

THE  
ANSWER  
OF

*Bernardus Trevisanus.*

TO THE  
EPISTLE  
OF

*Thomas of Benonia,*

Physician to

*K. CHARLES the 8th.*

*The Answer of Bernardus Trevisanus, to the Epistle  
of Thomas of Bononia, Physician to King Charles the Eighth.*

*Reverend Doctor, and Honoured Sir,*

With the tender of all possible Respects and Services be pleased to understand, that I have received your very large and copious Letter by Mr. Awdry, together with the Stone of your most secret Work; which truly is a remarkable argument of your Friendship, by which the confidence you put in me appears manifest and very great, and with how great and piercing a Wit also you are illustrated. Now then I shall very willingly Answer unto your Epistle: Some things I shall approve, which you have written learnedly and ingeniously, other things I shall briefly touch, and refute strictly and Philosophically, but not arrogantly, and throughly discuss them with submission and respect unto your Honour, and request: For in this sacred and secret Art, as in others, the truth of the Theory ought to be confirmed by Practical experience. Now therefore, Reverend Doctor, let us visit one another with such Returns and Treatises, since we may not be bodily united. But it is your wisdom (as you very well know) to know and inspect things by their Causes, for Experience is deceitful when not guided by a previous understanding. There is necessary to the Students in Philosophy, a strong and discret meditation, that the Work they undertake may be conveniently brought on to its utmost perfection: For contingent errors happen unto them who will fall to work, omitting or neglecting the judgment of a mental practice, which the Theory frameth in the mind before the operations proceed to the composure of any Work: For Work must attend Nature, and not Nature follow Work. He then that would effect any thing, must prepare his mind with the knowledge of the Natures and eventual Accidents of things, and afterwards he may safely put his hands to the Work. And indeed I clearly perceive your mind to be highly instructed in these things, by your Experiment set down fully in your Epistle: For as Water which is cold and moist, if it be well mixt with Vegetables, assumes another quality, and in decoction takes to it and puts on it the quality of the thing wherewith it is throughly mixt; so also *Quick-silver* assumes different natures and qualities in things familiar unto it, and throughly mixt with it: as if it be joynd to the Sun, the qualities of the Sun; if to the Moon, those of the Moon; if to Venus, of Venus: and so in other kinds of Metals. Their kinds therefore ought to be decocters therein, and *Mercury* is their Water, in which by a mutual alteration it assumes in a convertible manner their mutations. And this Water contracts unto it self from them a Nature in a resemblance to Vegetables, decocted in simple Water: though these kinds are not altered in their colour outwardly,

under the form of fluidity, in respect of the thickness of the Matter and Earth immersed in, and united proportionably to the Water of *Mercury*; but we find it otherwise in other diaphanous humidities: For this altered, Nature is altered, and its colour outwardly is hid under the appearance of *Mercury*, and is not manifest to the sight. And this you at large discuss and show, how simple River Water is the first Matter and nourishment of Vegetables, and consequently of all living and sensitive Creatures: therefore if any of them all be decocted in it, it assumes and puts on it self the virtue and propriety of their Nature: wherefore being in it self cold in the highest degree, yet by means of things decocted in it, it works in us the effect of a thing hot in the first degree, that I may use your words. Moreover; there is nothing that nourisheth more than the Broth or decoction of good flesh; and if the Water in which flesh and Herbs are boyled, or the things boyled in Water, be eaten moist, or the simple Water after boyling be taken or drank, it hurts not at all, yea it will profit and help much, although before in its simplicity and nature it would have been hurtful. Now this comes to pass because that Water is not such as it was before. In like manner *Quick-silver* is the Matter of all Metals, and is as it were Water, (in the Analogy betwixt it, and Vegetables or Animals) and receives into it the virtue of those things which in decoction adhere to it, and are throughly mingled with it; which being most cold, may yet in a short time be made most hot: and in the same manner with temperate things may be made temperate, by a most subtle artificial invention. And no Metal adheres better to it than Gold, as you say, and therefore as some think Gold is nothing but *Quick-silver*, coagulated by the power of *Sulphur*, &c. And thence you would conclude, as I think, and well, that if Gold be decocted and dissolved rightly in the natural way of Art, *Quick-silver* it self will obtain the natural properties of that Gold. But the way of this decoction and solution of Metals, is known to very few, and it manifestly appears: for the cause of this Solution is the moistness of *Mercury*, restrained by the compactness of an Homogeneous Earth; and contrarywise, the coldness of the Earth, restrained by a Water Homogeneous to it self, the Homogeneousness of qualities remaining: so that there is in it a single dryness, and double coldness, a simple moistness, but under a disproportion of immaturity to the anatical proportion of the ripe digested Sun. The dissolver therefore differs from the dissolvend in proportion and digestion, and not in matter: because Nature might make this of that, without any additional mixture, as Nature doth wonderfully and simply produce Gold of *Quick-silver*, as you have learnedly discoursed in your Epistle. For in Vegetables, the moisture of simple Water is taken for an intrinsick dissolution, that things congealed by Art, might diffuse into their effects; and the dissolution of things come about with the coagulation

of Water with the dissolution of things, and contrarywise: and so it is likewise in the Mineral Water, and things of its kind. He therefore that knows the Art and Secret of Dissolution, hath attained the secret point of Art, which is to mingle throughly the kinds, and out of Natures to extract Natures, which are effectually hid in them. How hath he then found the truth, who destroys the moist nature of *Quick-silver*? as those Fools who deform its kind from its Metallick disposition or dissolution, and by dissolving its radical moisture, corrupt it, and disproportion *Quick-silver* from its first Mineral quality, which needs nothing but purity and simple decoction. For example, they who defile it with Salts, Vitriols, and aluminous things, destroy it, and change it into some other thing, than is the nature of *Quick-silver*: For that Seed which Nature by its sagacity and clemency composed, they endeavour to perfect by violating and destroying it, which undoubtedly is destructive to it, as far as concerns the effect of our Work. For the Seed in humane and sensitive things, is formed by Nature, and not by Art, and well mixed; but nothing is to be taken from it, nor added to it, if the same *species* must be renovated by the procreation of its own kind: so the same Matter must abide and continue, that the same Form may follow, which it doth not otherwise. Wherefore, excellent Doctor, false and vain is all their doctrine, which altereth *Mercury*, which is the Seed, before the Metallick *species* be joyned with it: For if it be dried up, it dissolves not. What then can it do in the solution of things of its own *species*? For if it be heated beyond its natural digestion, it will not cause nor generate in the Metalline *species* a Feverish heat as it were, and will impertinently turn cold into hot, and passive into active; and the error from thence will be incorrigible, and labour lost. For example, Fools draw corrosive Waters out of inferiour Minerals, into which they cast the *species* of Metals, and corrode them: For they think that they are therefore dissolved with a natural Solution, which Solution truly requires a permanency of the dissolver and dissolved together, that a new *species* might result from both the Masculine and Feminine Seed: I tell you assuredly, that no Water dissolves any Metallick *species* by a natural Solution, save that which abides with them in matter and form, and which the Metals themselves being dissolved, can recongeal: which thing happens not in *Aquafortis*, but rather is a defilement of the Compound, that is, of the Body to be dissolved, Neither is that Water proper for Solutions of Bodies, which abides not with them in their Coagulations; and finally *Mercury* is of this sort, and not *Aquafortis*, nor that which Fools imagine to be, a lympid and diaphanous *Mercurial* Water: For if they divide or obstruct the homogeneity of *Mercury*, how can the first proportion of the Feminine Seed consist and be preserved? Because *Mercury* cannot receive Congelation with the dissolved

