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Michael Sendivogius.

The New Chemical Light. Second part.

Concerning Sulphur.

J. Elliot and Co., London.

1893 .

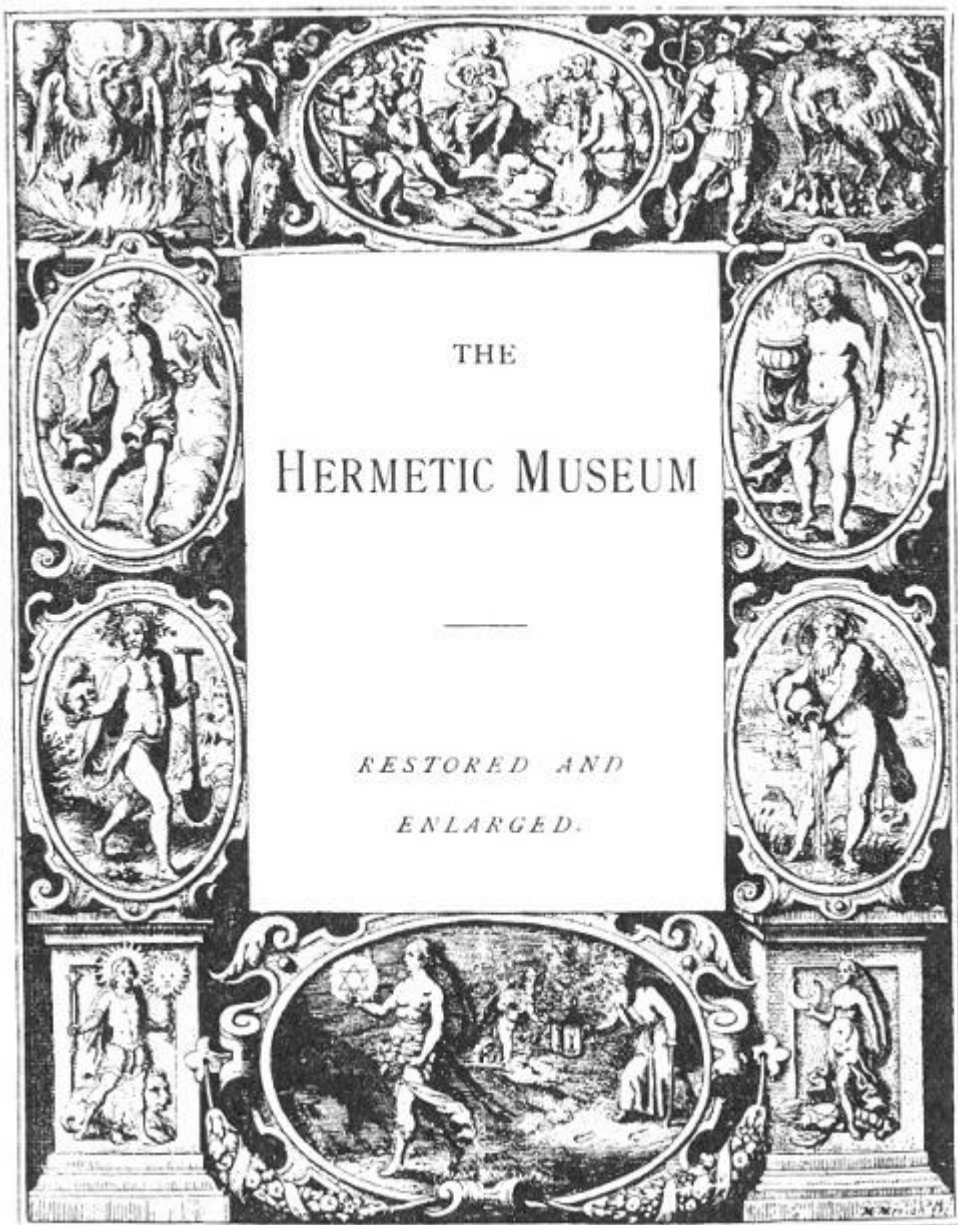
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THE
HERMETIC MUSEUM

—
*RESTORED AND
ENLARGED.*

NEW CHEMICAL LIGHT.

SECOND PART.

CONCERNING SULPHUR.

THE AUTHOR'S ANAGRAM:

Angelus Doce Mihi Jus.
(Angel, Teach me Right.)

P R E F A C E.

AS I am not at liberty to write more plainly than the Ancient Sages, gentle Reader, you may possibly be dissatisfied with my Book, particularly as you have so many other philosophical treatises ready to your hand.

But you may be sure that no necessity is laid upon me to write at all, and that if I have come forward it is only out of love to you, having no expectation of personal profit, and no desire for empty glory, for which reason I here refrain, as I have before done, from revealing my identity to the public. I was under the impression that in the first part of this work I had already given a lucid account of our whole Art. But my friends tell me that there is one point with which I have not yet fully dealt, and vehemently urge me to write this second treatise about Sulphur. The question is, whether even this Book will convey any information to one before whom the writings of the Sages and the Open Book of Nature are exhibited in vain. For if you could incline your ear to the teaching of Nature, you would at once be able to emancipate yourself from the tutelage of printed

volumes; in my opinion it is better to learn from the master himself than from one of the disciples. In the preface to my twelve Treatises, and again in the twelfth chapter, I have already hinted at the reason why there is now so great a multitude of books on this subject, that they confound and hinder the student instead of helping him. The confusion is rendered worse confounded by the ill-will of the Sages, who seem to have set pen to paper for the express purpose of concealing their meaning; and by the carelessness with which some of the more important volumes are copied and printed; the sense of a whole passage is often hopelessly obscured by the addition or omission of one little word (*e.g.*, the addition of the word " not" in the wrong place). Yet the student may get information even from these books (as the bee obtains honey even from poisonous flowers), if he reads them by the light of natural fact, and with constant reference to the utterances of other Sages. One writer explains another. Yet some of them are so closely beset with the difficulties of an obscure phraseology, that it is almost impossible to understand them, except by reading them side by side with the facts of Nature; for their interpreters and commentators are more hopelessly unintelligible even than the writers whom they take upon themselves to explain; the exposition is more difficult than the text. If you would succeed in this study, keep your eyes fixed on the possibilities of Nature, and on the properties of the natural substance. It is universally described as common and easy of access and apprehension, and it is so, but only to those who know it. He who knows it can discover it in the dunghill; he who does not will fail to find it even in gold. I have no desire to praise myself, but this one thing I will say, that the reading of my Books, in combination with a careful study of Nature, and of the writings of other genuine possessors of this Stone, must in the end open up to you the understanding of this secret. If I have planted another tree in the dense forest of Alchemistic literature, I have done so, not in order to obstruct the path of students, but in order to aid and refresh them by the way. Let not the diligent and God-fearing enquirer despair. If he seek the inspiration of God he will most surely find it. This knowledge is more easily obtained of God than of men. For His mercy is infinite, and He never forsakes those who put their trust in Him;

