

The
Tomb
of
SEMIRAMIS
Hermetically
Sealed¹,

**Which if a Wise-man open (not the
Ambitious Covetous Cyrus) he shall find
the Treasures of Kings, inexhaustible
Riches to his content.**

H.V.D.

*He that exercises Love, will apprehend what I say:
but if I speak to the ungrateful, he shall not comprehend my
sayings: St. Augustine of Divine Love.*

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Most Noble and most Famous, S.R.J. curious in the inspection of Nature, and my most honoured Patrons.

Not only in former times, but also in this old also in this old Age of the World, nothing hath been deeper buried, nor hitherto more desired by all, especially the lovers of Art, than the knowledge of that great Mystery of the Philosophers, which by a known word is called the Philosophers-Stone; We therefore preserving the Inscription of the Monument, do raise this Knowledge, buried and obscured under the pretext of the Tomb of the most wise Semiramis, formerly Queen of Babylon, out of its Grave, and present it to the view of the Learned, which if (not an ambitious covetous Cyrus, but) a wise man open, he will to his satisfaction find Royal and inexhaustible Treasures: I may also add constant Health: which two, you will say, are the principal supporters of an happy life.

But some haply of no small ingenuity will imagine that this Tomb may be opened by Women's

¹ *Tumba Semiramidis hermeticè sigillata, quam si sapiens aperuerit non Cyrus ambitiosus avarus, regum ille thesauros, divitiarum inexhaustos, quod sufficiat, inveniet.* (1674).

work, or Children's sport: but let them know that this Knowledge is a most deep River, wherein the Lamb wades, that is, the upright profits; and the Elephant swims, that is, the most Learned do fluctuate, yea are drowned in their opinions, errors and doubts; whilst one is yet doubtful concerning the true subject of the Great work, yea generally a stranger to it; another very solicitous in acquiring the sophical Mercury. wearies himself with unsuccessful labours, not knowing what it is, or of what form; Another tortures himself with vain perplexity to know what the Philosophers Fire is, what the magical Elements, the Key, or dissolving Menstruum, whence it is to be drawn, whether sweet, or corrosive? cold or fiery? it hath troubled me often to see such men so concerned, and in vain laborious in those things, wherein they at length could find nothing but vanity and affliction of mind; wherefore commiserating them by the impulse of Charity, I do freely impart (though many will accuse me as guilty of violated silence) the Light mercifully communicated to me, that they may use the same as a Key to the Sanctuary of that sacred Knowledge.

But the curious Industry, and indefatigable Curiosity of you, being most excellent in the exact Arcana's and Work of Polydaedalus nature, having invited all the Learned men of the World by your most sweet incitements, to communicate the most secret things, enjoin and oblige me to make you (the genuine Sons of all sorts of Knowledge) Heirs of this, which in my judgment is the most exact and curious Work of all Nature. But who I am, inquire not. I am a man that makes it my study to profit others, your Friend, and an admirer of your Virtues, known to many, at least by name.

Farewell therefore, ye Students of Nature, and High-Priests of Art, the lofty Stars of Germany, God be with you, and with his Power strengthen your Works and Thoughts, that they may be highly advantageous to the whole Commonwealth of Learning, for the increase of the Public-good, and the immortal Glory of your own Names.

From my Study, Jan.1. 1674.

CHAPTER I.
Of the Physical subject
of the Philosophers Stone.

The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of our Work, and the end Charity, and love of our Neighbour. Entering therefore with the assistance of our good God upon so divine a Work, it must be first enquired, what the subject thereof is. For as a Plough-man in vain prepares his Ground for Harvest, unless he be assured of the Seed; so also he

prepares the Chymical Ground without any recompense, if he knows not what he sows therein: and herein at this day many do perplex themselves, and are hurried into different opinions.

