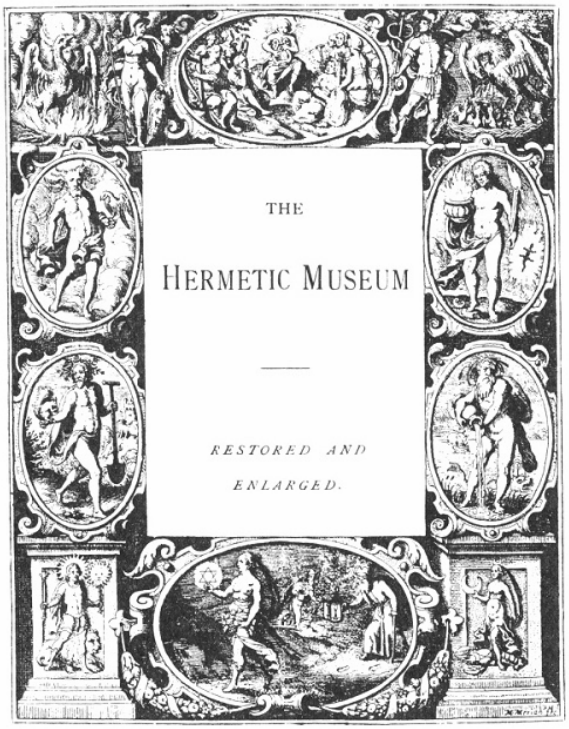

THE

HERMETIC MUSEUM,

RESTORED AND ENLARGED:

MOST FAITHFULLY INSTRUCTING ALL DISCIPLES OF THE SOPHO-SPAGYRIC ART HOW THAT GREATEST AND TRUEST MEDICINE OF

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

MAY BE FOUND AND HELD.

NOW FIRST DONE INTO ENGLISH FROM THE LATIN ORIGINAL PUBLISHED AT FRANKFORT IN THE YEAR 1678.

Translated by Arthur Edward Waite

Containing Twenty-two most celebrated Chemical Tracts.

London: J. Elliot and Co.

[1893]

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PREFACE

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION.

THE HERMETIC MUSEUM RESTORED AND ENLARGED was published in Latin at Frankfort, in the year 1678, and, as its title implies, it was an enlarged form of an anterior work which, appearing in 1625, is more scarce, but, intrinsically, of less value. Its design was apparently to supply in a compact form a representative collection of the more brief and less ancient alchemical writers; in this respect, it may be regarded as a supplement to those large storehouses of Hermetic learning such as the *Theatrum Chemicum*, and that scarcely less colossal of Mangetus, the *Bibliotheca Chemica Curiosa*, which are largely concerned with the cream of the archaic literature, with the works of Geber and the adepts of the school of Arabia, with the writings attributed to Hermes, with those of Raymond Lully, Arnold de Villa Nova, Bernard Trevisan, and others.

THE HERMETIC MUSEUM would also seem to represent a distinctive school in Alchemy, not altogether committed to certain modes and terminology which derived most of their prestige from the past, and sufficiently enigmatical as it was, still inclined to be less obscure and misleading than was the habit of the older masters. For it belonged to a period which had inherited a bitter experience of the failures, impostures, and misery surrounding the Magnum Opus and its mystical quest, which was weary of unequipped experiment, weary of wandering "multipliers," and pretentious "bellows-blowers," while it was just being awakened to the conviction that if Alchemy were true at all, it was not to be learned from books, or, at least, from any books which had hitherto been written on the subject. Running through all the tracts which are comprised in the following volumes, the reader will recognize traces of a central claim in alchemical initiation—that the secrets, whatever they were, must be understood as the property of a college of adepts, pretending to have subsisted from time almost immemorial, and revealing themselves to the select and the few, while the literature, large as it is, appears chiefly as an instrument of intercommunication between those who knew. At the same time, it may also be regarded as a sign and omen to the likely seeker, an advertisement that there was a mystery, and that he must go further who would unravel it.

While the treatises now translated are for the most part anonymous, as befits veiled masters, the literary reader will remember that the name of John de Meung connects the allegorical "Romance of the Rose" with the parables of Alchemy; Flamel will be familiar to all Hermetic students as the most celebrated of the French adepts; the saintly name of Basil Valentine, investigator of the properties of antimony, will not even now be dishonored by the chemist; Eirenaeus Philalethes, equally revered and unknown by all devout Spagyrites, is supposed to have been the most lucid of hierophants, and the "Open Entrance" to be the clearest of all his works. Helvetius was an illustrious chemist, and Michael Maier is a person of some repute in the Rosicrucian controversy. Michael Sendivogius was an uninstructed disciple of Alexander Seton, and the "New Chemical Light," which he published and claimed as his own, was really the work of his

master, who has been called the chief martyr of Alchemy. It may be added in this connection that some critics have cast doubt upon the genuine nature of the "Testament of John Cremer," and it is true that the annals of Westminster do not include an abbot of that name.

It should be understood that the writer of this brief note must not be accredited with the translation which it seeks to introduce. That is the work of a gentleman who is said to have had a life-long acquaintance with alchemical literature; it has been subjected to a searching revision at the hands of the present editor, who may himself be permitted to claim some experience in Hermetic antiquities; the version as it stands does not uncreditably represent both the spirit and the sense of the original without the original's prolixity. While affording to the modern student of secret doctrines an unique opportunity for acquiring in English a collection of alchemical writers, this edition of THE HERMETIC MUSEUM also claims consideration at the hands of the historian as a contribution of real value to the early history of chemistry.

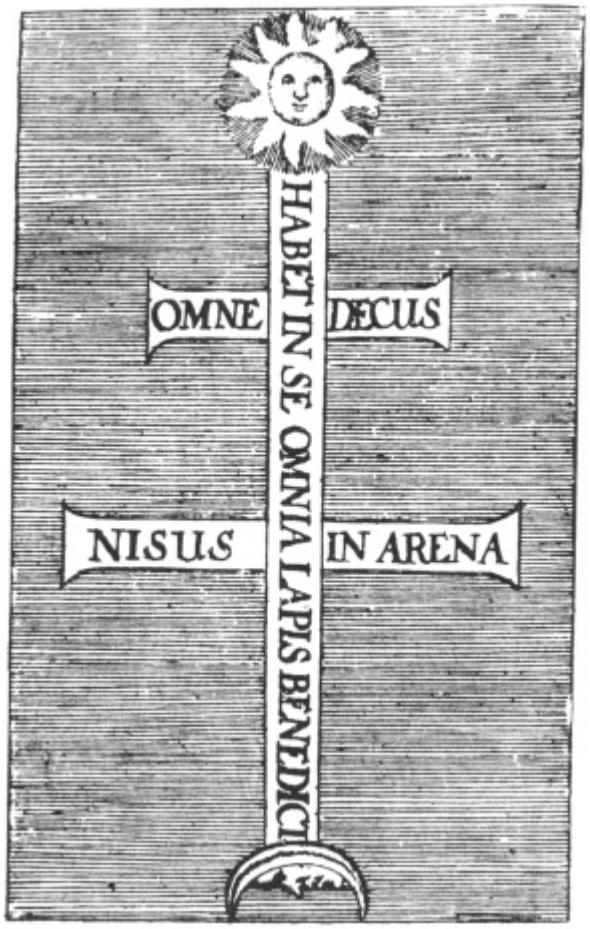
ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE.

THE GOLDEN TRACT

CONCERNING

THE STONE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

BY AN ANONYMOUS GERMAN PHILOSOPHER.



THE GOLDEN TRACT

CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.

The Author's Preface to the Art-loving Reader.

