

PREFACE to "Artephius His Secret Book"

The Preface to the reader in the French
and Latin copies.

Amongst all the other Philosophers (loving reader) only our Artephius is not envious as he affirms of himself in many places and therefore he lays down the whole Art in most open words in this Treatise. Interpretating as far as he may the doubtful speeches and sophisms of others. Nevertheless, lest he should give unto the wicked ignorant and evil men occasion and means to do hurt he has little veiled the truth in the Principles of the Science, under an artificial method, sometimes affirming, sometimes denying, and making as though he often repeated one and the same thing, whereas in those Repetitions he always changes some words, seeming often to say the contrary of what he had said before, willing to leave unto the judgement of the reader the way of truth, virtue, and true working; which if any man find let him give immortal thanks to God alone, but if he see that he works not in the right way, let him read over this author again and again, until he understand his meaning.

So did the learned John Pontanus which says in his Epistle, printed in Theatrum Chemicum. They err (says he speaking of them that labour in this Art) they have erred and will always err because the Philosophers in their books have never set down the proper agent except only one, which is called Artephius, but he speaks for himself and if I had not read Artephius, and understood whereof he spake, I had never come to the compliment of the work.

Therefore read this book and read it again, until you understand his speech and so obtain your desired end. It shall be needless to speak anymore concerning our Author. It suffices that by the grace of God and the use of the wonderful Quintessence he lived a 1000 years, as witnesses Roger Bacon, in his book of the wonderful works of Nature and also the most learned Theophrastus Paracelsus, in his book of Long Life; which term of 1000 years which

none of the other Philosophers, no not the Father of them, Hermes himself was able to attain unto. Look therefore whether peradventure, this man have not understood the virtue of our Stone and the manner how to use it, better than the rest.

However it be, use thou it and our Labours to the glory of God and the profit of this Kingdom. Farewell.

M. B. I wrote this preface.

ARTEPHIUS HIS SECRET BOOK

Antimony is of the parts of Saturn and has in every respect the nature thereof, so this Saturnian Antimony agrees with the Sun, having in itself Argent-vive, wherein no metal is drowned but Gold, that is to say, Gold only is drowned in Antimonial Saturnino Argent-vive and without that Argent-vive, no metal can be whitened, it whitens therefore Laton, that is Gold; and reduces a perfect body into its First Matter; that is into Sulphur and Argent-vive, of a white colour, and shining more than glass. It dissolves, I say, the perfect body which is of his nature, for this water is friendly and pleasant to the metals, whitening the Sun because it contains a white Argent-vive, and from hence thou may draw a great secret. To wit that the water of Saturnino Antimony ought to be Mercurial and white to the end that it may whiten the Gold, not burning it, but dissolving; and afterwards congealing it to the form of white Cream, therefore says the Philosopher that this water makes the body to be volatile, because after it has been dissolved in this water and cooled again, it mounts aloft upon the surface of the water; take (says he) Gold crude foliated, laminated or calcined with Mercury and put it into our Vinegar, Antimonial Saturnino Mercurial and drawn from Sal ammoniac (as it is said) in a broad vessel of glass, four fingers high or more, and leave it there; in a temperate heat, and in a short time, you will see lifted up, as it were a liquor of Oil, swimming aloft in a manner of a thin skin, that gather with a spoon or with a feather dipping it in and so doing many times in a day, until there do nothing more arise, afterwards make the water vapour away, by the fire: that is to say, the superfluous humour of the Vinegar, and there will remain unto you a Fifth Essence of Gold, in form of a white Oil incombustible, wherein the Philosophers have placed their greatest secrets, and

this Oil is exceeding sweet and is of great power to mitigate the pain and grief of wounds.

All the secret then of this secret Antimonials, is that by virtue thereof we know how to extract and draw out of the body of the Magnessio. Argent-vive not burning (and this Antimony and Mercurial Sublimate) that is we must draw a water living incombustible, and then congeal it to the or with the perfect body of the Sun, which is dissolved therein into a nature and substance white, congealed, as if it were Cream, which makes it all to become white.

Nevertheless, first of all this Sun in his putrifaction and resolution in this water, in the beginning will loose his light, be darkened, and become black and afterward will lift himself upon the water and there will swim upon it: By little and little a white colour in a white substance and this is called to whiten the Red Laton.

To sublime it Philosophically and to reduce it into his First Matter, that is to say, into white Sulphur incombustible and into Argent-vive fixed and the Seminal moisture, that is to say, Gold, our body by the reiteration of liquifaction in this our dissolving water, is turned and reduced into Sulphur and Argent-vive fixed, and so the perfect body of the Sun takes life in this water, is revived, inspired, increased and multiplied in his kind, as all other things are; for in this water it comes to pass that the body compounded of two bodies, of the Sun and of the Moon, puffs up swollen, putrifies as a grain of seed corn; becomes great with young, is lifted up and increases taking the substance and nature living and vegetable.

Also our water, or our foresaid Vinegar is the Vinegar of Mountain, that is to say, of the Sun and of the Moon and therefore it is mixed with the Sun and Moon and cleans them perpetually, to wit the body takes from this water the tincture of whiteness and with it (the water) shines with inestimable brightness: He

therefore that knows how to turn the body into white Silver Mercurial, he may afterward by this white Gold, easily turn all imperfect metals into very good and fine Silver; and this white Gold is by the Philosophers called their white Moon. The white Argent-vive fixed, the Gold of Alchemy and the white smoke, therefore without that, our Antimonial Vinegar, the white Gold of Alchemy cannot be made, and because in our Vinegar there is a double substance of Argent-vive, one of Antimony and another of Mercury sublimed. It does therefore give a double weight and substance of Argent-vive fixed, and also augment therein (in the Gold) the natural colour, weight, substance and tincture thereof.