Body, neither will the true kind be renovated afterwards in the administration of the Art, nay but some other filthy and unprofitable thing. Yet thus they think they dissolve, mistaking Nature, but dissolve not: For the *Aquafortis* being abstracted, the Body becometh meltable as before, and that Water abides not with, nor subsists in the Body, as its radical moisture. The Bodies indeed are corroded, but not dissolved; and by how much more they are corroded, they are so much more estranged from a Metallick kind. These solutions therefore are not the foundation of the Art of Transmutation, but the impostures rather of Sophistical Alchymists, who think that this Sacred Art is hid in them. They say indeed, that they make Solutions, but they cannot make perfect Metallick species, because they do not naturally remain under the first proportion or kind, which *Mercury* the Water allows in Metallick species. For *Mercury* is corrupted with Metals by way of alteration, not dissipation: because Bodies dissolved therein are never separated from it, as in *Aquafortis* and other corrosives, but one kind puts on and hides another, retaining it secretly and perfectly: so *Sol* and *Lune* dissolved, are secretly retained in it. For their nature is hid in *Mercury*, even unto its condensation, of which they lying hid are the cause, in as much as they are latent in it: and as *Mercury* dissolves them, and hides them in its belly, so they also congeal it, and what was hard is made soft, what was soft, hard; and yet the kind, that is, *Metals* and *Quick-silver*, abide still. He therefore who thus dissolves, congeals rather, and the corrupted species conjoynd, receive their old form by an artificial decoction: Notwithstanding this dissolution makes several colours appear, because the species remain as it were dead, yet their intrinsical proportion is permanent and entire. So the Lord in the Gospel speaks by way of similitude of Vegetables, *Unless a grain of corn fallen on the earth do dye, it abides alone; but if it dye, it brings forth much fruit*: Therefore this alterative corruption hides forms, perfects natures, keeps proportions, and changes colours from the beginning to the end: For when the Water begins to cover the Earth, the black colour begins to be hid under the white; when the Air covers the Water and the Earth, the citrine colour appears; which is turned to red, when the Fire covers the Air, or the other three Elements. And these last colours abide hiddenly and intrinsically, and appear under the shew of a white Spirit in liquid *Mercury*, until it be recondensed in the Powder which is in the Bodies: because the Soul lies hid in the Spirit, as in the condensation the Spirit and the Soul lie hid in the Powder or Body. For there is a corruption in the things to be altered, but no dissipation of parts, unless some superfluous parts be to be rejected as unprofitable for the generation, whereupon the Artificer purifies his Work, that digestion may succeed better. This is manifest by example in Grain, for

of two grains of Wheat, if the one be cast into good ground, there it putrifies, dies, and loses its external form, but nothing thereof is dissipated, yea in its time it encreases into a multiplicity of Fruit, and there is indeed made a corruption only of the form, and not any dissipation of the matter: But if the other grain be cast into the Fire, then both matter and form are corrupted, and the whole is dissipated, and that corruption is unprofitable for generation. Wherefore Water dissolves not Bodies, but those only of its own kind, and by which it may be condensed: nor can Bodies be at all nourished to generation, but by their like, which can preserve the *species* destroyed by that transmuting Body, through the artifice of the Work: though Vegetables are nourished by things of different kinds, yet before they nourish them, they are assimilated (the dissolution of them being first made) according to the proportion of the things which suck and draw them to them. It must be noted therefore, that the Solution of Metals may be made by different ways: one, which Fools know, as is abovesaid, with Foreign things, which abide not with the dissolved Metals, which is rather to be called a corrosive destruction and defilement of the compound. The second Solution is made by the power and force of Fire, which is no true Solution, but a melting rather of the colligated Elementary parts: for the outward heat of the Fire, in dissolving the Compound, finds out its intrinsical, natural or native Fire within, which internal and proportional Fire dwells in the Air, therefore it dissolves the Air it self. But that dissolved Air resides and dwells in the Water, and the Water in the Earth, and the Water it self dissolves the Earth, so that it melts both the active and passive; but this melting is no Solution, yea it is a dissipation, because the Elements there being homogeneous to one another, and proportionably fixed, by digestion are mixt, and one of them educed out of the power of another generally: And therefore this falls out even in pure Bodies, in which the Elemental natures are fixed Wherefore in them the flame of Fire causeth melting, and dissolves that whole Body to fluidity, and not to a separation; because Fire cannot flow, unless the Air consubstantial to it flow; neither doth the Air flow, unless the Water be dissolved; nor doth the Water flow, unless the Earth flow: and contrariwise, as the Earth is dissolved by the Water, so on the contrary side the Water retaineth the Air, and congealeth it: and in the same manner ascending upwards, the Air retaineth the Fire in Congelation, because the more fixt and fixing Elements cause fixation, by acting together on one another; as Earth and Water, and in a contrary manner Fire and Air, act together each on other unto Solution. But this Solution is called a melting of the Compound, and not properly a Solution of it, because the parts separable from one another in the generation of the Compound, are not dissolved, as is done in the third and truly Philosophick Solution, when the Compound is

dissolved in the manner aforesaid, and yet the parts abide unseparated, though separable; so that the virtue of the most digested Elements may be extracted from things to be dissolved by the dissolver, that is, *Quick-silver*, and the grosser parts in such a dissolution acquire some latitude of subtilty, because the Body is turned into Spirit, and contrariwise the Spirit into Body; fixed things are turned into volatiles, and volatiles to fixed. For this Solution is possible and natural, that is, by Art of Nature subserving thereto; and this is sole and necessary Solution in the Work of the Philosophers which can be done by no other thing than *Quick-silver* only, with a prudent proportion: so as a good Artificer knowing from within the natures and proportions, ought to make the proportion from his first entrance upon the Work. For these two, Sir, are sufficient for this Work, and nothing else enter it, nor generates and multiplies as we have said. Besides, you say that Gold, as most think, is nothing else than *Quick-silver* coagulated naturally by the force of *Sulphur*; yet so, that nothing of the *Sulphur* which generated the Gold, doth remain in the substance of the Gold: as in an human *Embryo*, when it is conceived in the Womb, there remains nothing of the Father's Seed, according to *Aristotle's* opinion, but the Seed of the Man doth only coagulate the *menstrual* blood of the Woman: in the same manner you say, that after *Quick-silver* is so coagulated, the form of Gold is perfected in it, by virtue of the Heavenly Bodies, and especially of the Sun. But by your good leave, and with respect I must tell you, we must not think so: For being we are Philosophically perswaded, that Gold is nothing but *Mercury* anatized, that is equally digested in the bowels of a Mineral Earth; and the Philosophers have signified, that this very thing is done by the contact of *Sulphur* coagulating the *Mercury*, and by reason of its operation, that is, from *Mercury* being digested and thickned by a proportionate heat. Wherefore we must know, that Gold is *Sulphur* and *Mercury* together, that is, the coagulant and the coagulated in one: and nothing added from without thereto, but only a pure digestion or maturation, which multiplies qualities, and excites one Element from another out of their pure possibility into act, no other thing whatsoever being superadded. But this digestion or maturation is produced actively, from the superiour Elements, that is, the Fire and Air, which are not actually but potentially in *Mercury*; yet being excited and assisted by an external heat and by the proper and natural digesting heat, the passive Elements in *Mercury* are by them subtilized, being not only potentially existent, but actually, towards Water it self, and the Water is subtilized towards Air, and Air follows to Fire; and in this proportionable action of Nature, and digestion of *Mercury*, the Male and Female abide together in closed Natures; the Female truly as it were Earth and Water, the Male as Air and Fire: which Earth and Water the Philosophers

