

Golden Manuscripts

The Hermetic Art

*The Teaching Concerning
Atomic Transmutation*

by

VOLPIERRE
1892-1952

*Translated into English from a Private Manuscript
by Frater Albertus*

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GOLDEN MANUSCRIPTS comprise a series of treatises very little known among readers of esoteric, metaphysical and alchemistical literature. Some of them have never appeared in the English language before, because these exist only in manuscript form, while some had a very limited number of copies printed.

It is my good fortune to own some of these original manuscripts, while others are rare-printed specimens of which, in some cases, only one or two are known to exist.

In addition to older manuscripts contemporary essays will be found among the various issues of the GOLDEN MANUSCRIPTS, proving that in our own times we do not have to rely solely upon anciently transmitted knowledge or what has been inherited from medieval times.

Frater Albertus

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INTRODUCTION

As recently as 1971 while I was teaching Alchemy in Walzenhausen, a beautiful spa in the Canton Appenzell in Switzerland, one of the students approached and asked: "Have you heard of an Alchemist by the name of Volpierre?" My answer was in the negative. "His real name was Nikolaus Burtschell" he continued. "He was born in 1892 and died in 1952 in Mainz on the river Rhine." Again, I had to reply that at that moment the name did not ring a bell. He said, "If you are interested in his works I shall be glad to give you all the information I have about him as I have corresponded with him." During overseas classes my time is always fully occupied. Even after the late afternoon periods students often come to me to discuss some question or other. At that time I could only answer that I would indeed be delighted to have any information he might have about this present day Alchemist.

The student was delighted with my reply and immediately handed me some papers with the injunction to please handle them carefully as they were very valuable to him. Among them was a photograph of a man showing only the upper part of his body; the head was in repose and very prominently displayed. It was a picture of Volpierre on his death-bed. Being pressed for time, I took all the papers he had given me, promised to read them and tell him my reaction. After reaching my hotel room a cursory glance through the papers gave me the distinct impression that here was the work of someone who had really tried alchemical experiments in a different manner. I promised myself a more thorough perusal of this work as soon as time was available.

Things do not always work out to one's liking and regretfully I had to return the papers. However, it was agreed that I should receive an exact photostatic copy. After my return to the U.S.A. the papers, including the original photograph mentioned above, arrived. A further investigation of these papers was delayed due to teaching commitments in the Far East. By this time laboratory problems had arisen in Europe and I was asked to arrange a stop there. The student who had given me the Volpierre papers accompanied me to both Zurich and Stuttgart. He inquired about the manuscript of Volpierre; I had to admit that nothing had been done. I determined to do some work with the manuscript on my return home. Further investigation proved it to be most interesting and revealing. Included with the manuscript was a letter with a brief sketch by the student, Heinz Fischer-Lichtenthal, of Bavaria, Germany from which I quote:

"In your book *Practical Alchemie in the 20th Century* you mentioned several contemporary individuals who worked in Alchemy. It might interest you that there were others like G. W. Surya (Georgiewic Waizer.) In 1949 I corresponded with another practical Alchemist who belonged to a society of which I also was a member. His name was Nikolaus Burtschell but he used the alchemistical pseudonym D. L. Volpierre. Gathering all that could be found about him, I condensed it into a biographical sketch. A manuscript about his work is in my possession and also the contents of a letter addressed to the editor of a French periodical written in 1948, wherein he strongly defended laboratory alchemy.

In his preliminary sketch, *An Alchemist of the Twentieth Century* he wrote: "The man I am going to talk about was born in the vicinity of Mainz, where he grew up in comfortable circumstances and gained an early education,

which, with other endowments was mainly responsible for his ability to read fluently at the age of five. He was a book worm all his life and metaphysical literature was his preference; this was based upon the inheritance from his parents of a treasure of occult experiences. He lived an everyday life but in addition to his daily routine an age old theme came alive within him—Alchemy. When the subject of Alchemy came up and he found it necessary to say a word about it, he used the pseudonym, D. L. Volpierre.

“He was engaged in healing most of his life. One of his specialities was Chromo Therapy (healing through color and light.) Under his direction, medications were produced by a pharmaceutical firm with surprising success. In 1932 he healed several obsessed individuals. In the same year, now forty years of age, he began his alchemistical activity; from his eleventh year he gave much thought to a universal tincture and always had the irrevocable conviction that he would reach this goal. Success was reached after a comparatively short time with a Great Tincture, which he produced himself, he also succeeded with several different transmutations.

“In his treatise, *The Hermetic Art*, Volpierre revealed his attitude toward Alchemy without transgression. This he sent to Salzburg to the metaphysical author, W. G. Surya, for an opinion. Surya gave him unstinting recognition and underlined the correct hermetical laboratory procedure.

“In his Great Work, Volpierre worked primarily with antimony and iron filings. Avoiding Acids produced synthetically he used only those derived from natural sources as did those who preceded him centuries ago. In 1935 it was impossible to obtain proper acids in Germany because of a new law forbidding the use of raw materials containing

arsenic, and especially those containing sulphur from Sicily. When using the new industrially produced acids his experiments were unsuccessful. Another goal, to produce a steel-glass, now became impossible.