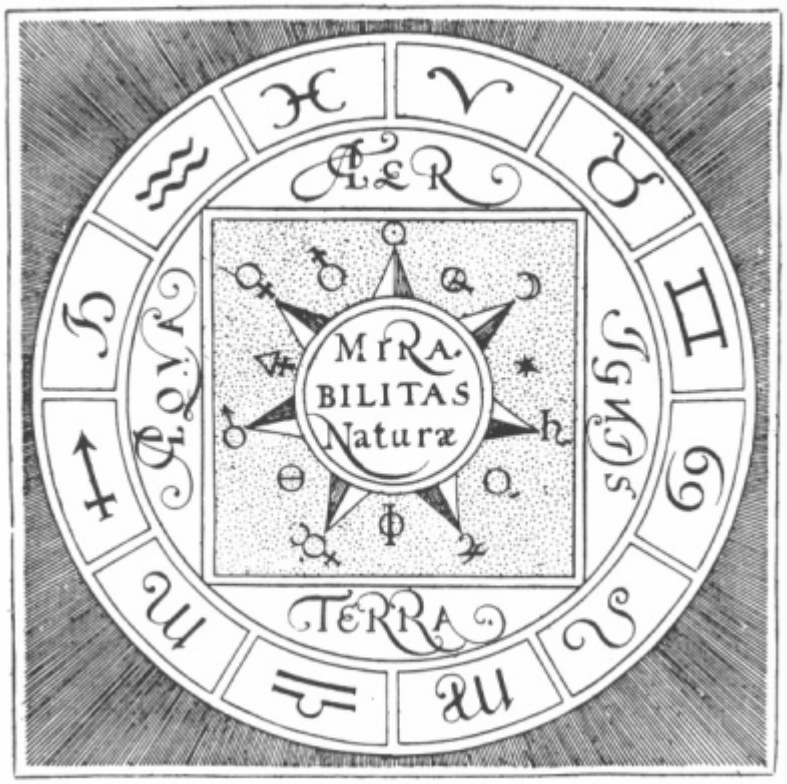
WORTHY reader, and true enquirer into the secrets of nature, marvel not that in the old age of this world, when it seems to have one foot already in the grave, I have determined to write this tract, although all libraries ale already full of books on this subject—of which, however, the greater part are false, and wear merely the rouge and powder of philosophy. I have written it not for my own pleasure, but for your advantage, that, by

pointing to the foundation of truth, I might lead you back from the pathless wilderness into the right way—which is certainly for your own interest. As far as I am concerned, I have long known all that I seek to know in regard to this matter, and have no need of many books, seeing that during the last twenty-two years I have read and re-read all the works that fell into my hands—including numerous manuscripts, as well as many printed volumes.

In this my tract you will find the subject set forth, and the true solution given, not only theoretically, but also from a practical and allegorical point of view, with a clearness and lucidity such as I believe to be almost unparalleled in any previous philosophical treatise. In quoting, I have always been careful to give the exact reference, so that you may look out the passage for yourself, and by diligently considering it, sharpen your understanding. I could more easily have composed this treatise, and made myself known to the Brethren of the Golden Cross, if I had left out those references; but for your sake I decided otherwise. Do not wonder that I conceal my name, and refuse to appear to you face to face. I have come forward, not for the sake of any paltry glory, or of worldly praise, but to do you good. Moreover, my teachers, even the true philosophers, advised me not thus to risk my life for the sake of obtaining a high place in the world's esteem, to expose myself to greedy robbers or to give occasion for many crimes by the prostitution of this profound secret. No doubt the gentle reader has learned by the works of Sendivogius that whenever he sheaved himself openly to the powerful, he went in constant fear of his life. Experience teaches that many philosophers who gave no thought to their personal safety, have been killed and deprived of their tincture by greedy and powerful robbers; and it stands to reason that any one going about with a great treasure in his hand, must fall a prey to brigands. Sendivogius concealed his name by an anagram. Thus also a short time ago another philosopher and Brother of the Golden Cross, whose real name has long been familiar to me, concealed it beneath an anagram, and made himself known to his friends by an enigmatical designation. Why then should I place myself at the mercy of this impure world? Permit me rather, dear friend; to follow the example of the sages, and leave the rest to the thrice good and great God, who will make my true self known to you in good time, if it be for the glory of His name, and for your and my good. Do not be eager to enquire after my name. For even if you should get to know it, or become personally acquainted with me, you would have to rest satisfied with the contents of this tract. For I have solemnly promised two philosophers—Bernard, Count of Trevisan, and Neigens—that I will not betray to any one more than has been revealed in this book. Neither be anxious to ask whether I actually possess this precious treasure. Ask rather whether I have seen how the world was created; whether I am acquainted with the nature of the Egyptian darkness; what is the cause of the rainbow; what will be the appearance of the glorified bodies at the general resurrection; what is the most indelible color. Of you that rightly understand this little book, I will enquire whether you have seen that great salt sea, without any corrosion, raise a sufficiency of the moisture of all nature to the summits of the highest mountains. Tell me where there is sulphur out of sulphur, and mercury out of mercury—or where sulphur springs from mercury, and again mercury from sulphur. When was there placed before your eyes the idea of most fervent love, the male and the female embracing each other so closely that they could no more be torn asunder, but through unsearchable love became one? If you understand what I am alluding to, and have performed the experiment with your own hands, and seen it with your own eyes, I welcome you as fellow partakers of

the mystery, and have no dearer wish than to enjoy your familiar intercourse—for which reason I have also sent forth into the world this little tract.

If any one complain of the difficulty of our Art, let him know that in itself it is perfectly simple, and can present no obstacle to those who love God, and are held worthy by Him of this knowledge. If any one blame me for setting forth the truths of this Art too plainly and clearly, so as to render it possible for any one to gain a knowledge thereof, I answer that I have indeed explained them with sufficient lucidity for those who are worthy and foreordained of God, but that the unworthy can derive no profit from them. To some foolish and shallow persons I have several times expounded this Art in the simplest manner, and even word for word, but they despised it only, and would not believe me that there is exhibited in our work a twofold resurrection of the dead. Our Art, its theory as well as its practice, is altogether a gift of God, Who gives it when and to whom He elects: it is not of him that wills, or of him that runs, but simply through the mercy of God. Though I had diligently studied this Art for 17 or 18 years, yet I had, after all, to wait for God's own time, and accept it as a free gift. No one need doubt the truth or certainty of this Art. It is as true and certain, and as surely ordained by God in nature, as it is that the sun shines at noontide, and the moon shows her soft splendor at night. But I must conclude this preface, and gird myself for writing the tract itself. But ye, beloved Brethren of the Golden Cross, who are about to learn how to enjoy and use this most precious gift of God in secret, do not remain unknown to me, and if ye know me not, be sure that the faithful will be approved and their faith become known through the Cross, while security and pleasure overshadow it. God be with us, Amen!



THE GOLDEN TRACT

CONCERNING THE STONE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

ANCIENT as well as modern philosophers, most beloved reader, and devoted seeker after true wisdom, when through the grace of God they had reached the goal of their desires, have endeavored to make their discovery known to their fellow inquirers in all parts of the world—not only because they wished to inform them that the thrice great and good God had enlightened their minds, blessed the labors of their hands, and shown to them the greatest and most profound secret of earthly wisdom (for which benefit all praise, honor, and glory are justly due to Him)—but also that they might afford assistance to beginners in the Art, by which, with God's permission, they too might attain to the knowledge of this most holy mystery. Such men there have been in all countries. Amongst the Egyptians Hermes Trismegistus holds the highest place; then come Chaldæans, Greeks, Arabs, Italians, Gauls, Englishmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, Germans, Poles, Hungarians, Hebrews, and many others. Though the aforementioned Sages wrote at different times, and in different languages, yet their works exhibit so marvelous an agreement, that any true philosopher may easily see that all their hearts had been gladdened by God in the discovery of this stone, and that they all had performed this work with their own hands. Now, as the truth of their views is perceived by their agreement, so the disagreement of certain others marks them as false philosophers. For, not knowing the foundation of this glorious Art, and making up fanciful theories out of their own heads, they exhibit their ignorance to all.

The aforesaid agreement exists in regard to the Matter, its solution, its weight, and the regulation and increase of the fire.

As concerns the Matter, it is *one*, and contains within itself all that is needed. Out of it the artist prepares whatever he wants. Its "Birth is in the sand," as the philosopher Anastratus says in "The Crowd": "Nothing is more precious than the red sand of the sea; it is the distilled moisture of the Moon joined to the light of the Sun, and congealed." That only this one substance is required is attested by Agadmon in the same book. He says: "Know that unless you take my body [sulphur] without the spirit [mercury] ye will not obtain what ye desire. Cease to think of many things. Nature is satisfied with one thing, and he who does not know it is lost."

