

The Natural round Physick or Philosophy of the Alchymical Cabalistical Vision

Transcribed from British Library MS. Sloane 3639, by Jon Evans

The Natural round Physick or Philosophy of the Alchymical Cabalistical Vision

The Sun and Moon with all the firmament appeared first, they stood still, a colour indeed they had, but gave no light. Beneath them also there appeared the globe of the Earth having a colour. In whose centre there was a little globe of a most white, shining colour, like snow. While I beheld all these, there was made a most horrible thunder with a great noise and fiery flash, which much affrighted me. A great cloud came also, which going away, a star was seen above the Sun, Moon, and firmament, whose shining was so bright, I could not fix my eyes upon it, with its redness it exceeded the redness of the Sun. As soon as ever this star appeared the whole firmament with the Sun and Moon began to run their race, and dance. In the meantime the said star darted fiery rays from above, through the exterior firmament. Of which sometimes more sometimes fewer, some also but by halves were carried upon the globe, but the little globe received the smallest part of these rays. Those rays whose halves only, entered the globe, moved the waters, that they might flow and fish might be seen in them. The other rays made the great globe begin to live, and bring forth all sorts of trees and fruits, on which also animals and men did walk. But the part of the rays, which entered into the small globe, so moved it, that it begun to boil like water in a pot, and disperse out of itself a white clear and pure vapour in the form of a star even unto the root of the trees, and herbs. Then out of this globe or white, shining star, there began, but yet slowly enough to grow all sorts of trees, and herbs, and tended towards the circumference of the globe, and when they almost attained to it, behold two white, stony mountains arose and were opened out of each end of the globe. In the mean time I saw the herbs and trees continually go forward in their growth, that the mountain at length bore flowers of all sorts and colours, which again were shut and changed into red, yellow, green and white knots. The knots of the mountain on the right hand were small and transparent, but those of the left greater but not transparent. In the meantime the superior and greater star sent continually more rays by the benefit of which more herbs and trees always grew. At last a voice was heard crying out thus clearly and aloud: Blessed be God who created this star; This shall be called always the Star of Wisdom and the eternal Light.

The Explication of the Vision

The great globe is the Earth, out of which grow all sorts of fruit, through which the waters pass to moisten it. In the middle is that which in respect of common water, I call corporeal, of which I not long since told you that it was the field, out of which all minerals had their rise, and take their seed from heaven or the firmament, as you see, for the heaven is extended above the Earth, which with its luminaries in their course surrounds the Earth, and affords the seasons, times of the years, and of the days. But that you think the star, we speak of to be God, therein you grievously mistake. For it is a divine creature, endowed with so great a virtue, that all which are in heaven as well as on Earth draw their original from it.

This star which you behold and by whose power Heaven and Earth are moved, is not properly a star, but by reason of the weakness of human nature, it is so delineated for you, which no corporeal creature can with corporeal eyes behold, nor comprehend: for it is nothing else but an invisible and eternal fire the next to God, and placed above all heavens. It is, I say, the force, power, form, life, virtue and preservation of all things in heaven, upon and in the Earth, a perpetual motion, not Nature, but the Lord of Nature, who commands Nature and all her powers, and in fine is all in all. But that it is called the Star of Wisdom and an eternal Light, this is the reason, because it is Light in itself, and borrows nothing from others, but rather communicates to them a virtue, and because the foundation of wisdom is hid therein, words are wanting to me to express the virtue and the power that do lie hid in it, which although I could perform, yet an impossibility hinders you from attaining it. For as it is impossible for ones mind to pierce to the bottom of the secrets of God and omnipotence, so neither is it possible for you or other men to enquire into this virtue. Yet this is not to be so understood, as if this virtue of this light were equal to God, for he rules over it, because it arises from him, and in it God has shown his omnipotence, that we might have a knowledge of his works.

Question the First!

What, therefore, is the virtue of this star: And what is the meaning that the stars are moved about by it, that it gives motion to the waters, and that by its rays the Earth produces fruits?

The Answer.

The Omnipotent God is in all his works the image or the beforehand representation of things, which must appear hereafter. Hence it is that after he had created heaven, Earth and all creatures, leaves, grass, herbs, brutes and men, he said: Increase and be multiplied. By this word the invisible fire took beginning, and received an impression (as also did the Heaven and Earth an astral property), that it compelled nature to complete the works implanted in her, and by this means gave to the Sun and by his assistance to the Moon and all the stars, not only a perpetual brightness but also a moveable virtue, and a seed, from whence terrestrial things draw their original, and are conceived by the Earth, as in a certain matrix, which like the load-stone drawing iron, has an attractive virtue. As the firmament first attracts a form to itself, that is, the eternal Light; so does the Earth, which ought to be taken notice of, attract out of the firmament a form unto itself, which form nevertheless before that time, was the matter of the star.