with Him there is no respect of persons, nor does He despise the humble and contrite heart. He has showered the fulness of His mercy even on me, the unworthiest of all His creatures, in shewing to me His wonderful power and ineffable goodness, which I am utterly unable to declare. The only way in which I can, in a small degree, at least prove my gratitude, is by succouring my struggling brother students with friendly counsel and assistance. Rest assured, then, gentle Reader, that He will grant this boon to you, if you wait upon Him day by day with earnest prayer, and in the power of a holy and loving life. He will throw open to you the portals of Nature; and you will be amazed at the simplicity of her operations. Know for certain that Nature is wonderfully simple; and that the characteristic mark of a childlike simplicity is stamped upon all that is true and noble in Nature. If you would imitate Nature, you should take her simplicity for your model in all the operations of Art. If my Book does not please you, throw it away, and take up some other author; it is short, so that you need not spend much time in reading it through. Only persevere: to the importunate knocker the door will at length be opened. The times are at hand when many secrets of Nature will be revealed to men. The Fourth or Northern Monarchy is about to be established; the Mother of Knowledge will soon come; and many things will be brought to light that were hidden under the three preceding monarchies. This fourth kingdom God will found by the hand of a prince who will be enriched with all virtues, and endowed with wisdom greater than that of Solomon. In his time (to adopt the words of the Psalmist) mercy and truth will meet together; peace and justice will kiss each other; truth will spring up from the ground, and righteousness will look down from heaven. There will be one Shepherd and one fold; and knowledge will be the common property of all. For those days I, too, am waiting with longing. Pray to God that it may come soon, gentle Reader. Fear Him, love Him, and read carefully the books of His chosen Sages -- and you will soon *see*, and behold with your own eyes, that I have spoken truly.

CONCERNING SULPHUR.

The Second Principle.

SULPHUR is by no means the least important of the great principles, since it is a part of the metal, and even a principal part of the Philosopher's Stone. Many Sages have left us weighty sayings about this substance: for instance, Geber himself ("Sum of Perfection," bk. 1, chap. 28), who says: " It illumines all bodies, since it is the light of the light, and their tincture." But seeing that the ancients regarded it as the noblest principle, before we proceed to speak about it, we must first explain the origin of the three principles. The origin of the principles is a subject which has hitherto been but scantily discussed in the works of the Sages; and the student who knows nothing about it, is as much in the dark in regard to this matter, as is a blind man in respect to colour. I therefore propose to make this point which my predecessors have neglected, the subject of my treatise.

Now, according to the ancient Sages there are two principles of things, and more particularly of metals, namely, Sulphur and Mercury; according to the Moderns there are three: Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, and the source of these principles are the elements; of which it therefore behoves us to speak first. Be it known to the students of this Art that there are four elements, and that each has at its centre another element which makes it what it is. These are the four pillars of the world. They were in the beginning evolved and moulded out of chaos by the hand of the Creator; and it is their contrary action which keeps up the harmony and equilibrium of the mundane machinery; it is they which, through the virtue of celestial influences, produce all things above and beneath the earth. We will say a few words about each of them in due order of succession, and first of all about the nearest element, Earth.

Concerning Elementary Earth.

Earth is an element of considerable quality and dignity. In this element the other three, especially fire, are latent. It is admirably adapted both to the concealment and to the manifestation of things committed to it. It is gross and porous, specifically heavy, but naturally light. It is also the Centre of the World and of the other elements; through its centre passes the axis of the earth to both poles. It is porous, as we have said, like a sponge, and produces nothing of itself; but it receives all that the other three project into it, conscientiously conceals what it should hide, and brings to light that which it should manifest. Whatsoever is committed to it putrefies in it through the action of motive heat, and is multiplied by the separation of the pure from the impure. Heavy substances are hidden in it. Light substances are driven by heat to its surface. It is the nurse and womb of all seed and commixtion; and these seeds and compounds it faithfully preserves and fosters till the season of maturity. It is cold and dry, but its dryness is tempered with water; outwardly it is visible and fixed; inwardly it is invisible and volatile. It is a virgin substance, and dead residue of the creative distillation of the world, which God will one day calcine, and after extracting the humour, create out of it a new crystalline earth. In its present state it consists of a pure and an impure element. The first is used by water for producing natural forms; the latter remains where it is. It is also the storehouse of all treasures, and in its centre is the Gehennal fire, conserving the machine of the world, and this by the expression of water, which it converts into air. This fire is produced by perpetual motion, and the influences of the Stars; it is aided by the Solar heat, which is tempered by the atmosphere, and the two together mature the growth of all things. For this reason the element of earth has fire intrinsically, and the earth is purified by this inward fire, as every element is purified by that which is in it. The inmost part, or centre of the earth, is then the highest purity mixed with fire, in which there is ceaseless motion, and we have shewn at some length in the twelve Treatises that it is, as it were, an empty space, into which the other elements project their products. It is enough for us to remember that this elementary earth is like a sponge, and the receptacle of all other elements.

Concerning Elementary Water.

Water is an element of great specific gravity, full of unctuous moisture. Outwardly it is volatile, inwardly it is fixed, cold, and humid. It is tempered by air, and is the sperm of the world, in which the seed of all things is conserved. There is a great difference between sperm and seed. Earth is the receptacle of sperm, water the receptacle of seed. Whatever the air, under the influence of fire, distils into the water, is imparted by the water to the earth. There is always an abundance of sperm awaiting seed, in order that it may carry it into the matrix, which is performed by the movement of the air, excited by the imagination of fire. Sometimes sperm has not a sufficient quantity of seed, for want of heat to digest it. Sometimes, when there is no seed, the sperm enters the womb alone, but is ejected again without producing any fruit. At other times conception does not take place, even when there is plenty of seed in the sperm, because the womb is rendered barren by a superfluity of bad sulphur and malignant phlegm. Water is capable of commixtion with all things, by means of its volatile surface; it purifies and dissolves earth; air is congealed in it, and thus intimately united to it. It is the Solvent of the World, because by the action of heat, it penetrates the air, and carries with it a warm vapour which causes the natural generation of those things with which the earth is like a womb impregnated. When the womb has once received a due portion of seed, Nature never rests until the natural form (whatever it may be) has been produced. The humid residue, or sperm, is putrefied in the earth by means of warmth. and out of it worms and other things are generated. An intelligent Artist will readily understand how great a variety of wonders is performed by Nature through this element, as a sperm, but the said sperm must be operated upon, having already within it an imagined astral seed of a certain weight. For Nature produces pure things by means of the first putrefaction, but things far purer by means of the second, as you see in the case of wood, where vegetable fibre is produced as the result of the first putrefaction, while the putrefaction of wood engenders worms and insects -- natural forms endowed with sentient life; and it is clear that animate creatures endowed with

sense and motion belong to a higher creative level, and are moulded of a purer substance than plants.