In the same way Arnold, of Villa Nova, writes in his "Flower of Flowers"; "Our stone is made out of one thing, and with one thing." To the same effect he says to the King of Naples: "All that is in our stone is essential to it, nor does it need any foreign ingredient. Its nature is one, and it is *one* thing." And Rosinus says: "Know that the object of your desire is one thing, out of which all things are made." Lilium: "You have need only of one thing, which at any stage of our experiment can be changed into another nature." So Geber says in his "Summary": "Our stone is one, one medicine, to which we add nothing, from which we take nothing away, only removing that which is superfluous." Again, Scites in "The Crowd" says: "The essence of this Art is in like manner a certain one thing which is stronger and more exalted than all other things, and is called the most powerful acid, because it changes gold into a clear spirit, without which there is neither whiteness, nor blackness, nor redness. When the spirit is joined to the body it becomes one with it; and yet again becomes a spirit, and is saturated with the spiritual and unchangeable tincture, and thus again by combination receives a bodily tincture which cannot be annihilated. If you place the body without the acid over the fire, it will be burnt and destroyed." From these words of Scites the reader might conclude, that not one but two things, namely a body and an acid (as he calls it) are required, and that a liquid must be combined with a dry thing lest the dry thing should be consumed by the fire, in order that by the moist thing it may be preserved from such combustion. To such a conclusion, if rightly accepted, I gladly subscribe. But from the above mentioned philosophical dicta (however obscurely worded they may be) it is clearer than day that the substance of our Blessed Stone is one (although different sages call it by different names), and that Nature has made it ready to the hand of the adept, having willed this one thing, and no other thing in all the world, to be the material of the Stone. This Matter lies before the eyes of all; everybody sees it, touches it, loves it, but knows it not. It is glorious and vile, precious and of small account, and is found everywhere. Theophrastus Paracelsus, in his book concerning "The Tincture of Physical Things," calls it the Red Lion, which is named by many, but known by few. Hermes, in the first chapter of his Treatise, calls it "Quick Silver coagulated in its innermost chambers." In the "Rosary of the Philosophers" it goes by the name of Salt. But, to be brief, our Matter has as many names as there are things in the world; that is why the foolish know it not. Foolish I call those who, without any previous knowledge of Nature and her properties, undertake to learn this Art, and come to it (as Arnold says) like the ass to the crib, not knowing for what they open their mouths. Hence it is well said by Geber, in the "Sum of Perfection": "He who has no elementary knowledge of Nature is far from a proper appreciation of this Art." And Rosarius says: "I advise no one to approach this Art unless he knows the

principle and the regimen of Nature: if he be acquainted with these, little is wanting to him except one thing, nor need he put himself to a great expense, since the stone is one, the medicine is one, the vessel one, the rule one, the disposition one." Yet this one substance is so divided by the operation of Nature, and the skill of the Artist, that it is transmuted into our White Eagle, nor does the splendor of the sun illuminate more abundantly the spagyric matter with its beams; or, as Basilius Valentinus hath it, that, "thence is born a spirit white as scow, and another spirit red as blood, which two spirits are contained in a third hidden thing." Hence King Aros well says: "Our medicine is composed out of two things having one essence, namely, through the mercurial union of a solid and a liquid, a spiritual and a corporeal, a cold and a moist, a warm and a dry, and in no other way can it be made." And Richard the Englishman says: "The stone is one, the medicine one, which, however, according to the philosophers, is called Rebis (Two-thing), being composed of two things, namely, a body and spirit [red or white]. But over this many foolish persons have gone astray, explaining it in divers ways." Rebis is two things, and these two things are one thing, namely, water joined to a body, by which the body is dissolved into a spirit, that is, mineral water, out of which it was first made; and this body and spirit make up one mineral water, which is called Elixir, that is to say, ferment; for then water and spirit are one thing, of which is composed a tincture and medicine for purging all bodies. And thus, according to the philosophers, we have the nature of sulphur and mercury above ground, while underground they become gold and silver. Bernard, Count of Trevisan and the March, says: Our work is performed by means of one root, and two crude mercurial substances, drawn and extracted from a mineral, pure and clear, being conjoined by the heat of friendship, as this matter requires, and carefully cooked until the two things become one thing," &c. Basilius Valentinus (*Lib. Nat. et Supernal.*, c. 4) says: "I will make this known to thee in all truth [for the love of God], that the root of philosophic sulphur, which is a heavenly spirit, is united in the same material with the root of the spiritual and supernatural mercury, and the principle of spiritual salt—out of which is made the Stone, and not out of several things. That universal thing, the greatest treasure of earthly wisdom, is one thing, and the principles of three things are found in one, which has power to change all metals into one. The three things are the true spirit of mercury, and the soul of sulphur, united to spiritual salt, and dwelling in one body; they are dragon and eagle, king and lion, spirit and body, etc."

In this way our prepared material is also called male and female, active and passive. So Zimon says, in "The Crowd": "Know that the secret of the work consists in male and female, *i.e.*, an active and a passive principle. In lead is found the male, in orpiment the female. The male rejoices when the female is brought to it, and the female receives from the male a tinging seed, and is colored thereby." And Diomedes says: "Join the male child of the 'red servant' to the fragrant spouse, and they will produce the object of our Art. But you must not introduce any foreign matter, neither dust, nor any other thing. The conception will then be perfect, and a true son will be born. Oh, how precious is the nature of the 'red servant,' without whom nothing can be effected!" Others call it quicksilver, or mercury, and sulphur, or fire, as Roger Bacon says, in the third chapter of his "Mirror": "Out of sulphur and mercury are all metals, and nothing adheres to them, neither is joined to them, or transmutes them, but what is of them. And thus we must accept mercury and sulphur as the matter of the stone." So also Menabadus says: "He who joins quicksilver to the body of magnesia, and the woman to the man, extracts the secret

essence by which bodies are colored." Lullius in his "Codicil" says: "The property of our mercury is to be coagulated by its sulphur" And, in the Practice of his Testament: "The silver is a flowing moisture, floating above and preserving the whole from combustion."

Others use the names, body, spirit, and soul. Thus Arnold, in his Flower of Flowers," says: "The Sages have affirmed that our Stone is composed of body, soul, and spirit, and they have spoken truly. For the imperfect part they have compared to a body, because it is weak. The water they have called spirit, and truly, because it is spirit. The ferment they have termed soul, because it gives life to the imperfect body (which before was dead), and makes its form more beautiful."

Again, he says: "A spirit is never joined to a body but by the interposition of a soul. For the soul is the medium between body and spirit, joining them together." Morienus says: "The soul quickly enters its own body—but if you tried to join it to a foreign body, you would labor in vain." And Lilium says: "Body, soul, and spirit make up one thing, which has all in itself, and to which nothing is added."

But why should we mention and explain all the names by which our Matter is designated? We will be content with the foregoing, seeing that they are the most common and the most germane to our purpose. In the following pages, after endeavoring to find where our substance lies hid, and where it may be obtained, we will say some words about the mode of its dissolution, that being after all the principal object of our inquiry. And first, as concerns the search after our Matter, we should remember that in the beginning, when there was nothing but Himself, God, who is infinite in wisdom, created two classes of things, namely, those that are in heaven, and those that are under heaven. The heavenly things (about which we need not here speak at length) are the heavens themselves, and the dwellers in heaven. The things that are under the heavens were created out of four elements, and are commonly divided into three classes. Those that live and feel hold the first place, and are called animals. The second class are the plants, that grow out of the earth, but do not feel. The third class, that of the minerals, has its origin underground. These three classes include all that (beneath the moon) has been created out of the elements. They can never become more or less, and God has bound each thing to its own genus and species, so that it cannot change from one genus to another. If any one tried to make a man or a tree out of a stone, or a monkey or lead out of a plant, or an animal or a plant out of lead, he would be prevented from doing so by the eternal order of the Great King. If such a thing were possible, all classes of natural objects could be changed into one. But, because such a change would put an end to the world, the Ruler of the Universe does not permit it. Nay, what is more, He not only restricted everything to its own kind, but gave each created thing its own seed, by which it might be propagated after its own manner—always remaining in its own class, and not overstepping the bounds of some other species. If any one wished to change a man into a horse, an apple into a lettuce, a diamond or any other jewel into gold, he would make an enormous mistake. For such an attempt would be against the nature of sublunar things. And as it was in the beginning so it shall be in the end, when the Almighty, who in the beginning said "Let it be," shall say "Let it perish." But among those things which have a common substance, seed, and elementary composition, it is not difficult to accomplish an amelioration and improvement, by the purification of their matter. So we may see a man of a clear and subtle mind attain to a higher degree of human excellence than others