do mingle in Gold, but called the Air and Fire a *Sulphur* as it were therein: neither is there any other Foreign addition in the bowels of the Earth. And therefore in Art above ground neither is there found any Foreign addition, to digest or condense *Mercury* into the nature of Gold, or other species of Metals. Therefore the Philosophers have said, that *Sulphur* and *Mercury* make *Sol*, that is, its corporeity and permanency: And therefore it is not hence concluded, that the external artificial heat, stirring up and assisting the proportional intrinsick heat, to digest and ripen the other two less digested and immature Elements in *Mercury*, namely its Water and Earth, is of the substance of the Compound. For the external heat is not permanent within, with the quantity and weight of the Matter, nor adds any thing thereto: But the intrinsick proportionate natural and simple heat is permanent, with the quantity and weight of the *Mercury* digested by it; because that heat is an intrinsick and essential part of *Mercury* it self, to wit, the two more active Elements in it, namely Air and Fire. Therefore Fools do ill and absurdly understand that saying of the Philosophers, that *Sulphur* and *Mercury* beget *Sol*; because, as is sufficiently known, as neither Air nor Fire in the first *Mercurial* composition, nor afterwards in the natural Metallick digestion, depart nor are severed from Water and Earth, so neither doth *Sulphur* (which is no other than Air and Fire) depart nor is separated from *Mercury*, which is the same with Water and Earth. And he is not a natural Philosopher who imagines or asserts the contrary: for the digestion of Gold happens and is made of the first *Mercurial* proportion, without any addition made thereto by Nature under, or Art above ground, as is said. Neither is that repugnant to what we have said, that a pure *Sol* and clear *Mercury* must in this Art be conjoynd, because this is not done to that intent to affirm, that there is one *Sulphur* in *Sol*, and another in *Mercury*, or that there is one *Mercury* in *Sol*, and another in *Mercury*, but because the digestion is more mature and perfect in *Sol*, than *Mercury*. And also in the Sun the *Sulphur* is more mature and digested, and therefore more active than in *Mercury*: whence the Philosophers have affirmed *Sol* to be nothing else but *Quick-silver* matured: For in *Mercury* there are only two actual Elements, to wit, Water and Earth, which are passive; but the Active Elements, Air and Fire, are only potentially therein. But (as it is known) when those Air and Fire in a pure *Mercury*, are deduced from possibility into act, that is, to a due digestion and proportionable concoction, then it becomes Gold. Wherefore in Gold there are four Elements conjoynd in equal and anatical proportion, in which therefore there is actually a more ripe and active *Sulphur*, that is, Air and Fire, than in *Mercury*: Wherefore Gold is by Art dissolved with *Mercury*, that the unripe may be holpen by the ripe, and so Art decocting, and Nature



perfecting the Composition is ripened by the favour of Christ. Whence the cause may be derived, why by the help of the Philosophick Art, more perfect, noble, and by many degrees more elevated Gold is made, sooner and in less time, than by the work of Nature. Because Nature doth act and work this by boyling and digesting *Mercury* alone in the bowels of the Earth, without any assistant: which cannot be brought on to the due proportion of Gold, or any other Metal, in a little time. But our Art helps the work of Nature, by mingling with *Mercury* ripe Gold, in which is a *Sulphur* excellently digested, and therefore maturing and quickly digesting *Mercury* it self, to the anatick proportion of Gold, by subtilizing its Elements: whereupon there follows by Art a wonderful abbreviation of this natural Work. Wherefore, my Doctor, I return to the former points; we must not imagine, according to their mistake, who say, that the Male Agent himself approaches the Female in the coagulation, and departs afterwards; because, as is known in every generation, the conception is active and passive: Both the active and passive, that is, all the four Elements, must always abide together, otherwise there would be no mixture, and the hope of generating an off-spring would be extinguished. For in every man, the Masculine Seed to the end of his life is called in him the Agent, when it is first mingled with the Feminine; and whether it be shed out, or consumed in him, Nature for its sake doth vegetate, and is wonderfully increased and nourished, and makes to it self in the same mans loins the like specifick Seed. The like is to be judged of the Feminine Seed in the Woman; wherefore both these Seeds abide always, and are to be esteemed for original Agents, and first Patients. Yet there is a various or different nativity or generation of Mixts and Vegetables: For they are called Simple Mixts, which grow under ground, out of our sight or about the surface thereof, by the commixture of the Elements alone compounded one with another: or from their first Solution; because they grow not as Vegetables, but how much soever of matter was compact and mixt in them, so much of their first weight is reserved in the same Compounds. For example sake: how much soever at first a mass of some *Mercurial* substance doth weigh in its Mineral disposition in the bowels of the Earth, so much weight of Gold will abide digested therefrom: and the *Scoriae* and *Faeces* rejected from it, will rather be diminished than multiplied, because they receive no nourishment. But there are manifold degrees of this first and simple natural mixture: The first is, the naked concretion and composition of the four Elements, and that immediate, in which there is not yet any change made, or exaltation of one Element into another: but a simple union of a symbolizing composition of them, presevering and abiding; of which sort Stones are. The second degree follows upon the first, because from the afore-said Stones, Minerals (about which we discourse) are generated, and the more

noble subterraneous *species* emerge and arise from hence: because in these begin the action of Elements, and their mutual transmutation, though their action is not in so great vivacity and virtue as in Vegetables and Sensitives, because they have neither growth nor sense, as we have said before. The third degree is that which comprehends precious Stones and Gems, because in them is found a perfect and compleat action, from the virtue of the Elements compacted and acting mutually, as I have declared more largely in my *Philosophy*: where I have perspicuously manifested this third degree, together with the second, to be a mean betwixt the first and second composition of Natural things. Then another nativity or generation is that which is not accounted to be of Simple Mixts, but Compound Vegetables: which are truly divisible into four kinds, or Classes, as I have discoursed more largely in my other Book which I sent you. For there are Vegetables, but Sensitives more especially, which for the most part beget their like, by the Seeds of the Male and Female for the most part concurring and commixt by copulation; which work of Nature the Philosophick Art imitates in the generation of Gold. No man can artificially perfect any human Seed, but we can by Art dispose a man to a productive generation of his like: For the vital Seeds are only digested in a vegetable manner by Nature, in the loins of both Parents; but we can by coition mix the Parents Seeds in natural Vessels, which copulation is as it were an Art disposing and mingling those natural Seeds, to the begetting of Man. For example sake; the Seed of the Man, as more ripe, perfect and active, is by this artifice joyned with the Seed of the Woman, more immature and in a sort passive; which Seed of the Man, because it actually contains in it the working Elements, to wit, the Air and Fire, is therefore more ripe and active for digestion. But the Female Seed doth more actually contain the undigested and passive Elements, and which therefore are to be digested, as the Earth and Water, which being shed out and mingled together in the natural Vessels of the Female, no Foreign thing being added thereto, (but the external heat of the Woman exciting and helping the proportionable inward heat of the Mans Seed) the active Elements of the Mans Seed, digest and ripen the Feminine Seed, and thence a Man is generated compleat and perfect according to his Nature. So it is in our Philosophick Art, which is like the procreation of Man; for as in *Mercury* (of which Gold is by Nature generated in Mineral Vessels) a natural conjunction is made of both the Seeds, Male and Female, so by our artifice, an artificial and like conjunction is made of Agents and Patients. For the active Elements which obtain the name of the Masculine Seed, are naturally conjoyned with the passive Elements, which are as it were the Feminine Seed; but herein the due natural proportion is always to be observed. Now this first *Mercurial* digestion is called Conjunction, in which the act riseth out of the