Therefore our dissolving water causes a great tincture and a great fusion because that when it feels the common fire, if there be in it the perfect body of the Sun or of the Moon, it suddenly makes it to be melted and to be turned into his substance, white as it is and add colour, weight and tincture to the body, it has power also to dissolve all things that may be melted and it is a ponderous body viscous, precious and honorable, resolving all crude bodies into their perfect matter, that is, into earth and a viscous powder, that is to say, into Sulphur and Argent-vive.

If therefore you put into this water any metal filed or attenuated and leaving it for a time in a gentle heat, it will all be dissolved and change into a viscous water or a white Oil, as is said, and so it mollifies the body and prepares it for fusion and liquifaction, nay it makes all things fusible, that is stones and metals and afterwards gives them life and Spirit, therefore it dissolves all things with a wonderful solution, turning the perfect bodies into a fusible medicine. Melting, penetrating and more fixed, increasing the weight and colour. Work therefore with it and you will obtain from it that which you desire, for it the Spirit and Soul of the Sun and the Moon it is the Oil.

Dissolving Water, The Fountain, The Balneum Mariae, The fire against Nature, the moist

Fire, The Secret Hidden and Invisible Fire and the most Sharp Vinegar, of which a certain Ancient Philosopher said; I besought the Lord and he showed me a certain clean water, which I know to be the pure Vinegar, altering and piercing and digesting; the Vinegar, I say, grenefiatiue and the instrument moving the Gold or the Silver to putrifie, resolve, and to be reduced into his First Matter; and it is the only agent in the whole world for this Art that can resolve and reincrudate or make raw again the metallick bodies with the conservation of their Species, it is therefore the only fit and natural mean by which we ought to resolve the perfect-bodies of the Sun and Moon, by an admirable and solemn dissolution under the conservation of their Species and without destruction unless it be to a new, more noble and better form or generation, that is to say, into the Perfect Stone of the Philosophers, which is their wonderful and hidden secret.

Now this water is a certain middle substance, clear as pure Silver, which ought to receive the Tinctures of the Sun and Moon, to the end that it may be congealed and converted into white and living earth, for this water has need of the perfect bodies, that with them after dissolution it may be congealed, fixed and coagulated into white earth; and their solution is their congealation, for they have one and the same operation, for the one is not dissolved but that the other is congealed, neither is there any other water which can dissolve the bodies but that which abides with them in matter and form, nay, it cannot be permanent except it be of the nature of the other body, that they may be made one together, therefore when you see the water coagulate itself with the bodies that be dissolved therein, rest assured that your Science, method and operations are true and Philosophical, and you proceed aright in the Art: Nature is amended in its like nature, that is Gold and Silver is amended in its like nature, that is Gold and Silver are amended in our water, also with the bodies, which water

is called the mean of the Soul, without the which we can do nothing in this Art and it is the Vegetable, Animal and Mineral Fire preserving the Fixed Spirit, of the Sun and Moon, the destroyer and conqueror of bodies because it destroys, dissolves and changes bodies and metallick forms and makes them to be no bodies, but a Fixed Spirit and turns them into a moist, soft and fluid substance which has ingression and power to enter into other imperfect bodies and so mixes with them by the smallest parts and so colours them and makes them perfect, which they could not do when they were metallick bodies, dry and hard, which have no entrance nor power to colour and make perfect, imperfect bodies and therefore to good purpose do we turn the bodies into a fluid substance, because every tincture will colour a thousand times more when it is in a soft and liquid substance, then when it is in a dry one, as appears by Saffron and consequently the transmutation of imperfect bodies is impossible to be done by perfect bodies while they are dry, except they be first brought back into their First Matter, soft and fluid: From hence we conclude that we must make the moisture return and so reveal that which is hidden, which is called the reincrudation or the making raw again of the bodies, that is, the boiling and the softening them until they be deprived of their hard and dry corporality or bodiliness, because that which is dry does not enter nor colour any more then itself; therefore the dry earthy body does not join except it be joined, because as I above said, that which is thick and earthy enters not nor colours, and because it enters not therefore it alters not, wherefore Gold colours not until the hidden Spirit be drawn from the belly.

Therefore our white water and that it be made altogether a Spiritual and white fume, the white Spirit and the wonderful Soul wherefore we ought by our water to attenuate, alter and soften the perfect bodies that they may afterwards be mixed with the other