who are less gifted. This difference arises from the superior purity and subtlety of his spiritual substance, which again has its origin in a rectified and well constituted body. Thus also we see one horse excel the strength and speed of another; and it is the same with all kinds of living beings. A like rule holds good to an even greater degree in regard to plants and trees—with trees, by transplanting, grafting, and kindred methods well familiar to gardeners; while as to other vegetable natures, we are taught by daily experience how plants and flowers of the same kind differ from each other in glory, in beauty, in fragrance, and savor. Of this cloves and tulips afford a striking instance. Into how many different species have these flowers been developed; and even these. new developments are being made more beautiful from day to day, and it is universally admitted that never were there such fine and fragrant flowers before. What am I to say about metals which have a common substance, namely, quicksilver, digested and consolidated by the power of sulphur? Concerning this common substance, Richard the Englishman has the following words: "Nature has elaborated all kinds of fusible things by a natural process out of mercury, and the substance of its sulphur, because it is the property of quicksilver to be consolidated by steam, as by the heat of white and red sulphur which does not burn."

The same view is expressed by Arnold (pt. 1., cp. ii.): "Quicksilver is the elementary form of all things fusible; for all things fusible, when melted, are changed into it, and it mingles with them because it is of the same substance with them. Such bodies differ from quicksilver in their composition only so far as itself is or is not free from the foreign matter of impure sulphur." Similarly Rosinus (*Ad Saratantam*) says: "The substance of all metals in the heart of the earth is solidified and imperfect quicksilver; for by the quickening heat of sulphur different metals (according to the different varieties of sulphur) are generated in the earth; their original substance is one and the same, and is modified only by a greater or smaller external influence." Hence we see daily how busily Nature is occupied in bringing them to mortification and perfection. Now the perfection of metals, and the final intention of Nature in regard to them, is gold. For all metals show that Nature has done something for them towards ultimate perfection; no metal is so base as not to contain a single grain of gold or silver Nature would always change quicksilver that has within itself its own sulphur into gold, if she were not often hindered by some outward impediment, viz., impure, fœtid, and combustible sulphur. In most cases gold is dug out pure, clear, free from dross, and unmixed with any other metals. But most frequently a large quantity of foreign sulphur mingles with the quicksilver, and thus prevents its perfect development; and, according to the variety of that sulphur, different kinds of metals are generated, as Aristotle says (4. Meteor.): "If the quicksilver be of a good substance but the sulphur impure and combustible, it changes the quicksilver into brass. If the quicksilver be stony, impure, and earthy, and the sulphur not pure, it becomes iron. Tin seems to have good and pure quicksilver; but the sulphur is bad and not well mixed. Lead has gross, bad, and ill-smelling quicksilver, and is thus not properly coagulated."

That retarding, combustible, and fœtid sulphur is not the true fire that fashions metals; but quicksilver has its own sulphur in itself, which is sufficient for the purpose of fashioning it, as Bernard, Count of Trevisan, says: "Some believe that in the generation of metals, a sulphuric substance is introduced from without; but, on the contrary, it is clear that in the working of Nature sulphur is already enclosed in the mercury. Yet it has no

power in it except through the moving heat, by which the said sulphur is changed, and with it two other qualities of the mercury. In this way, then, Nature generates by means of this sulphur the different kinds of metals in the veins of the earth, according to the diversity of degrees and alterations." For in metals, according to Arnold (pt. i., cp. iii.), "there is a two-fold superfluity: one that is enclosed in the innermost nature of the quicksilver, and got there at the first mingling of the metal; the other does not belong to the essence of it, is external to it, and corruptible. To remove the former is a difficult task; the latter may be removed without any difficulty. The combustible sulphur is taken away by being subjected to the action of fire, or is destroyed by foreign bodies; but the other, which is in the quicksilver, is preserved by it from combustion." But again, that inward sulphur which fashions the quicksilver belonging to it, and matures it towards perfection, is either pure or impure, combustible or incombustible. Impure sulphur hinders the digestion of the quicksilver, which cannot be transformed into gold until that which does not belong to it has been entirely separated from it; but the pure, incombustible, fixed sulphur remains with it, and then at length it passes either into gold or silver, according as the sulphur is either white or red. This internal sulphur is nothing but mature mercury, and the most advanced part of the quicksilver, and for this reason the quicksilver receives it so kindly, as being of its own essence, while it rejects the other which is foreign to it. So Richard the Englishman says, in his ninth chapter: The more simple the sulphur is, the more readily does it combine with simple and pure mercury, and the more intimately they combine the more precious is the metal which is produced." But such sulphur, says Avicenna, "is not found on earth, except in so far as it exists in metallic bodies through the action of the sun and moon. In the sun it exists in a perfect state, because there it is better digested and decocted." According to Richard, in his twelfth chapter, the red sulphur of the philosophers exists in the sun on account of its greater digestion, and the white sulphur in the moon on account of its inferior digestion."

Since, then, the substance of the metals is one, and common to all, and since this substance is (either at once, or after laying aside in course of time the foreign and evil sulphur of the baser metals by a process of gradual digestion) changed by the virtue of its own indwelling sulphur into GOLD, which is the goal of all the metals, and the true intention of Nature—we are obliged to admit, and freely confess that in the mineral kingdom, as well as in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, Nature seeks and demands a gradual attainment of perfection, and a gradual approximation to the highest standard of purity and excellence.

I thought it would be best, O friendly searcher of Nature, to discuss the matter more in detail, in order that you might the more readily know and make use of the substance of our Stone! For if you attempted to produce our Stone out of an animal substance you would fail, because the two things belong to different natural orders. For the Stone is a mineral, but you would be trying to fashion it out of an animal substance. "But nothing," says our Richard, in his first chapter, "can be got out of a thing which is not in it. Therefore every species, every genus, every natural order, is naturally developed within its own limits, bearing fruit after its own kind, and not within some other essentially different order: everything in which seed is sown must correspond to its own seed." And Basil. Valentinus says: "Consider and know, my friend, that you must not select an animal soul for this your purpose. For flesh and blood were given by the Creator to ani-

mals, and are proper to animals, and from them animals are formed and brought forth." For this reason I wonder at those who wish to be regarded as great adepts, and yet look for the substance of the stone in female menstruums, the seminal fluid, eggs, hairs, urine, and similar things, and are not ashamed to fill so many volumes with their vain and worthless recipes, and to deceive the ignorant with such foolish, futile, and useless speculations. Roger, in his "Mirror" (cp. iii.), expresses his amazement at the folly of these men when he exclaims: "How strange that any sane person should look for what he wants in the animal and vegetable worlds, which have nothing whatever to do with the object of his search, while the mineral world is quite as ready to his hand. It is incredible that any philosopher should establish his art on such a remote foundation, except indeed by way of allegory." "For our Stone (says Basil.) is not made of combustible things. Verily that Stone and the matter thereof are safe from all such violence, therefore cease to seek it in the animal kingdom; for Nature herself could not find it there." Again, whoever hopes to find it in the vegetable world, as, for instance, in trees, herbs, flowers, is quite as much mistaken as he who would change an animal into a stone. Plants and trees, with all that they produce, may be consumed by fire, and leave nothing behind but the dust out of which they are made, and the salt which at the first creation of their species they received from Nature. Let no one be misled by the confident assertions of those who pretend that they can produce the Philosopher's Stone out of wheat, or out of wine. These persons fancy they understand the meaning of a certain passage in the writings of Raymond Lullius, but they exhibit the depth of their folly by the assumption of profound wisdom, and thus only deceive themselves and others. I do not deny that some excellent solvents, indispensable both to the physician and to the chemist, are obtained from these sources; but I do most positively deny that the Philosopher's Stone can be prepared, or its seed elicited, from them, since the Creator has ordained that nothing should overstep the bounds of the natural order to which it was originally assigned. Hence every true disciple of wisdom may gather that the substance of the Stone is to be obtained neither in the animal nor in the vegetable world, seeing that both are combustible. We must therefore look for it among incombustible things, that is to say, in the mineral world, and thence only can we prepare it. Since, then, the Stone of the Wise is mineral, and there are different kinds of minerals, as stones (including clay and the different varieties of earth), salts, general minerals, and metals, we must further ask, in which of all these it is contained. We may at once eliminate stones, because they contain no fusible mercury, and cannot be incited, dissolved, or divided into their component parts on account of the large quantity of foreign sulphur and earthly substance which cleave to them.