But if the most high God had not uttered these words, all things had perished: for the herbs had in a little while been decayed, animals had died, the heaven had turned to nothing, and so this mighty work, in which the Omnipotence and Wisdom of God does shine, in a small time had been destroyed. Though also this fire were the first effect of the first Creation, and in respect of the world eternal, vivifying and constant, yet it must have yielded obedience to its Creator, have stood still and abstained from all operation upon Nature and the other creatures. But as soon as ever these mighty words were uttered, that incombustible and enlivening fire past into the bowels of Nature, and by exerting its impression stirred up Nature. Then at length motion received power, and an attractive property was implanted in heaven or the starry firmaments. Then at length the living force of propagation in all creatures went forward with stronger steps. This is the cause why the Sun, Moon, stars and all things were shown you dead, nor undeservingly dead, because they had soon again declined into destruction; because what were in an instant created, would immediately also have descended into ruin, had not these divine words been as it were their establishment. For these being spoken by God, the sun received a seed to purge himself, and as it were grow young again, the Moon also and the stars and the Earth to amend and restore their defect every day. To the efficacy of these words it is owing, that without ceasing and always every day and every night, rays are sent from the stars into the firmament, which serve the firmament like life and soul for a preservation against corruptibility. These rays take their seed, that is their chiefest essence from the Sun, Moon and stars, by which means the living fire mixes itself with, and is transmuted into the nature of the assumed seeds, but the seed obtains a moveable or vegetable life, and the virtue of multiplying itself, that is, to bring innumerable numbers to [or of] its own kind. This mixture being made in heaven or the firmament, this seed animated with a living fire or form, separates itself from the stars, and falls into the Earth as a matrix, with so strong a force, that it does invisibly divide the Earth and so long falls from above even until it come to the centre of the Earth. But in falling much of this seed, remains upon the Earth partly, and partly descends something lower into the bosom of the Earth. For much excrement is shaken off from this seed, out of which all sorts of herbs, trees and fruits proceed, according to the nature which the spiritual, volatile and material body assumed out of its star. This is the form, of which I said before, which as soon as it lights on the Earth, seeketh itself a proper matter, and multiplying itself therein constitutes such a corporeal body, as its spirituality before was, which fell down from heaven, in which a fire, as a life, was formed by the mediation of the great Star, that all sorts of great and small fruits may be made evident. For there is nothing on the Earth, which hath not been beforehand shaped and prepared into a form by the Star.

But the reason why some fruits are found in one certain place and not also in another, is this. Heaven consists of two poles, and is as it were fixed to them, upon which it is turned so, that one cannot come at the other. The stars also depending on them are not like one another, for so many stars, so many places. Since therefore one part of heaven cannot pass into the other, the roundness of heaven and the middle point of the Earth make an impossibility for the seed of the star of one place to be able to fall to the star of another place, and betake itself thither, but must needs fall as perpendicularly downwards as it can.

Hence you may conclude that a seed in India being the offspring of its star, cannot fall in Swedeland by reason of this distance of the star. This indeed is true, that men transfer and transplant an herb or a seed from its place to another which its own star cannot reach to and which also grows, the cause of which thing is unspeakable, the hidden multiplication in the spiritual fire is succeeding good digestion of the seed. But on the contrary this is also true, that some herb will grow well in one place and by no means be produced in another, the reason of which defect is this, both because it is destitute of a convenient matter, and because it meets with either too weak or too strong a

digestion. For an herb growing in Arabia, cannot grow in Germany, because it needs a stronger digestion as is proper to its nature. And so on the other hand, an herb growing in Germany will not grow in Arabia, but will there be burnt up and reduced to nothing. So therefore it is made evident that vegetables are produced by the benefit of the stars, have their influences, and die even as men do, and are reduced to nothing, and do get their poisons. Now we will proceed further and discover how man is governed and produced according to the stars.

Of the generation of Man and Animals

As to what appertains to men, and the generation of all sorts of sensitive animals, the manner is different. For as soon as there is a mixture made of the male and female, the stars are stirred up in the animal or in man, which are so strong that they draw unto themselves the stars, and the stars the eternal light (for the matter of everything attracts its form) then, I say, there happens an injection of the star together with the injection of the seed into the matrix, whence there succeeds the motion of vegetation, that the male sperm as the agent, may be mixed with the female, may act upon it, and beget a man or an animal, according to the form, in which the star or firmament did then excel. This body being so prepared, there follows another injection, that is the astral, material, spiritual and fundamental body, together with life.

Such therefore as the disposition of the stars then was, such the man or animal in sense and thought shows itself, that he who by reason of his external form is a man, yet has the mind of a dog, a wolf, or a bear, but a brute animal, as a dog or a wolf may be more cruel than another brute of its kind, and on the contrary, a wicked father may have an honest son.

Hence their demonstration is overthrown, who pretend to judge the nature of a man by physiognomy, or the face, or the shape of his members. For it comes to pass, that those who are unlike one another by reason of the external form, may yet have the same mind and thoughts. Often also and most commonly it happens that the second injection of the stars into animals, which concerns the soul or the life, agrees not with the first injection, and has not the property thereof; for such an one shows a sad, angry and cruel countenance, who yet is in his heart civil and humble, which may also be perceived in brute animals.

Although the eye, (that subtle member of the body) and tongue do sometimes show a man's mind, yet a man cannot from hence be sufficiently known, which some are so bold as rashly to affirm. For the diversity of places and times makes a man be different in one place from what he is in another, and at some times more angry or more civil than at another, which proceeds from the diversity of the climate, of the stars and countries, which, if they agree with a man, then his mind and impression conferred from heaven is made so much the stronger; but if they are contrary, then his will is hindered and his body also sometimes feels inconveniences. So therefore it appears by what means the stars rule man, and either promote or hinder his intention. Hitherto of the animal man who does what the stars will.