“His laboratory at St. Inber Saar was destroyed during World War II. From 1943 he lived with his sister in Mainz on the river Rhine helping in her Naturopathic practice.

“In July of 1950 Volpierre suffered a stroke. Death came early in September of 1953. He was buried in the new cemetery in Bischofsheim by Mainz. His former patients still speak highly of him to this very day.

“Reminiscing, his sister described him enthusiastically as having deep blue eyes, light blond hair, and wonderfully revealing facial features; his beautiful soul reflected again and again in his exterior being.

“Volpierre was reluctant to reveal his Alchemistical work and its importance to mankind which had not relinquished its cruelties. Perhaps specific personal experiences convinced this evolved soul personality that he could not cope with the shrewdness and wickedness of the mundane world. A letter written in 1948 in reply to a French magazine article about the transmutation of the elements, testifies to this. One thing that had emerged in the meantime among progressively thinking men was a certainty that Alchemy is the sovereign foundation of all science but is at the same time an art. It remains so at present and will do so in the future. Freed from its many disguises Alchemy will become an irrevocable basis for a continued evolution toward a genuinely modern mankind.”

The writer of this introduction was so thoroughly convinced of what Volpierre had accomplished, and of what he

had written in his treatise, *The Hermetic Art*, that he was eager to duplicate his work.

He wanted to know how to procure the raw materials and asked if I would help him to secure them. I agreed. He is still getting things prepared and underway while in the meantime finding further answers concerning various manipulations. He is deeply engaged in laboratory Alchemy. We hope to have a report about his results at a later date when more news is forthcoming from this writer.

In the meantime we shall let Volpierre speak for himself.

—*Frater Albertus*

THE HERMETIC ART

(A Teaching Concerning Atomic Transmutation)

Motto: What is exalted is simple

These lines serve as factual information and are intended primarily for those readers who are free from prejudice, have an incorruptible understanding, are endowed with a sensitive touch and have retained the fundamentals and simplicity of their comprehension. Writing this I shall purposely omit archæic expressions of the Alchemists whose understanding became only partly clear to my understanding while I was engaged in my self-induced working methods.

At last, this writing shall be a vindication, not to say a complete justification, of the Old Masters, who would have preferred contempt, persecution, even painful death, rather than to reveal their secret though their bones have long since decayed.

This secret, the formula of how to produce the Philosopher's Stone, was undoubtedly known in some Masonic Lodges to the Master of the Chair—as well as to the genuine Alchemists—but it can be safely assumed that at present not one Lodge in Europe has the formula and the know-how to procure the little or Great Tincture. The reader will realize that in my information given herein, I cannot trespass certain boundaries.

Those to whom the expressions of the Old Masters sound strange and unlikely should keep in mind that a gifted poet may speak phantasy to some while to others he proclaims the

highest wisdom when presenting his emotions for the human heart to conceive.

The nature of this writing is not to give absolute directions of how to proceed with the work. The result will have to speak for itself.

Knowledge and know-how are ever the new poles of polarity in the unfolding consciousness of man. They emerge out of the innermost atom of an indestructible faith in God and a sensing of the existence of a Divine Being. Being is eternal strength and eternal adding upon. Being is eternally descending and ascending, the eternal change of life and death, but in such a manner that even that which we call death and decay is in the fullest sense of the word a transformation, or rather, a regrouping of matter as a tangible expression in an imponderable, intangible field of force. Manifested force reveals itself in nature as an endless expression—in plant, mineral, metal, in a raindrop or a snowflake, or in animal or man. But what a world of difference we find between a gentle zephyr and a roaring holocaust, what a difference between the gentle air in May and the gnashing madness of a hurricane or a blizzard. Such differences show in earthquakes, on land or sea, often connected with volcanic eruptions.

Innumerable are the forces that are in essence only the expression of but one force. For example, note a tree or a flower in growth, blossoming, ripening and withering when looked upon from such a point of view. Even so is man, externally corruptive but endowed with inner strength of different degrees as a natural creature. So also are the seasons of the year, passing forms within as eternity confined, as is man's unending cycle of birth and death within a micro and macrocosm. We find on the one side sprouting life, decay

and transformation, and on the other side continuous change of form and shape reorganizing again manifold manifestations through but one energy which is continuously creative and eternal. The initiate knows of the existence of this energy—the secret Trinity—be it in sunshine or moonlight, be it in the waters of the earth or heavens—be it in the joyously creative womb of Mother Earth, or in the dry, moist, cold, or the warm breath of the wind. To know about these means to be able to have such powers that serve us and follow the outlined paths of creation.

The Magnum Opus, the Great or the Royal Work of the Initiates called Alchemists is in itself not difficult and could be taken care of in a few sentences. The work involved is so manifold, so full of surprises, that even so-called proven and established physical laws, enough to fill a thick book, would not justify themselves. No wonder that in our time of “rational” thinking and hurried progress aimed toward externalization, instead of directing forces toward interiorization, very few are able to understand the old alchemical writings, let alone separate the chaff from the wheat. Many expressions used in the work and most especially those that should identify some objects can hardly be understood. Mysterious identifications, such as: Green Lion, Red Lion, the Coat of the Red Lion, Menstruum, Serpent, Diana, Phoenix, Lima, Flying Dragon, Virgin’s Milk, Echeneu, etc. sound rather fantastic but close examination reveals an intensively grouped correctness of expression that will be proven in practical application.