Nor will the wise investigator of Nature's secrets expect to find the substance of the Blessed Stone in salts, alums, or similar minerals. In them he meets with a sharp, corroding, destructive spirit, but mercury and sulphur, as understood by philosophers, he would vainly look for. General minerals, like magnesia, bismuth, antimony, etc., can never under any circumstances become metals; how, then, can the substance of this Stone, which is the essential perfection of all metals and minerals, be obtained from them? Moreover, they have nothing in common with metals, but do burn, corrode, and destroy them:—how then can they be the means of their improvement?

Hear what Richard the Englishman has to say on this head (cp. x.): "The lesser minerals cannot become metals—First, because they were not generated out of the elementary

substance of metals, which is quicksilver. But seeing that their generation differs from the generation of metals in form, and substance, and composition, they can never become metals, because things belonging to the same species have the same elementary sub- stance, and spring from the same seed. But the lesser minerals are not generated from mercury, as we learn from Aristotle and Avicenna. If they were to become metals, they would have to change into the elementary substance of metals. And, since such a transformation is beyond the power of chemistry, they can never become metals; that is to say, they can never be the substance of the Stone. Second, since the lesser minerals cannot become the elementary substance of metals, which is mercury, they can never reach the middle and the end of the same development, namely, metals and the tincture. But because the properties of the lesser minerals are foreign to those of the metals, although they may have some of the virtues of minerals, yet on the whole they are less excellent and are liable to be injured by fire. Therefore the nature of metals delights not in them, but repels them, while it receives that which is suited to it. For this reason they are foolish who bring in so many foreign speculations for the purpose of imposing upon their hearers; for the things they put forward are altogether unlike metals and can never receive nor impart their nature."

The student must not suffer himself to be misled by the language occasionally employed with regard to salts by the philosophers whom we have quoted, as, for instance, when it is said, in the mystic language of our Sages, "He who works without salt will never raise dead bodies"; or, again, when he reads in the book of Soliloquies," He who works without salt draws a bow without a string." For you must know that these sayings refer to a very different kind of salt from the common mineral. This you may see from the following passage of the "Rosary of the Philosophers": "The salt of metals is the Philosopher's Stone; for our Stone is water congealed in gold and silver; it is hostile to fire and may be dissolved into the water of which it is composed after its kind." And that the "congealed water" of the Sages does not mean ordinary water may be gathered from the following words of Geber (lib. forn., cp. xix.): "Seek to resolve the sun and the moon into their dry water, which the vulgar call mercury." The Sages have also described their earth under the name of salt—*e.g.*, in the "Sounding of the Trumpet," where it is said: "That which is left at the bottom of the distilling vessel is our salt—that is to say, our earth." And in the "Allegories of the Wise" one bursts forth into these words: "Mark well that those bodies which flow forth from our bodies are salts and alums." At times they call the medicine itself "Salt," as in the following passage of the "Scale": "The virtue of the second water is to exalt earth into its own mineral salt, as though assimilating it by its own strength." And Arnold, in his work concerning the "Preservation of Youth," (lib. iii.) says: "This prepared salt has great virtue in preserving youth. The Sages have compared it to the natural heat of healthy youth. The Stone itself has sometimes been called by the wise the Animal Stone, sometimes the Mineral Secret, on account, of this similitude; sometimes the Everlasting Remedy, or the Water of Life. The whole preparation may be reduced to the purest drinking water, like other things that have the same properties." From the aforesaid it clearly appears that we are forbidden both by the teaching of the Sages and by the nature of the thing to suppose that the Stone can be made out of the lesser minerals.

We should next enquire more carefully whether the matter of our Stone may be obtained from the intermediate minerals—like bismuth, antimony, magnesia, and so on.

They are certainly often mentioned in this connection by the Sages. Thus Senior says, in a certain passage: "If yellow orpiment has not the power of coagulating mercury our Magistery can never attain its goal." Thomas de Aquinas recommends us to take "our antimony, or black earth," while Parmenides, in "The Crowd," says: "Take quicksilver and coagulate it in the body of magnesia, or corruptible sulphur." But in all such passages these terms are used metaphorically; it is not meant that the Great Stone can ever be made out of such substances. The orpiment and magnesia of the Sages are not the common minerals, but the substance which in other passages is called the Agent, the Lion, the King, Sulphur, and by many other names. They call it orpiment because it gives a deeper and more brilliant coloring to gold; magnesia because of the excellence and greatness of that which is gained from it; antimony, with Thomas Aquinas, on account of the brilliant blackness which it assumes after solution. As a matter of fact, when the Stone has assumed its ebony color they are in the habit of comparing it to all black things.

But it may be said that some of these intermediate minerals are, as a matter of fact, composed of mercury and sulphur, and may become metals, *e.g.*, magnesia unites with lead and tin, and antimony not only mingles with metals, but also produces a lead not very different from natural lead. Moreover, it is asserted that many persons of high and low degree have actually seen gold made of these minerals. It is further said that as these minerals are composed of mercury and sulphur (and can by chemical means be reduced to them), and are therefore of a common origin with the metals, the substance of the Stone may also be elicited from them. But, in the first place, we must draw a distinction between the various minerals of this class, namely those which contain mercury, and those which hardly ever contain it. Those that are full of mercury are of greater account, since, by means of our Medicine, their mercury may be transformed into gold and silver; and, their nature being partly metallic, they may well be called half metals. But the rest, which have no mercury, are of no use for our purpose. But forasmuch as, on account of the gross and combustible sulphur which is in them, even the first are very far indeed from the metallic goal, so they cannot be taken for the substance of our Stone, which should be pure and perfect mercury combined with pure, subtle, and incombustible sulphur. That they are most impure and deeply infected with the grossness of their sulphur, may be easily seen by the test of a chemical experiment. One of them (zinetum) might, by reason of its weight and brilliance, be taken at first sight for pure mercury by the careless; but when brought to the test of fire it is consumed with a smoke, like that of sulphur. Bismuth, on the other hand, is not even fusible by fire—such is its earthy grossness and impurity. Antimony, again, can be purged by a chemical process, and reduced to a very white and beautiful regulus. As we gaze upon it in this purified state, it seems difficult to believe that it may not be transformed into something glorious. Hence it is natural that some self-conceited people should have supposed that the Stone may be prepared from it. But however much antimony is purged of its blackness, it still retains its grossness, hardness, and sulphuric properties; it can never become malleable (like the metals), and therefore, in spite of its numerous affinities, cannot be regarded as a metal. Moreover, it has gross and impure mercury; and its sulphur is combustible. Ye, then, who would be great philosophers and do deceive many with your voluminous writings, in which you put this mineral forward as the essence of the universal remedy—I ask you again and again to reconsider your opinion, and to mark the saying of Arnold, that "it is foolish to seek in a thing that which it does not contain." He also says, in his Commen-

tary on "The Crowd": "The philosopher's stone is a pure substance." Again, Lullius in his "Last Testament," observes: "Our tincture is nothing but pure fire." There is an expression to the same effect in his "Vade Mecum": "It is a subtle spirit which tinges bodies, and cleanses them of their leprous infirmities." But this mineral (like all the rest, without a single exception) is so gross and impure that it can only be cleansed by the mediation of our tincture. Therefore, the substance of our Great Stone cannot be elicited from it, since (Richard, cp. 1.) nothing can be obtained from a body which does not exist therein. What shall we say of vitriol, which misleads many by its wonderful qualities, especially as some part of it changes into copper, and itself has the power of transforming icon into copper? As a matter of fact, it is the elementary substance of copper, and when this mineral vapor (or aeriform mercury) finds in the mineral veins of the earth a place where its bitter, acid, salt, and venereal sulphur lies hid, it immediately amalgamates with it into a metal. But since the quantity of the aforesaid sulphur greatly exceeds that of the mercury, when the pure is separated from the impure, and the combustible from the incombustible by the segregating office of Nature, the mercury itself is changed into a greenish inferior substance. When common sulphur is added to copper, and the whole brought in contact with fire (for art can do by intense heat in a few moments what it takes the gentle heat of Nature a long time to accomplish) it corrodes the copper, and changes it into vitriol, and, in proportion to the quantity of the sulphur, the vitriol assumes a richer or fainter color; whence it comes that some vitriol contains more copper and some less. In iron, too, there is gross sulphur; hence it is corroded by vitriol which seeks its mercury (the mercury of iron being very like that of vitriol), and (the mercury being joined to the sulphur) the iron becomes pure copper.

