



Lecture 01 - What is required to get started

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Delivered to learn\_alchemy yahoo group 2004-05  
Unedited version 1.0-200805  
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This third recipe is from A.E.Waite's "Hermetic and Alchemical Writings of Paracelsus the Great" (Holmes publishing). A book well worth owning if you intend to take alchemy seriously.

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The First Entity of Herbs

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Take celandine or balm; beat them into a pulse, shut them up in a glass vessel hermetically sealed, and place in horse dung to be digested a month. Afterwards separate the pure from the impure, pour the pure into a glass vessel with dissolved salt, and let this, when closed, be exposed to the sun for a month. When this period is elapsed, you will find at the bottom a thick liquid and the salt floating on the surface. When this is separated you will have the virtues of the balm or the celandine, as they are in their first entity; and these are called, and really are, the first entities of the balm or of the celandine.

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The recipe is a good example of how the old adepts concealed the keys to their knowledge by being vague about fundamental concepts, which they knew the initiated would recognise. The 'dissolved salt' in Paracelsus' recipe is not (as we know from experience) sodium chloride (table salt) but has to be potassium carbonate, otherwise the process will not work.

~rubaphilos