imperfect bodies and therefore if we had no other profit by that Antimonial water then this that it makes the body subtil, soft and fluid according to his own nature, yet it were sufficient for us, for it brings back the bodies to their First Original of Sulphur and Mercury, that of these we may afterwards in a short time, in less than one hour of the day do that above ground which Nature wrought underground in the mines of the earth in a thousand years, which is as it were miraculous and therefore our final secret is by our water to make the body volatile, spiritual and a joining water which has ingression or entrance into the other bodies, for it makes the bodys to be a very Spirit because it does increase (that is bring to the temper and consistence of wax) the hard and dry bodies and prepare them to fusion, that it turn them into a permanent or a biding water, it makes then of the bodies a most blessed Oil, which is the true tincture and the white permanent water of Nature, hot and moist, temperate, subtil and fusible as wax, which pierces, reaching to the bottom, colouring and makes perfect; therefore our water does incontinently dissolve Gold and Silver and makes them an incombustible Oil which may then be mixed with other imperfect bodies, for our water turns the bodies into the nature of fusible Salt, which is by the Philosophers called Sal abroc, which is the best, noblest of all Salts being in the regiment thereof fixed and not flying the fire and it is indeed an Oil of a nature hot, subtil, penetrating, reaching to the depth and entering, called the compleat Elixir and it is the hidden secret of the wise Alchemist; he therefore that knows this Salt of the Sun and Moon and the generation or preparation, thereof and afterwards how to mix it and make it friendly to the other imperfect bodies, he in truth knows one of the greatest secrets of Nature and one way of perfection. These bodies thus dissolved by our water are called Argent-vive which not without Sulphur, nor Sulphur without the nature of the Luminaries (or lights) because

the lights (the Sun and Moon) are the means or middle things by which Nature passes in the perfecting and accomplishing the generating thereof and this quicksilver is called the Salt honoured and animated and pregnant (or great with child) and fire seeing that it is nothing but fire, nor fire but Sulphur, nor Sulphur but quicksilver drawn from the Sun and Moon by our water and reduced to a Stone of great price, that is to say, it is maker of the lights altered from baseness unto nobleness.

Note, that this white Sulphur is the Father of Metals and their Mother, together it is our MERCURY and the minera of Gold and the solve and ferment and mineral virtue and the living body and the perfect Medicine. Our Sulphur and our Quicksilver, that is, Sulphur of Sulphur and Quicksilver of Quicksilver and MERCURY of MERCURY the property therefore of our water is that melts Gold and Silver and augments in them their native colours, for it turns the bodies from corporality to spirituality and this water it is, which sends into the body a white fume which is the white Soul, subtil, hot and of much fierceness, this water is also called the bloody Stone and it is the virtue of the Spiritual Blood without which nothing is done and the subject of all liquable things and of liquafaction agrees very well and cleaves to the Sun and the Moon, neither is it ever separated from them, for it is kin to the Sun and the Moon, but more to the Sun than to the Moon.

Note this well, it is also the mean of conjoining the Tinctures of the Sun and Moon with imperfect metals, for it turns the bodies into a true tincture to join the other imperfect metals and it is the water which whitens, as it is white which quickens as it is a Soul and therefore (as the Philosophers say) soon enters into the body, for it is a living water which comes to moisten its earth, that it may bud and bring forth fruit in his kind and time, as all things springing from the earth are engendered by the dew or moisture; the earth therefore buds not without

watering and moisture; it is the water of May dew that pierces them like rain water whitens them and makes one new body of two bodies.

This water of Life being rightly ordered with his body, whitens it and turns it into his white colours for the water is a white fume and therefore the body is whitened by it, whiten the body then and burn your books and between these two, that is, between the body and the water, there is friendship, desire and lust, as between the male and female, because of the nearness of their like natures, for our second Living Water is called Azote washing the Laton, that is, the body compounded of the Sun and Moon, by our First Water; the Second Water is called the Soul of our dissolved bodies, of which bodys we have already tied the souls together to the one, that they may serve the wise Philosophers.

O how perfect and magnificent is this water, for without it the work could never be brought to pass, it is also called, The Vessel of Nature, The Belly, The Womb, The Receptacle of the Tincture, The Earth, and this is the Fountain in which the King and Queen wash themselves and the Mother which must be put and sealed in the Belly of her Infant, that is, the Son which preceeded from her and which she brought forth, and therefore they love one another as a mother and son, and are easily joined together because they come from one and the same Root, and are of the same substance and nature and because this, the water of the vegetable life, and therefore it gives life and makes the dead body to vegetate, encrease and spring forth and rise from death to life by solution and sublimation, in so doing the body is turned into a Spirit and the Spirit into a body and then is made amity, peace, concord and union between the contraries, that is, between the body and the spirit, which reciprocally change their natures which they receive and communicate to one another by the least parts, so that the hot is mixed with the cold, the dry with the moist and the hard with the soft and thus is there a

mixture made of contrary natures, that is, of cold with hot and of moist with dry and admirable connection and conjunction of enemies. Then our dissolution of bodies which is made in this First Water, which is no other thing than killing the moist with the dry, because the moist is coagulated with the dry, for the moisture is contained, terminated and coagulated into a body or earth only by dryness.

