

VII

Yes, yes, it is the only Mercury you have to seek, unsubmitive minds! because only in this Mercury you can find everything the Sages need. In it are united in forthcoming power the Moon and the Sun, who, put together, without vulgar Gold and Silver, make the real seed of the Silver and the Gold.

VIII

But every seed is useless if it remains as it is, if it does not decay and becomes black; because corruption always precedes generation. It is this way that Nature proceeds in all its operations, and when we want to imitate it, we must also blacken before whitening, without which we will only produce rejects.

Third Song

I

O you! who, to make Gold by art, are always in the middle of the flames of your glowing coals; you who freeze and solve your various mixtures in so many ways, sometimes dissolving them entirely, sometimes coagulating them only partially, how comes that, like smoky moths, you spend days and nights roving around your furnaces?

II

Stop from now on to exhaust yourself in vain, fearing that a crazy hope makes all your thoughts to go in smoke. Your works only involve useless sweat, which marks on your front the unhappy hours you spend in your dirty

retreats. What are these violent flames good for, since the sages do not use glowing coal nor burning wood to perform the hermetic Work?

III

It is with the same fire that nature uses underground, that the art should work, and that is the way that art should imitate nature. A vaporous fire, which is not light however, a fire which nourishes and does not consume, a natural fire, made by art however; dry, but which brings rain; humid, but which dries. A water which extinguishes, a water which washes the bodies but does not wet the hands.

IV

It is with such a fire that the art, which wants to imitate nature, must work, and which one has to supply when the other is lacking. Nature starts, art finishes, and only art purifies what nature could not purify. Art encompasses industry, and nature simplicity; so if the one clears the road the other stops immediately.

V

What's the use of so many different substances in retorts or pot-stills, if the matter is unique, just like the fire? Yes, matter is unique, it is everywhere, and the poor can have it as well as the rich. It is unknown to everybody, and everybody has it before the eyes; it is despised like mud by the vulgar ignorant, and is sold at a cheap price; but it is precious to the philosopher who knows its real value.

VI

It's this matter, disdained so much by the ignorants, that the savants look after with care, because in it is all they can desire. In this matter are together the Sun and the Moon, not the vulgar ones, not the dead ones. In this matter is enclosed the fire, from which these metals get life; it is this matter which gives the fiery water, which also gives the fixed earth; it is finally this matter which gives all what's necessary for an enlightened spirit.

VII

But instead of considering that one only compound is sufficient for the philosopher, you enjoy yourself, stupid chemists, to put several products together, and instead of the philosopher, who boils, with a gentle and solar heat, in a single vessel, a single vapour which thickens slowly, you put one thousand different ingredients together, and instead of God, who made all things from nothing, you debase everything to nothing.

VIII

It is not with the soft gums, nor with the hard excrements, it is not with blood or human semen, it is not with green raisins nor with herbal quintessences, strong waters, corrosive salts, nor with Roman vitriol, not with arid talcum, nor impure antimony, not with sulphur or mercury, not even with the vulgar metals themselves that an able artist will work at our great Work.

IX

What! the use of all those mixtures? Because our science encloses the whole Magistry in one root, which I made you know already, and perhaps more than I had to. This root contains two substances, which have only one essence however, and these substances, which are initially only Gold and Silver in power, become eventually Gold and Silver in act, provided we can well equalise their weights.

X

Yes, these substances make actual Gold and Silver, and through the equality of their weights, the volatile is fixed in Golden sulphur. O luminous Sulphur! o real animated Gold! I adore in you all marvels and all virtues of the Sun. Because your sulphur is a treasure, and the real foundation of the art, which ripens in elixir what nature only brings to the perfection of the Gold.