But now it is the part of a true man to consider, that he is nobler than every creature, and that beside this corporeal and astral body, he has from the omnipotent God received a spirit or a certain third and most chief thing, that is a body endowed with a soul, and for that reason that there is in him an everlasting eternity, and that he is made by reason thereof a possessor also of the heaven and of the firmament, and can rule over them. By this foundation all impressions, complexions, and nativities are rejected. For here the government of man is not to be attributed to the stars, but to the body endowed with a soul, that is to the divine spirit, that the deeds may correspond with the name. That is that man ought to behave himself according to the will of God his creator, who forbids him evil, and commands him to follow good. By virtue of which command the whole heaven or the firmament falls down together, the doctrine of their influence, I suppose, for this command admits of no respect of man of what complexion so ever he be, or whithersoever man does incline; and drives away all excuses. For had it not been well known to God, that man could resist the stars, and had thought man ought to behave himself according to the inclination of the stars, he had not given the command, nor appointed man the lord of all things, heaven also and the firmament would be in more esteem than man, nor in the last day could any man be judged, but the fault would be to be thrown on fortune, the stars, and God himself; which may God forbid. Men therefore do evilly when they say they are the sons of Venus, the Sun, or Mars, for this is not a rational speech but belonging to a beast. This to make idols of the stars, that they have contributed anything to your nativity. But your discourse ought to be such: I am of the sons of the most high God, who gave his only Son for me to redeem me with his Blood, Passion, and Death out of the power of the evil Spirit. So you ought to speak and give honour to him who has well deserved of you. The heathens did put confidence in Astronomy, subjected themselves to the stars, and worship them as Gods, but you like Christians, not heathens, ought not to speak so brutishly; which may you judge as said to you and everyone unto himself; least God do punish you severely.

The second Question. Of Astronomy.

Is Astronomy therefore to be quite rejected?

Answer.

Astronomy of itself is an excellent art, and praiseworthy, if its true use be observed; but it has been much corrupted while they would make Gods by it. Besides, the true calculation has been lost, so that the astronomers of these times follow that which Ptolemy left in his writings. Which nevertheless is full of error and falsehood, for now there is another constitution of heaven, its course is become slower, and its virtues are diminished. But whoever knows the true method of Astronomy, let him use it as a Christian not like a heathen, that is to find out days, years and season, but not as some would, for the certain and infallible prediction of wars, seditions and other evils: for these depend upon the Divine Will, and what men deserve. Though a city or province have a very good ascendant, and the inhabitants should take a wandering way or contrary to the Divine command, yet the divine chastisement and revenge would not be suspended. Sodom and Gomorrah are for an example, whom neither the good nor the evil planet assisted, but their sins being punished by God, was to them instead of an evil planet, of which thing there are many examples extant in scripture; and man therefore ought to have his mind attentive to and regard his Lord God. For he who kept Daniel and Joseph, is still as powerful. But whoever relies on the Stars, and subjects himself to them, he transgresses the bounds of human nature and renders himself a brute animal, and makes unto himself strange Gods, on which occasion if he happen to meet ill fortune, he must of necessity ascribe and attribute it to himself. But this is done by the divine permission, that this man's folly and ingratitude may be known.

Others also cherish an error in respect of herbs and other things, which they think should be gathered or dug up according to the influence of the stars; for what has Astronomy or the course of the stars to do with the herb. Come then; cast the seed of some herb into a good and newly cultivated earth, and exposed to the Sun, and some of the same seed into a dry earth, ill dressed, and shadowed from the Sun and you shall see that seed which was sown in a good earth arise and sprout out, sooner than the other which was cast into a bad earth; though both places are nigh one another. Now if by the rule of Astronomy they be gathered on a certain day and time, you'll see that one of the two seeds is better grown than the other, that one has received increase the other decrease, what knowledge have you therefore of a certain time? Conclude therefore this opinion to be false and erroneous.

The ancients had indeed a true understanding of Astronomy, but in process of time it has been corrupted and falsified. And it is true that every simple ought to be dug up or gathered according to its Astronomy, which nevertheless is to be taken in a proper sense. For everything has its Astronomy or star within itself, of which you must be mindful, that is when there is a good ascendant at hand, and its chief planet (from whose seed it descended) is exalted, for then any herb (or whatever else it shall be) is most efficacious in its virtue, then it ought to be gathered and kept for use, having no consideration of heaven, summer or winter; but rather of the proper heaven of the herb, of its proper autumn and station, in which by its own body that herb is made the best, and arrived at the highest degree. Behold this is the best Astronomy. You will be able to learn the inferior from the superior; to know by the constitution of time, that which is taken in hand and when any planet is exalted. Likewise, if it shall appear to you, which planet any herb is subject to, by its signature, you may observe its exaltation.

Besides, what has been said something high and greater is drawn from Astronomy. For with the conjunction and exaltation of some planets being observed, their kinds (as are metals, minerals, herbs, gems and stones) are united with them under heaven, then the rays of the stars enter into these bodies, which so augment and exalt their virtues that by them most wonderful things, and as it were impossible to be done, may be effected: not only in curing the diseases of men spiritually, (since by the touch of seals hanging on their necks distempers are invisibly taken away) but also in natural magic.

But the reason, for which this operation ought to be done in the point of the conjunction of the planets and stars; this is worthy to be observed: Every matter desires a new form, hence it is that as soon a conjunction of the planets is made this heavenly, spiritual and material matter, desired to undergo every living form, and by reason of its attractive nature or property does in a moment draw unto it self that heavenly fire, of which our discourse is, as it were a life, and joins it to itself, so that by this means the spirit and soul are mingled together and united. The Earth which in respect of heaven the Father, is considered as the Mother, in a moment also attracts these bodies to itself, to that these two conjunctions are made in an instant of time, whence all vegetables, animals and minerals draw their original. If therefore such rays fall on a water or wood which is correspondent to their nature, then such virtues or bodies, insinuate themselves spiritually into them, and are the cause of so great magical virtues. But if by means of Astronomy, you shall be aware beforehand of this conjunction, and conveniently touch the metals and vegetables, which have the nature and complexion of those stars, which make the influx, then they will enter, not into the Earth,

but into such bodies (for like rejoices in like): by which means such strange things have been performed by this miracle of Nature. Every Philosopher and Chymist ought here to understand some other thing. Enough to the Wise.