The alchemical novice is liable to be misdirected when reading intensively, not to say also extremely far fetched literature, dealing primarily with the procurement of the acid called by the Old Masters respectively vinegar, alcohol, or

wine. The novice, his inner hopes raised because he believes he has finally found the way to the Great Work, finds himself in a trap and lost as he discovers in the continuation of his work that he has fallen deeper and deeper into the abyss of bitter despair and hopelessness.

As to when to begin the actual work, all literature handed down to us, as it originated with genuine alchemists, compares as to a hair. Based upon carefully established observations, considering certain sidereal constellations arising out of well-founded calculations, they all fall into place and need not be considered any further herein. Taken practically and factually any alchemistical work may be begun at any hour or any day. However, the end results differ during various constellations, either quantitatively or qualitatively.

Concerning technical aspects, the modern student has an advantage over the old Masters from the very beginning. The old Alchemists had neither gas or electricity as we have today, but were solely dependent on coal or wood for their fires. These fires were most difficult to maintain and control. Because of their type of heat the alchemists were forced to employ various baths for their work. For instance, I remember the Balneum Mariae and the sandbath required at a certain stage of the work. The first has become superfluous because it is now possible to regulate the gas flame exactly. These various baths have created a fountain of confusion for the alchemistical disciples. Hence they get caught in their own nets, their enthusiasm diminishes and finally their efforts end in discouraged abandonment.

Furthermore, the old Masters used vessels made of clay—such as retorts. When used singly these vessels were called Philosophical Eggs, with a lid glued to the top in a precarious manner which must have been quite a feat in those days. In

our time we have vessels made of strong, almost unbreakable glass. Another expression which novices do not know how to interpret is "woman's and children's work." This phrase found repeatedly in alchemistical literature simply refers to the regulation of the fire and of its various degrees of heat as the work requires. One has to think about the clay retorts filled with various substances of different specific weights and boiling points that had to be separated meticulously in the same retort during the work, offering different resistances under pressure, that even today with much more sophisticated equipment, requires skill even with an easy to regulate gas flame. How much more skillful must have been the regulation of a coal fire!

How much more must our astonishment grow into a marvelous admiration of the Royal Art of the old Masters, some of whom were called Emperor, a title justly deserved by their having attained a rulership over the Opus Magnus.

Each original work of creation is built upon a formative, shaping activity of three vital principles—male, female, and spiritual. That official science acknowledges only two principles—male and female—be they antipodes of complimentary is of no interest to today's Alchemists because while we are engaged in our work, three principals appear absolutely clear in the form of fundamentally different essentials—*our* Mercury, *our* Sulphur, and *our* Salt—without which no little or Great Work nor a tinging or a transmutation is possible. When only two essentials are considered any scientifically alchemistically conducted experiments will be doomed to failure, without exception, as has been previously proven. It is important and necessary for the student of alchemy—and to be taken for granted by him—that he be mindful of the three reigning principles in the Cosmic, else

he will uselessly sacrifice time, money, physical and mental strain.

According to the concept of the old Masters which was looked upon from a purely external point of view, nature was entirely subject to the male and female principle.

Nature receives her eternal strength from the Cosmos which latter cannot exist—and this should be especially emphasized—without the Universal Spirit of the Creator. I shall spare myself to enter into the differentiation about different active force centers within the Macro and the Microcosmos. This was done by the old Masters and during the past five hundred years especially by the one named Paracelsus.

This introduction was necessary even in a limited scope in order to bring us closer to the thought level of the Masters that weaves itself like a red thread through the entire work and proves itself by the final results.

The Opus Magnus has been separated into three parts:

- I. Preparation
- II. Principal Work
- III. Concluding Work

Each section is a masterpiece and has, of course, parallels in the various realms of Nature, be it in regard to heat, moisture, or dryness, which give rise to the sprouting growth in the various stages of the Work, as has already been mentioned by Hermes Trismegistus.

PREPARATION

(*The Preparatory Work*)

According to the old Masters the earth came forth out of the Chaos, or the Prima Materia. Our first task therefore is to bring any material substance with which we are working back into its Chaos, if we use the alchemist's language, or to dissolve and change it into its first or chaotic state. The concept of dissolution is here well enough established. It does not deal with an annihilation but with a certain degree of dissolvment or rearrangement where the building up of energy takes place and infuses the entire work with life and forms it; however, only after the so-called corporeal has been reduced. The objective or the contents of the entire work can be expressed in one sentence or guide line of Natural Philosophers, out of which has evolved their sovereign rulership over matter: *solve et coagula!* (separate and unite.) I shall once more draw attention to the great importance of knowing about the male and the female principles of all matter to be considered for the Opus Magnus. A great deal of this knowledge is transmitted to us by way of astrology, a knowledge which Paracelsus especially emphasizes in his writings. A little example shall suffice: According to age old laws copper, sulphur and the number 6 come under the dominion of Venus, just as iron, sodium chloride (common salt) and the number 9 are related to Mars, and lead, saltpeter and number 8 are under Saturn, etc. It is now up to the disciple of the alchemical Art to cull from such known and established facts the proper proportions necessary to reconstruct the objectives under question. In addition, the degree of heat is of utmost importance in all three parts. Too much heat will bring failure, since the subtle penetrating fumes,

which the old Masters called by the meaningful word Spirit, would escape, and for this reason become useless since the active force has escaped.