possibility, that is the Masculine from the Feminine, namely the Air and Fire, from the Earth and Water, by means of a pure digestion and subtilization of them. But the Philosophers and ingenious Artificers imitating Nature, besides this natural digestion of the Seeds in *Mercury*, have by a most subtle invention made another conjunction and digestion, whence they have not generated simple Gold only, but some other far more noble and perfect thing. For they commanded Gold (in which the Elements are more active) as the Male Seed, to be joynd with *Mercury*, (in which the passive Elements are existent) that it might be duly dissolved, excluding all Foreign things, save that they used an outward heat, which by helping doth excite the internal natural heat of Gold, to digest actively and ripen *Mercury*. And so as a Man is generate by Nature, so Gold by Art: Although notwithstanding their Sperm and Seed cannot be generated by Art, because Art knows not proportion of the mixture necessary to procreate Seed; and in Man it knows neither composition, nor mixtion or first proportion, not the causes of subterraneous things, which flow out from the Earth, where is the proper and natural place of their generation. But those Seeds produced by Nature are artificially conjoynd, that out of them in a way of composition, that which is to be generated may be produced, in which both the Seeds abide together well mingled, although *Aristotle*, as you write, seem to think otherwise. Wherefore the Masculine Seed of *Mercury*, or our *Sulphur*, goes not away after coagulation, as some falsly affirm; and that this falls out in *Mercury*, by the force of the Sun especially, and that by its heat chiefly the form of Gold is perfected, as some think in subterraneous places: Yea rather by the force of the motion of its Globe, or of its Orb, and of the whole Heaven universally, because the *Solar* Rays do only heat the surface of the Earth, and not inwardly those its deep places, in which the generation of several kinds of Metals is brought about; and neither do the influences of Heaven, brought down by the Rays, reach into those lowermost parts, although the subterraneous motion of the Elements proceed first from the motion of the Heavens, and not from its Rays of light, nor from their heat, nor other influences save motion: but how this comes about, and what is the cause of this motion of subterraneous things, I believe your Reverence is not ignorant, and therefore I forbear it at present. Therefore the Sun is not the principal cause of Gold, or of its form, though there be a resemblance in names betwixt them; because as the Sun is hotter than the rest of the Planets, so Gold is hotter than any of the Metals, which the like difference of proprieties. The rest of the Planets also have obtained like names, whence this error of Fools doth arise: For they believe that every one of the seven Planets, generally and specially by its influence doth beget one special kind of Metal, whereunto by a certain propriety it agrees, and is in its nature

resembled. But it happens otherwise in subterraneous things, than in Vegetables, in which Heaven or the Sun is the cause of their generation or augmentation, not only by its motion, but also by reason of the heat of its Rays: For the Sun heats the Vegetables themselves, and the superficies of the Earth, the Elements being very strongly reflected by its Rays to the surface of the Earth, because that its Rays can proceed so far. To instance: for that from the twelfth Heaven, which obtains the utmost degree of height, proceeding to descend lower, there follow always thicker or less subtle Orbs, till you come to the concave of the Orb of the Moon where alterable things have their place, or the mixt Elements begin, and are terminated under the Hemisphers of things generable and corruptible. And therefore the more subtle and simple Fire is there found, though not altogether pure: because the simple pure Fire cannot be found apart amongst the alterable sorts of things, nor any one of the other Elements, albeit in every Compound thing simple Fire may be found, mixed with other simple Elements, else there would not be many elements, but one only. Therefore the Rays of the Stars of Heaven, of the Sun especially, pass through the foresaid Regions unrefracted, until they descending farther downwards, are reflected in the Fire by reason of its thickness; afterwards descending farther through the Sphere of the Fire, they by moving it reflect the Fire it self into the Air which is thicker. And in like manner the Rays proceeding perpendicularly to lower things, through the Sphere of Air, into the Water thicker than the Air, from which they are reflected back into the Air. And so after its manner they are reflected back by the Water moved by them, which also is much better perceived in the Earth, with its thickness above other Elements. By this decoction and reflection the Elements are moved invisibly, though not unperceivably: because we perceive heat by the motion of the Heavens, and it is always reflected from the superiour and subtler Elements, into the inferiour and thicker, unto the surface of the Earth, by means of the Rays of the Stars descending perpendicularly from aloft to the lowest things; and things thus reflected being moved, and by the Rays of the Sun reflected, accidental heat is produced in the *medium*, though sometimes by the Rays of other Stars, other qualities are produced here below, as dryness and coldness, as is manifest in Astronomy; not that the Rays are in themselves hot, but that they are the cause of heat in such manner as we have said. Now that these things are true, is manifestly known from Astronomy and Perspective, whence it is understood how generations happen in Vegetatives and Sensitives, thus much therefore may suffice. But vain Astrologers have other conceits, and think that the influences of Heaven are from the virtue of its activity, and not from the virtue of its motion: which is false, because the Rays of Heaven produce or effect nothing in the superiour Orbs. For such Rays cannot be reflected on the

aforesaid Orbs, nor be mixed with them, as they are reflected in the Elements and mingled with them, not by composition, but by a moving reflection and mixture of the same Elements, as hath been said: but in the supercelestials there is no capacity to receive new qualities, or Foreign impression, although the Rays themselves produce wonderful qualities in the Elements, moved by their reflection. Wherefore, my Doctor, the Sun in particular is not the cause of the generation of Gold, nor yet is it by means of its heat the cause of Vegetables either above the Earth, or of Mixts about its superficies, which namely we know to be heated by the Rays of the Sun, as we have said, which is also agreeable to Astronomy. But the knowledge of these things, need not any longer disputation, wherefore I pass on to what remains; for if you apply your mind to those things which we have said, you will understand and you will find it true, that by the activity of *Sulphur* digesting and coagulating *Mercury*, its form from Gold is specially perfected: but yet you must not think that from any other Metal, or any Star, this may be done, as you have written in your Epistle. That which we have said, is also to be understood of other Metals, in their kind and manner; but with difference, because in other Metals there is a double *Sulphur*: One which is superfluous, and may be separated, the form of the Metal still remaining: Another *Sulphur* is an essential part of the Metal, but united to its *Quick-silver*, and not separable, so that the form of the Metal continues: yet that imperfect and Sulphureous Metal may be perfected by a Medicine corrupting the form of that Metal, and introducing another. But what we are to think of the duplicity of this *Sulphur*, which you assert in this Philosophick Art, I pray you, my renowned Doctor, without violating the Law of our Friendship, or your Authority, that you would be pleased to consider. This duplicity of *Sulphur* is not so distinct in *Mercury* coagulated into divers Metals, that one of them should intrinsically and essentially appertain to the generation of the Metal, and be esteemed an essential part thereof, and the other ascribed to corruption. But there is in every Metallick species, equally as in Gold and Silver, a simple and single *Sulphur*; which is termed *Quick-silver*, from the first *Mercurial* composition, as hath been declared in the generation of Gold: Because *Sulphur* and *Quick-silver* are nothing else but the four Elements in *Mercury* it self, so or so proportionally disposed, as this or that Metallick species requireth. But that which is reputed a second *Sulphur*, and to be rejected, is a certain *Scoria* and faeculent part in the Metals, contracted in the coagulation of the *Mercury*; or a certain superfluity, which being unclean and impure, would not in the digestion of the *Mercury*, endure a congelation to the form of a Metal: because it was not of an homogeneal and proportionable Nature of *Mercury*, apt to be congealed and digested into a Metal. But some Philosophers have called this *Scoria*, a combustible *Sulphur*,