Water is the menstruum (solvent) of the world, and exists in three degrees of excellence: the pure, the purer, and the purest. Of its purest substance the heavens were created; of that which is less pure the atmospheric air was formed; that which is simply pure remains in its proper sphere, where, by the Will of God, and the co-operation of Nature, it is guardian of all subtle substances here below. It has its centre in the heart of the sea; its polar axis coincides with that of the earth, whence flow forth all springs and fountains of water, which are presently swollen into great rivers. This constant movement of water preserves the earth from combustion, and distributes the seeds of things throughout its length and breadth. Yet all water courses return to the heart of the sea. As to the ultimate fate of this water opinions are divided. Some say that all water is generated in the stars, and the sea does not overflow its shores because the water is consumed by fire as it reaches the heart of the sea. But this hypothesis is contrary to Nature's methods of working: Nature produces like out of like -- and how can the stars, which are air and fire, produce water? Moreover, the safety of this earth depends on the equilibrium of the four elements; if at any time the total quantity of one element exceeded that of the others, the universe would relapse into chaos. Hence, if the stars generated water, they must manifestly produce an equal quantity not only of air and fire, but also of earth -- which is manifestly absurd. It is much more reasonable to suppose that the waters are chained down, as it were, to the foundation of the earth by the circum ambient air, and that they are constrained by it to continue in a ceaseless movement towards the Arctic pole -- because no vacuum is possible in Nature; which is also the reason why there is a Gehennal fire in the centre of the earth, which is presided over by the Archeus (the first principle) of Nature.

For in the creation of the world, God first of all separated the quintessence of the elements from the weltering mass of chaos; and out of it He evolved fire, the purest of all substances, giving to it the most exalted place in the universe, and making it, in a special manner, the dwelling-place of His Sacred

Majesty. In the centre of chaos was kindled that fire which afterwards distilled and carried upward the purest substance of water. But because this most pure fire now occupies the firmament, and surrounds the throne of God, the waters have been condensed into a body beneath it; and thus the sky is formed, while the water which now forms the atmospheric air and the lower firmament is due to the action of a lower and grosser fire. As the water of the firmament cannot pass the bounds of that highest and celestial fire, so the lower fire cannot pass through the atmospheric air to the earth; nor can the air pass the bounds of this lower fire. The water and the earth were formed together into one organic mass. Only one part of this water was volatilized into air, in order to protect the earth from the fierce and consuming heat of the sun. If there had been a vacuum in the air, all the water would have evaporated; but as the space below the firmament is already filled up with air, the great bulk of the water is kept below, near the centre of the earth, by the pressure of the air. These natural conditions continue to operate day by day, and through their normal action the world will be preserved from destruction during the good pleasure of the Creator. The central fire is kindled day by day by the universal motion and influence of the celestial bodies. This fire heats the water, and a certain quantity of the water is dissolved into air, the air day by day keeps down by its weight the residue of the water, and causes it to form one mass with the earth. And as the equilibrium of the world is thus naturally preserved by the Creator, so every natural generative process in the world must repeat the same conditions on a small scale. Thus the elements below act in perfect unison with the elements above, which God created of a far greater purity and excellence, and the example of obedience to their influences, which is set by the whole universe, is imitated on a small scale by the constituent parts of the world below.

But let us now proceed to explain the flux and reflux of water. There are two Poles -- the Arctic Pole in the north, and the Antarctic Pole, or the southernmost point of the earth. The Arctic Pole possesses the property of magnetic attraction; the Antarctic Pole that of magnetic repulsion. Thus the Arctic Pole attracts the waters along its axis, and then they are

again repelled by the Antarctic Pole along its axis; and, as the air does not permit inequality, they are once more forced back to their centre, the Arctic Pole. In this their continual course from the Arctic to the Antarctic Pole, they pass through the middle (*i.e.*, along the axis) of the earth, are diffused through its pores, and break out here and there as springs and fountains, which are swollen into rivers, and return to the point whence they first flowed forth. This universal motion is incessantly proceeding. The waters, then, are not generated by the stars and consumed in the heart of the sea; but they flow forth from the centre of the sea into the whole earth, and are diffused through all its pores. On this principle the Sages have constructed conduits and aqueducts, since it is well known that water cannot rise higher than the level of its spring or fount. If this were not an actual fact, art would vainly found its practical conclusions upon it; and the natural principle involved is illustrated in the process by means of which wine is drawn out of a cask.

It may be objected to our view that if the water of our springs were derived from the sea, it would be salt, and not sweet, as we actually find it to be. The answer to this objection lies in the fact that the sea water, in its passage through the pores of the earth, gradually deposits all the salt which it contains, and thus wells forth from the ground in a sweet and fresh condition. It should, however, be remembered that some of our springs -- called mineral or saline springs -- actually do exhibit all the original saltiness of the sea water which has not passed through earth calculated to retain its mineral element. In some places we also meet with hot springs, which are caused by the passage of the water through certain spots where large deposits of sulphur have been set afire by the central heat of the earth; every one who has tasted this water must have observed its sulphureous flavour. Something closely analogous happens when the water passes through large deposits of iron, or alum, or copper, and acquires their taste. Thus the earth is a great distilling vessel, formed by the hand of an all wise Creator, on the model of which all Sages have constructed their small distilling vessels; and if it pleased God to extinguish the central fire, or to destroy the cunning machinery, this universal frame would

relapse into chaos. At the end of time, He will kindle the Central Fire into a brighter flame, will cause all the water to evaporate, will calcine the earth -- and thus the earth and the water will be rendered more subtle and pure, and will form a new and more glorious earth

The operations of the earth and the water are always performed in combination, and are mutually dependent, since they are the two tangible elements, in which the other two work invisibly. Fire keeps the earth from being submerged, or dissolved; air keeps the fire from being extinguished; water preserves the earth from combustion. This is what the Sages call the equilibrium of the elements, and it illustrates the aid which they render to each other. Fire is closely associated with earth, and air with water. It will suffice if we remember that elementary water is the sperm and menstruum of the world, and the receptacle of seed.

Concerning Elementary Air.