The individual stages in this process of preparatory work can be seen by a continuous change of color. In my work the object I used was originally of a dark gray, slightly gleaming color, but which became pitch black, then a bluish black, and then a light gray. Then the color changed to dark brown, light brown, and then to a very light gray, almost white. This was followed by bluish white shading changing over to a transparent ice gray, then into an immaculate white. Thereafter it became clouded and then was penetrated by a delightful bright green like a breath, with everything slowly becoming more subdued until it become of an olive color; still later it changed to a yellowish green. During this time there showed a completely dark closed circle a certain distance in from the mass on the bottom of the top part of the container about two centimeters wide—a strange phenomenon as we shall see later. This circle moved slowly closer and closer in a steady motion and became darker and denser. It moved with remarkable uniformity and kept the same distance changing slowly to a blue-black color. It began to penetrate slowly at the edge of the mass on the bottom, but from the wall of the container, and was not any deeper than it was wide. At the same time the mass grew taller from three quarter centimeter to twenty centimeters. The dark band rested about fifteen to sixteen centimeters distance from the bottom, about two centimeters into the mass, while the depth of the circle or ring was about one to two centimeters. After awhile the dark blue ring got a lighter blue only to become a deeper blue again several days later, and gave off a beautiful radiance. Blood red lines began to appear, rising slowly from the bottom, until one day a juice of ruby or blood

red color could be seen—the menstruum, also called Aqua Fontana, that welled forth all at once from the philosophical mine. The state of this work the old Masters pointedly called the Peacock's Tail (Gauda Pavonis.) It is hardly possible to find a more fitting name. This red juice is also called the Coat of the Red Lion, since the real Red Lion is concealed thereby, because in the course of the further degrees of the work he devours various substances, even different elements. Within this Coat of the Red Lion *our* Mercury has his being and is rightfully called Bearer of Light. Menstruum, like similar alchemical terms, has a double meaning. At one time, for instance, through the manipulation of the Master's hand it becomes a perfectly natural excrement of the Original Chaos called Prima Materia, calx of metals, greasy earth or matrix. On the other hand, it becomes a solvent, though not a perfect one. As the work is continued one will see what relationship this menstruum has. This red juice or the Aqua Fontana of Paracelsus has to be decanted carefully, making sure that none of the residue on the bottom comes with it. The residue is further imbibed with wine or vinegar and oil, also called Aqua Forta or Aqua Pluvialis which later also appears in the main work—though in an essentially different form—until it is completely dissolved. Herewith the preparatory work is ended. One has to be careful when touching this fat earth as it is highly corrosive and should not be mistaken because of its greasy consistency.

The Art of the first part of this work consists of the total destruction of the substance used, no matter of what natural origin it is, so as to change nothing and to have only the menstruum left. It is actually possible through certain manipulations with certain liquids that have been named—alcohol, wine, vinegar, or on occasion oil—to obtain a red juice, which coloration by now is pending between a delicate

shiny raspberry or ruby red out of any metallic substance. The peculiar thing about this red juice in connection with its own color is a green sheen that appears on the wall of the glass when the container is shaken ever so slightly. This green sheen is the symbol of a "growing strength" which is of decisive importance in the continuance of the work. Should this juice besides its green lustre, show a brownish coloration, however slight, the product becomes utterly useless for any further work. Whoever had the fortune to finish this masterpiece of the preparatory work can now with confidence go to the main work.

Out of the preceding method of the preparatory work can be seen—especially in expectation of the end result—what the old Masters understood as destruction. As is previously mentioned, a change-over or putrefaction of a corpse, used deliberately as a parallel by the old Masters because a decaying corpse leaks its own juice or "spits"—an old alchemical expression. At times the matter actually gives off a fetid stinking odor. When the old Masters used the expression, "To transmute a body into chaos," and knew what was understood thereby the description of the preparatory work begins to make sense. However, this should not be confused with a classification, "out of the chaotic realm." The old Masters classified Nature into various realms, such as:

1. Vegetable
2. Mineral
3. Metal
4. Animal
5. Chaotic
6. Astral

What is meant by these classifications can be clearly seen in the old literature of the Masters. The old Alchemists held closely to the concept of but one essential element or substance as a biological, dynamic unit whose visible fundamental forms manifest as the four elements. These should not be confused with the elements of scientific postulation. This principle element was preferably called Phosphorous which in essence means "carrier of light." This has given rise to many erroneous concepts of specific hermetic expressions that led to wrong conclusions and false judgments. This is still the case today. There is no need to name such instances—instead let us be satisfied with facts. By the expression Phosphorus was meant the inner fire or inner light that shines but does not consume itself. Indeed, after it has become fixed it cannot be melted nor consumed by any fire. Thus it was correctly named down to its core. However, how this inner fire was to be obtained and how to hold on to it was information wisely withheld.