because it cannot subsist, but vanisheth in the testing of Metals, or is separated from them into Faeces. And here I may bring this example: the bloud in Sensitives, and sap in Vegetables, in their coagulation have several and different offices; because some parts of the bloud have a conformity unto Flesh, and therefore may be coagulated and turned into Flesh, and retain the uniform nature of Flesh, and obtain the name of Flesh. But some parts thereof residing in the pores, are of a superfluous humour, which can in no wise be converted into solid Flesh, and therefore are ejected by Sweat and Medicines, and separated from the true Flesh. But in Sanguine complexion there are many fewer superfluities, than in others: So we may conclude by way of resemblance, that it is in Gold and other kinds of Metals; that the purer or impurer *Mercury*, in its first coagulation, contained or contracted more or less superfluities, or natural impurities. Wherefore the difference is made in the coagulation of *Mercury*, which specifies and causes divers Metals; and whatever *Mercury* there is in any sort of Metal, is termed incombustible, and inseparably permanent, though in fixed Bodies it is made volatile by Art, yet by Nature it remains inseparable in an Elemental proportion. But what dross soever was contracted in the *Mercury*, and mixed with it from the beginning, (that is, in the congelation of *Mercury* in its first composition, by heat digesting it to a Metallick kind; and therefore it is by the rest taken away from the *Mercury*, that is the homogeneous *Mercurial* nature, and separated from the Metallick kind as rejectaneous and heterogeneal) this is not properly called a *Sulphur*, but a dross and certain superfluity: because *Sulphur* is nothing else but a pure act of Air and Fire, warming and digesting, or decocting the Earth and Water in *Mercury*, proportionable and homogeneous unto it. But the dross is that which in the first composition was not pertinent unto the nature of *Mercury*, nor had a proportion to any Metallick kind in the composition and digestion of the first Elements in *Mercury*. From these things it is known, that there are not in other sorts of Metals any distinct or more *Sulphurs*, than are in Gold and Silver, but one only and simple *Sulphur*; though there are in them more and greater superfluities, than are in Gold. From hence the truth of your saying is known that Gold, of all Metals cleaves most unto *Mercury*. Now this comes to pass by reason of the purity of both, because in them is less dross, dregs, or superfluity, than in others: For every thing doth naturally desire, by a through mixture and union, to be joyned to a thing of like nature to it, and proportionable in homogeneity, rather than with a thing unequal and unlike to it, as we know; like as Water very easily and without contradiction is quickly joyned to another Water, with an identative and uniting mixture. Now in Gold there is nothing but *Mercury*, therefore being there is in it little dross, (which is not of a *Mercurial* nature, as we have shewed) there is

therein no great resistance, but that a pure *Mercury* may more easily adhere to Gold and Silver, than to other Metals, in which many superfluities and dross do forbid and hinder other Metals, or their congealed *Mercury*, any contact, or through mingling with crude *Mercury*. For those superfluities, as we have already said, are not of the first composition of *Mercury*, nor of the same natural or proportional homogeneity: and if happily they be of its composition, yet they are not of its proportion; for whatever is of any things proportion, is not superfluous. Wherefore they cannot be inseparable throughly mingled, neither with *Mercury* to be coagulated by Art, nor with *Mercury* coagulated, which in the nature of its Mineralness is joynd with them in the same kind of Metal; being such dross is combustible by Fire, and therefore separable. What wonder is it then if in those Metals to which they are accidentally superadded, they hinder their natural commixtion, and permanent union which coagulated *Mercury*, or other crude *Mercury*? For this very cause Gold it self, though never so pure, can far more difficultly abide with, be joynd and adhere to an unclean and drossie *Mercury*, coagulated or not coagulated, than with a pure and clean one. Because a simple Nature doth rejoyce in the society of, and is perfected by a simple Nature, that is like to it, and same with it in its first homogeneity and Elemental proportion: but Gold, as hath been said, is nothing else but *Mercury* thickned by its proper digestion, and Elemental action: therefore albeit in the Earth there be a difference betwixt Gold and *Mercury* in ripeness, (because Gold is more ripe than *Mercury*) yet there is no diversity in their Matter. Therefore whatsoever Gold hath acquired by the digestion it hath unto maturity, *Mercury* may acquire the same without any extraneous thing. But Art to breviate and contract the Work, joyns Gold with *Mercury*, as is said, and out of two Sperms it makes and generates artificially that same thing, which Nature doth create in the Mines of one actual Seed, the identity of the Matter being always everywhere observed, but not the same active power. And therefore as nothing extraneous to its Nature, doth enter this Work in its first composition, so neither doth any thing multiply it, which is not of the first temperament thereof. Wherefore some men think falsly, that the Philosophers Stone may be composed of divers things, or of all things, and be nourished by them, instead of the aforesaid Sperms, notwithstanding divers names have been imposed on them. Neither doth this Philosophick Work eat any thing, or convert it into its own Nature, which is extraneous, because it doth not vegetate. Wherefore though there be in the said Philosophick Stone, a Body and a Soul, or a Spirit, it is not therefore vegetably animated as Trees and Plants: For this Stone, as all Minerals, is of the aforesaid first, and not of the second, or any superiour intention or imposition. But Trees and Plants are of the second imposition, as Vegetables

are of the third, fourth, fifth, or last imposition, for mixt things in those four last impositions, do vegetate. For in them the Elements by many transmutations, and by being oftner altered, are more subtle; wherefore they are more active and perfect, though they are not more durable and permanent in their permixtion, because the Elements in them are not of a fixt, but dissolvable composition; wherefore they take in their nourishment vegetably. But our Stone, as also all the Minerals, is of the first imposition; because it vegetates not, nor is vegetably nourished, but nourishment befalls it rather by apposition of a nourishment of a like nature to it, and not by vegetation. For example sake: because, as is manifest by experience, out of a Feminine Seed, to wit out of *Mercury* put to it unitively, insensibly and by way of composition this Philosophers Stone is nourished, by means of a digestive heat. For it takes and assimilates its like unto it self, to be multiplied by way of apposition, and not vegetably; wherefore it becomes weightier in quantity, and more active and perfect in quality: neither doth Fire or heat multiply this our Stone, as its due nourishment, because it is not of its first composition, but heats it by an extrinsical accident: For how can Flame or Fire multiply the Stone itself, or make it of it self more weighty, when it cannot be fixedly and permanently mingled with it, nor is not of its first composition or form? Nothing therefore nourishes and multiplies the said Stone, to the generation of the same form, except the Feminine Seed, which nourisheth it by means of heat, and nourishes it not vegetably, but by way of apposition and commixtion. He therefore who thus multiplies and nourisheth it, shall not erre, because this multiplier and nourisher is turned into the same kind. A man may indeed increase the Stone and its weight by extraneous things; but this must be done out of its natural kind, not convertible into it: For that weight would be made besides Nature, that is, not into the same *species*, nor into the unity of one *species*, yea it would be an aggregation of divers kinds, and an accidental composition, which might be separated by the Test. But when the Philosophers said, that the Stone might be made of every thing, truly they understood it not, (as some perversly interpret them) that the Stone might be made of divers things, unlike unto it both in kind and nature; or, which is more absurd, that it might be multiplied by a Flame ministred to it from without: for this reason especially, because Fire and its Flame may by a certain production arise out of every thing: Now the refutation of this opinion is manifest from what hath been said before. But when the Philosophers say, that the Stone is made of every thing, they mean, that it is made of the four Elements proportionally equalized to one another by a due and natural digestion: out of which four Elements every thing that is generable and corruptible is made. Therefore by this similitude the Philosophers say our Stone is made out of every thing,