The most noble element of air is inwardly heavy, visible, and fixed, outwardly light, volatile, and invisible. It is hot and moist, is tempered by fire, and is nobler than earth or water. Air is volatile, but may be fixed, and when fixed, renders all bodies penetrable. Its purest substance has been formed into the vital spirits of animals, that which is less pure into the circum ambient atmosphere, and the grosser residue has remained in the water, and associates with it as fire with its kindred earth. In the air the seed of all things is formed, as it were, in the body of the male, and is projected by its circulative motion into its sperm, which is water. It contains the vital spirit of all creatures, is the life of all, and penetrates and forces its seed upon all, as the man does upon the woman. It nourishes, impregnates, conserves the other elements; and we are taught by daily experience that it is the life not only of minerals, animals, and vegetables, but also of the other elements. We see that water becomes foul and unwholesome without a supply of fresh air; without it fire is extinguished -- as is well known to Alchemists who regulate the temperature of their fire by the supply of air. Air is also that which conserves the pores of the earth. In short, the whole universe is kept fresh and sweet by air, and it is the vital element

of man, beast, plant, and stone. It contains the seed of all things which is forced up, into vegetables for instance, through the pores of the earth by the action of fire, and thus the tree is built up atom by atom out of the vital element of congealed air. This vital force has remained in it ever since the time when the Spirit of Life brooded over the waters in the air. The magnetic power of life which air undoubtedly possesses, was put into it by God at the Creation. As the magnet attracts to itself hard steel, and as the Arctic Pole attracts to itself the water, so the air, by means of the vegetable magnet which is in the seed, draws to itself the nutriment of the menstruum of the world (which is water). This power of attracting water is in a certain part (*viz.*, the 280th part) of all seed. If, then, any one would be a cunning planter of trees, he should take care to turn the point of attraction towards the North; for as the Arctic Pole attracts water, so the vertical point draws to itself the seminal substance. If you would know what the point of attraction in a tree is, submerge it entirely in water; that point which always appears first, will be the point of attraction. In the air, then, is the seed and the vital spirit, or abode of the soul of every creature.

Concerning Elementary Fire.

Fire is the purest and noblest of all elements, full of adhesive unctuous corrosiveness, penetrant, digestive, inwardly invisible, fixed, hot and dry, outwardly visible, and tempered by the earth. Of its purest substance was created the Throne of the Almighty; of that which is less pure, the Angels; out of fire of an inferior purity were created the stars and the heavenly luminaries; that which was less pure still was used to bear up the heavens; that which is impure and unctuous -- that, namely, which we have termed the fire of Gehenna -- is in the centre of the earth, and was there inclosed and shut up to set this lower world in motion. Though these different fires are separate, yet they are also joined together by natural sympathy.

This element is the most passive of all, and resembles a chariot: when it is drawn it moves; when it is not drawn, it stands still. It exists imperceptibly in all things; and of it is fashioned the vital rational soul, which distinguishes man from all other animals, and makes him like God. This rational soul

was divinely infused into his vital spirit by God, and entitles him to be regarded as a microcosm, or small world by himself. But the fire which surrounds the Throne of God is of an infinitely pure and simple essence, and this is the reason that no impure soul can know God, and that no human eye can penetrate this essential fire, for fire is the death and destruction of everything composite -- and all material substances are of this nature. What I said about the restful passivity of fire, applies in a certain sense to the eternal calm and unchangeableness of the Divine Nature. For as the fire sleeps in the flint, until it is roused and stirred up from without, so the power of God, which is a consuming fire, is only roused to action by the kindling breath of His Almighty Will. How calmly and solemnly does not even an earthly monarch sit enthroned in the pomp and state of his royalty ! His courtiers hardly venture to move, and all around is calm and still. But when he rises what a stir of motion and activity does he not cause! All that are about him arise with him, and presently you see him sweeping along in grand and stately majesty. Yet the pomp of an earthly prince is but a faint reflex of the glory of the King of Kings. When He utters the voice of His Will, all heaven is roused, the world trembles, and thousands of angels speed forth on His errand. But it may be asked how I come to have this knowledge about heavenly things which are removed far beyond human ken. My answer is that the Sages have been taught of God that this natural world is only an image and material copy of a heavenly and spiritual pattern; that the very existence of this world is based upon the reality of its celestial archetype; and that God has created it in imitation of the spiritual and invisible universe, in order that men might be the better enabled to comprehend His heavenly teaching, and the wonders of His absolute and ineffable power and wisdom. Thus the Sage sees heaven reflected in Nature as in a mirror; and he pursues this Art, not for the sake of gold or silver, but for the love of the knowledge which it reveals; he jealously conceals it from the sinner and the scornful, lest the mysteries of heaven should be laid bare to the vulgar gaze. If you will but rightly consider it, you yourself are an image of God, and a little picture of the great world. For a firmament you have the quintessence of the four elements attracted to the formative

womb out of the chaos of seed, and bounded by your skin; your blood is fire in which lives your soul, the king of your little universe, acting through the medium of the vital spirit; your heart is the earth, where the Central Fire is always at work; your mouth is your Arctic, and your stomach your Antarctic Pole, and all your members correspond to some part of the greater world, as I have set forth at some length in my work on the Harmony of the Universe, and in the Chapter on Astronomy. In the microcosm of man's nature the soul is the deputy or Viceroy of the Creator. It governs the mind, and the mind governs the body: the mind is conscious of all that is conceived in the soul, and all the members understand the mind, obey it, and wait eagerly to carry out its behests. The body knows nothing of itself; all its motions and desires are caused by the mind; it is to the mind what the tool is to the craftsman. But though the rational soul operates in the body, a more important part of its activity is exerted on things outside the body: it rules absolutely outside the body, and therein differs from the vital spirits of brute beasts. In the same way, the Creator of the world partly acts in and through things belonging to this world, and is thereby, in a sense, included in this world. But He absolutely transcends this world by that infinite part of His activity which lies beyond the bounds of the universe, and which is too high and glorious for the body of the world. The great difference between the soul's extra corporal, and God's extra mundane, activity, is that man's rational activity is purely imaginative and mental, whereas God's thoughts are immediately translated into real existences. I might be mentally in the streets of Rome, but my journey would be purely imaginative; God's conceptions are at once objective essences. God, then, is included in the world, only as the soul is enclosed in the body, while it has power to do things which far transcend the capacity of the body. By material relations such as these you may know God, and learn to distinguish Him from the material manifestations of His power. When once the gates of knowledge have been flung wide for you, your understanding will be enlarged.