Let therefore the hard and dry bodies be put in our First Water, in a vessel well shut, where they may abide till they are dissolved and ascend on high, and then they may be called a new body, The White Gold of Alchemy, The White Stone, The White Sulphur, not burning and the Stone of Paradise, that is, the Stone converts imperfect metals into fine white Silver, having this, we have also the Body, Soul and Spirit all together, of the which Spirit and Soul it is said that they cannot be drawn from the perfect bodies but by conjunction of our dissolving water, because it is certain that the thing fixed cannot be lifted up but by the conjunction of the thing volatile, the Spirit by the mediation of water and the Soul is drawn from the bodies and the body is made no body because at the same instant the Spirit with the Soul of the body mounts on high into the upper part which is the perfection of the Stone and is called sublimation. This sublimation (says Florentinus Catalanus) is done by things sharp, volatile and spiritual, which are of a Sulphurous and Viscious nature, which dissolve the bodies and make them to be lifted up into the air in Spirit and in this sublimation a certain part and portion of our said First Water ascends with the body joining itself with them, ascending and subliming into a middle substance, which holds of the nature of the two, that is, of the bodies and of the water and therefore it is called the corporeal and spiritual compound. Corfusto Cambar Ethelia Zandariach, the good Duenech, but properly it is called the Water Permanent because it flys not into (away?) the fire

always adhering to commixed bodies that is, to the Sun and Moon and communicating into them a living Tincture incombustible and most firm, more noble and precious than the former which these bodies had because from hence forward, this Tincture can run as Oil upon the bodies, perforating and piercing with a wonderful fixation because this Tincture is the Spirit and the Spirit is the Soul and the Soul is the body because in this operation the body is made a Spirit of a most subtil nature and likewise the Spirit is incorporated and is made of the nature of the body with bodies and so our Stone contains a body, a soul, and a spirit, which you could not do it if the Spirit was not incorporated with the bodies and the bodies with Spirits and made volatile or flying and afterwards permanant or abiding, therefore they have passed into one another and are turned the one into the other by wisdom. O Wisdom! How you make Gold to be volatile and fugitive, although by nature it be most fixed, it behoves then for to dissolve and melt those bodies by our water and to make them a permanant water, a Gold water sublimed, leaving in the bottom the gross earthy superfluous dry, and in this sublimation the fire ought to be soft and gentle, for in this sublimation the bodies be not purified in a lent or slow fire and the gross or earthly parts (note well) separated from the uncleanness of the dead, you shall be hindered from ever making your work perfect, for you need only this subtil and light nature of the dissolved bodies which our water will easily give you if you proceed with a slow fire, for it will separate the hetrogeneaus all (or that which is another kind) from the homogeneal (or that which is all one kind).

Our compound therefore receives mundification or cleansing by our moist fire, that is to say, dissolving and subliming that which is pure and white and casting aside the foeces like a voluntary vomit (says Asinaben) for such a disposition and natural sublimation, there is made a loosening or an untying of the Elements,

a cleansing and separation of the pure from the impure, so that the pure white ascends upwards and the impure and earthly fixed remains in the bottom of the water or the vessel, which must be taken away and removed, because it is of no value, taking only the middle white substance, flowing and melting and leaving the feculent earth which remained below in the bottom, which came principally from the water and is the dross of the damned earth, which is nothing worth nor can ever do any good, as does the pure clear white and clean and after which we ought only to take, and against this Coepharean Rock the ship and knowledge of the Scholars and Students in Philosophy (as it happened also to me sometimes) most improvidently dashed and broken because the Philosophers do very often affirm the contrary, namely, that nothing must be removed or taken away, but the moisture, that is, the blackness which notwithstanding, they say and write only to deceive the unwise, gross and ignorant, which of themselves without a Master, unwearied reading or prayer unto God almighty, would like conquerors carry away the Golden Fleece. Note therefore that this separation, division and sublimation is without doubt the Key of the whole work, after the putrifaction then dissolution of these bodies. Our bodies do lift themselves up to the surface of the dissolving water in the colour of whiteness, the Antimonial and Mercurial Soul is by the appointment of Nature infused with the Spirits of the Sun and Moon, which separates the subtil from the thick and the pure from the impure, lifting up little and little: The subtil part of the body from the dregs, until all the pure be separated and lifted up, and in this is our Philosophical and natural sublimation fulfilled and this whiteness is the Soul infused into the body, that is, the Mineral virtue which is more subtil than fire, being indeed the true Quintessence and Life which desires to be born and to put off the gross earthy foeces which it has taken from the menstruous and corrupt place of his original and in this our Philo-

sophical sublimation, not in the naughty common mercury which has no qualities like unto them wherewith our Mercury drawn from his Vitriolate Cavern is adorned, but let us return to our sublimation.

It is therefore most certain in this Art that this Soul drawn from the body cannot be lifted up but by the putting to a volatile thing which is of his own by which the bodies are made volatile and spiritual, lifting up, subtilating and subliming themselves against their own proper nature which is bodily and ponderous and by this means they are made no bodies but incorporeal and a Fifth Essence of the nature of the Spirit which is called Hermes, his bird and Mercury drawn from the red servant and so the earthly parts remain below or rather the grosser parts of the bodies which cannot by any wit or devices of man be perfectly dissolved and this white fume, this white Gold, that this Quintessence is called also the compound Magnesia, which as a man contains or like a man is compounded of a body, a soul and a spirit, for the body is the fixed earth of the Sun which is more than most fine ponderously lifted up by the force of our divine waters, the Soul is the Tincture of the Sun and of the Moon proceeding from the conjunction or communication of these, but the Spirit is the mineral virtue of the two bodies and of the water which carries the Soul or the white tincture upon the bodies and out of the bodies as the tincture of dyers is carried by water upon the cloth and that Mercurial Spirit is the bond tyall of the Soul of the Sun and the body of the Sun is the body of fixation containing with the Moon the Spirit and Soul of the Spirit, therefore pierces the body, fixes the Soul, couples, colours and whitens; of these three united together in our Stone made, that is, of the Sun and Moon and Mercury, then with our gilded (or golden) water is extracted a nature surpassing all nature and therefore except bodies be by this our water dissolved, imbibed, ground, softened and sparingly and diligently governed until they leave their greatness and thickness

