

The Admirable  
**EFFICACY,**  
And almost incredible Virtue of true  
Oil, which is made of  
**SULPHUR-VIVE,**  
Set on fire, and called commonly Oil  
of Sulphur per Campanam,

To distinguish it from that Rascally  
Sophisticate Oil of SULPHUR, which  
instead of this true Oil, is unfaithfully  
prepared, and sold by Druggists and  
Apothecaries, to the dishonour of Art, and  
unspeakable damage of their deluded Patients.

Faithfully collected out of the Writings of the most  
acute Philosopher, and unparalleled Doctor of this  
last Age, John Baptist Van-Helmont, of a noble  
Extraction in Belgia, and confirmed by the  
Experience of.

George Starkey,  
who is a Philosopher by the Fire.

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**The admirable Efficacy, and almost incredible  
virtue of true Oil which is made of SULPHUR  
VIVE, set on fire, and called commonly Oil of  
SULPHUR per Campanam<sup>1</sup>.**

OF this most noble Liquor, and not vulgar  
Medicine, the noble Helmont writes thus in his  
excellent Discourse concerning the Tree of Life.

In the year 1600. a certain man belonging to  
the Camp whose Office was to keep account of the  
Provision of Victuals which was made for the Army,  
being charged with a numerous Family of small  
Children, unable to shift for themselves, himself  
being then 58 years of Age was very sensible of the  
great care and burden which lay upon him to  
provide for them, while he lived, and concluded that  
should he die, they must be enforced to beg their  
bread from door to door, whereupon he came (said  
Helmont) and desired of me something for the  
preservation of his life. I then (being a young man)  
pitied his sad condition, and thus thought with

myself the fume of burning Sulphur, is by  
experience found powerfully effectual, to preserve  
Wines from corruption. Then I recollecting my  
thoughts, concluded, that the acid liquor or Oil,  
which is made of Sulphur Vive, set on fire, doth of  
necessity contain in itself this fume, yea, and the  
whole odor of the Sulphur, in as much as it is  
indeed nothing else, but the very Sulphurous fume  
imbibed, or drunk up in its Mercurial Salt, and so  
becomes a condensed liquor. Then I thought with  
myself Our blood being (to us) no other then as it  
were the Wine of our life, that being preserved, if it  
prolong not the life, at least it will keep it sound  
from those many Diseases which proceed originally  
from corruption, by which means the life being  
sound, and free from diseases, and defended from  
pains and grief, might be in some sort spun out to a  
further length than otherwise. Upon which  
meditated resolution, I gave him a Viol glass, with a  
small quantity of this Oil, distilled from Sulphur  
Vive burning, and aught him (moreover) how to  
make it as he should afterward need it; I advised  
him of this liquor, he should take two drops before  
each Meal in a small draught of Beer, and not  
ordinarily to exceed that Dose, nor to intermit the  
use of it, taking for granted, that two drops of that  
Oil contained a large quantity of the fume of  
Sulphur, the man took my advice, and at this day in  
the year 1641. he is lusty and in good health, walks  
the Streets at Brussels, without complaint, and is  
likely longer to live, and that which is most  
remarkable, in this whole space of forty one years,  
he was not so much as ill, so as to keep his Bed, yea,  
although (when of a great age) in the depth of  
Winter, he broke his Leg, near to his Ankle-Bone,  
by a fall upon the Ice, yet with the use of this Oil,  
he recovered without the least Symptom of a Fever,  
and although in his old age, poverty had reduced  
him to great straits, and hardship, and made him  
feel much want of things necessary for the comfort  
and conveniency of Life; yet he lives healthy and  
sound, though spare and lean. The old mans name  
is John Mass, who waited upon Martin Rithovius,  
Bishop of Ypre, in his Chamber, where the Earls of  
Horne<sup>2</sup>, and Egmondon<sup>3</sup> were beheaded<sup>4</sup> by the  
Duke of Alva<sup>5</sup>, and he was then 25 years of age, so

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<sup>2</sup> Admiral Horn.

<sup>3</sup> Count Egmont, Distinguished Soldier and Dutch Protestant  
National Champion.

<sup>4</sup> June, 1568.

<sup>5</sup> In response to *The Netherland Heresy*, Spanish Duke of Alva,  
Fernando Álvarez de Toledo (appointed Captain-General) was  
dispatched with 10,000 troops to position a garrison in all Spanish  
Netherland cities and the establish in 1567, the 'Council of Troubles'  
(more notoriously known as the 'Blood Council'). It superseded all  
other institutions and within three months 1,800 of the highest, the  
noblest men suffered death of which many carcasses were displayed  
throughout the country ultimately leading to the Netherlands Revolt  
in 1572.

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<sup>1</sup> Bell.

that now he is complete 99 years of age, healthy and lusty, and still continues the use of that liquor daily.