It should be carefully noticed that the acid spirit of vitriol is generated from sulphur; for the smell of sulphur is perceived in the spirit of vitriol, and the spirit of sulphur, like the spirit of vitriol, has power to change into vitriol. Since, then, this corrosive sulphur is hid in vitriol, and since it contains so small a quantity of impure mercury, we may be sure that it cannot be the object of our search. In this we agree with Alphidius, who says: "Take heed, my son, and eschew dead bodies, and stones; in these things there is no true way of procedure, for their life preserves not, but destroys. Such are salts, orpiments, arsenic, magnesia, bismuth, tutty, and the like." And Arnold (Flos Flor.) says: "The reason of these mistakes is that the four spirits, viz., orpiment, salt of ammonia, mercury, and sulphur, are not the seed of perfect or imperfect metals (except, of course, mercury and sulphur by themselves)."

But from these last words of Arnold it might be inferred that common mercury and quicksilver are the substance of the stone, seeing that these are referred to the four spirits, and that sulphur is supposed to consolidate the mercury. But I answer, with Richard the Englishman, in his eleventh chapter, that it does not really do so. For every kind of common sulphur is repugnant to metals, as the Sage says: "Indeed you must know that sulphur comes forth out of the fatness of the earth, and is thickened in the minera by gentle heat; when it becomes hard it is *called* sulphur."

Now there are two kinds of sulphur, the living and the combustible. Quick sulphur is the active principle of metals, and, when purged from all foreign matter, is the Matter of our Stone. But the common combustible variety is not the Matter of metals or of our Stone; rather, it is injurious to them. Common, combustible sulphur—so we are told by

Avicenna and Richard the Englishman—has nothing to do with our art. However carefully prepared, it still disintegrates and destroys metals, because it has no affinity with them. When enclosed in metals, it retards their fusion. This is clearly seen in the case of iron, which contains hard, gross, and impure sulphur. When this sulphur is burned it is nothing but a dead, earthy, powdery substance. How then can it impart life to other things? For it has two principles of decay—its inflammability and its earthy impurity. The sulphur of the Sages, on the other hand, is living fire; it is quick, and quickens and matures lifeless substances. Common sulphur, then, cannot be the substance of the Stone.

But what shall we infer concerning common mercury? The Sages tell us that the Matter of our Stone is a mercurial substance, and many of its qualities closely resemble those of vulgar mercury. For it is the elementary substance of all fusible minerals, as Arnold says (Ros., pt. I., cp. ii.): "Since all fusible substances, when melted, are changed into it, and it mingles with them because of its common nature: they can differ from it only in so far as it contains impure foreign sulphur." And, again (cp. iv.): "Living mercury is clearly most perfect, and proved in all its operations, since it saves from combustion and promotes fusion. It is the red tincture, the sum of perfection, and quick as lightning; nor is it severed from that with which it has mingled so long as it exists. The same is full of affinity, cleaving faithfully, and is the medium by which tinctures are united, for it mingles most intimately with them, penetrating naturally into their inmost part, for it is of the same nature. We imitate Nature exactly, who in her minera hath no other matter whereon she works except a pure mercurial form. It is the only thing that overcomes fire, and is nut overcome by it, but delights in its amicable warmth." Again, Bernard says: "In this mercury is enclosed essential sulphur, which the fire cannot touch; and it accomplishes our object without any other substance than that of pure mercury." Seeing, then, that mercury has such excellent properties, it must surely be the substance of our Stone? True; but as there are two kinds of sulphur, so there are two kinds of mercury, the common mercury and the mercury of the Sages. Common mercury is gross and crude; nor does it stand the test of fire like our mercury, but is dissipated in the form of smoke, even by gentle heat. Hence the Sages have laid down this rule: "Our mercury is not the mercury of the vulgar herd." So Lullius says (Clav. cp. I.): "Common quicksilver, however carefully prepared, can never become the quicksilver of the Sages, for common quicksilver can only stand the test of fire by the aid of some other dry and more highly digested quicksilver." But most students of this art have spoken largely about the sublimation of common mercury, and have persisted in seeking the treasure of earthly wisdom where it cannot be found, because Nature has not placed it there. And, truly, the working even of common mercury is so wonderful that it has misled some who supposed themselves to be adepts in this art. The following is a case in point. I knew a man who succeeded in giving to his amalgam an orange color, but he could not get it any nearer to the color of gold. At last this clever chemist determined to increase the heat of the furnace, thinking that this would have the desired effect of more intimately combining the various ingredients. But alas! the alembic burst, the gold was hurled into the fire, and almost changed from its nature by the still volatile mercury. Hence it appears that the mercury (which is its body) so strongly affected the gold in its minutest particles as to reduce it to a tincture, although several colors were obtained by the action of the heat on the melted mass. If that good man had taken to heart Arnold's words in the "Flower of Flowers," he would never have made that experiment. For the

said Arnold makes reference to those who adopt this method in the following terms: "They knew that mercury is the elementary principle of the metals, and that they are produced through its digestion by the heat of sulphur; they therefore sublimed mercury by itself, then fixed and consolidated it, again melted it and did again coagulate it: but when they came to examine the alembic, they found no gold, etc." Therefore we cannot believe that common quicksilver is the substance of the Stone. At the same time I do not deny that it is indispensable both to the philosophical chemist and to the physician.

We have carefully sought the substance of our stone in the animal and vegetable world, among stones, lesser, intermediate, and greater minerals, but in vain. We must now see whether we can find it in the metals, and if so, whether in all or only in some. It is a well-known fact (to which Roger bears witness, Spec., cp. iii.), that all metals are generated out of sulphur and quicksilver, and that nothing will become one with them, or change them, but what originates in themselves; since a thing can be developed and improved only by that which belongs to its own nature (Richard, cp. i.).

I need not say that the Great Artist has ordained that throughout the whole of Nature things should generate and produce only that which is like them, so that, for instance, a horse can never be the offspring of a man. "As brute animals," says Basil Valentine, "cannot multiply after their kind by way of generation except by virtue of their common nature; so you cannot expect to obtain the Blessed Stone, but out of its own seed, out of which it was made from the beginning. Now to find the seed you should diligently consider for what purpose you require the Store. You will at once see that it can be obtained only from the metallic root from which God has ordained that the metals themselves should be generated. Moreover, there is a great conformity between the generation of the metals and the Stone. For in both sulphur and quicksilver (containing that salt which is their quickening soul) are indispensably required; nor can any useful metal be generated until these three (making up the metallic substance) have been combined; for in the composition of metals there must be nothing which has not been obtained from a metallic source." "No external thing," says Draco, "which is not derived from these two [sulphur and mercury] has power to produce or transmute metals. On this account we must select a metallic substance for the production of the Stone." We must next briefly enquire whether it is to be found in imperfect metals. Many imagine that the substance of the white (tincture) may be elicited from tin or lead, and that of the red out of copper or iron, or both. This idea is doubtless owing to a misconception of the words of the Sages. For Geber (lib. forn. cp., ix.) says: "The mass for fermentation we generally gain from the imperfect [base] bodies." Therefore we lay it down as a general rule that the white paste may be extracted from Jupiter and Saturn, the red from Venus, Saturn, and Mars. And Basil. Valentinus says (Lib. de phys. et hyperphys.), that the tincture is prepared out of a conjunction of Mars and Venus. Again (Triumph. Antimon.), he uses these words: "After this tincture of the Sun and Moon comes the tincture of Venus and Mars, which two make up the tincture of the Sun, when they have been thoroughly perfected and condensed. After these come the tinctures of Jupiter and of Saturn (for the coagulation of mercury), and at last the tincture of mercury itself." But the searcher of Nature must know that there can be no contradiction of opinion between Geber or Basil, for it is impossible that the true philosophers should ever lie, and so these words should be parabolically understood. For no perfection can be obtained from imperfect metals, either by themselves or mixed, nor can that which is itself imperfect bring other things