that is, out of every Element; because if any one of them were mortified or destroyed, the whole proportion of the Golden Nature would perish, and its kind: and every thing in whatsoever latitude and sort of alterables, is generated out of the four Elements either actually, or potentially mixt: yet it cannot be properly said of every producible thing, but of our Golden Stone, and other things equally mixt, that they are made out of every thing: for this reason especially, because in those things which are not produced by an equal, but by an adequate proportion of the Elements, all the Elements are not actually existent; but in their adequate activity and passion: for some of the Elements are therein either in an active or passive power, and the rest are therein actually. But in the Philosophers Stone, which is Gold, being it is an uniform Work of Nature, all the four Elements active and passive are actually therein, and permanent in an equal proportion. For the Essence or Nature of Gold, is nothing else but the four Elements equally mixd; not that their form and matter may be said to be therein equal, but their passive and active power; that is, they are each alike and equal not in quantity, but in quality: because that the active doth not exceed the passive in its acting; nor on the other side, the passive doth not exceed the active by suffering more: because there is an equal proportion as to measure in our Gold, or in our Medicine, double hot, double moist, double cold, double dry, and all these are actually therein, by actual action and passion; that is, Fire, Air, Water, and Earth, as we have said before. And all these are said to be alike, and equal in quality, not quantity, because they are equal in actives and passives; and they are therefore durably permanent in Gold, because the passive in it consists permanently in its active, and on the other part the passive rises not up against the active. And they ought not to be alike in quantity; that is, there ought not be so much matter of Fire, as there is matter of Earth: because then the Fire by reason of its quality, would be everywhere of an unequal activity with its passive Earth, and of a far greater. Wherefore there is in Gold, as to its matter, but not as to its quality, much more of the heavier and more passive Element, than of the lighter and more active; that is, more in quantity: there is in it a greater quantity of Earth, than Water; a greater quantity of Water, than Air; a greater of Air, than Fire: wherefore it is the heaviest of all Metals. But in this unequal proportion of quantity there is an equal and like proportion of quality, of hot, dry, moist, and cold, because each of these is in Gold, as hath been said. The cause of which weight is the permanency of the solidity of the Earth and Water, and the solution of an homogeneous water with the Earth because Water dissolves in Homogeneous Earth. Also their intrinsical thorow mixture in their very least particles, is the cause of the weight; because the Water as well in Gold, as *Quick-silver*,

suffers not the Earth to have any pores in it: which is otherwise in other Metals, in which pores are insensibly made in their congelation, because of the dross mingled in those Metals all over, rejected by the *Mercurial* nature and heterogeneous: whereupon their lightness results, which is nothing else but want of matter, and porousness of the same, as weight is nothing else but a solid addition of matter. Wherefore if there were in an equal commensurative quantity, so much of the solid matter of Fire; as there is of the matter of Earth, Fire would be as weighty as Earth. But the cause of the weight of *Saturn*, is its immature congelation, because it doth not yet reject the dross of its parts, whence the pores are made in it; but the pure and impure abide through mixt together in it everywhere, as in the first crude *Quick-silver*, in which the inspissation and coagulation is weak, for that cause *Saturn* or Lead retains the weight of its *Quick-silver*, not because of the purity of its solid matter, but because of its immature coagulation or coction. Wherefore if in this Work you would not destroy the Fire and Air, you must preserve in a distinct and like proportion the heat of the Compound: But if you would not destroy the Air and the Water, then in the same Compound you must cherish the humid: so in the same manner you may preserve the Water and Earth, or the Earth and the Fire, in the said Work, by preserving rightly, and by the artifice of the Philosophick skill, both the cold and dry: because if you destroy any one of them, the proportionable form and kind of Gold is lost. For this cause the Philosophers say, our Gold is made of every thing, that is, of every Element, every Element being intrinsically preserved in it, and actually compounding it: wherefore all the Elements are intrinsically in act or power, the principles of all compounded alterable things, and for that cause are said to be all things. Furthermore, my Reverend Doctor, for your credits sake, you must understand the sayings of the Philosophers according to the possibility of Nature, and not according to the sound of Words: For they have handled this holy and hidden Art, and its Secrets, under Similitudes, Fables, Riddles, and obscure words, and have hid it purposely, that it might not be exposed to the unlearned, impious, and unworthy. Furthermore, that I may go on to other Heads of your Epistle, I understand the artifice of your Stone to be a composure from Gold, but from your writing I cannot apprehend it, because you set not down the first original of that Composition. Therefore I shall not need to handle it more at large, till you instruct me fully and more plainly in its Composition and Operation: For I cannot neither believe that the *Elixir*, or *Philosophers Stone*, can consist of the signs appearing in it, and of the properties of the nutritive vegetation of the flaming Fire, which you attribute to it, as I have openly shewed in what I have said already. But when I received your Work, and the gift of so great a Secret sent unto me, I at once understood your unfeigned love, and free confidence in me. Wherefore for your Friendship

sake, I reserve your Stone with me, and keep it as a most acceptable gift, and shall write unto you more concerning it, when you shall declare it to me more manifestly. But whereas you say, that in your Stone there are three, a Body, Spirit, and Soul, (which is manifest to you by your experience and work) the Philosophers when they said those three natural things were in their artificial Stone, understood it by way of resemblance and experiment: For they called the Earth, its Body and Bones; because it is an astringent Compound, and restrains the fluid Elements from their raw flexibility, having the Fire also with it symbolically by its driness, But they called the Water and Air its Spirit; because they are the Elements that moisten and dissolve the Earth. But they called the Air and Fire, the Soul; because they ripen and digest the whole Compound. And they named them thus, with resemblance unto Humane nature, because in the well-constituted Flesh there ought to be Bones to sustain the Body, and likewise there ought to be in the Flesh a vivacity of vegetable Accidents, which are called its Spirits: contrary to the errors of the Pagan Philosophers, who thought the vital Spirits to be something distinct from the Body compounded, and parts compounding it: so also there must be in Humane Flesh an informing Soul, digesting in man the brutal acts, and to work in him the intellectual work. But we must understand it otherwise in our Stone, in which the Earth hath the name of the Body, Air and Water obtain the name of Spirit, neither is in it a Soul but because it contains the Air and Fire; which I perceive well, you do perfectly understand. But the Philosophers divided them in this manner: By a crude Spirit, they extracted a digested Spirit out of the dissolved Body, and they had remaining a fixed mass of Ashes to be farther dissolved, in which they found an incombustible and stoney oyliness and gumminess, which they called the Soul; which enlivens, unites incerates and produces united Natures; and in the Spirit they disjoyned the Natures, so in the Oyl they re-conjoyned them. For our Stone hath not an informing nature, as a Vegetative or a Sensitive, but it hath only a formed form, which form is the very Elements themselves, because it is homogeneous. But mans Body, and that of other Sensitives, is heterogeneous: For Bones, Flesh, Bloud, Marrow, Hair and Nails, are distinguished differently in it; which is otherwise in Gold, in which whatsoever there is, is found to be of one kind. Wherefore, my Reverend Doctor, the Philosophers speak this by way of similitude, by reason of the administration of Art, and operation of Nature: not because there is a Soul in the Stone, but metaphorically, (as you well know) nor Spirit, nor Body, (as an informing form) as it is found in Man, and other Sensitives. Verily I tell you, that Oyl which naturally incerates and unites Natures, and naturally induces the Medicine into other Bodies that are to be tinged, is not compounded of any