and be turned into a thin and impalpable Spirit: Our labour will always be in vain, for unless the bodies be changed into no bodies, that is, into the Philosophers Mercury, the rule of Art is not yet found and the reason is because it is impossible to draw out of the bodies the most thin or subtil Soul, which has in it all tinctures, if the bodies be not first dissolved in our water. Dissolve therefore the bodies in the golden water and boil them until by the water all the tincture comes out into a white colour or white oil and when you shall see this whiteness upon the water, then know that the bodies are dissolved or melted and continue the decoction until they bring forth the cloud which they have conceived dark black and white, put therefore the perfect bodies in our water, in a vessel Hermetically sealed, upon a soft fire and boil them continually until they are perfectly resolved into a most precious oil.

Boil them (says Adfar) with a gentle fire as it were, for the hatching of chickens, until the bodies be dissolved and their tincture most nearly conjoined (mark well) be wholly drawn out, for it is not drawn out all at once, but it comes forth by little and little every day and every hour until after a long time this dissolution be compleat and which is dissolved do always arise uppermost upon the water, and in this dissolution let the fire be soft and continual until the bodies be loosened into a Viscous impalpable water and that the whole tincture come forth first in the colour of blackness, which is a sign of true solution, then continue the decoction until it become a white permanant water, for governing it in its bath it will afterwards be clear and is become like common Argent-vive climbing through the air upon first-and therefore when you see the bodies dissolved into a viscous water then know they are turned into a vapour and that you have the Souls separated from the dead bodies and by sublimation brought into the order and estate of Spirits, whereupon both of them with a part

of our water are made spirits flying and climbing into the air and that there the body compounded of the male and female, of the Sun and Moon and of that most subtil nature cleansed by sublimation, takes life inspired by his moisture, that is by his water as a man by the air and therefore from henceforth it will multiply and increase in his kind, like all other things and therefore in such an operation and Philosophical sublimation, they are joined one with another and the new body inspired by the air, lives vegetably, which is a wonder wherefore unless the bodies be subtilized and made thin by fire and water until they do arise like spirits and be made like water and fume or like Mercury, there is nothing done in this Art, but when they ascend they are borne in the air and are cleansed (changed) in the air and are made life with life in such sort that they can never be separated, as water mixed with water and therefore it is wisely said that the Stone is borne in the air because it is altogether spiritual, for the Vulture flying without wings crys upon the top of the mountain, saying, I am the white of the black and the red of the white and the citron of the red. I tell truth and lie not.

It suffices you therefore to put the bodies in the vessel and in the water, once for all and to shut the vessel diligently, until a true separation is made, which by the envious is called conjunction, sublimation, assation, extraction, putrifaction, ligation, dispensation, subtilation, generation, etc., and that the whole mastery be done, do therefore as in the generation of a man and every vegetable, put the seed once into the womb and shut it well, by this means you see that you need not many things and that our work requires no great charges because there is but one Stone in Medicine, one vessel, one regiment and one successive disposition to the white and to the red and all that we say in many places, take this, take that, yet we understand that it behoves to take but one thing and put it once into the vessel and to shut the

vessel until the work be perfected, for these things are set down by the envious Philosophers to deceive the unwary, as is aforesaid, for it is not this Art Cabalistical and full of Secrets; and do you fool, believe that we do openly teach the Secret of Secrets, and do you take our words according to the literal sound?

Know assuredly (I am no whit envious as others are) he that takes the words of the other Philosophers according to the ordinary signification and sound of them he does already having lost Ariadines thread, wonder in the midst of the Labirinth and has as good as appointed his money to perdition.

But I Artephius, after I had learned all the Art and perfect science in the books of the true speaking Hermes, was sometimes as envious as all the rest, but when I had by the space of 1000 years or thereabouts, which are now passed over me, since my Nativity by the only grace of God almighty and the use of this wonderful Fifth Essence, when I say, for so long time I had seen no man that could work the Mystery of Hermes, by reason of the obscurity of the Philosophers words, moved with pity and with the goodness becoming an honest man, I have determined in these last times of my life to write all things, truly and sincerely, that you may want or desire nothing toward or to the Perfection of the Philosophers Stone (excepting a certain thing which it is not lawful for any person to say or write because it is always revealed by God or by a Master and yet in this book he that is not shipwrecked, shall with a little experience easily learn it.

I have therefore in this book written the naked truth, although clothed with a few colours, that every good and wise man may from this Philosophical Tree happily gather the admirable apples of the Hesperides; therefore praised be the most high God, which has put this benignity into our Souls and with a wonderful long old age has given as a true decoction of heart, wherewithall it seems unto me that I do truly love, cherish and embrace all men, but

let us return unto the Art; surely our work is quickly dispatched, for that which the heat of the Sun does in a hundred years in the mines of the earth, for the generation of a metal (as I have often seen) our secret fire, that is, our fiery Sulphurous water, which is called Balneum Marie, works in short time and this work is no great labour to him that knows and understands it; neither is the matter so dear, considering a small quantity suffices, that it ought to cause any man to pluck back his hand because it is so short and easy, that it may well be called the work of women and the play of children.