But this is not a place to discuss all these things, whilst some do seek it in the Animal Kingdom in Blood, Sperm, Sweat, Urine, Hair, Dung, Eggs, Serpents, Toads, Spiders, &c. Others are with great diligence employed in the Vegetable Kingdom, especially in Wine for the unprofitable Magistry. For though it be manifest to us, that the supreme Medicine of our health may be obtained in either Kingdom, and indeed in Man, (especially in his heart) as also in Wine: for as Gold contains the virtues of all Minerals, so do these two comprehend the powers of all Animals and Vegetables as contracted into one; yet that the great work of Philosophers could be made from them, was never in the thought of any Adept, it is therefore requisite to be sought in the Mineral Kingdom. But there is also here a great company of Dissenters, so that we have need of an *Oedipus*. For some there be that think to extract it out of the middle Minerals, as they call them, namely, Salt, Niter, Alum, and such other, but all in vain, because they have in them no Argent vive, into which they may be resolved; in which error even we in our primitive ignorance were also involved. It remains therefore to be supposed, that Metals are the Physical subject of our blessed Stone. But here also the matter is in suspense, because Metals are some perfect and some imperfect.

But in fine we say, that all fused Metals, but especially the not fused, though imperfect, may by the intimate depuration of their original pollution (which yet is very difficult, and by outward appearance scarce possible) be the subject of the Stone, whereof, said Flamel, *some have operated in Jupiter, others in Saturn, but I (said he) have operated and found it out in Sol:* and in Exercit. ad Turbam² it is read, *That all Metals clean and unclean are internally Sol, and Luna, and Mercury, but there is one true Sol, which is drawn from them.* The Author of the Secret work of the Hermetick Philosophy³, Can. 16. said, *He that seeks the Art of multiplying and perfecting imperfect Metals but by the nature of Metals, deviates from the truth; for Metals must be expected from Metals, as the species of Man from Man, of Beast from Beast.* And Can. 18. He proceeds thus: *Perfect Bodies are endowed with a more perfect Seed; under the hard shell therefore of the perfect*

Metals lies the perfect Seed, which he that knows how to extract by Philosophical Resolution, is entered into the Royal Path. So also that Anonymous Philalethes⁴ in his Introduction into the King's Sacred Palace⁵, Chapter 19. concerning the progress of the Work in the first forty days; *There is indeed in all (even in the common) Metals, Gold, but nearer in Gold and Silver, though (as the same Adept speaks well) there is yet one thing in the Metallic Kingdom of an admirable off-spring, in which our Gold is nearer than in common Gold and Silver, if you seek it in the hour of its nativity, which melts in our Mercury, as Ice in warm Water, &c.*

But leaving now these more imperfect Metals, at present we declare those two great and more perfect Luminaries *Sol* and *Luna*, to wit, Gold and Silver, to be the Physical subject of the Stone, which way a great part of the Philosophers have followed, and came to their desired end. Which same thing Augurellus⁶ shows, 2 Chrysop⁷. when he said,

*Take a Metal pure,
and purged of all its dross,
whose Spirit recedes in its secret part,
and being pressed with a great weight,
lives privily, and desires to be released from bands,
and to be sent out of prison to Heaven,
being spread into thin plates.*

The same in Chrys. lib. 1. *Seek not the principles of Gold anywhere else: for in Gold is the seed of Gold; though being close shut up, it retires further, and is to be sought by us with tedious labour.* Concerning the dignity of both the Luminaris, Lully⁸, that Star of Spagyrick Philosophy, in his Book, P.M⁹. 28. said, *Two are more pure than the rest namely, Gold and Silver, without which the Work cannot be begun or finished, because in them is the purest substance of Sulphur perfectly purified by the ingenuity of Nature; and out of these two bodies prepared with their Sulphur or Arsenic, our Medicine may be extracted, and cannot be had without them.* And Clagor Buccinae¹⁰ said, *You must operate prudently and expressly, because neither Sol nor Luna can be without ferment, and any other seed or ferment is not proper and useful, but Gold to the red, and Silver to the white; which bodies being first subtiliated underweight, must then be sowed, that they may putrefy and be corrupted; where one form being destroyed, another more noble is put on; and this is done by the means of our Water alone.* From hence a certain Anonymous in his Answer excellently concludes; *As Fire is the principle*

⁴ Eiraneus Philalethes.

⁵ An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King (*Introitus apertus ad occlusum regis palatium*).

⁶ Giovanni Aurelius Augurello, Joannes Aurelius Augurellus. (b:1441–d:1524).

⁷ *Chrysopoeia poem (1515)*

⁸ Raymond Lully.