other extraneous thing, but out of the bowels of the Body that is to be dissolved: which Oyl retains the colour of its Spirit always, until it be rethickened, and then first of all it puts on the Royal Ensigns, that is a citrineness and Metalline form, which it manifests to all; in Gold, a Golden, in Silver, a Silver colour and form: which Oyl if it be *Sol*, being dissolved, is perceived to be red inwardly, though outwardly it appear white, under the form of liquid *Quick-silver*. Now some think to compound an Oyl as generous and powerful as this Oyl is, namely out of *Mercury* throughly dried, or out of the substance of Tin, or Body of the Sun, commixed with ingredients of divers kinds; but for what concerns our Work, their Experiment is fallacious. They can indeed reduce the *species* of Metals into a kind of Oyl, but they cannot at any hand reduce them into a Metallick kind, observing and keeping the proportion of the things to be mixed sound and entire. But that Oyl may be profitable for Medicine to sensitive Creatures, because the nature of Gold is dissolved therein; but yet impertinently and unprofitably as to our Philosophick Work. Besides, my Honoured Doctor, that I may lightly touch on the remaining Heads of your Epistle, you must diligently and wisely observe, that Fire and *Azor*, wash *Laton*: But *Azor* is not raw *Quick-silver* simply extracted out of the Mine, but it is that which is extracted by *Quick-silver* it self, out of the dissolved Bodies; which is found to be more ripe upon tryal. Wherefore if *Laton* be an unclean Body, it is depurated by such an *Azor*, which you write that you have had formerly; and by this *Laton* purified by *Azor*, we make our Medicine for curing every sick person. Indeed this *Azor* is made of the *Elixir*, because *Elixir* is nothing else but a Body resolved into a *Mercurial Water*; after which resolution, *Azor* is extracted out of it, that is, an animated Spirit. And it is called *Elixir*, from *E*, which is *out of*, and *Lixis*, which is *Water*, because all things are made out of this Water: and *Elixir* is the second part of the Philosophick Work, as *Rebis* is the first in the same Work. But the Tincture constitutes the third Work; for as the matter of this Composition produces divers effects, so it obtains different names one after another. Thence it manifestly appears, that *Azor* is not requisite to the *Elixir*, because in this Work the *Elixir* goes before *Azor*, and not the contrary; like as Water precedes the Oyl, and the Spirit the Soul: For *Azor* is drawn and extracted our of the *Elixir*, as Oyl out of Water, and not contrariwise; as mention is made elsewhere. For example sake; as in the Art of Physick, pure simple Fountain-water, by boyling in the first concoction, is joyned with the Flesh of a Chicken, and thence in the first degree of concoction we obtain a Broth, a good and perfect decoction, and the humid, watry and airy parts of the Chicken being actually dissolved in the aforesaid Water; though there be other Elements therein also actually. But that it may be made a much more perfect

Medicine, and more generous for restoring man's sick Body unto health, the decocted Body of the Chick is beaten into a mash, with the said Water already altered into a boyled Broth, or with part of it, and is distilled by a stronger decoction, whence a Broth and decoction will be made much more noble and generous, partaking of the whole nature of the Chicken: Because by this second decoction not only the moist parts, but the hot parts, that is, its aerial and fiery parts, being melted into the Broth or decoction, are throughly mingled and dissolved: and therefore the whole virtue of the Chick is in such a decoction extracted into the aforesaid Liquor. So it falls out in the Philosophick Work, because the crude Mineral Spirit, like Water, is joyned with its Body, to dissolve it in its first decoction: whence it is called *Rebis*, because it is compounded of two, or a double thing, to wit, of the Masculine and Feminine Seed, that is, of the thing to be dissolved, though it be one thing and matter: whence the Verses,

*Rebis is two things joyn'd, yet it's  
but one  
Dissolv'd to their first Seeds, the  
Sun or Moon.*

Now out of these two things dissolved together, the *Elixir* is compounded, that is, a tinged Water: whence the Verses,

*Pure Bodies are of Lixis Made by  
Art;  
Hence Greeks Elixir term its second  
part.*

Out of this *Elixir*, my Venerable Doctor, as out of the first Broth or Bullion of a simple decoction, *Azor* is extracted, to wit, by a stronger and iterated distillation: which *Azor* resembles and participates the nature of its Body from which it was extracted, which is hot, and retains its virtue in it self, namely an Oylie nature, which is hot and moist, because it is actual Fire and Air; though all the Elements are in it in Essence, and by Composition. Medicines therefore to cure the Bodies of Sensitives, may be composed out of the said Metals by several artifices; but they are not pertinent to the Philosophick Work, as the *Elixir* is to *Azor*: that is, the vital Spirit and fugitive Soul are not diaphanous, nor transparent as the clear tear from the Eye: nor every dissolving Spirit, though they be each of higher Natures than another, according to their degrees, as the Soul is higher than the crude Spirit, being they are not of one form. For as the Soul lies hid under the species of a dissolved Spirit, before its re-inspissation,

(for the Soul being extracted out of the Body, always appeareth like *Quick-silver*) so after its inspissation the Soul and Body lie hid under the *species* of a Body. Your Worship hath seen an Experiment thereof, in the powder sometime sent to that King whose Physician you are; in which Experiment, *Quick-silver* was found in the *species* of *Quick-silver*, but if that which remained in the bottom had been coagulated, it would certainly have assumed the same form of Powder: But that Powder must be called A Tincture nominally only, not that it is a Medicine for Metals, for it is not yet perfectly fixt; yet as a Medicine for Men, it is of very good force. But the fixt Medicine without all doubt exceeds this humane Medicine in all virtues, both as to Metals, and to Men; which cannot come to pass in a clear diaphanous and transparent Liquor: Because if the aforesaid *Elixir* and *Azor*, that is, Spirit and Soul, did appear in, and had a transparency, now the Earth as to its proportion had left the Water, and had been separated from it, which had thickned and coagulated its parts, causing an opacity in the *Elixir* and *Azor*, and making a congealable Metallick form to consist. For in the condensing of fixed Metallick *species*, the condenser must act upon the condensable, and the coagulating upon the coagulable; which cannot be in the aforesaid diaphanous and clear Water. But it happens otherwise in Vegetables, in which a simple and diaphanous Water is thickned by decoction into the Vegetables themselves: which yet by the Test of the Fire doth at length vanish and evaporate, because it is not permanent and fixed in its composition, because it had not with it an Earth Naturally homogeneal to it in its composition, as *Quick-silver* hath: which Earth indeed is the cause of permanent fixation in homogeneous things: wherefore simple Water cannot by coagulation be so fixed with Vegetables, as *Mercury* with Metals. If therefore *Mercury* should be reduced to a transparency in the Work of the Philosophers, it would by good reason remain of an uncoagulable substance; nor would it be congealed upon *Laton* to a Metallick form, *species* and proportion, which carries not with, nor in it self its own congelation, namely Water the Earth: which Earth (as we said) is *Mercurial*, and the first cause of Inspissation, Coagulation, and Fixation. If then this Water abide destitute of Metallick proportion, how should it be possible that such like *species* should be produced from this Composition? They also erre who think to extract a limpid transparent Water out of *Mercury*, and out of it to work many wonderful things: For be it so that they can perfect such a Water, that Work would conduce nothing either to Nature or proportion, nor could it restore or build up any perfect kind of Metal: For so soon as *Mercury* is throughly changed from his first Nature, so soon he is forbidden entrance into our Philosophick Work, because he hath lost his Spermatick and Metallick Nature. From these things it is manifest, what truth there is in your opinion, and in what it is contrary and improper, when

