

Histoire Critique de Nicolas Flamel et de Pernelle sa Femme, recueillie d'Actes anciens qui justifient l'origine & la médiocrité de leur fortune contre les imputations des Alchimistes. On y a joint le Testament de Pernelle & plusieurs autres Pièces intéressantes. Par M. L. V*** A Paris, Chez G. Desprez, Imprimeur & Libraire ordinaire du Roi & du Clergé de France, rue St. Jacques, à saint Prosper & aux trois Vertus. M.DCC.LXI. Avec Approbation & Privilège du Roi.

12°. Pp. xij, 403 [4, 1 blank]. Frontispiece and plate of Flamel's house.

M. L. V* ** stands presumably for M. L'Abbé Villain. The author's name was Étienne François

Villain. For other references see under FLAMEL (Nicolas).

Villain, *Essai d'une Histoire de la Paroisse de Saint Jacques de la Boucherie*, Paris, 1758, pp. 145-164 (Chapitre xxi. De Nicolas Flamel, & de Pernelle sa Femme. In this he ascribes Flamel's moderate wealth to hard work and economy, and not to the Jews or the philosophers' stone—and he mentions also Flamel's benefactions. This book was reviewed in *L'Année Littéraire*, 1758, Tome vii, pp. 241-267, and special attention (pp. 250-264) is given to Flamel. Arguments to rebut Villain's statements are advanced, the amount of Flamel's wealth, as evidenced by the magnitude of his foundations, is referred to as being too great for him to have made it by the un lucrative profession of a scrivener, and then is quoted Flamel's twenty-one years' search for the stone, with the projections he made. He concealed his wealth, however, although he became one of the notable men of the parish. Next follows a description of the MS. seen by Dom Pernety. It was a breviary, in Flamel's handwriting, of 1414 On the margins was an allegorical treatise of the Hermetic Work, addressed to his nephew. Apparently it was in answer to this review or challenge that Villain wrote the present life of Flamel, producing documentary evidence for the statements that his wealth was limited, his donations in reality small, and showing that there was no necessity for assuming his money to have been due to a knowledge of the Hermetic Secret. As this stands, it is perhaps an unsettled historical question, requiring revision to determine with what accuracy the abbé pursued his enquiries. Anyhow, his life of Flamel, reiterating his previous statements with proofs, was more than Pernety could stand, and hence his letter in *L'Année Littéraire* of 1762, referred to below, in which he says: 'Après l'analyse que vous [*i.e.* the editor to whom he is writing] faites dans votre *Année Littéraire*, au mois de Novembre 1758, de l'*Essai Historique sur Saint Jacques de la Boucherie* par M. l'Abbé V***,

j'aurois cru que cet auteur se seroit condamné au silence. Mais vos remarques au sujet de sa digression sur *Nicolas Flamel*, & l'envie de justifier une opinion hasardée qu'il a pris le parti de ne pas abandonner, ne lui ont pas permis de se taire.' One can understand why Fréron, the editor, in introducing this letter of Pernety's, styled Villain's book 'cet écrit fort ennuyeux. It was 'very tiresome' to have one's hero-adept deposed from his eminence, and one's arguments all upset by a writer who had covered himself with dust 'en feuilletant les vieux parchemins des archives de S. *Jacques de la Boucherie*, as Dom Pernety puts it, but that sort of thing is rather apt to happen. In fact, they would appear to 'have wakened up the wrong man,' and he stated his views accordingly).

Pernety, 'Lettre de Dom Pernety sur une Histoire de Nicolas Flamel,' in M. Fréron's *L'Année Littéraire Année M.DCC.LXII*, Amsterdam, iii, pp. 24-35. (This is a review of Villain's book, in which he shows that the facts and arguments therein put forward do not touch the question of Flamel's being an adept. He also defends the authenticity of an alchemical MS. dated 1414 which bears to be the composition as well as in the handwriting of Flamel himself, but which Villain did not believe in. The abbé replied to this critique in the following letter, which I have not succeeded in seeing: Lettre à M.*** sur celle que dom Pernety a fait insérer dans les feuilles de M. Fréron contre l'*Histoire Critique de N. Flamel* Paris, 1762, 12°.)