⁹ *Praxis universalis magni operis?*

¹⁰ *Clangor buccinae propheticæ de novissimis temporibus (1620).*

² *Exercitationes in turbam Philosophorum in Artis auriferae* I, p. 154; Ripley, *Chymische Schrifften*, 1756, p. 31; Tract, aureus cum scholiis ; *Theatricum chemicum (1613)* IV, p. 691; Manget (J.J.) *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa*, 1702, i. p.497.

³ "*Arcanum*" or "*The Grand Secret of Hermetick Philosophy*", Third Edition, (1650) by [Jean Espagnet](#).

of Fire, so Gold is the principle of Gold; such as the Cause is, such is the Effect; such as the Father, such the Son; such as the Seed is, such is the Fruit; Man generates Man, and a Lion a Lion.

But you will say, The Philosophers affirm, that the matter ought to be such, that the Poor as well as the Rich may obtain it: from whence that saying is, *God hath granted this treasure to be sought by all men; nor doth he deny that great Good to any man, except to him that makes himself unworthy by the depraved affections of his heart.* And Geber, *You ought not to consume your goods because of mean price: if you understand the principles of Art, which we shall deliver to you, you will attain to the complete Magistry. For if it were Gold, or any such costly thing, the Poor would be constrained to postpone this glorious Work. Whereas an Artist may often-times happen to err, a poor man could not repeat the Work after an error committed, which must absolutely be done, if there be no other remedy.* And Lilius¹¹; *This Stone is openly sold at the meanest rate, which if the Sellers knew, they would keep it in their hands, and by no means sell it.* And another Anonymous, *Our expenses exceed not the price of two Florins: which Arnoldus¹² thus confirms; Hold fast, because the charge of our most noble Art exceeds not the price of two pieces of Gold in its emption, that is, in the operation.* And Geber said, *If in operations you lose your money, reflect not injuriously on us, but impute it to your own imprudence; for our Art requires no great expenses.*

To which we answer; That we never denied, that besides Gold and Silver there is not also granted another subject of meaner value, where we excluded not imperfect Metals, as we mentioned before out of an Anonymous Philosopher in these words; *There is yet one thing in the Metallic Kingdom if an admirable beginning, &c. though many Philosophers would have this vile price to be understood of our dissolving Menstruum.*

Moreover, you will say out of Sendivogius¹³ Tract¹⁴. 11. *in your Operations take not common Gold and Silver, for these are dead things.*

We answer, by granting that the Stone is not made of common Gold and Silver, as such, and so long as they are dead, but when resuscitated, and reduced into their first seminal nature, and made like unto the Philosophers Gold, then do they not only express their seed, but also do serve instead of

ferment: which a certain Philosopher confirms in those words, saying; *Neither the ancient or the modern Philosophers have ever made anything but Gold of Gold, and Silver of Silver, yet that was not common Gold or Silver.*

By which it appears, that the Philosophers Gold is not common Gold, neither in colour nor in substance, but that which is extracted from them is the white and red tincture.

CHAPTER II.

What the Physical or Philosopher's Gold is.

The Philosophers Gold or Silver, is a metallic body, resolved into the last matter, to wit, into *Mercury*, which is the first matter of the Stone, and is thus proved. Everything is from that into which it is resolved: But all Metals are reduced into *Argent vive*; ergo, they were *Argent vive*.

For, according to the common opinions of Philosophers, that which the wise men seek is in *Mercury*. Moreover, *Mercury* is the radix in Alchemy, because from it, by it and in it are all Metals. Theophrastus¹⁵ (that most profound Sea of the Spagyric-Philosophy) thus speaks concerning the first matter of Metals: *To extract Mercury from metallic bodies, is nothing else but to resolve or reduce them into their first matter, that is, running Mercury, even such as it was in the center of the Earth, before the generation of Metals, to wit a moist and viscous vapour, which is the Philosophers Gold or Silver, containing in it invisibly the Mercury and Sulphur of Nature, the principles of all Metals, which Mercury is of ineffable virtue and efficacy, and contains divine secrets.*

CHAPTER III.

Of the preparation of Bodies for the Philosophers Mercury.