Thus far Helmont, which relation as it is most remarkable, so it gives the Philosophical reason of his advice, on which it was grounded: Elsewhere the same Author relates how by this liquor he cured many dangerous deplorable Fevers, which by other Doctors had been given over for desperate. In other places he commends it as a peerless remedy to assuage the insatiable thirst which accompanies most Fevers.

To which relation and testimony of this most learned Doctor, and acute Philosopher, I shall add my own experience.

I find it a rare preservative against corruption, not only in living Creatures, but even in dead flesh, Beer, Wine, Ale, &c. a recoverer of dying Beer, and Wines that are decayed, a cure for Beer, when sick and roping; Flesh by this means may be preserved so incorruptible, as no embalming in the World can go beyond it, for the keeping of a dead Carcass, nor Salting come near its efficacy, as to the conserving Meat, or Fowls, or Fish, which by this means, are not only kept from corruption, but made a mumial<sup>6</sup> Balsome, which is itself a preservative from corruption, of such as shall eat thereof, which being a curious rarity and too costly for to be made a vulgar experiment, I shall pass it over, and come to those uses which are most beneficial, and desirable.

It is an excellent cleanser of the Teeth, being scoured with it, they will become as white as the purest Ivory, and the mouth being washed with Oil dropped in water or white-Wine, so as to make it only of the sharpness of Vinegar, it prevents the growing of that yellow scale which usually adheres to the Teeth, and is the forerunner of their putrefaction, it prevents their rottenness for future, and stops it (being begun) from going further, takes away the pain of the teeth, diverts Rheums, and is a sure help for the strong favour of the Breath, making it very sweet: In a word, there is not a more desirable thing can be found, for such who would have clean or sound Teeth, or sweet Breath, or to be free from Rheums: for which use let the water be made by dropping this Oil into it, as sharp as Vinegar, as I said before.

Against a tickling cough and hoarseness, it is a rare remedy, not only taken two or three drops, twice a day inwardly, in the usual drink one uses before each meal, but also by gargling the Throat with it, and (so used) it is excellent against swelled Throats, Angina's, Struma's, Palates of the mouth inflamed, or the Uvula of the Throat, or the Almonds of the Ears, which are (usually said then to be) fallen; It is excellent also against the Head-ache,

and to divert Rheums from the Eyes, to wash the Temples therewith, likewise to take away Tetter, Morpew, Itch, or Scabs, this dropped in water is a pleasant, safe, and effectual remedy.

Besides which outward applications, it is a Lord internally taken, preventing corruption, rooting out the seeds thereof, though never so deeply concealed in the body, and upon that score opening inveterate obstructions, eradicating old pains, and preventing otherwise usual relapses into Stranguretical, Colical, or Arthritic pains: it is abstersive, cleansing all Excrementitian settlings in the Mesaraick or Mesenterial Vessels, and so cutting off the original source, and taking away the cause of putrefactive corruption, which is the productive beginner of very many diseases.

On this score it lengthens the life, and frees the body from many Pains and Ailes, to which otherwise it would be subject.

It is a pleasant remedy, having only a little sharpness, which to the Palate is most grateful, and yet this Acidity is contradistinct from that Acidity which is the forerunner of putrefaction, which it kills and destroys, as the Acidity of Spirit of Vitriol is destroyed by the fixed Acrimony of its own *Caput mortuum*, or that of Vinegar, by the touch of *Cerussè*<sup>7</sup> or *Minium*<sup>8</sup>.

Preternatural heat and thirst in Fevers, is no way allayed so speedily, and easily, as by this, nor is there anything that for a constant continuance may be more safely and profitably taken; Spirit of Salt (such as the noble Helmont speaks of) alone may be joined with this, for its safety, and continual use with profit, especially in Nephritical distempers, and the heat or sharpness of Urine.

Now as this is so noble a medicine, so there is none in the World more basely adulterated and counterfeited, our wise Doctors commending for it (*quid pro quo*) an adulterated mineral acidity of Vitriol, distilled in a Retort from vulgar Sulphur, which the Apostate Chemists prepare, and sell for, and the Knavish Apothecaries use, and give to their Patients instead of this true Spirit, which if sincere is clear as water, ponderous, and exquisitely acid, made of Sulphur Vive only, set on Fire without any other mixture, and the fumes received in a broad Glass, fitted for the purpose, vulgarly called a *Campana* or Bell, from its shape or likeness.

Most sottish<sup>9</sup> is that Maxime of the Doctors, that Spirit of Sulphur and Vitriol are of one nature, when experience teaches, that the mere Acetosity of Vitriol (which brings over nothing of its excellent

<sup>7</sup> White or Black Lead, Rust of Lead.

<sup>8</sup> Red lead, Lead tetroxide, Cinnabar.

<sup>9</sup> Stupefied from; as if from drink. 2. Tending to drink excessively.