We said that fire was the quietest of all elements, and that it is stirred by a kind of motion well known to the Sages. The Sage should be perfectly acquainted with the generation and

destruction of all things; he is familiar with the creation of the heavens, and the composition and commixtion of things terrestrial; yet, though he knows everything, he cannot make everything. He knows the anatomy and composition of the human body -- yet he cannot make a man. This is a mystery which the Creator has kept in His own hand. Nature cannot work till it has been supplied with a material: the first matter is furnished by God, the second matter by the Sage. But in the philosophical work Nature must excite the fire which God has enclosed in the centre of each thing. The excitation of this fire is performed by the will of Nature, and sometimes also by the will of a skilful Artist who can dispose Nature, for fire naturally purifies every species of impurity.

All composite substances are purified by fire, as all substances that are not fixed owe their purification to water. It is the property of fire to separate and divide composite substances; and this separation means a purging away of the impure from the pure. This element also acts secretly, by marvellous means, not only in opposition to the rest of the elements, but also to all other things. For as the reasonable soul was made of this most pure fire, so the vegetable soul was made of the elementary fire which Nature governs. The fire which is contained in the centre of any given thing acts in the following way: Nature provides the motive power, which stirs up the air; the air stirs up and rouses the fire, which separates, purges, digests, colours, and brings every seed to maturity, and expels the matured seed through the sperm into places or wombs, either pure or impure, more or less hot, dry, or humid; and according to the nature of the place or womb, different things are produced (cp. the Twelve Treatises). So the Most High God has ordained that, in the economy of the universe, one thing should be at enmity with another, and that the death of one thing should be the life of the other; that one thing should consume what another produces, and evolve out of it some higher and nobler form of life. The elementary separation of all living thing, is death; and hence it is necessary for man to die, as his body is compounded of the four elements, which cannot hold together for ever. In spite of this fact, our science furnishes an incontestible proof of man's original immortality. It

is certainly true that all composite substances are liable to decomposition; that this decomposition, when it takes place in the animal world, is called death; and that the human body is a substance compounded of the four elements. But it is also true that the elements of Paradise, where man was created are not subject to this law, seeing that they are most pure and incorruptible heavenly essences; and if man had remained in this pure and celestial region, his body would have been incapable of natural decay. Adam, however, in an evil day for our race, disobeyed his Creator, and straightway was driven forth to the beasts, into the world of corruptible elements which God had created for the beasts only. From that day forward his food was derived from perishable substances, and death began to work in his members. The pure elements of his creation were gradually mingled and infected with the corruptible elements of the outer world, and thus his body became more and more gross, and liable, through its grossness, to natural decay and death. The process of degeneration was, of course, slow in the case of Adam and his first descendants; but, as time went on, the seed out of which men were generated became more and more infected with perishable elements. The continued use of corruptible food rendered their bodies more and more gross -- and human life was soon shortened to a very brief span indeed. In some favoured climes, where men eat and drink moderately, they still sometimes live to a green old age; but in our latitudes men abridge the term of their natural existence by grossly filling themselves with an excess of elementary corruptible food, and thus, before their time, become like "the beasts that perish." When the pure and essential elements are joined together in loving equilibrium, as they are in our Stone, they are inseparable and immortal, like the human body in Paradise; whence also our philosophical treasure has been compared to the creation of man, an analogy which modern wise men, who take all things literally, have understood as referring to the corrupted generation of this present order, which is produced from corruptible elements.

It was the recollection of man's immortality in Paradise, that first set Sages a-thinking whether those pure and essential elements might not be obtained in this world, and united in one body. At length a merciful Creator made known to them that

the desired conjunction of such elements existed in gold. It could not be found among the animals who are sustained by corruptible food, nor in vegetables, because they exhibit the elements in a state of inequality and contention. When corruptible elements are united in a certain subject, their strife must sooner or later bring about its decomposition, which is, of course, followed by putrefaction; in putrefaction, the impure is separated from the pure: and if the pure elements are then once more joined together by the action of natural heat, a much nobler and higher form of life is produced. In the strife of the elements, which follows when a body has been broken up by the victory of water, earth and air unite with fire, and together they overcome the water, digest, cook, and ultimately congeal it -- which is the beginning of a new life. For if the hidden central fire, which during life was in a state of passivity, obtain the mastery, it attracts to itself all the pure elements, which are thus separated from the impure, and form the nucleus of a far purer form of life. It is thus that our Sages are able to produce immortal things, particularly by decomposition of minerals; and you see that the whole process, from beginning to end, is the work of fire.

Thus, then, we have briefly set forth as much as will serve our purpose concerning the four elements. Truly the description of each might be extended into a large volume, but we postpone all amplification for our Treatise on Harmony, which, God helping, if our life be spared, will be opportune to a more large discourse upon natural things.

Concerning the Three Principles of All Things.

The three Principles of things are produced out of the four elements in the following manner: Nature, whose power is in her obedience to the Will of God, ordained from the very beginning, that the four elements should incessantly act on one another, so, in obedience to her behest, fire began to act on air, and produced Sulphur; air acted on water and produced Mercury; water, by its action on earth, produced Salt. Earth, alone, having nothing to act upon, did not produce anything, but became the nurse, or womb, of these three Principles. We designedly speak of three Principles; for though the Ancients mention only two, it is clear that they omitted the third (Salt),

not from ignorance, but from a desire to lead the uninitiated astray.

Whoever would be a student of this sacred science must know the marks whereby these three Principles are to be recognised, and also the process by which they are developed. For as the three Principles are produced out of four, so they, in their turn, must produce two, a male and a female; and these two must produce an incorruptible one, in which are exhibited the four (elements) in a highly purified and digested condition, and with their mutual strife hushed in unending peace and goodwill. In every natural composition these three represent the body, the spirit, and the hidden soul; and if, after purging them well, you join them together, they must, by a natural process, result in a most pure substance. For though the soul is most noble, yet it cannot reach the goal without the spirit which is its place and abode; and if it is your desire to bring it back to a given place, both the soul and the place must be purged and washed from all impurity, so that the soul may dwell in glory, and nevermore depart. Without these three Principles, the Artist can do nothing, since even Nature is powerless without them. They are in all things, and without them there is nothing in the world, neither, indeed, can be. Their origin being such as we have described, it is from these, by an imitation of Nature, that you must produce the Mercury of the Philosophers, and their first matter, bearing in mind the laws which govern natural things, and especially metals. Do not think that Salt is unimportant because it is omitted by the Ancients; they could not do without it, even if they did not name it, seeing that it is the Key which opens the infernal prison house, where sulphur lies in bonds. The three Principles are necessary because they are the immediate substance of metals. The remoter substance of metals is the four elements, but no one can produce anything out of them but God; and even God makes nothing of them but these three Principles. Why, then, should the Sage lose time and labour over the four elements, when he has the substance made ready to his hand by Nature? It is surely less troublesome to go three miles than four, and as these three Principles exist in all things, and, according to their proportions, etc., produce either metals, or plants, or animals, it is best to use them as our first substance.