Avicenna said, *If you desire to operate, you must necessarily begin your Work in the solution or sublimation of the two Luminaries; because the first degree of the Work is, that Argent vive may be made from thence; but because these, as the more perfect Bodies, are closer bound, and have an harder coagulation, that they may be reduced into Mercury, they do in the first place require preparation, and physical calcination, which indeed is not so necessary in Silver; for by reason of the cleanness and softness thereof, our Water easily acts upon it; which is not done in Gold, and the other Metals, which do all require Calcination, on which our Water then more easily acts, especially if those which are impure be deputed for the similitude of substance.*

Concerning the Calcination of Bodies out of the secret Work of the Doctor and Bishop of Trent¹⁶ for the Philosophers Stone: Metals to be dissolved

¹¹ Possibly, Thomas Aquinas' "*Liber lilii benedicti*", or Guilielmus Tecenensis' "*Lilium de Spinis evulsum*" in *Threatrum Chemicum*, Vol. IV.

¹² Arnaldus de Villa Nova (Arnaldus de Villanueva, Arnaldus Villanovanus, Arnaud de Ville-Neuve, Arnau de Vilanova, c. 1235-1311) author of "*Opus aureum*" (1604) and "*Hermetis Trismegisti Phoenicum Aegyptiorum Sed et aliar...*" (1657).

¹³ Michał Sędziwój, *Michael Sendivogius* (1566–1636).

¹⁴ *Tractatus de Lapide Philosophorum* (1604).

¹⁵ Paracelsus, Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, (1493 – 1541).

¹⁶ Saint Albert.

ought to be first calcined or purged in *Lac virginis*, and *Luna* being most fine and subtly filed, must be dissolved in *Aqua-fortis*, and distilled rain-water in which *Sal Armoniack*¹⁷ or common Salt hath been dissolved; then it must be precipitated into a most white Calx, and washed in decanted water, and the Calx must beedulcorated¹⁸ in other rain-water hot, that all the saltness and acrimony may be taken away, then must it be dried, and it will be a most pure Calx.

But Gold must be calcined after this manner: Make an Amalgam with Gold (which must be first depurated by the Body of the black Eagle, that it may be made beautiful and glorious above measure) and Mercury very well purged with Salt and Vinegar, and strained through Leather, put it in purified *Aqua-fortis*, that all the Mercury may be dissolved, decant the *Aqua-fortis* from the Calx of Sol, wash the Calx as aforesaid in warm water, and dry it with a gentle heat, that Calx (if artificially and lightly reverberated, yet so that it flow not) will be converted into a most beautiful *Crocus*¹⁹.

Gold that it may be reduced into the first Matter, or Mercury of Philosophers, is thus otherwise calcined, whereof Paracelsus, in his 7th Book of *Metamorphosis*²⁰ concerning resuscitation, declares, namely; that Metal must be calcined with revived Mercury, by putting Mercury with the Metal into a Sublimatory, digesting them together, till an Amalgam be made, then sublime the Mercury with a moderate Fire, and bruise it with the metallic Calx, and as before, repeat the digestion and sublimation, and that so often till the Calx being put to a burning Candle will melt like ice, or wax. This Metal so prepared, put to digestion in Horse-dung or in bain-marie, moderately hot, digesting it for a month, and the Metal will be converted into living Mercury, that is, into the first matter, which is called the Philosophers Mercury; and the Mercury of Metals, which many have sought, but few have found.

Joachimus Poleman²¹ of the Mystery of the Philosophers Sulphur, by help of his duplicated and satiated Corrosive, divides a Metal into the least Atoms, and dilacerates it to be delivered to the fiery Menstruum, dissolving it to a tingeing Soul.

¹⁷ *Sal ammoniac*, a rare mineral composed of ammonium chloride.

¹⁸ washed

¹⁹ A chemical preparation resembling the flower. Eg., *Crocus Metallorum/Antimonii* is a sulphuretted oxide of antimony, *Crocus Martis* is burnt green vitriol.

²⁰ *Metamorphosis Theophrasti Paracelsi: Item Deßelbigenn drey herliche schriften, allen Stenden, so durchs unnütz vermeinter Artzten geschwetz verführt, sehr nutz unndt dienstlich.* (1584).