<sup>6</sup> Mumio, Mumijo, Mountain Balsam, mineral supplement.

virtue) will dissolve Argent Vive, which the strongest Spirit of Sulphur, truly, and not sophistically made, will not touch, nor will that recover Beer or Wines, or preserve them, as this will do, one therefore is an unripe Esurine<sup>10</sup> Acetosity, of little virtue: the other a Balsom of an Antidotary virtue, a preservative against corruption, and upon that score nothing can be used more effectually as a preservative against, or a remedy in, Contagious Fevers, Small-Pox, Measles, or Pestilence than this, nor more ridiculously than the other, which being drawn from the vulgar Sulphur, that hath an infection of malignity mixed with it (which it took from the Arsenical nature of the Minerals from which it was melted) adds nothing of virtue to the *crude vitriolate* Spirits, but only that which was before of little virtue, to become a Medicine of more danger and hazard, but not a jot more goodness, than it was, when first drawn from the Vitriol; which being of itself clear, and crude, is for to deceive the ignorant (by its Colour,) tinted with some Root or Bark; Thus the credulous world is imposed on, and cheated, while instead of most noble remedies (in name promised) adulterated trifles are produced, to the Disparagement of Art, and the scandal and reproach of the professors Medicine.

To discover which abuses, and vindicate true Art, I have made my *Praeludium*, concerning this Oil or Spirit of Sulphur, the virtues of which (if truly and faithfully made) are so eminently remarkable, and almost incredibly efficacious, that I thought it not unworthy my pains, in a few lines to communicate to the studious Reader, both what real benefit is to be expected from the true, and what injury is done to deluded (at least) if not destroyed Patients, by the Sophisticate Oil of Sulphur.

### Post-Script.

That those who desire this so pleasant, so efficacious, and profitable a remedy, may not be abused by the base counterfeit Oil of Vitriol, corruptly called Oil of Sulphur, because it has been once distilled from common unwholesome Brimstone, and tinted with some Bark or Root, of which the Town is full, and all Apothecaries Shops, to the great abuse of Art, but much greater of those who make use of it instead of the true, when indeed it has not one quality like thereto: Let the Reader be informed that at George Starkey's House, in St. Thomas Apostles, next door to Black-Lyon-Court; And at Richard Johnsons, at the Globe in Mountague-Close in Southwark, the true is to be had, drawn from Sulphur Vive (set on Fire) without

any addition, but the Sulphur itself, which is easily known by its clearness, sharpness, weight, not working on Quick-silver, turning bitter like to Gall, on the filings of Silver, preserving Wine and Beer from Corruption, restoring them when decayed, and in a word, by its quenching feverish heat and thirst, &c. As before has been rehearsed at large, may by anyone be distinguished, from that which is false and Sophisticate. However at those two places he may be confident of that which is real and true; And likewise at Richard Johnsons House, in Mountague-Close in Southwark aforesaid, you may have any Chemical Salts, Oils, and Spirits.

Besides which Oil or Spirit of Sulphur, several other rare and admirably effectual Medicinal Secrets for the certain, safe, and speedy cure of most (if not all) diseases, as hath been proved by many hundred Patients (adjudged rather incurable or desperately dangerous by other Doctors) are there to be had, being the more than ordinary Secrets, and preparations of George Starkey, who entitles himself a Philosopher by the Fire.

In particular, that Pill, or Antidote, injuriously challenged as the Invention of Mr. Richard Mathews, who in truth had that Preparation (for which he has since been so famous) from the said George Starkey, the true Author thereof, who had it from God, by studious search, without the help of Book or Master, and which Preparation he hath since amended, and advanced in its virtue beyond comparison of that which Mr. Mathews had from him, as has been, and is daily confirmed by the Experience of able Men. Concerning which Antidote, or Pill, or rather Anodinous<sup>11</sup> Elixir, its virtues, and advancement, to almost a true Universality, by four variations thereof, which the first Author of the thing (by long Experience) found out, he has wrote particularly, and at large, with the way of administering it, and how to order the Patient, by one or all of those Preparations, for his recovery, out of any the most desperately acute, or fixed Cronical disease, which Book being now ready for the Press, in few days God willing, shall see the light. It is called a brief Examination and Censure of several Medicines, &c.

For the undeceiving of such who have been injuriously and falsely persuaded, that only Mr. Richard Mathews, and Paul Hobson have that Medicine truly prepared, condemning all others as counterfeit, to the disparagement, and palpable injury of the first Inventor, who accounts it unreasonable, that he who learned what he had from him, should censure himself as a counterfeit, unless he bind himself up to his Preparation, which though it be a true one, yet is the most inferior in

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<sup>10</sup> Causing hunger; eating; corroding

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<sup>11</sup> Spanish *Anodinos*, bland.

virtue of all the Author knows, and called by him, his Elixir Diaphoretic, commune; Of which, able judicious Practitioners (having once brought his more effectual, and higher graduated Preparations in the same kind) have so low an esteem (comparatively to these others) that they desire no more thereof.

Farewell,

**George Starkey,**

FINIS.