The body is earth, the spirit water, the soul fire or sulphur of gold. The Spirit augments the quantity of the body, the soul the virtue. But because in the matter of weight there is more of spirit than of fire, the spirit is uplifted, oppresses the fire, and attracts it to itself in such a way that both augment in virtue and the earth, which is mediate between them, augments in weight. The Artist should determine which of the three Principles he is seeking, and should assist it so that it may overcome its contrary. Afterwards he must seek by his skill to supplement what has been wanting in Nature, and thus his chosen Principle will obtain the necessary victory. The element of earth is nothing but a receptacle, in which fire and air carry on their strife through the mediation of air. If water predominate, temporal and corruptible things are produced; if fire obtains the victory, it produces lasting and incorruptible things. So you know which of the elements ought to receive your aid. Moreover, though fire and water are in all things, they can produce nothing without air and earth. Their activity is aroused by external heat (in Nature, the Central Fire of the earth), and in their struggle they are assisted each by that which is like to it. By this strife they are subtilized in the pores of the earth, and when they ascend to the surface they produce flowers and fruit, in which they closely associate together as friends; and the more they are subtilized and purified in their ascent, the more excellent are the fruits which they produce.

When the purification has thus been performed, let water and fire become friends, which they will readily do in their earth which ascends with them, and the process will be the more speedily and perfectly accomplished, if you combine the two in their proper proportions -- thus improving upon Nature. In all natural compounds fire is always the smallest part; but it is aided and stirred up by the action of outward fire; and according as fire is overcome or obtains the mastery. imperfect or perfect things are the result. The outward fire does not enter into the composition as an essential part of it, but only by the effect which it helps to produce. The inward fire is sufficient, if it only receive nutriment from the outward fire, which feeds it as wood feeds elemental fire; in proportion to the quantity of nutriment the inward fire grows and multiplies. Care should be taken,

therefore, that the outward fire is not so fierce as to devour, instead of feeding, the inward fire. Gentle coction will be the best means of attaining perfection, and of adding excellence to weight. But as it is difficult to add to a compound substance, I would advise rather to produce the same effect by removing that which is present in an excessive quantity. Remove that which is too much, and let the compound develop itself naturally. But many artists sow straw instead of grain; others sow both; many throw away that which the Sages love; others begin and do not persevere to the end; they look for short and easy labour in a difficult Art. But we say that this Art consists in an even mingling of the virtues of the elements -- in the natural equilibrium of the hot, the dry, the cold, and the moist -- in the conjunction of the male and female, the female having engendered the male, i.e., of fire and the radical humour of the metals. If you understand that the Mercury of the Sages contains within itself its own good Sulphur, digested and matured by Nature, you can accomplish the whole process by means of Mercury alone; but if you know how to add the supplement which our Art requires to the natural proportions of substances, to double the Mercury, and to triple the Sulphur, you will all the more quickly produce, first the good, then the better, and finally the best -- though only one sulphur appears, and two mercuries (which, are, however, of the same stock); they should not be crude nor too much digested, yet well purged and dissolved (if you understand me)

It is really unnecessary to describe the matter of the Mercury and the Sulphur of the Sages, as it has already been as plainly delineated by the Ancients as is consistent with our vow. We do not altogether say that the Mercury of the Philosophers is a common thing, or that they have openly called it by its name, and that the matter from which Mercury and Sulphur are philosophically extracted has been plainly pointed out. For the Mercury itself is not found above ground, but is extracted by an artifice from Sulphur and Mercury conjoined, in short, Sulphur and Mercury are the ore of our quicksilver, and this quicksilver has power to dissolve, mortify, and revive metals, which power it has received from the sulphur (which has some of the properties of an acid). In order to put you on the

right track, I will also tell you the difference between our quick silver and common mercury. Common mercury does not dissolve gold and silver so as to amalgamate with them; but when our quicksilver dissolves gold and silver, it amalgamates with them in inseparable union, as water is mixed with water. Common mercury has bad combustible sulphur, which turns it black; our quicksilver contains incombustible, fixed, good, snow-white and red sulphur. Common mercury is cold and humid; our quick silver is hot and humid. Common mercury blackens other bodies; our quicksilver renders them white and pure as crystal. Common mercury is changed by precipitation into a yellow powder and bad sulphur; our quicksilver is converted by heat into snow-white, good, fixed, and fusible sulphur. Common mercury becomes more fusible, our quicksilver more fixed, the more it is subjected to coction. Our quicksilver possesses such marvellous virtue that it would by itself be sufficient for our purpose, if subjected to gentle coction; but in order to accelerate its congelation, the Sages add to it its well digested and matured sulphur.

We might well have cited philosophers in confirmation of the points of our discourse, but as our writings are more clear than are theirs, we have no need of their support. Whosoever understands them will understand us better. If you would practise our Art, learn first to hold your tongue, and study the nature of minerals, metals, and vegetables. Our Mercury may be obtained from all things, as everything has it; only from some substances it is more easily procured than from others. Our Art is not a matter of luck or accident, but is founded on a real knowledge, and there is only one matter in the world by which, and of which, the Stone of the Philosophers is prepared. The substance is indeed to be found everywhere, but the method of its extraction out of some matters would take a lifetime, and if you begin your search without a due knowledge of natural things, more especially in minerals, you will be working in the dark and in blindness. It is, indeed, possible to set about our Art in a casual manner; and some who actually operate on our quicksilver, begin at the wrong end, and thus fail in bringing it to perfection, because they are quite in the dark about its real nature. Yet, after all, we must confess that a right knowledge of our Art is

the gift of God alone, and is granted to diligent students in answer to earnest and importunate prayer. To the Master it may appear easy enough; but to the beginner it must seem at first very hard and uphill work. He should not, however, despair, for in due time he will receive the reward of his diligence and aspiration; even in the dangers which the knowledge may bring upon him, he will be kept from harm by the loving hand of Providence, as I can testify from personal experience. We have with us God's Ark of the Covenant, which contains the most precious of earthly things, and is guarded by the holy Angel of the Lord. We heard that our enemies had fallen into the snare which they had laid for us; that those who sought our lives had been enclosed in the meshes of death; that those who attempted to rob us of our goods had lost all that they possessed, and that those who strove to blacken our reputation, died in shame and dishonour. Such is the care which God has of us, Who, from our childhood, has kept us safe under the shadow of His wings. And the feeling uppermost in our minds is the humbling consciousness of our utter unworthiness: we do not deserve the very least of His great mercies. But one thing we do and will do: our hope and trust always have been, are, and will be, in Him alone. We will not put our confidence in men or in princes: we will place ourselves in the hands of One who remains unchanged when all earthly power and greatness have passed away. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: never did Sage utter truer word than this; and if we would attain to the knowledge of this glorious science, if we would be able to use it well when we possess it, we must wait on God continually, and importune Him with earnest prayer. But to proceed with our description of the Matter. We said that it was quicksilver, and quicksilver only: whatever is added, is gained from this same substance. We have repeatedly affirmed that all things earthly are evolved out of three principles. But for our purpose they must be purged of their impurities, and then recombined; that which is wanting is added -- and thus imitating and assisting Nature, we arrive at a degree of perfection such as Nature is unable to attain, on account of the impurities with which her operations are clogged. Do not suffer yourself to be confounded by the apparent con-