²¹ Author of '*Novum Lumen Medicum*' (1659)

It is calcined by us another and better way, which Calcination we rather call the first solution, and it is done by pouring the Wine of Life to the Calxes of *Sol* or *Luna* aforesaid, put into a Phial, (which is our Menstruum, of which hereafter in Chapter 6.) to the height of a fingers breadth, and putting to an Head or Alembic, they must be digested in Ashes, or also in Sand, and coagulated; being coagulated, you must pour on new Menstruum, as before, and coagulate, and that three or four times, or till the metallic Calx melt at the fire like Wax or Ice, which is a sign of sufficient Philosophical calcination; and this is done with the preservation of the Metal in its primitive virtue; and this is that which Aristotle said in the Rosary²², *join your Son Gabricius dear to you then all your Children with his Sister Beja, who is a tender sweet and splendid Virgin.*

CHAPTER IV.

Of the second and true Philosophical Solution of Bodies, and their reduction into Mercury.

Having performed Calcination, or the first Solution, whereof we have spoken in the preceding Chapter, and which (are the anonymous Philosopher in his Golden Treatise of the Philosophers Stone in his Answer hath it) ought to be sweet and fully natural; that is, which should without noise dissolve the Subject with the preservation of its radical moisture, then the Bodies so calcined must be put into a Phial hermetically sealed, and in a gentle heat of bain-marie Dew, be digested, or putrefied the space of a Philosophical Month: for a voluntary solution is better than a violent; a temperate, than a speedy; as the Philosopher said it. Thus is made the second and true Solution of a Metal into viscous water, or a certain Oleity with the preservation of the radical moisture, in which is the true metallic Sulphur, together with the true and most noble Mercury: for one of them is always the Magnet, and remains solving with the solved, and desires to continue inseparably, and that because of the similitude of substance. Wherefore the Ancients said, *Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature overcomes and alters Nature*, whereby the essential or formal Solution is distinguished from the corrosive Solution. But you must know that from *Luna* is obtained a liquor, or green tincture, which is the true Elixir of *Luna*, and the highest *Arcanum* to comfort the Brain. But from *Sol* by equal putrefaction is produced a Liquor of the highest redness, which is the true Elixir of *Sol*, and the quinessence of Metal. Whereof, said Geber, *we make sanguine Gold better than that produced by Nature, which Nature no wise makes.* Concerning this Viscosity, Geber further speaks briefly: *We have most exactly tried*

²² *Visio Arislei*

all things, and that by approved Reasons but we could never find anything permanent in Fire, except the viscous Moisture, the sole radix of all Metals, when as all the other Moistures being not well united in homogeneity do easily flee from Fire, and the Elements are easily separated from one another, but the viscous Moisture, to wit Mercury is never consumed with Fire, nor is the Water separated from the Earth, but they either remain altogether, or go altogether away.

But will you enquire in what weight the Menstrum is to be espoused to a Metal? The Philosophers Rosary said, *As in the working of Bread, a little Leaven leavens and ferments a great quantity of Paste; so also a modicum of Earth is sufficient for the nutrition of the whole Stone.* Aristotle nominates the weight, saying, *do thus, and coct till the Earth that is, the Gold bath exhausted ten parts of the Water.*

The Author²³ of *Novum Lumen*²⁴ at the end of his Book breaks forth into these words; *There ought to be ten parts of Water to one part of Body: and by this way we make Mercury without common Mercury, by taking ten parts of our Mercurial Water (that is, the Mercurial Oil of Salt putrefied and alembicated) which is an unctious vapour, to one part of the body of Gold, and being included in a Vessel by continual coction, the Gold is made Mercury, that is, an unctious vapour, and not common Mercury, as some falsely do imagine.*

CHAPTER V.

What a Quintessence properly is.