In the following *Tabula Smaragdina* of the classical alchemist, Hermes Trismegistus, this phenomenal knowledge about the three parts of the work has been expressed profoundly and efficiently:

"It is true, certain and without falsehood, that whatever is below is like that which is above; and that which is above is like that which is below: to accomplish the one wonderful work. As all things are derived from the One Only Thing, by the will and by the word of the One Only One who created it in His Mind, so all things owe their existence to this Unity by the order of Nature, and can be improved by Adaptation to that Mind.

"Its Father is the Sun; its Mother is the Moon; the Wind carries it in its womb; and its nurse is the earth. This Thing

is the Father of all perfect things in the world. Its power is most perfect when it has again been changed into Earth. Separate the Earth from the Fire, the subtle from the gross, but carefully and with great judgment and skill.

“It ascends from earth to heaven and descends again, new born, to the earth, taking unto itself thereby the power of the Above and the Below. Thus the splendor of the whole world will be thine, and all darkness shall flee from thee.

“This is the strongest of all powers, the Force of all forces for it overcometh all subtle things and can penetrate all that is solid. For thus was the world created, and rare combinations, and wonders of many kinds are wrought.

“Hence I am called HERMES TRISMEGISTUS, having mastered the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world. What I have to say about the masterpiece of the alchemical art, the Solar Work, is now ended.”

Aristotle was of the opinion that there were four elements in Nature: Earth, Water, Fire, and Air and that they penetrate all realms of Nature in an ever changing pattern, when active life forms are engaged in their primary function. In this connection I refer again to Hermes Trismegistus when he said in the above much recited text, “The wind carried it in his belly.” One has to think about the moisture content of air that can, according to prevailing circumstances, become fog, rain, snow, or hail in its free region and in its eternal round become water. In such conditions and in similar occasions occurring in Nature, the alchemist has to leave any concepts aside that are held by those that consider chemical elements, as used by scientists, which are contrary to his alchemical conception.

In rain water, snow, frost, or for that matter in any moisture in the air, we find this agens in the form of three

essentials least suspected or even recognized by all of mankind —waiting perhaps for a revival or rebirth to reveal its magical forces. Who is going to decide when the time has come and mankind is ready? It was simply impossible for the old Masters, who called themselves Philosophers of Nature and learned from Nature, to conceive of a material manifestation without a soul force. On the contrary, in their opinion concentrated power within matter was known to them which science today after thousands of years has belatedly come to recognize. This conviction of the alchemist urges itself upon the tongue to be proclaimed by all those who have had such an inner experience. This active power induces out of decaying foodstuffs high vitamin contents, out of plants its healing virtues as well as poisons, also it brings forth from flowers and blossoms sweet smelling marvels as it reveals in visible forms its strength in various degrees as a never ending supply of all that is essential, for such is the genuine Art of the Alchemists.

First, it is important to have the proper medium prepared as given above in the preparatory work, a medium which is possible to bind the active force to itself, similar to a magnet that attracts iron. According to an old teaching like will be attracted to its own, or as it says subtle to subtle, but like forces will repel each other. As the work continues it will be seen just what peculiar stuff this “menstruum” or Blood of the Red Lion really is and that this blood, to use a well known word from our old master Goethe, in a different sense has a right to be called a “special juice.”

THE PRINCIPLE WORK

It speaks for the exalted Art of Alchemy that the old Masters were in a position to accomplish their Great Work with the most simple and efficient equipment that was available at the time. In the Principle Work a retort, also called the Philosophical Egg, was primarily used by the old Masters. So called Renomier equipment is senseless and useless.

The retort is filled about three quarters full. One must watch carefully the degree of fire or heat. The reason for this has been mentioned previously. During this so called distillation by degree, for which the old Masters used the athanor, three liquids will appear in succession. Besides this there will remain in the retort a glass-like powder of a yellowish white color, but sometimes of a green or light blue shading. It is noticeable that three entirely different fluids will appear. One is yellow, two are water clear of which the last shows an oily consistency, i.e., it flows like an oil, although in the preliminary work only two liquids were used as a foundation for the entire process. In the three distilled liquids of which the second is called phlegm this is of no use and is poured away. Again we have the male and female principles. These two agents have been given various names as yellow and white vinegar, wine, alcohol, root moisture, growing strength, arsenic, sulphur, salt, etc. The remaining powder is called dead earth, the magnet, mumia or the corpse to be revived again. Thereafter it has to be buried in an alchemical sense or, as others express it, buried in horse manure. This latter expression is also used in similar terminology in the preliminary work. One sees an array of seeming contradictions of formulas and expressions. The real task of the principle work is, first, the exact completion 'der

Scheidekunst' or art of separation, and thereafter, to revive the dead earth during its peculiar way of burial when its own seed is implanted and when grown shows peculiar blossoms and flowers on one stem. Separation and purification, the mortification with the putrefaction and at the same time a revivication of the earth, compares to a yearly cycle of Nature and is also known as a "turning of the wheel of Nature."

The nomenclature of Hermetic Art may prove to be a hard task to solve by newcomers to alchemy, since hermetic means sealed airtight. It is a fact that a certain part of the work has to be accomplished in an airtight container if success is to be had. Furthermore, the alchemistical Masters knew of a hermetic union whereby several different ingredients were united or welded into 'one' unit, as it happened in this work. Even the most exact chemical analysis will not reveal the three, or to be exact, the four different substances formerly mentioned.