Work then cheerfully (my son) pray to God, read books continually, for one book opens another; think of it profoundly, fly all things that vanish in the fire, for you have not your infant in those combustible and consuming things, but only in the decoction of the water drawn from your lights, for by this water is colour and weight given infinitely and this water is a white fume, which as a Soul flows in the perfect bodies, taking wholly from them their blackness and uncleanness and consolidating the two bodies into one and multiplying their water, and there is no other thing that can take away their true colour from the perfect bodies, that is, from the Sun and Moon but Azoth, that is this our water which colours and makes white the red body, according to the regements thereof.

But let us speak of fires, our fire therefore is mineral, equal, continual, it vapours not unless it be too much stirred up, it partakes of Sulphur, it is taken otherwise then from the matter, it pulls down all things, it dissolves, congeals and calcines, it is artificial to find, it is a short way (or an expense) without cost, at least without any great cost, it is moist, vaporous, digestive, altering, piercing, subtil, airy, not violent, not burning, compassing or environing, containing but one and it is the fountain of living water which goes and contains the place where the King

and Queen bathe themselves. In all the work this moist fire is sufficient for thee at the beginning, midst and end, for in it consists the whole Art.

This the fire natural against nature, unnatural and without burning, and finally this fire is hot, dry, moist and cold, think you upon this and work aright taking nothing that is of a strange nature, and if you do not well understand these fires, hearken further to what I shall give you, never as yet written in any book, for out of the abstruse and hidden cavitation of the ancients concerning fires.

We have properly three fires without the which the Art cannot be done, and he that works without them takes a great deal of care in vain. The first is the fire of the Lamp, which is continual, moist, vaporous, airy and artificial to find. For the Lamp ought to be proportioned to the closure (or inclosure) and herein we must use great judgement which comes not to the knowledge of a workman stiffneck, for if the fire of the Lamp be not geometrically and duly proportioned and fitted to the furnace, either for lack of heat you will not see the expected signs in their times and so you will lose your hope, by too long expectation or else with too much heat you will burn the flowers of the Gold and so sadly bewail your lost labour.

The second is the fire of ashes, in which the vessel hermetically sealed is shut up, or rather it is that most gentle heat which proceeding from the temperate vapour of the Lamp goes equally round about your vessel. This fire is not violent, if it be not too much stirred up, it is digesting, altering, it is taken from another body than the matter, it is but one, or alone, it is moist and unnatural etc.

The third is the natural fire of our water, which for this cause is also called fire against nature, because it is water and yet nevertheless it makes a meer spirit of Gold, which common fire cannot do. This fire is mineral, equil and partakes of Sulphur,

it breaks, congeals, dissolves and calcines all. This is piercing, subtile, not burning and it is the fountain of living water wherein the King and Queen bathe themselves, whereof we have need in the whole work in the beginning, middle and ending; but the other two abovesaid we do not always need but only sometimes.

Join therefore in the reading of the book of Philosophers, these sorts of fires and without doubt you will understand their cavillations concerning their fires.

As touching the colours, he that does not make black cannot make white, because blackness is the beginning of whiteness and a sign of putrifaction and alteration and that the body is now pierced and mortified, therefore in the putrifaction, in this water, there first appears blackness like unto the broth wherein blood or some bloody thing is boiled. Secondly, the black earth by continual decoction is whitened because the Soul of the true bodies swims aloft upon the water, like white cream, and in this only whiteness all the spirits are so united that they can never fly from one another and therefore the laton must be whitened and fear the books lest our hearts be broken, for this entire whiteness is the true Stone, to the white and the body enobled by the necessity of his end and the tincture and whiteness of a most exuberant reflection and shining brightness, which being mixed with a body never separates from it.

Here then note that the spirits are not fixed but in the white colour, which by consequence is more noble than the other colour and ought more earnestly to be desired. Considering it is as it were the complement and perfection of the whole work, for our earth is first putrified into blackness, then is censed in the elevation or lifting up, afterwards being dried, the blackness then it is whitened and the dark, moist domination of the woman perishes and then the white fume pierces into the body and the spirits are shut up or bound together in dryness, or that which is corrupting, de-

formed and black with moisture vanishes and then the new body arises again, clear white and immortal, getting the victory over all his enemies and as heat working upon that which is moist, causes or engenders blackness, which is the first colours, so by decoction evermore and more heat working upon that which is dry, begets whiteness which is the two colours and afterwards working upon that which is purely and perfectly dry, it causes citrinity of redness, of so much concerning the colours.

We must therefore understand that the thing which has the head red and white, his feet white and afterwards red and yet before that, the eyes black, this only is our mastery, dissolve then the Sun and the Moon in our dissolving water, which is familiar, friendly and of the next nature unto them, which is likewise to them sweet and pleasant and as it were a womb, a mother, an original, the beginning and the end of life and that is the reason why they are amended in this water, because that nature rejoices in nature and nature contains nature and in true marriage they are joined together and made one nature, one new body raised up and immortal and this we must join consanguinity of those natures, will meet and follow one another, putrify themselves, engender themselves and make one another rejoice, because nature is governed by nature, which is nearest and most friendly to it. Our water (says Danthin) is the most pleasant, fair and clear fountain, prepared only for the King and Queen, whom it very well and they know it, for it draws them to itself and they abide therein, to wash themselves 2 or 3 days, that is, 2 or 3 months, and it makes them young again and fair and because the Sun and Moon have their original from this water, their mother, therefore it behoves that they enter again into their mothers womb, that they may be born again and made more strong, more noble and more valiant and therefore if these do not die and be not turned into water, they remain alone and without fruit, but if they die and be dissolved in our water, they bring

fruit an hunderd fold and from that very place where it seemed that they had lost what they were, from thence shall they appear that which they were not before, let therefore the spirit of our living water be with great and subtilty fixed with the Sun and Moon because they being turned into the nature of water, do die and seem like unto the dead. Yet afterwards being inspired from thence, the live increase and multiply like all other vegetable things.