Paracelsus in his third Book of long Life, Chapter 2. discusses thus: *A Quintessence is nothing else but the goodness of Nature, so that all Nature passes into a spagyric mixture and temperament, in which no corruptible thing, and nothing contrary is to be found.*

He also in his fourth Book Archidox. of the Quintessence said, *A Quintessence is a matter which is corporally extracted out of all Creesitives²⁵, and out of all things that have life, being separated from all impurity and mortality, most purely subtiliated, and divided from all the Elements thereof.*

A little after in the same place; *You ought to know concerning the Quintessence, that it is a matter little and small, lodged and harboured in some Tree, Herb, Stone, or the like; the rest is a pure body, from which we learn the separation of the Elements.*

Rupescissa²⁶ concerning the Quintessence, in Chapter 5. about the end, said, *The Quintessence which we seek is therefore a thing ingeniated by divine breath, which by continual ascensions and descensions is separated from the*

corruptible body of the four Elements; and the reason is, because that which is a second time, and often sublimed, is more subtle, glorified and separated from the corruption of the four Elements, then when it ascends only once; and so that which is sublimed even to a thousand times, and by continual ascension and descension comes to so great a virtue of glorification, that it is a compound almost incorruptible, as the Heavens, and of the matter of the Heavens, and therefore called Quintessence; because 'tis in respect of the Body, as the Heavens are in respect of the whole World, almost after the same way: by which Art can imitate Nature, as by a certain like, very near and connatural way.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the Philosophical Fire, or Dissolving Menstrum, or our Liquor Alkahest.

The preparation of this Water, or most noble Juice, (which is the Kings true Bath) the Philosophers always held occult, so that Bernard Count Trevisan²⁷ and Neigen, Book 2. said, *he had made a vow to God, to Philosophers, and to Equity, not plainly to explain himself to any man, because it is the most secret Arcanum of the whole Work, and is so indeed; for if this Liquor were manifested to every man, Boys would then deride our Wisdom, and Fools would be equal to the Wise, and the whole World would rush hither with a blind impulse, and run themselves headlong without any regard to Equity or Piety, to the bottom of Hell.* Augurellus calls this Menstrum Mercury in these words:

*Tu quoq; nec coeptis Cylleni audacibus unquam
Defugis Argentum vulgo quod vivere dicunt Sufficit,
& tantis praestant primordia rebus.*

Nor is Argent vive ever wanting to the bold undertaking of Cylenus²⁸, it yields principles to great things. The same doth George Ripley judge in his Preface of the twelve Gates: *I will teach you truly, that these are the Mercuries that are the keys of Knowledge, which Raymund calls his Menstrua's, without which is nothing done.* Geber names it otherwise, saying, *by the most high God,*

*this is that Water, which lights Candles,
gives light to houses, and yields abundance of Riches,
Oh the Water of our Sea!
Oh our Sal Nitre appertaining to the Sea of the
World!
Oh our Vegetable!
Oh our fixed and volatile Sulphur!
O the Caput mortuum, or feces of our Sea!*

Tridensine²⁹ in his secret work of the Philosophers Stone, said: *The Water which Philosophers used for the complement of the Work, they called Lac*

²³ Michał Sędziwój

²⁴ *Novum lumen chymicum* (1610).

²⁵ Creatures.

²⁶ Johannes de Rupescissa, *John of Rupescissa*, Cardinal Jean de La Rochetaillée. Jean de Roquetaillade. (born ~1366).

²⁷ Original text, *Tresne*.

²⁸ Silenus was the old rustic Greek god of the wine-press dance.

²⁹ Person from Trent, Italy.

Virginis, Coagulum, the Morning-dew, the Quintessence, Aqua-vitae, the Philosophers Daughter, &c.

Paracelsus variously also, Azoth, Spirit of Wine tempered and circulated, Mercurial-Water, Sendivogius, Chalibs; Rupescissa, Vinegar most nobly distilled.

Van-Helmont³⁰ (that most profound Philosopher by Fire) called it, *the Liquor Alkabest*, and thus described it: *The Liquor Alkabest resolves every visible and tangible body into its first matter, preserving the power of the Seed, concerning which the Chemists say, the Vulgar burn by Fire, but we by Water.*

We, by the Philosophers leave, are those that can at will give names to their products, do call it the Mercurial Oil of Salt putrefied and alembicated: for Oil is exalted to an higher degree of a fiery quality, as it is the foundation of the whole metallic solution, (which is to be well observed) without which nothing can be advantageous in the Art, and it acts the part of a Woman in our Work, and is deservedly called the Wife of *Sol*, and the Matrix; and it is the hidden Key to open the close Gates of Metals; for it dissolves calcined Metals, it calcines and putrefies the volatile and spiritual, it tinges into all colours, and is the beginning, middle and end of Tinctures; and is of one nature with Gold, as Arnaldus de Villa Nova affirms, unless that the nature of Gold is complete, digested and fixed: but the nature of the Water is incomplete, indigested and volatile. In a word, it is the Philosophers Fire, by which the Tree of *Hermes* is burnt to ashes.