Of the Generation of Minerals and Vegetables

Since it was also said above, that the virtue of the seed or of the rays drifted from the stars, or the firmament fell into the centre of the Earth and went to the little globe, as the heart of the Earth; it is to known, that such rays, descending so low, are more subtle and spiritual than those, which could not arrive thither. These rays by falling down through the Earth (as water through sand) are purged, the way of which purgation is this: All created things are by reason of mans transgression of the Divine Command made liable to the Curse, whence it comes to pass that the stars and, as you and all men do, abound also with their impurity, hence it comes that when the rays are sent into the Earth, the thicker spirits from this seed of the foundation remain in the superficies of the Earth, which produce all sorts of herbs, part whereof does affect animals, so that from thence several diseases break forth. But the more subtle and purged spirit, like a spirit passing through a wall, penetrates even to the middle point of the Earth, and preserves the Earth, and fortifies it with its strength; for the centre is a certain greater and better thing than the circumference, for as much as the circumference is from the centre itself, in which all the virtues of the circumference are collected, which are dispersed in the circumference. Let man be an example to you, in the middle of whom there rest the soul and spirit, the virtue and motion. So in the herb the celestial fire and the number of multiplication lies hid, the remaining path is only the house or the cover of its virtue. The same reason is also here. For the corporeal water or mineral earth, lies in the earth as the yolk in the egg, being endowed with the purest and (as I said) the highest and most subtle powers of the Earth. The Earth from this subject taketh water, but it takes nothing from the Earth, but multiplies itself in itself, and like the phoenix grows young again. The virtue of multiplication has been granted to it by the only God, as well as to fire, whence it has in itself its own firmament, and proper motion. The thing will appear from the example of wheat; take thereof one part, and two parts of earth, or as much as you please, in the way of sowing it, cast this seed into the earth, and after it has grown up, weigh it, which being done you will find that nothing went away from the earth but that it retains its former weight, whence it appears that the wheat is endowed with its own firmament, its increase by growth, and its motion, by virtue whereof it grows warm, tinges, grows young again, and acquires strength in its multiplication.

This subject also suffers no diminution of itself, for though metals grow out of it, yet nevertheless they dye again. In the same manner you see men are born and again dye and perish. As out of one sea there flow many waters, and flow back again into it; so also many minerals pass away, and others succeed into their place; of which those that perish, leave their bodies in the place whence they arose, but their soul or virtue retires, and is attracted by that from which it was produced, and rejoices in its like. There appears therefore to be no defect in this water, but as to what relates to the faeces which it leaves, they fall into the earth and are made the form of the earth, which are the cause of its long continuance. This thing neither you nor any man has ever perceived, nor could you ever penetrate into the knowledge of it, without the help and assistance of me and my companions ordained for this by God.

Question the 3rd. Of the corporeal Water.

Because you are employed in the explication of the globe, I would very willingly ask you, that you would be pleased to inform me why you have denoted the little globe by the name of corporeal water?

The Answer

The reason of this name is, that I might so much the more strongly inculcate and describe the thing in your mind by its own proper name. For you see from this figure that it is a white thing and shining like mother of pearl. For this reason it is water in respect of common earth; but it is the body of the Earth, by reason of its thickness which it has in regard of water, which names were not given it by me in vain, which you in time will better consider.

When therefore this purged seed, or mineral form falls into a small portion of earth, it is then the life of minerals, and metals, and the motion of union is at hand, which the celestial and immortal Spirit desires to procure with the earthly mortal body, and so long follows after the matter which also does by a particular desire long after which, until it obtain its like, with which it in a moment mingles itself, and unites, out of which after a sufficient digestion the little tender shrub does grow with boughs, leaves and flowers and seed, in which the virtue of this whole tree does lie. This seed is the end of the tree. Out of which it is demonstrated that there is a seed prepared to perform a multiplication which is also to be seen in herbs. For as diverse herbs grow out of diverse seeds, do produce divers seeds; for every seed or form, according to the property of its own nature attracts unto itself a body or convenient matter out the Earth (which has in itself the matter of all things): in the same manner from the conjunctions of the stars by the nature of them and the power of the enlivening fire the celestial seeds of all sorts, fall continually upon

the Earth, whence all sorts of fruits are produced; for no star is so small and weak, which affords not its animals, vegetables and minerals; whence when a star is little and of less power there is made a race of viler men, and fruits of the field, herbs and minerals, and on the contrary. For as divers herbs grow and are plucked up in one place, so also diverse minerals are found in the same place, which are distinguished by the diggers, are taken out and separated by the founders.

Furthermore, you must know, that of this spiritual, celestial body is clear, pure and transparent from the best stars, then it seeks also in the centre of the Earth a master like itself clear, pure and transparent, out of which there grows the subtle clear and transparent shrub, having subtle, tender branches, and soft as juice, the flower of which shrub at first dilated or spread wide, is afterwards contracted, and passes into its second nature, into a clear, transparent and pure seed. In this manner gems are produced, and tinged according to the conceived form, and get a property, which is painted out for you to behold in the mountain which is set at the left side.

The 4th Question of Gems

If the thing be so, it will from thence be concluded that gems ought to be found in every place, because the stars in their course surround the whole Earth, when yet experience teaches in these countries none, but in others many are found.

Answer.