traditions which the Sages have introduced into their writings for the purpose of keeping their secret. Select only those sayings which are agreeable to Nature; take the roses, leave the thorns. If you wish to produce a metal, your fundamental substance should be metallic; only a dog can beget a dog; without wheat you will vainly plough your field; and all your endeavours in this Art will be in vain unless you take your radical humour from a metal. There is one substance, one Art, one operation. It is as erroneous to suppose that any of the particular benefits of our Stone can be enjoyed before the Stone itself has been prepared, as it would be absurd to imagine that you can have a branch without a root or tree. If you have water you can cook in it various kinds of meat, and thus obtain broth of different flavours; but there will be no broth unless you have both the water and the meat. . . . In metals, then, as in all other things, there is only one first substance, but the universal substance is modified in a vast variety of ways, according to the course of its subsequent development. Thus one thing is the mother of all things. This great fact ought always to be borne in mind in studying the works of the Sages; for nothing but mistakes and disappointment can result from a slavishly literal interpretation of their books. It is a pity that, instead of humbly studying and following Nature, our Alchemists are so ready to adopt any fancy or notion that happens to pass through their minds. They seek to attain the end not only without a middle part, but without so much as a beginning. But how can anyone who sets about our Art in so casual and haphazard a manner expect anything but disappointments? Let our Alchemists have done, then, once for all, with their sophisticated methods, to which they ascribe so great an importance -- with their dealbations, rubrefactions, fixations of the Moon, extractions of the soul of gold, -- and let them place themselves under the unerring guidance of Nature. For though the soul of the metal has to be extracted, it must not be killed in the operation; and the extraction of the living soul, which has to be reunited to the glorified body, must be carried on in a way very different from the violent method commonly prevailing among Alchemists. We do not propose to multiply wheat without seed corn. But let us, in concluding this part of the subject, earnestly inculcate on the

student's mind the necessity of having seed that will germinate and grow, and to avoid the use of seed which has been killed by an excess of fiery heat.

Concerning Sulphur.

Among the three principles the Sages have justly assigned the first place to Sulphur, as the whole Art is concerned with the manner of its preparation. Sulphur is of three chief kinds: that which tinges or colours; that which congeals mercury; and essential sulphur, which matures it. The properties and preparation of this Sulphur we propose to describe, not in a set treatise, but in a dialogue like that which brought out the essential properties of Mercury. We will only say, by way of preface, that Sulphur is more mature than the other principles, and that Mercury cannot be coagulated without it. The aim and object of our Art is to elicit from metals that Sulphur by means of which the Mercury of the Sages is, in the veins of the earth, congealed into silver and gold; in this operation the Sulphur acts the part of the male, and our Mercury that of the female. Of the composition and action of these two are engendered the Mercuries of the Philosophers.

In our former dialogue we gave an account of the meeting of Alchemists, which a sudden tempest brought to so abrupt a close. Among those who took a prominent part in the proceedings, was a good friend of the first Alchemist; he was not a bad man, or an impostor, but, as they say, nobody's enemy except his own; yet he was foolish withal, and though really very ignorant, had no small opinion of his own wisdom and learning. He had at the meeting been the foremost champion of the claims of Sulphur to be regarded as the first substance of the Stone, and was satisfied that he would have been able to make good that claim, if the meeting had not been prematurely broken up. So when he got home he resumed his operations on Sulphur in a very confident spirit. He subjected it to distillation, sublimation, calcination, fixation, and to countless other chemical processes, in which he spent much time and money, without arriving at any result whatsoever. His failures at length began to prey on his health and spirits, and in order to recruit the former, and raise the latter, he fell into the habit of taking long walks in the neigh-

bourhood of the town where he lived. But wherever he went he could think of nothing but Sulphur. One day, with his mind full of this besetting idea, and being wrought almost to an ecstasy, he entered a certain verdant grove, in which there was abundance not only of trees, herbs, and fruits, but also of animals, birds, minerals, and metals. Of water there was indeed a great scarcity; it was carried to the place by means of aqueducts, and among these was a conduit flowing with water extracted from the rays of the moon ;-- but this water was reserved for the use of the Nymph of the grove. In the grove there were two young men tending oxen and rams, and from them he learned that the grove belonged to the Nymph Venus. The Alchemist was gratified enough, but all his thoughts were absorbed by the subject of Sulphur, and when he remembered the words of the Sages, who say that the substance is vile and common, and its treatment easy, when he recollected the vast amount of time, labour, and money which he had vainly spent upon it, he lifted up his voice, and in the bitterness of his heart, cursed Sulphur. Now Sulphur was in that grove, though the Alchemist did not know it. But suddenly he heard a voice which said: " My friend, why do you curse Sulphur ? " He looked up in bewilderment: nobody was to be seen. " My friend, why are you so sad ?" continued the voice. *Alchemist*: Master, I seek the Philosopher's Stone as one that hungers after bread. *Voice*: And why thus do you curse Sulphur ? *Alchemist*: My Lord, the Sages call it the substance of the Stone; yet I have spent all my time and labour in vain upon it, and am well nigh reduced to despair. *Voice*: It is true that Sulphur is the true and chief substance of the Stone. Yet you curse it unjustly. For it lies heavily chained in a dark prison and cannot do as it would. Its hands and feet have been bound, and the doors of the dungeon closed upon it, at the bidding of its mother, Nature, who was angry with it for too readily obeying the summons of every Alchemist. It is now confined in such a perfect labyrinth of a prison, that it can be set free only by those Sages to whom Nature herself has entrusted the secret. *Alchemist*: Ah ! miserable that I am, this is why he was unable to come to me! How very hard and unkind of the mother ! When is he to be set at large again ? *Voice*: That can only be by means of hard and persevering labour. *Alchemist*: Who are