Concerning this Fire Johannes Pontanus in his Epistle said, *The Philosophers Fire is not the Fire of Balneo, nor of Dung, nor of anything of that kind, which the Philosophers have published in their Writings; it is mineral, it is equal, it is continual, it evaporates not, unless it be too much incensed; it participates of Sulphur; it is taken elsewhere than from the matter; it divide, dissolves calcines and congeals all things; and it is a Fire with moderate burning; it is a compendium without any great charge, because the whole work is perfected therewith.* Study therefore therein: for if I had found this at first, I had not erred two hundred times before I attained to practice: wherefore men do err, have erred, and will err, because the Philosophers have not constituted a proper Agent in their Books, except one, namely Artepheus. But he speaks according to his judgment; and unless I had read Artepheus, and perceived his scope, I had never attained to the Complement of the Work, &c. Do you consult him, and you shall know what our Menstruum is. I have said enough.

CHAPTER VII.

Whether the dissolving Menstruum be corrosive.

³⁰ Jan Baptist van Helmont (1579 - 1644)

Geber of *Summa perfectionis magisterii* Chap. 52 seems to be of this opinion, whilst he said, *Everything that is solved must necessarily have the nature of Salt, Alums, and the like.* Paracelsus in his fourth Book Archidoxies of the Quintessence, a little after the beginning, said thus: *It is difficult, and scarce credible, to extract a Quintessence without a Corrosive out of Metals, but especially out of Gold, which cannot be overcome but by a Corrosive, by which the Quintessence and Body are one separated from the other; which Corrosive may again be taken from it.* Chapter 3. of Long Life, Tom. 6. Book 3. he thus speaks: *Resolve Gold together with all the substance of Gold by a Corrosive, &c. and that so long till it be made the same with the Corrosive: nor be you dismayed because of this way of operation; for a Corrosive is commodious for Gold, if it be Gold, and without a Corrosive it is dead.*

Yet you must know, that our *Menstruum* being poured upon Gold, ought not properly be said to be corrosive, but rather fiery; the strength and virtue of which *Arcanum* overcomes all Poisons. For every *Realgar*, that is, *Mercury vive* and *sublimate*, as also precipitate, ought to dye in the Elixirium of *Sol*, and come to a singular and excellent tincture; because also violent solution is not made by our *Menstruum*, such as by the *Resuscitatives*, *Aquafortis* and *Regia*, and others of this form; but (as was said before in the fourth Chapter) it is done gently, sweetly, without any noise, and with the preservation of its radical moisture, with the spirits of which (as Lully hath it in his *Vade mecum*³¹) a vivified virtue is infused in the matters.

CHAPTER VIII.

Of the practice of the Stoe.

When you have acquired the tingeing Soul of the Planet, or the true Quintessence thereof by previous putrefaction, in which the true Mercury, and the Philosophers true Sulphur are contained: then is your matter prepared, fit to make thereby our blessed Stone. Take therefore (in the name of Him that said, and all things were done) of this most pure matter a sufficient quantity, put it into a fixing Vessel, or Phial, or Philosophical Egg, hermetically sealed; place it in an *Athanor*, as you know, and proceed with a convenient, viz. a digesting heat, continual, (for that failing it must needs dye, or become abortive) sweet, subtle, altering, and not burning (that I may use the Count³²s own words) from the first conjunction, even to perfect ablution, government of the Fire, concerning which the

³¹ *Codicillus seu vade mecum Raymundi Lulli philosophi doctissimi : in quo fontes alchimicae artis ac philosophiae reconditoris vberimè traduntur* (1572).

³² Bernard Count Trevisan

anonymous *Philalethes* may be further consulted, who by the government of every Planet clearly describes the diversities of colours, coagulating and fixing it into the white or red Stone: for (as Raymund Lully advertises) he that hath not power and patience in the work, will corrupt it with too much haste.