you say, there must be had (as I think) to perfect the highest *Elixir*, a Gum in which are all things necessary thereunto, and containing the four Elements, and it is a most clear Water as a tear from the Eye, made Spiritual, &c. which make Gold to be a mere Spirit: For a Body penetrates not a Body, but a subtle congealed Spiritual substance, which penetrates and colours a Body. Let it be so as you say, my Venerable Doctor, that Natures are not joyned but in a Gum or Oylie substance, and equal proportioned, having a Spiritual Nature, the Elements being yet fixedly shut up in it; unto which Gumminess the whole Philosophers Stone is at last reduced by Inceration, under a gentle flux, after the manner of an Inceration resembling all the Elements, standing like Copper and in the nature of Copper, existing also in a subtle Spiritual Nature penetrating and colouring Metallick Bodies. For this Stone in the sublimation of the first crude Body, hath not lost its kind, namely of the same Spirit, neither yet in the perfect and great Gum doth it lose its first Nature: Therefore Gum and Oyl belong not otherwise unto this Work, but as Elements equally proportioned shut up together, resolvable, united in the Oylie viscosity of the Earth, retained, burned, inseparably mixt. For this Gum of Oyl first is extracted out of the Body, drawn into an incinerated Spirit, till the superfluous humidity of the Water, be turned into Air, and one Element be excited from another Element by digestion, and what was of an Aqueous form, become of an Oylie nature: and so the whole Stone at last assumes the name of Gum and *Sulphur*. For *Geber* teacheth this, when he saith, as you have written in your Epistle, if any person know to joyn and friendly unite our *Sulphur* unto Bodies, he hath found one of the greatest Secrets, and one way of perfection: as if he should say, If any man can reduce a Body to this, that it may be made a Gum which may be thoroughly mingled with other imperfect Bodies, he hath found the greatest Secret of Nature, &c. because this perfect Stone is a Gum and a *Sulphur*, as is known by what we have already said. But you must know, that *Geber* with highest prudence and wonderful artifice hides the truth under a Veil, intermingling with it many obscurities and falsities, which those who are ignorant at first appearance imagine to be truth: yet he speaking like a Philosopher secretly under his craft, doth openly, learnedly and Philosophically describe the truth: wherefore the unexperienced and Sophisters, not understanding his mind and wit, nor the nature of the thing, do perversly turn aside to the vulgar exposition and sound of the words. For he saith, If thou knowest that, we have said something to thee; but if thou knowest not, we have said nothing to thee. Wherefore in reading Philosophick Books, consider especially the possibility of Nature; notwithstanding some writers of this Art have also sometimes erred, and have happened sometimes to have handled it, as to the natural truth either ill

or ambiguously. As it may be observed that *Arnoldus de Villa Nova* hath said, in a Book which he called his *Rosary*, that raw *Mercury*, that is, *Quick-silver*, which in its own nature is cold and moist, by Sublimation may be made hot and dry; afterwards being revived, it becomes hot and moist like the complexion of Man. You will say then, what wonder it is if it be joynd with the Sun, that it likewise becomes of the nature of the Sun? For *Mercury* is of a convertible nature, as the Heavenly *Mercury*, which is such as the Planet is with which it is in Conjunction. For that *Arnoldus*, though in other Sciences he were a Reverend and Ingenious Doctor, yet in this Art he handled Experiments only, without the learning of the Causes. Now when he saith, that in the first Sublimation the crude Spirit is sublimed from the inferiour salt Minerals, and that *Mercury* it self, which in its own nature is cold and moist, becomes a Powder of an hot and dry nature, as he saith, this yet conduces nothing to our Work. But let it be so, that he makes of *Mercury* such a Powder as he speaks of, that is, thoroughly dried and hot by sublimation from Salts; yet these Purifications are vain and impertinent to our Work, yea as to the perfecting of our Work they are hurtful. For though these inferiour Minerals communicate with Metals in their nature, yet not in kind and proportion: For the superiour and inferiour Minerals, in their nativity and subterraneous formation, are of one and the same constitution universally, and therefore of the same nature; but they differ in proportion, quality, and kind or form. Wherefore if *Mercury* be distilled with those inferiour Minerals, and throughly dried, then his internal nature is confounded and disproportioned, and is hindred and made unprofitable, as to the effect of a Feminine Seed, and invalid for our Metallick Work. For so soon as he is turned into the form of a Powder, (except from his Body of *Sol* or *Luna*) so soon he undergoes a thorough driness, unprofitable to the Philosophick Work. Yet I deny not, but that a drosse and impure *Mercury* may and ought, by a simple Salt, be sublimed or purged once or oftner, according to a due Philosophick experience, to take from it its dross and outward Mineral impurity, so that notwithstanding the fluidity and radical humidity of *Mercury* may always remain unaltered: For the *Mercurial* kind and form in such a Work, ought to remain uncorrupted, as hath been said already. Nor ought its outward form to be reduced into a thoroughly dried Powder; because its external form being corrupted, shews its internal nature to be confounded, unless it be in the way of generation that it be altered, as may be manifestly seen in the signs which appear in the Work of the natural way. For there are Sublimations of *Mercury* from its own proper Bodies, which are conjoynd and mingled with it, by an Amalgamation which it in its most inward parts, from which being oftentimes raised and reunited, it rejects and loses its superfluities, and is not confounded in its nature; and afterwards it is very



agreeable to the Philosophick Work, and powerful to dissolve Metallick species; yet it is not greatly altered intrinsically for the Philosophick Work, unless it be altered by fixed Bodies dissolved in it. But wonderful things may be done in Medicines for Sensitives from this dried Powder, whether it be reduced into an Oyl, or into Water, or it abide in a Powder; but it is not at all pertinent to the Philosophick Experiment. And therefore it must be universally noted, that so soon as *Mercury* is turned into a Powder, of whatever sort, contrary to the nature of its Body to be dissolved, so soon will it be unprofitable to the Philosophick Work. There are certain deceiving Sophisters, who by joyning *Venus* to it, or adding other species, make a Sophistick Work; that is, they give unto imperfect Copper a colour, but not natural; they induce indeed a kind of an apparency, but not a true nature, that is, transmutation: like as he that paints a dead Image, or composes a Statue of Wood, which appears only, but is not; and as much as a living differs from an Image and Picture, so much differs their Work from the Philosophick. Hence this mixture perseveres not in the Test of the Fire, though it be Mineral; because Nature attracts it not from a proportionable digestion, nor hath Art vehemently decocted it to an alteration of the mixt natures: wherefore that Copper appears to be superficially only, and not permanently and intrinsically tinged. Wherefore we must not adhere to the Experiments of deceitful Sophisters, because the truth of the natural Art confutes this Sophistick Work, and shews it to be false. And if you will instance farther, and say, that as the said *Arnoldus* by Sublimation purged away the dross of *Mercury*, and dried it in its nature; so also (as you say) he by reviving it, moistned it again, and made the *Mercury* it self hot and moist, and in its nature conformable to its Body. This hinders not (my Reverend Doctor) nor refutes the truth of the Philosophick Art, yea rather an errour appears in the Natural Art: For, as is manifest, *Arnoldus* doth teach, if you regard the sound of his words, that *Mercury* thus thoroughly dried, is revived by hot water into which it is cast; and he saith that it is made hot and moist, when it was first sublimed hot and dry. But what true Philosopher would say, that *Mercury* or any other Metal, is changed in nature and internal quality by simple Water, however hot or boyling, or that it could thence acquire its natural humidity, and so be revived? Therefore *Mercury* in this revival acquires nothing, because common water neither decocts nor alters it, because it neither hath entrance nor ingress into it, and that which neither hath entrance nor ingress, alters not; because every thing to be altered, must first be thoroughly mingled. For indeed such a Water may wipe away from it some superficial dross swimming upon it, but cannot infuse into it a new quality: For what nature soever *Mercury* reduced into a Powder, and mortified by Sublimations, retained, such nature altogether it

retains revived by Water. Now this I would have to be spoken in honour and respect unto the said *Arnoldus*; but I contemplate and defend the truth of Nature and Experience. Furthermore, honoured Doctor, that I may by this my Answer satisfie your Epistle, and put an end thereto, I humbly entreat you that you would take in good part, and favourably bear what I have written, not by way of Confutation, but Disputation: But if I have answered any thing that offends you, take it yet in good part and favourably, or signifie it to me in writing, and I will satisfie you to my power as the most true Doctor our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, blessed for ever and ever, shall give and teach me.

*Thanks be to Christ.*