These seeds fall most commonly in hotter countries. Therefore where the Sun is in the highest degree of heat, there this seed (which proceeds from the Sun, the planets and a few other powerful stars) is sown, and by the means of the strongest heat of the Sun is so purged, that it is the most pure, before it arrives at its matter in the centre of the Earth. And though the Sun send out as strong a light and a splendour in one place as in another, yet by reason of the nearness of the pole there intercedes so great a cold between the Sun and the Earth, that this seed cannot be sufficiently clarified, and though it were clarified, yet the digestion would be insufficient, because such an intense heat of the Sun is not used to nourish long in such a place. But the digestion of the seed agrees well with hot countries. That is: after the seed is sent by the Sun and stars, it is first purged in the sphere of the Air, afterwards also in the Earth, which in the place is hot and attractive, which having cast off all its impurity and having sought and found its pure matter, it diligently increases and comes forth: for the Sun by its intense and continual heat does so warm the Earth, that the precious and the best stones, which can be found in the whole world grow out of it. And though precious stones be found in Germany and other places, yet they are not like these. For toward the Eastern and Southern climates of the world, all things are nobler than towards the Northern and Western. You are not ignorant that Arabian gold exceeds the Hungarian, but the Hungarian that of the Rhine. So all Eastern fruits are better than the Western. It can likewise in no manner be brought to pass, that Hungarian Gold can be naturally made like the Arabian, by reason of the want of digestion, for its seed cannot be purged enough, nor at last can it ripen enough. I add a further demonstration to what has been said. When the Sun is his own house, and is clear in a clear season then in the point of exaltation the seed is sent from him, which this purges itself, that part of it remains in the Air, part upon and in the Earth, part falls into the centre of the Earth. This is distributed into diverse parts, for one namely the most beautiful, clearest, and most cleansed part joins itself and mingles with its matter, whence Carbuncles are made. Another part of smaller value mixes itself also with its matter, whence rubies grow; at length another viler part, having left all its transparency in the gems serves for generating the preciouslest Arabian gold. Moreover another part affords the nature of red sulphur, whence Arabian sulphur and next it Hungarian sulphur is thought the best; beside these others add and commend many more sulphurs, but as they understand a thing to they also speak of it. From those falling parts of seed; the Sun being in his exaltation, which remained upon the Earth, there are bred the best and most precious herbs, the noblest of which is that which is called Alladruca, or Allakanea, which indeed performs great effects. This herb in growing rises up high, produces red and gold-coloured flowers, and is fat like oil, is well enough known to the Armenians. But from some other parts of the aforesaid seed, which also stayed upon the Earth there are made Gamahei in stones, wood, herbs and all things which were separated before, from their Root. From the part of the Seed which remains in the Air, a matter is made resembling a certain juice, which falls upon the Earth and is called Rumani, unknown to you, as many other things not necessary to be known. Hitherto you have observed the virtue of the rays of one star. But when a certain planet makes a conjunction or a trine aspect with other planets, changes a sign and enters into another sign, then the rays fall otherwise than they did before, for hence it is that such different fruits are product. For the Sun in his exaltation having a conjunction with Mars, the carbuncles are bred with a greater but obscurer shining red, the rubies also of an impure and of a tawny redness, which reason takes place also with the other planets. In cold countries there grow stones, metals and herbs which are not found in the hot. An example for us is crystal, which needs a cold place, for it is clearer there, whose

growth is not out of snow, as some think, but from a mineral water, in which it is generated by Saturn, by means of his cold ascendant. If in a serene and clear sky in Saturn's exaltation there be made a conjunction of him with the Moon, you will have beautiful, clear, white and pure crystals but if in a cloudy sky there be a conjunction of Saturn with Mars, you'll have other crystals. The same is the reason of other colours, which depend on the conjunction of the planets, which is as it were unspeakable by me and impossible to be understood by you. We also have with us sapphires, granates, pearls, corollas and stones which they call chalcedonies, for the reasons before alleged according to a dominion and conjunction of the planets, which yet are not like the Oriental ones. And so I have hitherto spoke to you of the production of gems, to which I forbear adding any more by reason of cheats and those who traduce the Art, and leave the rest to be guessed at by him who desires to be made a perfect physician. Where it is to be observed that when the corporeal and spiritual seed is pure, its quantity is the less, which is the cause why so few gems are found, for the sky on this account is not always favourable. But I speak here of the purer seed, not of that which separated itself from the pure, as is the seed of crystal, just now spoken of. But the highest virtue is in these gems. For the celestial fire mixed with the soul of the Sun, is by a slight precedent operation found better in carbuncles and rubies, than in all the other creatures. When a seed falling from the Moon would make a sapphire, and from Venus an emerald, it seeks out for itself like matter in the Earth, which being united to itself, it shows to our sight growing as a tree, and thrusts out its branches, that is, its drifts, veins and flowers in the Earth; such as are found in vitriol, antimony, sulphur, marcasites and talc. In which the pure, tender flower dispersed like a subtle juice or a powder, is of a far more excellent substance, than the metal itself or the seed arising from that flower. For as roses, lavender and spikenard, and other odoriferous herbs have a more grateful smell while they yet flourish or are newly distilled, than if the seeds of them were offered to or smelled to, or were distilled: So is our flower much more grateful, more excellent and more powerful in its virtue, than its metal is.

Question the 5th.

Of the flower or being of metals and the first Ens. Is this flower called the first Ens of which Theophrastus wrote such strange things?

Answer

Yes; but it is not rightly called so in a true sense. For marcasites are not the first beings, nor are they that which Theophrastus teaches to extract out of them by sublimation and distillation, but may only be called the beginning of the seed, or the last spiritual Ens of metals or minerals, in which the celestial ethereal fire lies hid, being joined with its subject. Here there is need of a separation, not of that only which is made by sublimation, whereby you obtain the flowers of metals and minerals, and you break them off from their stalks, that is, from the impure mineral places: but you must first extract the first Ens from them, because it lies hid in them and can easier be obtained, than out of its metals. For that being as yet soft, tender, pure and volatile is dispersed in its subject, but in the metal straightened up, hard and fixed. As by distillation, as an easier way, you may extract as I said above, the sweet scent of lavender and roses, as you perceive by their smelling, which you can hardly draw out of the seed, because it is compact, and the last matter of roses, so the business is here also. Hence you see, that in this spiritual and last Ens of metals (which is in a readiness that seed may be made out it) there lies hid a great virtue: which Ens may easily be made like its seed or metal: but with difficulty out of a metal, and not without a diligent preparation, which is worthy to be taken notice of. After the flower has got to the end of its time, it is out of its dispersion closely contracted into the body, and is made a metal according to the nature of the seed falling down from heaven or the stars, and so Nature has done her duty, because she cannot lift up this seed to a higher degree: Behold this is the generation of minerals and metals, this is the other mountain placed on the left hand.