In its own 'grave', of its own natural substance, the dead earth receives the Aqua Pluvialis, the rainwater, also known as water of heaven, and begins under its influence not only slowly to revive, but also to decay in a certain way. It begins to swell and thickens, runs when fully absorbed and feels gooey and sticky. During the distillation an absolutely clear water—the very Aqua Pluvialis, comes over, which is absolutely tasteless and odorless, and can be drunk without scruples. During this process, should any fumes arise that were not noticeable before, the work will then enter into a new phase. It now becomes necessary to pour the yellow or white vinegar upon the solidified mass, but with the utmost care and dexterity, otherwise severe physical damage may occur since this manipulation is not without danger. When these two

wines are brought together they become a radical solvent and mix under a soft or not so soft hissing noise into a blood red juice which in a surprisingly short time dissolves the entire earth. The menstruum has appeared again but this time in a purer form as previously and, as the work continues, becomes even purer and stronger. The so-called phlegm that is always poured away because of its uselessness for our work, will add up to a considerable amount, usually one fourth to a third of the third total amount, whose origin and timing during the separation is another physiological enigma. Contrary to the separation of the phlegm, the menstruum does retain its quantum from the beginning to the end of the principle work!

During the fifth to seventh revolution of the wheel of Nature an extraordinary phenomena appears. During the process of distillation when the fluids partly turn into invisible fumes and only condense in the neck of the retort, suddenly from the bottom of the retort a milky fluid will rise and begin to move freely at the top of the retort like clouds during a storm, to finally flow through the neck of the retort into the receiver. From the moment the liquid begins to rise and gathers at the top there is just enough time—with the greatest care—to change the receptacle with a carefully set aside new receptacle to hold the new separation.

This peculiar liquor is the Virgin's Milk, the Universal Menstruum, radical solvent, the Flying Dragon also known as Phoenix and Luna. In this radical solvent all matter of terrestrial origin can be completely dissolved while retaining their entire essentials and characteristic virtues, which no other solvent in the entire world can accomplish. A careful observation will reveal that this Milk is a light liquid, like water, in which many tiny scales of a silver-white lustre are

swimming. This Milk can be kept indefinitely since the wings of Mercury have been clipped, as the old Masters used to say. As soon as the tiny scales called Escheneii or little fish have been separated the possibility of keeping them indefinitely is gone. Another astounding and unusual fact is revealed. When these tiny scales are kept in a hermetically sealed container, they will disappear and leave no residue or condensation whatsoever. These tiny scales have a strong salty-sweet taste. Besides when tasted this powder, like the water, leaves a pleasant warmth in the mouth without being in the least corrosive. During the continuation of the principal work one surprise follows another. For instance, in a decisive stage of the work during the distillation, the yellow vinegar changes its original consistency. It becomes a clear water leaving a peculiar residue in the retort. This residue separates into two powders of equal size presenting themselves in their own way. They rest, as it is said, upon a chair, separated from each other by a small margin on the bottom of the glass in a perfect elliptical shape with their points in a north-south direction. The one powder is white, while the other is yellowish—the hermetic Salt and Sulphur, showing themselves in an extremely fine or subtle state as a volatile Salt—*Sal Volatile*, i.e., *quinta essentia*—after we become acquainted with the volatile Mercury.

In the concluding work these must be fixed which means to avoid evaporation since they as Mars and Venus, like their brother in spirit, Mercury, did fly away while hermetically sealed in their container.

Thus the principle work is finished. The remaining earth is of no further use to us, since from it the volatile double mercury has been leached.

CONCLUSION

The Concluding Work

From the foregoing it can easily be seen that the Opus Magnus required an enormous measure of observation and concentration, as well as a deep feeling for the secret workings of Nature and the entire Cosmic. One should consider that in such a process hundreds, thousands, or millions of years of continuous natural phenomena has been condensed into an average of nine months by the Master's Art, which strangely enough resembles the ripening of the human embryo. The hardest work, technically speaking, is the principal part, that of proper regulation of the gas flame, while remembering the great difficulties encountered by the old Masters attending their coal or wood fires.

As difficult and dangerous as the work is, one is tempted to make comparisons with certain initiation rituals as practiced in some of the Temples of old Egypt. It is easy to understand the decision of a Master that under no circumstances would he repeat the work because of the great dangers involved.

The preparatory work is similar to the principle work of the old Masters. One particular part is to *solve* and the other of the following concluding work is to *coagula*. Some of the forementioned steps merge into each other during the preliminary and the principal work, so that an exact limitation of the various concepts within the work becomes impossible. Only after the work has been started, and the proper sequence has been fortunately concluded, will things become clearer to the alchemistcal laboratory worker. Through proper contemplation one realizes the correct

procedures as described in the Opus Magnus with the individual procedures explained in symbolic expressions and associated pictures of the old Masters.