Biographie Universelle, 1816, xv, pp. 8-12; 1856, xiv, pp. 185-187. (Article by Delaunay, who points out that the whole legend is symbolical of the Hermetic Work itself, and that it was put in circulation, if not actually invented, by Jacques Gohorry, in a sort of preface to the 'Sommaire philosophique,' which he printed in his collection: Transformation métallique, 1561, 8°. Delaunay

V * * * *Continued.*

claims to have shown for the first time that the date of Flamel's first projection for silver on 17 January, 1382, said to have been *lundi*, was in reality *vendredi*, according to the *Art de verifier les dates*; but it was fitting that the projection for *luna* should take place on *lundi*. The rest of the article takes a very prosaic and by no means flattering view of Flamel and his transactions.)

*Analectablibion, ou extraits critiques de divers livres rares oubliés ou peu connus, tirés du Cabinet du Marquis D. R*** (i.e. Marquis du Roure)*, Paris, Techener, 1836, i. pp. 132-134. (This is a brief review of Villain's 'Vie,' and it summarizes his data obtained from the original acts of gift and testamentary dispositions of Flamel and his wife, by which is shown that the reputed immense wealth and property in lands and houses are reduced to a sum which Flamel could have made in the course of his profession and by strict economy of living and which required no philosophers' stone to produce it. 'The arguments,' it is added, 'appear to us incontrovertible, they will possibly not convince everybody, and people, sensible and learned, will not the less go on saying that Nicolas Flamel and Pernelle his wife possessed the secret of transmutation. Pour punir leurs imitateurs, nous les condamnerons à lire trois fois le livre de l'abbé Villain qui, bien que judicieux et recherché des amateurs, ne se lit pas commodément.')

Alphonse Esquiros, 'Nicolas Flamel,' *La France Littéraire*, Paris, 1836, xxiii. pp. 231-249. (This is a readable recapitulation, with a thread of badinage through it, of the legend of Flamel, and may have been intended as a sort of comment on the matter of fact statement in the *Analectablibion*. It describes Flamel's coming to Paris, his life as a scrivener, and acquisition of the book of Abraham the Jew, its contents, Flamel's pilgrimage and ultimate successful transmutations, the proofs of his wealth, the impossibility of the insinuations of Naudé (spelled Naudée), that it came from plunder of the Jews, Cramoisy's visit and Flamel's escape from taxation; his recognition of his dangerous position by jealousy of his endowments of hospitals and churches, and his plans to escape from it; Pernelle's reputed death, her interesting will, which is still extant, Flamel's supposed death seven years later; his meeting with Pernelle at Geneva, and their departure to the East; Paul Lucas' report in 1713. Esquiros then adds a bit of his own: Flamel's return to Paris on June 6, 1818, his inability to see any place he knew, except his tower

V. F. S. P.

See CREILING (JOHANN CONRAD).

V. (J. R.), M.D.

Guldene Rose, d. i. Einfältige Beschreibung des Allergrössten von dem Allmächtigsten Schöpfer Himmels und der Erden Jehovah, in die Natur gelegten, und dessen Freunden und Auserwählten zugetheilten Geheimnisses, als Spiegels der göttlichen und natürlichen Weisheit, ans Licht gebracht durch J. R. V. M. D.

See DREY Curieuse Chymische Tractatlein, 1706.

See FÜNF Curieuse Chymische Tractatlein, 1767.

of St. Jacques-de-la-Boucherie, his failure to get any one to believe that he was Flamel returned after five hundred years' absence, his leave-taking of Paris and departure with his wife into everlasting exile.)

P. L. Jacob (Paul Lacroix), *Soirées de Walter Scott à Paris*, Paris, 1846, i. pp. 23-50 (a little romance on Flamel, in which he is not shown to the best advantage, and the account of his death is quite different from anything elsewhere).

François Lacombe, *Histoire de la Bourgeoisie de Paris, Les Bourgeois célèbres de Paris*, Paris, Amyot, (1852), pp. 199-216 (repeats the stories about Flamel, accuses him of doubting everything except the occult sciences, and interprets all his benefactions as means of protection against the thunderbolts and anathemas of the church, a new suggestion; the author seems even to believe that there is something in the legend that Flamel and his wife are still alive; perhaps, however, he joked with difficulty. He quotes a reference to Flamel in an article 'Les Chercheurs d'or au moyen-âge,' by M. Claude Vignon (i.e. Noémie Constant) in the *Assemblée Nationale*, 30 Dec. 1851, which I have not seen)

Guillebert de Metz, *Description de la Ville de Paris au XV^e Siecle. . . publiee pour la premiere fois d'apres le Manuscrit unique par M. Le Roux de Lincy*, Paris, 1855, p. 84. ('Item Flamel l'aisné, escrivain qui faisoit tant d'aumosnes et hospitalitez, et fist plusieurs maisons où gens de mestiers demouroient en bas, et du loyer qu'ilz paioient estoient soutenus povres laboureurs en hault.' In the note reference is made to Villain's life of Flamel, and attention is drawn to the distinction between him and Flamel le jeune, calligrapher of the Duc de Berri, who wrote a remarkable bible preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale.)