Question the 6th. Of the astral or celestial Seed

It is not undeservedly demanded, if this celestial seed in metals be equal; that is, whether this seed be as equal in one as in another; for this fire might as well be extracted out of the viler metals as out of the best, or, which is easier, out of their first Ens to avoid change?

Answer

You ought to have more rightly understood, what I showed you above concerning this: for I said that the heavens, or the celestial firmament of the stars, there being in them a new conjunction of the planets, as it were an attractive matter (which in respect of Earth is esteemed fire) draws unto itself from the superior stars and the living fire, a life and a stirring up of this Fire and transmutes itself into its nature and place, or, which is the same into the nature of the form attracted by the said firmaments, as was said more at large in the First Question which is thus further

declared. If the spiritual body of the conjunction of the planets be cold, then this soul, or this fire will also be of a cold nature. For this fire is subject to no certain complexion, and applies itself to any thing, also puts on its nature, hence it is, that in the rest of the conjunctions their complexions are also made. From hence therefore you understand the possibility and nature of life. Therefore by how much the nobler a certain creature is, by so much the nobler is the life and the celestial fire in it.

But if the spiritual body be thick, and sprung from a gross star, then it also associates to itself a matter like itself. From this association are made all sorts of stones, flints, sand, and marbles. But sand or gravel is nothing but broken stones. These stones are looked upon among mineral stones, as herbs which always accompany good herbs, and oft are a hindrance to their growth. This is the cause why the best mines, are found in the highest mountain, that is, the highest carnell (or cockle) grows right the best herbs. And as the beech, an oak, or an herb when it grows up high, spreads its branches in the air, and divides the air, which division nevertheless by reason of the weakness of sight and subtilty of the air, is not perceived by men's eyes; though it may well be understood in the mind: so also mineral herbs do act, for these divide the Earth, lift it up on high, extend it to the sides, and thus make hills, and valleys. For such trees are tall and strong, for whose extension and dilation it is required, that such an herb should have a very great thickness and power of extending itself, if it must ascend from the center to the superficies of the Earth. Hitherto you have also attained to the growth of the mountains and valleys.

But as to what belongs to the growth of minerals, you must know, that gems, minerals and their stars grow most slowly, so that many were of this opinion, that they grow not at all, but have their original from the running of Mercury into sulphurous veins, and in them veins that it is coagulated into a metal, which yet is false, both because it contradicts the divine word of multiplication, and because Mercury never was the matter of metals, much less sulphur. For Mercury derives its growth from the planet Mercury, and is by itself a mineral fruit, and according to the nature of the conjunction of this planet with another planet, there is produced argent vive. For Mercury is the noblest among the rest of the planets, and changes himself into the nature of what planet soever, with which he makes a conjunction, according to the house of the zodiac in which he is lord: for metals are produced according to the rule of some planet and yet nevertheless obtain some quality from the nature of that with which the conjunction was made. Hence there is argent vive of diverse colours, white, blueish, grey, blackish, one slow, another swift, yet having in itself an open metal and a body easy to be transmuted. For as the planet Mercury is easily changed into the nature of the rest of the planets, so also running argent vive may be easily changed into another metal, but chiefly into that which proceeded from the conjunction of some planet, into whose metals it ought to be converted. For example sake, Mercury makes a conjunction with the Sun, whence because he is the lord of the conjunction, there arises a Mercurial tree, whose spiritual solar seed is contained in the argent vive, whence such an argent vive may be easily transmuted into gold, which is also to be understood of all the rest.

In this variety of argent vive there is required the experience of some master, to know for what use this or that is if he would go about a right transmutation. If he takes in hand an argent vive, which has the nature of silver or some other metal, he must first strip it of the nature, which is no small labour, and afterward convert it into gold: For you must overcome the spirit, not with a body, but with a spirit which is stronger than it, which is to be overcome. Perhaps in your first trial you got a Mercury, bred out of the conjunctions of Mercury, Sol and Mars, Mercury being lord over Sol and Mars. Out of this the Mercury had grown, which you precipitated and converted into a better metal. Your labour was easy, because Mercury was superior to Sol, and Sol to Mars, whence came the easiness of your labour. Another Mercury which you would transmute was of the nature of Lune and Jupiter, which had no good success, because you ought to have first overcome it with the Spirit of Sol, whence your error and ignorance deceived you.

The sulphur also which, as I said above, ought also to contribute something to the generation of metals, is not that which is to be sold, but that which descends from heaven; by the ancients named sulphur, by reason of the astral, celestial fire, which has dominion in it, whence it deservedly is called incombustible sulphur. Out of the other sulphur no metal can (without art) be made, because by itself it is a fruit to which a metallic virtue is given, which the artist may extract. But the best sulphur is the Arabian and Hungarian, because it contains the excrements of the ruby, the carbuncle and the granate, of which I spoke before. This is red like blood, and transparent, its preparation is of no small concern, and in its substance it is rather the form than the matter of metals. The other sulphurs are bred from the stars, and are nothing else but the excrements of the stars, and of diverse kinds, as black, green, yellow, white, and tawny, according to the nature and property of the stars: hence you see the ancients mistook in the generation of metals, which none of them understood better than Hermes. Since therefore metals grow and have a beginning, it follows also, that they are also multiplied. Now follows another error of those who affirm gold to be eternal or incorruptible, which opinion is false, because since everything has in itself life and death, and gold also has received a life, it will follow that it received death also. If this were not so, gold could neither by Nature nor by Art be destroyed. Since nevertheless experience, which in this case teaches truth, witnesses the contrary. Gold