The main purpose of the concluding work is the coagulation and fixation or fastening of the volatile Mercury duplication. With this fixation the old Masters understood their cementation, placing before the worker in the laboratory an abundance of riddles and difficulties. Here, it deals with the Secret and Art of the Alchemists, i.e., the innermost atom of a tightly enclosed, indissolveable conjunction of such matter which gives the tincture and *quinta essentia* its own characteristic being. This ending crowns the Opus Magnus and thus, after much trouble and corresponding patience and perseverance, the final goal is reached.

Depending on the tincture the interplay of color changes during the concluding work. First the substances in question have to be united in their "natural weight." After a short period the mass will become completely black and show many blisters. This same thing happens also during the preparatory work. With a light shining on this black mass (one will be astounded over its deep dark red color—as a blood-like glow.)

It is hard to imagine the change in color that takes place and which differs only from that in the preliminary work through a wonderful shining pureness and beauty that one is tempted to describe as a symphony of color. This glowing of color rises to such a state in the completed lapis or stone, it does not matter whether it be the little or the big arcanum, it literally glitters; an unmistakable sign that it is the genuine, true tincture.

Depending on how much tincture is prepared, the stone can, during its first multiplication, be raised a hundred fold

and thereafter to ten and twenty thousand times its former strength. Through further work the tincture can be raised to still further increase the power of multiplication. The limit of the power of multiplication in its concentration depends on the elements used and their specific weight. When this limit has been reached this tincture will penetrate glass and be as hard and dense as the best steel.

It is from here that a historically proven fact is mentioned about a maleable glass that can be forged, which has defied all efforts of modern science to rediscover.

The highest known concentration was reached by Pryce of England with a potency of 1,140,000. With a single gram of his tincture he brought about an atomic transmutation of 40 kg. Unfortunately this great Master ended his life by committing suicide because he was denied membership in a scientific society.

When using hard or quartz glass higher potencies can be obtained than that which Pryce had reached, but handling such high concentrations can have some unpleasant conditions as a result.

Since this tincture is not confined to metals but can be used equally as well upon minerals, plants and animal substances, when the time has come, it can open avenues of practical application that are presently unlimited if one considers that within the weight of grams of this tincture, kilogram weights of matter are stored.

D. L. Volpierre
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ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE ALCHEMISTICAL OPUS

(Its contents and procedure, describing how to obtain
the *quinta essentia* by the great wet way)

By Heinz Fischer-Lichtenthal

In the first part of the Great Work (Opus Magnum) consisting of three parts, any metal carefully dissolved in acid in an artful manner will yield a red juice (menstruum, Blood of the Red Lion.) In such manner a substance will be returned to a certain degree to its primeordial condition (chaos), becoming a useful medium capable of extracting the essential vitality found in all creation and then being able to retain it, i.e., such agents that is superior to inherent atomic power as we understand it presently.

In the second part a 'menstruum universal' (radical solvent, Virgin's Milk, Flying Dragon) can be obtained from the red juice and its residue through gradual and repeated distillation wherein all natural essentials can be dissolved while their inherent characteristics are still retained.

It contains the Flying Mercury in the form of tiny silver colored scales, like salt, which evaporate quickly when separated from the liquid. Furthermore, from part of the distillation of the yellow vinegar a residue is obtained. This residue consists of two powders (volatile salts) which form on the bottom of the glass container, in the shape of elliptical particles laying next to each other in a north-south direction. One of them is white (hermetical Salt) and the other of a yellowish color (hermetical Sulphur.)

The final result is obtained only in the third part when all three mentioned salts are fixed. This is the 'cemetation'.

By joining (cohobation) of such *quinta essentia* which does not dissolve them, the final tincture will give to it the desired character and becomes the Great Tincture. The latter is identical with the Philosopher's Stone.

Begin by mixing one part powdered antimony trisulphide and six parts iron filings in a five litre (5,000 ml), wide necked, glass bottle with ground joint and stopper. Evenly cover the bottom by not more than $\frac{3}{4}$ cm.

Next, three pourings on the antimony and iron filings must take place consisting of 3ml of hydrochloric acid and 2ml of sulphuric acid every 24 hours.

Immediately a strong reaction caused by fuming gases makes it imperative that the container be closed very tightly. No antimony particles must be found between the ground stopper and the flask opening. It is best to moisten the stopper with sulphuric acid. Fasten the stopper with some string using two cork stoppers, one on each side, to tighten the string.

Each time some acid has been poured over the mixture place the glass container in a sandbath at a temperature of 37° - 38°C. Let the bottle slowly cool before adding more acid. After the bottle has cooled carefully pour in both acids very gradually and stopper at once. The glass stopper may be removed by inserting strong string tightly between the stopper and the neck of the bottle, then with a uniform jerk on both sides of the stopper, lift it out. Fast work is essential; none of the fumes must escape. Close the bottle very tightly each time after more acid is added.

Beginning with the fourth pouring there is a change of proportion when adding more acid. It is now 6ml.

hydrochloric acid and 4½ml. sulphuric acid which is to be repeated every fourth day. This schedule must be adhered to no matter what the contents of the container shows. The temperature must be kept the same as before, except for the short period when more acid is added. Should little lumps show or the substance have a tendency to stick too tightly into a solid mass, use a glass stirring rod and carefully break it up. Be careful not to break the bottom of the retort. Should the glass show a crack a new vessel must be used and the work started anew.