to perfection. For the purest substance of mercury is required for our purpose, as is testified in the "Sounding of the Trumpet," and by Avicenna, Lullius, and almost all the Sages, who unanimously affirm that "the purest substance of mercury is selected by us for our work." Now this highly refined substance of mercury is not found in the base metals, since they are rendered so gross by their impure and unessential sulphur, that, like leprous bodies, they can never be thoroughly purged and cleansed, in which process is the essence of our artifice. Nor do they well stand the test of fire, which is one of the properties required in our Matter. Let us hear what Geber has to tell us (Summa, cp. lxiii.) concerning the impurity of imperfect metals, and the properties of perfect mercury: "Thus," he says, "we happen upon two most wonderful secrets. The one is that there exists a twofold cause for the destruction of every [imperfect] metal by fire: namely, (1), the combustible sulphur enclosed in their interior substance is kindled by fierce heat, and (unimpeded by any excellence in their mercury) annihilates, and converts into smoke their entire substance; (2), the outward flame is fed by them, penetrates into their interior, and dissolves them into smoke, even though they be very solid; (3), their interior is laid bare by calcination. Now when all these conditions of destruction are found together, bodies must needs be destroyed; if they are not found together, they are destroyed somewhat more slowly. The second secret is the excellence which quicksilver imparts to bodies. For quicksilver (no other condition of decay being present) does not permit itself to be separated into its elements, but proves its perfection by preserving its substance intact in the fire. Blessed be God who created it, and gave it such a substance and such properties as are not found in all Nature besides. This is that which overcomes fire, and delights in its amicable heat." Here Geber clearly shows that the substance of our Stone cannot exist in imperfect metals; because things that are impure in themselves do not abide the fire which might purify them, while our mercury (on account of its purity) is not in the slightest degree injured by the fire. Thus we perceive that no one imperfect metal can contain the substance of our Stone. But neither is it to be found in a mixture of impure metals—for by mixing they become less pure than they were before. Moreover we said above that the substance we required was *one*. This fact is clearly set forth by Halys (lib. secret., cp. vi.), when he says: "The Stone is One; nothing else must be added to it: out of one substance the Sages obtain our remedy. Nothing else must mingle with the Stone itself, or with its substance." And Morienus says: "This Magistery grows from one original root, which branches out into several parts, and from which springs one thing."

But if base metals cannot be the substance of the Stone, why do the Sages bid us employ them? I will tell you. When they speak of impure bodies, they do not mean copper, iron, lead, tin, &c., but its own *body*, or its earth—as Arnold (Flos Flor.) says: "Mercury is united to earth, *i.e.*, to an imperfect substance [or body]." "For though this earth" is so perfect and pure that in these respects it would seem to attain the utmost possibility of Nature, yet in regard to the Stone it is still imperfect and impure. In this point art leaves Nature behind, since it accomplishes what Nature could not perform. That this earth before its plenary purgation and regeneration is imperfect, may be seen from the fact that it cannot yet accomplish more in the matter of tinging than Nature has given to it, while after its regeneration it is most powerful. Its grossness is clearly perceived in an actual experiment: for first it is black and looks like lead or antimony; then it is of a whitish color, and is called Jupiter (or tin, or magnesia), and this also before it has attained true whiteness, but when it has passed the white stage, it is called Mars and Ve-

nus; after that it becomes perfect and red. That Basil. Valentinus agrees with me, and did not really hold the opinion which he expressed in some of his writings, is clear from his tract concerning the Great Stone, where (speaking of the Matter of the Stone) he says that in the Sun all three perfections are found together, whence it derives its power of resisting the fire, and that the Moon, on account of its fixed mercury, does not easily yield to the fire, but endures the trial. "That noble paramour Venus," he continues, "is furnished with an abundance of color, and the greater and richer part of her body is full of tincture. The color is the same which dwells in the most precious of metals, and on account of its abundance has a reddish appearance. But its body is leprous, for which reason the tincture cannot remain fixed in it, but evaporates when the former is destroyed. For when the body decays the soul cannot remain, but is dissipated and driven off. Its habitation is destroyed and burnt with fire, and its place knows it no more. In a fixed body it would without difficulty remain. The fixed 'salt' gives to brave Mars a hard, strong, and heavy body; whence the strength of his soul is perceived: for this warrior is not easily overcome. For his body is hard and difficult to wound."

But let no one conclude from these words of Basilius that that fixed sulphur of Venus, when united to the spirit of perfect mercury, will become the tincture. We must again repeat that our substance is not collected from many sources; but, as Basilius says, it is one universal thing, and is found in, and obtained from one thing, being the spirit of mercury, the soul of sulphur, and a spiritual salt, united under one heaven and dwelling in one body. Therefore let us turn our backs upon the base metals, and turn our minds to the precious metals, taking to heart those words of Plato (qu. ii.): "Why do you melt and dissolve other bodies with great labor, when in these ⌈the precious metals⌋ you have what you seek? If you wish to use the base metals, you must first change them into the substance of perfect bodies." Therefore, beloved inquirer into the secrets of Nature, leave on one side all things animal and vegetable, all salts, alums, vitriols, bismuths, magnesias, antimonies, and all base and impure metals, and seek thy Stone with Arnold de Vill. nov. (Pt. I., cp. vii.): "in Mercury and the Sun for the Sun, and in Mercury and the Moon for the Moon; since the whole virtue of this art consists in them alone." "For as the source of ignition is fire, so gold is the principle of gold making," says Ripley, in his "First Gate." If, therefore, thou wouldest make gold and silver by the philosopher's art, take for this purpose neither eggs, nor blood, but gold and silver, which, being subjected to the action of fire naturally, prudently, and not manually, generate new substances after their own kind, like all things in Nature. Richard (cp. x.) tells us "to sow gold and silver, that aided by our labor they may bring forth fruit, through the mediation of Nature: for these two have ⌈and are⌋ what you seek and nothing else in all the world." And why should I not fix on them since they contain pure and perfect mercury, with red and white sulphur. (Richard, cp. xvii.) So Avicenna teaches that, "in all silver is white, as in all gold there is red, sulphur. No other sulphur like that which exists in these bodies is found on all the earth. Therefore we cunningly prepare these two bodies, that we may have sulphur and quicksilver of the same substance as that which generates gold and silver under the earth. For they are shining bodies, whose rays tinge other bodies with true whiteness and redness, according to the manner of their own preparation." "For our Magistery," says, Arnold (Rosar., pt. I., cp. v.) "aids perfect bodies, and works upon the imperfect without the admixture of anything else. Gold, then, being the most precious of all the metals, is the red tincture, tinging and transforming every body. Silver is the white tincture, tinging other bodies with its perfect whiteness." Let me tell