therefore does die, does see an end and perish, as do all things in the world. But because minerals grow on a long course of time therefore they also in a long time decrease. For what soon grows, soon decreases; an example whereof is given us in herbs, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Venus, which are devoured and consumed with their own rush and canker; as it were by a death implanted within them. Men by reason of the shortness of their lives, cannot observe the mortification of gold, therefore it was held to be immortal and incorruptible. Now follows the confuting of the third error of the ancients about gold, of which many write that it requires a thousand years until it be made mature, but yet it can no ways be proved. As in Spain, France and Italy fruits grow sooner than in Poland, Swedeland, Denmark and Germany, nay in Arabia and India much sooner: So minerals do grow in one place sooner than in another, yet all in one summer, that is their own proper summer. For everything has, as I said before has its own summer, and its own firmament. So also every metal is sown in its spring, grows its summer, bears fruit in its autumn, and in its winter again falls away and perishes: whence no certain term of time can be prefixed for these things, but yet on the account of gold it runs out into many ages.

Furthermore we must still refute another error, for some, who to themselves seem learned, write that one metals is in the Earth changed into another, but this is false. For as an apple tree cannot be made out of a pear (or pear tree) so in the Earth gold cannot be made out of silver. Though there be made a transplantation of some herbs, yet out of them there is made a particular sort, such as nature produces not. So when silver is transplanted, there is made the Lazuli (or azure stone, whence, ultramarine is made) which therefore is not good, or any thing else having the property of any metal: we must therefore bid farewell to such errors: for everything grows by itself, one communicates nothing to another, just in the same manner, that one herb has no communication with another, though they are sprung out of one matter, namely earth, and minerals out of a corporeal water; yet the form of them even as much as the matter is different from one another, which is to be observed.

Question the 7th, of the maturation of metals, and of volatile gold

It is notorious and manifest that by Art gold and silver are drawn out of the base minerals, which have in them often no metal, or but a small quantity of metal, whence it is concluded that such base metals are converted into gold and silver. Therefore if metals were not transmuted in the Earth into one another, it is also impossible that Art should perform this with lead, tin, and copper that gold and silver may be made out of them, because Art only imitates Nature, and neither does, nor can do any other thing, than what Nature does beforehand figure out for Art, without which Alchymy would be false and wicked.

Answer.

It is true indeed and possible, that out of some minerals which have in them neither gold nor silver, and in which trial being made, none is found, gold and silver may be drawn; yet this is not to be taken in the sense that you think. For as I said above, vile herbs grow also with the good ones, the herbs bearing gold and silver, and mix themselves with them, as are copper, iron, tin, lead, vitriol and antimony. Those herbs come sooner to maturity, than the herbs called gold and silver, whence they can also be sooner destroyed. But when Venus and Mars, and the minerals also of Saturn and Jupiter are gathered, then not only the flowers of Sol and Lune, but the seeds are also comprehended. These when they are subjected to a trial in the ordinary way often afford gold presently, because the seed is in them: but if only the flower be there, they yield not gold: for the flower is quite destitute of the virtue, which should resist the violence of the fire, as the seed does.

But when these minerals are digested and matured with hot corporeal and fixed species bred from the conjunction of the Sun, as antimony, vitriol and Sol, there is no little profit arises thence. For these species not only ripen immature gold, but also transmute unripe metals, as lead, tin, copper and iron, and because they as yet remain in the flower do convert them into gold and silver; and then they enter into their true furnace, in here, the flower is in a short time ripened and reduced to a firmness, without which medium Nature would have been employed a long time in performing this effect, by reason of her infirm and weak digestion. Thus these minerals give their spiritual and immature gold fixed and sometimes in a greater quantity than Nature would have brought to perfection in them, and here therefore there is need of great diligence, that good species be made use of for maturation, and such indeed as by reason of their generation have a kindred with Sol and Lune, or, which is better, are endued with sulphur, that is, with the flower of Sol, for in such sulphurous species those minerals are highly tinged.

But in this operation you must take care of a right digestion and a temperate heat, which ought to be natural and perfecting. For when we desire to perfect a great many minerals together and at once there needs a particular diligence and understanding. For many have in samples of a small quantity found great profit, but in the working a greater quantity, just none at all. The cause of this thing was, that they not only made the lair wrong, and too close and thick, by too much breaking and dispersing the minerals, they laid open the flower, but also they thought, that by

reason of the quantity of matter there ought also to be so much greater digestion, whence they made so much the stronger a fire; hence it came, that the minerals (or ores) were burnt in one place, and in another felt even no fire. Hence that matter remained common ore and sometimes brought more loss than profit; you must therefore proceed prudently. But that many are persuaded that they can draw more out of a volatile than out of a fixed mineral, it is rightly said indeed, but not rightly understood. For how volatile so ever any mineral be which wants the flower of Sol or Lune, or does not get it by an addition, in it nevertheless you will find neither Sol nor Lune, but only the metal joined to the mineral whose flower it has in it, though you torment it with a great deal of digestion, or burning and roasting. So I have made the maturation of metals more easy to be understood by you, and that Art does, as also Nature ripen minerals; also I have demonstrated that man may by his knowledge and reason transmute minerals above and contrary to Nature. For this Nature cannot do, because she has not hands, nor feet, and cannot, as man may, unite distant things.