The change of color is as follows:

Dark gray, slight sparkle
pitch black to blue-black
dark gray
light gray
dark brown
light brown
very light gray, almost white
a bluish white
gray, like ice
pure white
glowing green
olive-green
yellowish green

Then a dark floating ring, 2cm. thick, ascending, getting heavier and darker, (blue-black) enters the mass, which has risen from the bottom to a height of 15 or 16 cm. The color changes from dark blue to light blue, deep, dark blue, now giving off a radiance. Blood red lines begin to rise from

the bottom on the side of the vessel. When after circulating for three or four months the rising red juice has reached the top of the mass, the process has reached its sign of development and is concluded.

This juice or tincture can be carefully poured off in any desired quantity. From now on the acids may be added in the same order as before, but in ten to thirty fold quantities or even more, depending on the available space in the container. The mass will dissolve at once.

This solution is kept in special glass bottles for later use. When not enough containers are available only as much as is needed should be dissolved for the work at hand. It is surprising how much acid is necessary to completely dissolve the contents in the glass container.

When shaking the glass container the juice has to show a green lustre. An additional brown coloration shows that the liquid up to this stage has become useless.

The red juice is a natural separation from the Original Chaos. It contains the main element, the 'carrier of light' (Phosphorus—the inner light—fire that burns, but does not consume itself) which manifests in all four elements. Chaos or *prima materia* is the beginning of matter as we know it. Strength is increased when the corpora is reduced. By too high a heat the fine penetrating fumes (Spirit) would evaporate.

The preliminaries are the beginning of the work and these should be commenced if possible during a fortunate trine such as Mercury trine Jupiter, or trine Venus, or trine the Sun, or a trine with a well aspected Mars.

As much as eighty litres, approximately twenty gallons of the menstruum, has been obtained out of a five litre bottle, approximately one gallon and a quarter.

A 250ml. retort is filled three quarters full of Dragon's Blood. Begin the distillation with a small flame and have in readiness three Erlenmeyer 50ml. flasks. Each liquid will be collected separately. Using a low flame, first, the yellow vinegar (Hydrochloric acid) comes over, thereafter the phlegm which is entirely worthless and can be thrown away.

When nothing more comes over by the small flame fine threads, rising from the bottom to the top, shows on the side of the retort and announces that the sulphuric acid is about to distill over. The receptacle is changed again and the heat is raised. Toward the end the bellows or more oxygen will have to be used to distill the rest of the sulphuric acid. The retort can be glowing red during the last procedure. Then let the retort cool and break it.

Remove the remains from the broken retort, grind in a mortar and submit for three weeks in a dish to the moist air, preferably in a cellar away from any light. It is hygroscopic and becomes slimey and finally thick like honey. Place this in a 100ml. retort using a small funnel and glass rod. The neck of the retort must be washed down with the 'Air-water' to be certain that the neck is absolutely clean.

Distillation is started with a low flame. Steam will form, condensing in the neck, and will flow out. When the water has distilled out the steam gets more dense, like fumes, and the distillation must be stopped. Let the retort cool, then break it. Remove the contents and grind in a mortar. Place the contents from the mortar in an evaporating dish, and pour the yellow vinegar over it. There is no danger in this. Then carefully pour the sulphuric acid slowly through a funnel. Take care as it may splash.

The two acids combined turn to red and make a loud noise while doing so. Once again we have the product with

which we began. The first part of our work is completed when the red liquid is poured through a funnel into a 250ml. retort and provision made for a repetition of the same process.



The described procedure must be repeated four to six times until the Flying Dragon appears. This can occur during the fifth, sixth, or seventh distillation. One must be especially careful, because our Phoenix can rise suddenly, boiling to the top and flowing out. Quick and efficient changing of the receiving flask is important for this separation.

After Luna has left us, distillation is continued under the same temperature until next the phlegm-like water distills completely over. Continuing the distillation by a lower heat than formerly used, the sulphuric acid comes over. In the remaining water in the retort a peculiar residue forms on the bottom. Next to each other, but separated from each other, a yellow and white salt will appear in an elliptical north-south formation. Both are volatile and can only be kept in their own water. The same applies to the silver-like scales noticed in the residue.

In case too much moisture has been distilled off the salts and the liquid is not sufficient to cover the bottom of the vessel, some of the distillate must be returned. Without this liquid the volatile Salt and Sulphur would evaporate within twenty-four hours, but in the absence of light it would take longer.

It is recommended during the distillation either to extend the neck of the retort with a glass tube for better cooling, or to use a water cooled condenser.

To use the remaining recovered Sulphur again is not recommended!



Formerly the work was conducted solely with natural ingredients. Acids used by the old Masters with their specific characteristics are now hard to obtain or unknown today.

From a chemical point of view we consider hydrochloric acid, sulphuric acid and nitric acid. The latter we can do without for some of the procedures. Hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acid useable for the work described was produced by the Chemical Industry in Europe as little as a few decades ago in a so-called Lead Chamber Process. Raw materials used were native sodium nitrate from the Alsace in France, native Vitriol (copper sulphate) from the mines in the Harz mountains, or Hungary, etc., and red arsenic-sulphur from Sicily. Common yellow sulphur was found to be useless for producing acid to be used alchemistically.