It is enough then to dispose the matter sufficiently from without, for from within itself does work sufficiently to its own perfection, for it has in itself a certain and inherent motion, according to the true way better than any order that can be imagined by man and therefore do you only prepare and nature will perfect, for if she be not hindered by the contrary, she will not pass her own certain motion, as well to conceive as to bring forth, wherefore after preparation of the matter, take heed lest by too much fire you make the bath too hot, take heed lest the spirit do exhale, because it would hurt him that works, that is to say, it would destroy the work and cause many infirmitys (that is) much sadness and anger, from this that has been spoken is drawn the axiom, to wit, that by the course of nature he does not know the making of metals, that knows not the destruction of them, it behoves then to join together them that are of kindred, for natures do find their like natures and being putrified are mixed together and mortify themselves; it is necessary therefore to know this conjunction and generation and how the natures do embrace one another and are pacified in a slow fire, how nature rejoices in nature and nature retains nature and turns into a white nature, after this, if you will make it red you must boil this water in a dry continual fire, until it be as red as blood which will be nothing else but fire and a true tincture and so by a continual dry fire the whiteness is changed, amended, perfected and made citrine and acquires

redness, a true fixed colour and consequently by howmuch the more this red is boiled, so much the more it is coloured and made a tincture of perfect redness, wherefore you must with a dry fire and a dry calcination, without any moisture, boil this compound until it be clothed with a most red colour and then it will be a perfect elixir.

If afterwards you will multiply it, you must again resolve that red new dissolving water and after by decoction, whiten and rubifie it by the degrees of fire, reiterating the first regiment, dissolve, congeal, reiterate, shutting, opening and multiplying in quantity and quality at thy own pleasure.

For by a new corruption and generation there is again brought in a new motion and so we could never find a end, if we would always by reiteration of solution and coagulation by the means of our dissolving water, that is to say, dissolveing and congealing, as is said in the first regiment and so the virtue thereof is increased and multiplied in quantity and quality, so that if in the first work one part of your Stone will join an hundred, in the second it will join a thousand, in the third ten thousand and so by persuing your work your projection will come to infinity, joining truly and perfectly and fixedly, every quantity how great soever it be and so by a thing of an easy price is added colour and virtue and weight, therefore but our fire and azoth are sufficient for you, boil, boil, reiterate, dissolve, congeal and so continue according to your will, multiplying it as much as you will and until your Medicine be made fusible as wax and that it have the quantity and virtue which you desire, therefore all the accomplishment of the work or of our 2 Stones (note it well) consists in this, that you take the perfect body which you must put in our water, in a house of glass well shut and stopped with cement, lest the air get in, or the moisture inclosed get out and there hold it in the digestion of a gentle heat, as it were of a bath, or

the moist temperature of dung, upon the which with the fire you shall continue the perfection of decoction until it be putrified and resolved (or dissolved) into black and afterwards be lifted up and sublimed by the water that it may thereby be cleansed from all blackness and darkness and that it may be whitened and made subtil, until it come to the utmost purity of sublimation and at last be made volatile and white within and without, for the Vulture flying in the air without wings cries that it may get upon the mountain, which is upon the water, upon which the white spirit is caused, then continue a convenient fire and your spirit, that is, the subtil substance of the body of Mercury will ascend upon the water, which quintessence is whiter than the snow, continue still and in the end strengthen your fire until all which is spiritual mount on high, for know well that all is clear, pure and spiritual ascends on high in the air in the form of a white fume, which the Philosophers call the Virgins Milk, it behoves therefore that (as Sybil said) the Son of the Virgin be exalted from the earth and that the white quintessence after his resurrection, be lifted up towards heaven and that the gross and thick remain in the bottom of the vessel and of the water, for afterwards when the vessel is cold, you will find in the bottom thereof the foeces, black, burnt up, combust, separate from the spirit and white Quintessence, which dregs you must cast away.

In these times the Argent-vive rains from our Air, upon our new Earth which is called Argent-vive, sublimed from the Air whereof is made a water, viscous, clean and white, which is the true Tincture, separated from all black foeces and so our brass or laton is without water governed, purified and adorned with a white colour, which white colour is not gotten but by decoction and congelation of the water, boil it then continually, wash away the blackness from the laton, not with your hand but with the Stone or the fire or our second Mercurial water, which is the true Tincture for this