Nouvelle Biographie Générale, 1858, xvii. cols. 817-823 and references. (Article by Vallet de Viriville, who gives a straightforward account of Flamel's life, profession, business capacity and methods, of the sources and amount of his fortune. He considers that his reputation as an alchemist was due to an exaggerated estimate of his wealth, and to the report ascribed to Gohorry, and he concludes that in his belief Flamel was not the author of any work on the Hermetic philosophy.)

Ladrage, *Bibliothèque Ouvaroff, Sciences Secrètes*, 1870, No. 557.

Schelenz, *Geschichte der Pharmazie*, 1904, p. 231.

V. (J. R.), M.D. *Continued.*

This tract is in verse and is divided into sections entitled respectively:

I. Ansprache an die wahren Weisheits-Kinder.

II. Jesus.

In the 1767 edition, however, this is called: Merkwürdige Nachricht, wie es einem Schüler der Hermetischen Philosophie in dem Gesuch des Steins der Weisen ergangen; nebst einer Anweisung, was man, um besagten Stein zu erlangen, zu beobachten hat.

III. Gespräch zwischen dem Saturnus der Weisen und einem Chymisten, von der wahren Materia des Philosophischen Steins und seiner Vorarbeit.

IV. Vom Stein der Weisen, und zwar von Jamsthalers ersten Tinctur.

V. Von Jamsthalers zweyten Tinctur.

VI. Fr. Basilus von der Wurzel des Steins der Weisen.

VII. F. R. C.

VIII. Letz-Sätze von der Praeparation des Steins der Weisen.

IX. Sophische Arie von der Weisen Stein,

X. Ratzel.

XI. Nachklang.

Beschreibung des grossen Geheimnisses des Steins der Weisen, als der von Gott erbethenen und erhaltenen Weisheit des Königs Salomonis.

See DREY Curieuse Chymische Tractatlein, 1704.

See also FÜNF Curieuse Chymische Tractatlein, 1767.

This is an extract from *Guldene Rose*, consisting of numbers II., IX. (which is called 'Eine Sophis-

tische Arie von der Weisen Stein') and X. 'Rätzel.'

Auszug aus der güldenen Rose.

See HERMETISCHES A. B. C., 1779, iii. p. 207.

VADE Mecum Philosophique.

See LE CROM (ALEXANDRE?), 1719.

VADIS (ÆGIDIUS DE).

See ÆGIDIUS de Vadis.

Maier, *Symbola Aureae Mensæ*, 1617, p. 481.

Van der Linden, *De Scriptis Medicis libri duo*, 1637, p. 8.

Borel, *Bibliotheca chimica*, 1654, p. 3.

Manget, *Bibliotheca Scriptorum Medicorum*, 1731, II. ii. p. 416.

Jacob Leupolds *Prodromus Bibliothecae metallicaæ*, 1732, p. 144.

George Rudolph Boehmer, *Systematisch-Literarisches Handbuch der Naturgeschichte*, Leipz. 1788, IV. i. p. 10.

Schmieder, *Geschichte der Alchemie*, 1832, p. 298.

Ladrage *Bibliothèque Ouvaroff, Sciences Secrètes*, 1870, Nos. 969-970.

VAGAN (THOMAS DE).

See VAUGHAN (THOMAS).

VALENTIA (FLORENTINUS DE).

See FLORENTINUS de Valentia

VALENTINI (MICHAEL BERNHARD).

Museum Museorum, oder Vollständige Schau-Bühne aller Materialien und Specereyen nebst deren Natürlichen Beschreibung, Election, Nutzen und Gebrauch, aus andern Material- Kunst- und Naturalien-Kammern, Oost- und West- Indischen Reifs-Beschreibungen, Curiosen Zeit- und Tag-Registern, Naturund Artzney-Kündigern, wie auch selbst-eigenen Erfahrung, zum Vorschub