the gentle reader that the metals, that is to say, gold and silver in their metallic form, are not the Matter of our Stone—being in the middle between them and the base metals, as our Matter is in the middle between the former and our Great Stone. So Bernard says, (pt. ii.): "Let them be silent who affirm that there is any tincture but our own, or any other sulphur than that which lies hid in magnesia; also those who would extract the quicksilver from any but the red slave, and who speak of some other water but our own which is incorruptible and combines with nothing except that which belongs to its own nature, and moistens [tinges] nothing except that which is one with its own nature. There is no acid but our own, no other regimen, no other colors. In the same way, there is no other true solution, sublimation, consolidation, putrefaction. I therefore advise you to have done with alums, vitriols, salts, black bodies, borax, aqua fortis, herbs, animals, beasts, and all that proceeds from them, hairs, blood, urine, human seed, flesh, eggs, and all minerals, and to keep to the metals. But though the quicksilver required for our Stone is found in metals only, and in these is the beginning of the work, they are not therefore our Stone, so long as they retain their metallic form. For one and the same substance cannot have two forms. How can they be the Stone which holds an intermediate form between metals and mercury, unless their present form is first destroyed and removed?" Therefore, also, Raymond Lully says in his "Testament" (cp. vi.): "On this account a good artist takes metals for his media in the work of the magistery, and especially the Sun and Moon, because in them the substance of the Mercury and Sulphur is ripened, pure, and well-digested by Nature's own artifice. The artist would vainly endeavor to produce this exact proportion out of the natural elements, if he did not find it ready to his hand in these bodies." And in the "Codicil" he says: "Without these two, viz., gold and silver, our art would have no existence since the sulphur they contain has been purified by nature with a thoroughness such as art would vainly strive to imitate. From these two bodies, with their prepared sulphur [or prepared arsenic] our Medicine may be elicited, but without them we can never obtain it." In the preface to his "Key" he says: "I advise you, my friends, to operate on nothing but the Sun and Moon; but these you should resolve into their elementary substances, viz., our quicksilver and our sulphur." In like manner Arnoldus assures us that "from these bodies there is extracted an exceedingly white and red sulphur; for in these there is a most pure substance of sulphur, cleansed to the highest degree by Nature's own artifice." Nicarus, in "The Crowd," says: "I bid you take gold, which you desire to multiply and renew, and to divide its water into two parts; for that metal falling into that water will be called the fermenting matter of gold." How can this Sage call his "water" gold? To assist the student in solving this enigma I must tell him that the gold of the Sages is not common gold, as also Senior tells us. In "The Crowd" it is said: "As mercury is the element of all metals, so gold is their ultimate goal; hence in all metals, pure and impure, there are gold, silver, and mercury. But there is one true gold which is the essence of all." Thus you see that there is a gold of the Sages, which, though derived from common gold, is yet very different from it. The following words occur in the "Rising Dawn" (cp. xvi.) "The philosopher's gold resembles common gold neither in color nor in substance. That which is extracted from it is the red and white tincture." "The philosopher's gold may be bought at a low price" (Aphidius). "All that is bought at a high price is false. With little gold we buy much" (Morienus). Moreover, our gold is living gold, and our silver is living silver, so that they can cause nothing but life and growth. Common gold and silver are dead, They can effect nothing until they are raised from the dead and quickened by the Sage. Then they live, and possess in a high degree the power of propagating and multiplying

their race. Concerning the life of our metals that great philosopher, Sendivogius (who is still living), has the following words: "Let me advise you not to receive the gold and silver of the vulgar herd, for they are dead. Take our living metals. Place them in our fire, and there will result a dry liquid. First, earth will be resolved into water [for thus the Mercury of the Sages is called]. That water will solve gold and silver, and consume them until only the tenth part with one part is left. This will be the humid radical of the metals."

It is to be noted that Sages sometimes call their water, as well as their earth, gold. Hereunto we have already heard the words of Nicarus, and after a like manner we are told in the "Rosary of the Philosophers: "Our gold and silver are not the gold and silver of the vulgar. We call gold the water which rises into the air when exposed to fire. Verily, this gold is not the gold of the vulgar. The vulgar would not believe of their gold that it could be volatilized on account of its solid nature."

The philosopher's "earth," then, is sometimes designated their gold, as the same author testifies: "Know that our ore, which is the gold of the philosophers, is their earth." This "earth" is also called ore, ferment, or tincture; just as the "water" is called white and flaky "earth" So we read in the "Sounding of the Trumpet": "Wherefore Hermes says, 'Sow your gold in white, flaky earth which by calcination has been made glowing, subtle, and volatile.' That is to say: Sow gold, *i.e.*, the soul and quickening virtue, into the white earth, which by preparation has been made white and pure and freed from all its grossness. Thus natural gold is not the fermenting matter, but the philosopher's gold is the quickening ferment itself." Again, in the Seventh Step of the "Ladder of the Philosophers": "Their earth is white in which their gold [which is the soul] is sown, and this body is the centre of knowledge, the concentration thereof, and the habitation of tinctures." Once more: "Therefore Hercules says; 'Solve the body of magnesia which has become white and like the leaves of the bramble.' This is the body; the soul is the essence which is called the philosopher's gold." (For with water the spirit ascends into the upper air.) "Mix," says Senior, "gold with gold, that is water [mercury] and ashes." Again, Hermes says: "Sow gold into the white flaky earth." From these expressions, however obscurely worded. it is clear that our gold is not common gold.

But why do the philosophers call their gold now "water," and now "earth"? Do they not contradict themselves, or each other? No; our Sages, in expounding the truth, veil it under obscure and allegorical expressions, but nevertheless agree with each other so marvelously that they all seem to speak, as it were, with one mouth. They do nit confound one thing with another, nor do they wish to lead the earnest enquirer astray. They express themselves in mystic phrases to hide the truth from the unworthy and impious, lest they should seem to be casting pearls before swine, and giving the holy thing to be trodden underfoot by these who think only of indulging their lustful desires. But the noble student of our art has been told more than once, not only from what quarter our Stone may be obtained, but also that its substance must be *one*, which by the artist's skill may be resolved into two, viz., earth and fire, or mercury and sulphur.

The Sages, then, do well to call their gold earth or water; for they have a perfect right to term it whatever they like. So they have frequently called their Stone their gold, their super-perfect gold, their regenerate gold, and by many other names besides. If any one

does not perceive their meaning at the first glance, he must blame his own ignorance, not their jealousy.

The reader now knows that the substance of our Stone is neither animal nor vegetable, and that it does not belong to the minerals or the base metals, but that it must be extracted from gold and silver, and that our gold and silver are not the vulgar, dead gold and silver, but the living gold and silver of the Sages. We must now say something about the mode of solution, as the greatest arcanum of all, and the root of the matter. A solution takes place when we transform a dry thing into a liquid, a hard thing into a soft, a hidden thing into one that is manifest, *i.e.*, when a solid is changed into water; not, however, the vulgar water (as Parmenides and Agadmon in "The Crowd" teach us: "When some persons hear of the liquefaction, they think a change takes place into the water of the clouds. But if they had read and understood our books, they would know that our water is permanent), but into the water of the Sages, i e., the elementary substance, as Arnold (Ros. I., cp. ix.) says: "The object of the Sages is to dissolve the Stone into its mercury, or elementary matter" And Avicenna says: "Thou who wouldest attain our object must first endeavor to dissolve and sublime the two luminaries, which is the first stage of the experiment, that they may become quicksilver." Therefore Arnold (Ros. II., cp. ii.) describes the solution as a resolving of bodies, and a preparation of the first Matter or Nature. And Richard the Englishman (cp. xviii.) writes thus: "First the Stone must be resolved into its elementary substance [seeing that it is an union of body and spirit], that the two may become one mercurial water." But even as this first solution is the most vital part of our process, so is it also the most difficult, as Eobold Vogelius testifies when he says: "How hard this achievement is can be affirmed by those who have performed it." Bernard of Trevisan, in his book addressed to Thomas of Bononia, says: "He who knows the secret of the solution is acquainted with the arcanum of the Art, which is, to mingle kinds, and effectually to extract elements from elements which lie hid in them." The solution must not be made with aqua fortis; for aqua fortis corrodes and destroys the body which should be only liquefied and improved. The solution does not take place into any water that wets the hands, but into a dry water, which is called both sulphur and mercury, as Zneumo says (Turba): "Unless by resolving it into its elements you extract from the body its marrow, and make it an impalpable spirit, you labor in vain." And Richard the Englishman, following Avicenna, affirms (cp. xi.): "The Sages have striven to discover how those sulphurs may be extracted from those more perfect bodies, and how their qualities may be so refined by Art, that that which was not manifest before (although it always lay hid in them) may appear by the mediation of the said Art with Nature." And this they confess cannot be done unless the body be resolved into its First Matter, which is quicksilver, out of which it was made in the beginning, without admixture of any outward things; since foreign matter cannot improve the nature of our Stone. "For no water," says Bernard, "dissolves our bodies, but that which is of their kind, and may be inspissated by them." (Ep. to Thom. of Bonon.) And in the same Epistle he writes: "The solution should be permanent, so that from both elements, viz., the male and female seed, a new species may result. Amen, I say unto you that no natural water can dissolve metals, except that which is always in them substantially and formally, and which the metals themselves, being dissolved, may again consolidate." Thus Morfoleus, in "The Crowd" says: "Every body is dissolved with the spirit that is joined to it, and doubtless also becomes spiritual. And every spirit