separation of the pure from the impure, is not done with the hands, but nature herself alone by working it circularly to perfection brings it to pass, it appears then that this composition is not a manual work, but a change of nature, but because nature dissolves and conjoins itself, is sublimed and lifts up itself and having separated the foeces it grows white and in such a sublimation the parts are always joined together more subtil, more pure and essential because that when the fiery nature lifts up the subtil parts, it lifts up always the more pure and by consequence leaves the gross in the bottom and therefore it behoves by an indifferant fire to sublime in a continual vapour, that the Stone may be inspired in the air and live, for the nature of all things takes life of the inspiration of air and also all our mastery consists in vapour and is the sublimation of water and therefore our brass or laton must by degrees of fire be lifted up and freely without violence of himself ascend on high, wherefore unless the body be by fire and water be dissolved, attenuated and subtilized until it ascends as a spirit or climb like Argent-vive or as the white Soul separated from the body and carried in the sublimation of the spirits, there is nothing at all done in this Art, but when it ascends on high is born in the air and changed in the air and is made, life being altogether spiritual and incorruptible, and so a Regiment the body is in such made a spirit of subtil nature and the spirit is incorporated with the body and is made one with it and in such sublimation, conjunction and elevation, all things are made white and therefore this Philosophical and Natural sublimation is necessary, for that it makes peace between the body and the spirit, which is impossible otherwise to be done then by this separation of the parts.

Wherefore it behoves to sublime them both, to this end, that in the troubles of this stormy sea the pure may ascend and the impure and earthly may descend and for this cause it must be boiled continually, that it may be brought to a subtil nature and that the

body may assume and draw to itself the white Mercurial Soul, which it naturally retains and suffers it because it is like unto it in the nearness of the first pure and simple nature.

From hence it appears that this separation must be made by decoction until there remains no more of the fat of the Soul, which is not lifted up and exalted in the upper part, for so they shall be both reduced into a simple equality and unto a simple whiteness, the Vulture therefore flying in the air and the Toad going upon the earth, is our mastery and therefore when you shall gently and with great discretion separate the earth from the water, that is, the fire and the subtil. From the thick then, from that which is pure will ascend from earth into heaven and that which is impure will go down to the earth and the more subtil part will in the upper place take a nature of a spirit and in the lower place take the nature of an earthly body, wherefore let the white nature with the more subtil part of the body be by this operation lifted up, leaving the foeces which is done in a short time, for the Soul is aided by her associate and fellow and perfected by it.

My Mother (says the body) has begotten me and by me she herself is begotten and after she has taken her flight (or I have taken from her flying) she after the best manner, she can become a pious Mother, nourishing and cherishing the Son whom she has begotten until she come to a perfect state.

Hear this Secret; keep the body in this our Mercurial water until it ascends on high with the white Soul and the earthly descend to the bottom, which is called the earth that remains, then shall you see the water coagulate itself with its body and be assured the Science is true, because the body coagulates his moisture into dryness, as the rennet of a lamb coagulates milk into cheese; in the same fashion the spirit will pierce the body and there will be a perfect mixture made by the least parts and the body will draw into himself his moisture, that is to say, this white Soul,

even as the lodestone draws the iron, because of the likeness and nearness of his nature and his greediness and then the one will hold the other and this is our sublimation and coagulation which retains everything volatile and makes that it can fly no more, therefore this composition is not a manual operation, but (as I said) a changing of natures and a wonderful connexion of their cold with hot and their moist with dry, for the hot is mixed with cold and their dry with moist and so by this Mercury is made the mixture and conjunction of the body with the spirit which is called the changing of contrary natures, because that in such a solution and sublimation the spirit is turned into a body and the body into a spirit, so that the natures being mingled together and reduced into one do change one another in as much as the body makes the spirit a body and the spirit turns the body into a joined and white spirit.

And therefore (this is the last time I will tell you) boil it in our white water, that is, in Mercury until it be dissolved into blackness and then by continual decoction it will be deprived of this blackness and the body so dissolved will at length arise with a white Soul and they will embrace one another, so that they will no more be divided asunder and the spirit is united to the body with a real accord and are made one permanent thing and this is the solution of the body and the coagulation of the spirit, which have one and the self same operation.

He therefore that knows how to marry, to make with child, to mortify, to putrify, to engender, to quicken the species, to bring it into the white light and to cleanse the Vulture from his blackness and darkness until he be purged by fire, coloured and putrified from all his spots shall be the owner of so great a dignity, that Kings shall reverence him and do him honour.

Wherefore let our body abide in the water until such time as it is loosned into a new powder in the bottom of the vessel and of the water which is called the black ashes and this is the corruption of the body which is by wise men called, Saturn, Laton or Brass, The Philosophers Lead and the discontinued powder and is the putrifaction and resolution of the body; there appears three signs, to wit, the black colour, the dis-continuity of the parts and a stinking smell, which is likened to the smell of a sephulchuer or graves; this ashes then is the of which the Philosophers have said so much, which remained in the lower part of the vessel, which we ought not to despise, for in it is the diadem of our King and Argentive, black and unclean, from whence the blackness must be purged by continual decoction in our water until it be lifted up in a white colour, which is called the Goose and the Poulet of Hermogenes.

He therefore that makes the red earth black and then white has the mastery, as also he that kills the living and quickens the dead, therefore make black, white and then the white red, that you may make your work perfect and when you see the true whiteness appear, which shines like a naked sword, know that in that whiteness is redness hidden and then you must not take out of the vessel that whiteness, but only boil it to the end, that which dryness and heat, there may come upon it a citron colour and in the end a most shining and most sparkling red, which when you see it, with great fear and trembling, praise the most good and most great God, which gives wisdom and by consequence riches to whom he pleases and according to the iniquity of persons, take them away again and deprives them of them forever, plunging them in the servitude and slavery of their enemies.

To Him be praise and glory forever and ever AMEN.

The End.