The sign of the Work perfected will be this: If the Stone being projected upon an hot plate of *Venus*³³, doth melt like Wax, and not smoke, but penetrate and tinge, then is the Oriental King born, sitting in his Kingdom with greater power than all the Princes of the World. Hence a Philosopher cries out, *Come forth out of Hell, arise from the Grave, awake out of Darkness for you have put on Brightness and Spirituality, because the voice of Resurrection is heard, and the Soul of Life is entered into thee, praised be the Most High; and let his Gifts redound to the Glory of his most holy Name, and to the good and benefit of our neighbour.*

CHAPTER IX.

Of the augmentation of the blessed Stone.

When by the help of God you have now obtained the foresaid incombustible Sulphur, red with Purple, that you may by the repeated inversion of the Wheel (as the Philosophers term it) know how to augment it; in which no small mystery of Art is contained, we may the same way and method augment it, whereby we made it; yet you must know that the oftner our Sulphur, which is our Stone, is moistened or nourished by its proper Milk, dissolved in a moist Balneo, and again coagulated and fixed, as in the first work, the tingeing virtue of it will be always greater; so that indeed after the first absolute work, one part will tinge an hundred of purged Mercury, or any other imperfect Metal, in the second solution by *Lac Virginis*, and the coagulation and fixation thereof, one part will tinge a thousand. Thus time after time is our Medicine augmented and multiplied in quantity and quality, in virtue and weight.

Take therefore one part of our Stone, and pour it upon two parts of *Lac Virginis*, or the Mercurial Oil of Salt putrefied and alembicated; solve and coagulate as you did in the first work, and our Water which before was only a Mineral potentially, is actually made a Metal more precious than Gold. Thus is the Stone mortified by sublimations, and revived by imbibitions, which is the chief universal way. These things being brought to a desired end; Projections may at pleasure be made upon this or that Metal prepared, and decently mundified and fused, as you have obtained the tincture either for white or red; the true use of this Art, and all the Philosophers Books, (especially our

Philalethes) will abundantly show.

CHAPTER X.

Of the physical use of the Stone both internal and external.

YOU must know concerning this blessed Stone, that it is an universal Medicine containing in it the perfect Cure of all Diseases, as well hot as cold, so far as they are known to be curable by Nature, and are permitted by God to be cured. If you enquire, how this most perfect Medicine, and Celestial Tincture, and such other Universal Curatives do act, and operate, by curing contrary things in Man's Body. We answer; They perform all this by heating, illuminating, and irradiating the *Archaeus*, as our Philosopher *Van Helmont* hath it in a Treatise, entituled, *There is in Herbs, Words and Stones a great Virtue, that they do certainly act without their dissolution or destruction, without their penetration, intro-admission, commixture, and commutation, also afar off upon the drowsy or inflamed Archaeus, as it were by the sight alone, by the irradiation or ejaculation of their virtues produced and exposed, their former weight and properties being yet retained, and not changed.* After which manner, as *Joachimus Poleman* excellently said, *They transmute the spirits of darkness, to wit, diseases, (which are all nothing else but the properties of the seat of death, or the forerunners of dark and obscure death) into good spirits, such as they were when the man was sound in perfect health, and by this renovation of the defective powers, strength is withal universally restored.*

The dose of it is from one grain to two, according to the age and strength of the Patient in a draught of warm Wine, or in a spoonful of the same Quintessence dissolved, and taken every third day. In external Diseases, Wounds, *Cacoheck*³⁴ and Phagedenic Ulcers, Pustules, Gangrene, Cancer, &c. one grain is taken in Wine every day, or once in two day; but the part externally affected is washed in Wine, wherein a portion of our Stone hath been dissolved; or if necessity require, it is injected by a Syringe, putting a plate of Lead, and a convenient Ligature thereupon.

This is the internal and external use of this great Mystery consummated, for the acquisition of which invoke the Light of Light, and with a pure heart pray for the illumination of your understanding, and you shall receive it: then operate prudently, give relief to the Poor, abuse not the blessings of God, believe the Gospel, and exercise yourself in Piety.

Amen.

FINIS.

³³ Copper.

³⁴ Irresistible urge; mania.