I now go on to the other part of the Seventh Question; which was this: that the transmutation of metals was impossible to the art, because no metals were in the womb of the Earth changed into one another. But that you are widely mistaken will be made out to you by what follows. A metal as yet lying hid in the Earth, rests upon its root and stalk, and is sustained by its own root and nourishment, and therefore while it cleaves to its root, can take nothing from another metal, or attract its nature unto itself, but when it is lopped off, then at length it expects a nourishment, which, if it can be made partaken of it, it greedily draws from the flower of Sol or Lune, or other metals. Then this seed as the spirit of that body undergoes the nature of the metal which was lopped off, and brings it, as was said above, sometimes into a perfecter condition, and sometimes also to a worse.

Observe this exactly; as soon as a certain mineral is plucked away from its root, then it is withdrawn from Nature, it can no more grow, nor, without man's help arrive at ripeness. Then all metals enjoy one and the same original, and have one and the same mother, who nevertheless, as to her purity is different in the metals. For by how much the form is nobler, by so much also the matter is more noble, and since there are diverse forms, there must also of necessity be diverse matters. As a form that is pure removes the excrement from an impure matter, and purges it, before it mix itself with it, that so the fruit may be like the form: so also Art behaves itself; for it you prepare a pure form, and there with make a projection upon impure metals, then the pure form separates the impurity of the matter, or of the impure metal and so there is made a true conjunction and a pure metal. But if the form have attained such a degree of preparation, as I taught you, and has been multiplied by itself and in itself, then it will be so powerful and strong, that it divests neither the form nor the matter of its mineral excrements, but renews the whole substance together, and transmutes it into the best mettle. On the other hand, if out of the basest metal namely Jupiter or Saturn, you made such a form multiplied into itself, then its imperfection and feculence will be so much multiplied, and be of so great a power that this form, if it be projected upon a body, or an imperfect metal, it so abundantly communicates its impurity to it, that, it also conquers the perfect bodies themselves, namely gold and silver, and converts them into lead or tin, from whence you may have an evident testimony of regeneration.

Furthermore because the origin of gems, metals and minerals is one and the same, as to the mother, you will be able out of metals well and rightly prepared, clarified, and purified to make all sorts of gems, every way like the natural, nay more excellent in virtue if your preparation be subtle. In like manner, if you add to them again what Nature has taken from them, they may from thence be made permanent metals. You may also out of any vitriol, antimony, sulphur, salt, according to the quality of its nature make metals, and furthermore gems afterwards, and prepare a metal out of vitriol, antimony, sulphur and salt, which nevertheless differ much from one another; for as much as they are the vitriol of Venus, of Sol, of Mars, and of Saturn. Also the antimony of Venus, the antimony of Sol: the same is true of sulphur and the salt. In fine there are, as I said above as many sorts of mineral, as there are of argent vive.

Moreover you must know that it is possible to prepare a salt out of every gem, metal and mineral, and out of the salt an herb, or a tree according to its nature, and, which is more, out of this herb or tree, an animal. On the other hand out of any animal you shall make a vegetable, and out of this vegetable, salt, sulphur, vitriol, etc., a metal and at length all sorts of precious stones. Is not this a certain great and admirable thing, which nevertheless few men have as yet taken notice of.

One example of these things you saw, that out of wine, which is of the number of vegetables, a salt was made, which is placed among the minerals, and by Saturn out of this salt. If you had thoroughly looked into and continued this affair, you might have gone further and out of this Saturn have made Sol, Lune, Mars, Jupiter, Mercury, Venus, Saturn, and at length precious stones. If you would you might have also produced Tartar, and out the salt wine, out of the wine a grape, and out of the grape a vine, and so proceed unto the end of its principle. If you would, I say, out of Saturn in his passage, you might have made another herb of what sort soever, or any sort whatever of animal, namely Homunculus, but yet destitute of an eternal soul. So you in your mind perceive what Art can do. Whence I proceed further, that I may lay the power of Art more open to you. For you may, as you please in a short time out of

the vitriol of Venus or Mars make the vitriol of Sol or Lune: and out of the Antimony of Saturn, the Antimony of Sol, and change the one into the other. All things are possible to Art, with which man is endowed by God, for he far surpasses Nature. Art does not follow Nature as a servant, but rules over Nature, and performs things impossible to be done by Nature. Take an example from man: In himself he contains the whole world, India, Spain, and Italy. He has also the whole heaven in himself, and can therefore do in the Northern places, what Nature does in the Southern: Again what Nature does in the East, that man does in the West, and on the contrary: so that man can prepare and produce in Norway an herb which grows in India; which by reason of the firmament is impossible to Nature, but man can imitate the heaven or the firmament. As to the matter out of which a man, as out of wood or stone prepares a most excellent thing, Art so surpasses Nature, that by reason of the virtue, form and excellence of the thing Nature with her things dare not show herself to Art.

Hence it is that man in German, Swedeland, Poland can make Arabian, and on the contrary, in Arabia gold of the Rhine, which to Nature is impossible. The cause of this consists in two things, the first whereof is, that God created all things out of one, and out of it made a partition, from hence is their communion, and it is possible for man to reduce these into one again, and out of them to make another creature, as the potter from the same clay makes according to his will, what he pleases. (The other is that God appointed Man Lord over all.) Hence there was knowledge given to him, that he might know the virtues of all things, which appeareth in the first Man, who gave names to all things according to the virtues of them. Spirits also were ordained by God, to the end they should from him receive this wisdom, that they might reveal it to the most fitting and those elected for it. Of which number the chief is King Salomon, who was endowed with divine wisdom, which by the Spirit, as by a medium was communicated to him, which nevertheless, he at length used evilly. My friend Adolphus the great succeeded Salomon, who is known and unknown. Hermes and many others followed him, who nevertheless has only an apprenticeship.

Question the 8th. Who was Adolphus the Great? follows in my other sheets.