his gaolers ? *Voice*: They are of his own kindred, but grievous tyrants. *Alchemist*: And who are you ? *Voice*: I am the judge and the chief gaoler, and my name is Saturn. *Alchemist*: Then Sulphur is detained in your prison ? *Voice*: Yes; but I am not his keeper. *Alchemist*: What does he do in prison? *Voice*: Whatever his gaolers command. *Alchemist*: And what can he do? *Voice*: He can perform a thousand things, and is the heart of all. He can perfect metals and minerals, impart understanding to animals, produce flowers in herbs and trees, corrupt and perfect air; in short, he produces all the odours and paints all the colours in the world. *Alchemist*: Of what substance does he make the flowers ? *Voice*: His guards furnish him with vessels and matter; Sulphur digests it; and according to the diversity of the digestion, and the weight of the matter, he produces choice flowers, having their special odours. *Alchemist*: Master, is he old ? *Voice*: Know, friend, that Sulphur is the virtue of the world, and though Nature's second-born -- yet the oldest of all things. To those who know him, however, he is as obedient as a little child. He is most easily recognised by the vital spirit in animals, the colour in metals, the odour in plants. Without his help his mother can do nothing. *Alchemist*: Is he the sole heir, or has he any brothers ? *Voice*: He has some brothers who are quite unworthy of him; and a sister that he loves, and who is to him as a mother. *Alchemist*: Is he always the same ? *Voice*: As to his nature, it is always the same. But in person his heart only is pure: his garments are spotted. *Alchemist*: Master, was he ever quite free ? *Voice*: Yes; in the days of the great Masters and Sages, whom Nature loved, and to whom she gave the keys of the prison. *Alchemist*: Who were these wise adepts? *Voice*: There have been very many, and among them Hermes, who was one and the same with the mother of Sulphur. After him there were kings, princes, a long line of Sages, including Aristotle and Avicenna. All these delivered Sulphur from his bonds. *Alchemist*: What does he give to them for delivering him ? *Voice*: When he is set free, he binds his gaolers, and gives their three kingdoms to his deliverer. He also gives to him a magic mirror, in which the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world may be seen and known at a glance: and this mirror clearly exhibits the

creation of the world, the influences of the celestial virtues on earthly things, and the way in which Nature composes substances by the regulation of heat. With its aid, men may at once understand the motion of the Sun and Moon, and that universal movement by which Nature herself is governed -- also the various degrees of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness, and the virtues of herbs and of all other things. By its means the physician may at once, without consulting an herbarium, tell the exact composition of any given plant or medicinal herb. But now-a-days men are content to trust to the authority of great writers, and no longer attempt to use their own eyes. I hey quote Aristotle and Galen, as if there was not much more to be learned from the great Book of Nature which is spread open before them. Know that all things on the earth and under the earth are engendered and produced by the three principles, but sometimes by two, unto which the third, nevertheless, adheres. He who knows these three principles, and their proportions as conjoined by Nature, can tell easily by their greater or less coction, the degrees of heat in each subject, and whether they have been well, badly, or passably cooked. For those who know the three principles know also all vegetables -- by sight, taste, and odour, for these senses determine the three principles, and the degree of their decoction. *Alchemist*: Master, they say that Sulphur is a Medicine. *Voice*: Nay, you might rather call him a physician, and to him who delivers him out of prison, he gives his blood as a Medicine. *Alchemist*: How long can a man ward off death by means of this universal Medicine? *Voice*: Until the time originally appointed. But many Sages who did not take it with proper caution, have died before that time. *Alchemist*: Do you call it a poison then? *Voice*: Have you not observed that a great flame swallows up a small one? Men, who had received the Art by the teachings of others, thought that the more powerful the dose they took of our Medicine, the more beneficial would be the effect. They did not consider that one grain of it has strength to penetrate many thousand pounds of metals. *Alchemist*: How then should they have used it? *Voice*: They ought to have taken only so much as would have strengthened and nourished, without overwhelming, their natural heat. *Alchemist*: Master, I know how to make

that Medicine. *Voice*: Blessed are you if you do ! For the blood of Sulphur is that inward virtue and dryness which congeals quicksilver into gold and imparts health and perfection to all bodies. But the blood of Sulphur is obtained only by those who can deliver him from prison; and therefore he is so closely imprisoned that he can hardly breathe, lest he should come to the Palace of the King. *Alchemist*: Is he so closely imprisoned in all metals ? *Voice*: In some his imprisonment is less strict than in others. *Alchemist*: Why, Lord, is he imprisoned in the metals so tyrannously? *Voice*: Because if he once came unto his royal palace, he would no longer fear his guards. He could look from the windows with freedom, and appear before the whole world, for he would be in his own kingdom, though not in that state of highest power whereto he desires to arrive. *Alchemist*: What is his food? *Voice*: His food is air, in a digested state, when he is free; but in prison he is compelled to consume it in a crude state. *Alchemist*: Master, cannot those quarrels between him and his gaolers be composed ? *Voice*: Yes, by a wise and cunning craftsman. *Alchemist*: Why does he not offer them terms of peace ? *Voice*: He cannot do so by himself: his indignation gets the better of his discretion. *Alchemist*: Why does he not do so through some commissary ? *Voice*: He who could put an end to their strife would be a wise man, and worthy of undying honour. For if they were friends, they would help, instead of hindering each other, and bring forth immortal things. *Alchemist*: I will gladly undertake the duty of reconciling them. For I am a very learned man, and they could not resist my practical skill. I am a great Sage, and my Alchemistic treatment would quickly bring about the desired end. But tell me, is this the true Sulphur of the Sages ? *Voice*: He is Sulphur; you ought to know whether he is the Sulphur of the Sages. *Alchemist*: If I find his prison, shall I be able to deliver him ? *Voice*: Yes, if you are wise enough to do so. It is easier to deliver him than to find his prison. *Alchemist*: When I do find him, shall I be able to make him into the Philosopher's Stone ? *Voice*: I am no prophet. But if you follow his mother's advice, and dissolve the Sulphur, you will have the Stone. *Alchemist*: In what substance is this Sulphur to be found ? *Voice*: In

all substances. All things in the world -- metals, herbs, trees, animals, stones, are its ore. *Alchemist*: But out of what substances do the Sages procure it? *Voice*: My friend, you press me somewhat too closely. But I may say that though it is everywhere, yet it has certain palaces where the Sages can most conveniently find it; and they worship it when it swims in its sea and sports with Vulcan (god of fire), though there it is disguised in a most poor garb. Now is it in a dark prison, hidden from sight. But it is one only subject, and if you cannot find it at home you will scarcely do so in the forest. Yet, to give you some heart in your research, I will solemnly assure you that it is most perfect in gold and silver -- most easily obtained in quicksilver.

With these words Saturn departed, and the Alchemist, being weary with walking, fell into a deep sleep, in which he saw the following vision: He beheld in that grove a spring of water, near which Salt and Sulphur were walking and quarrelling, until at last they began to fight. Salt dealt Sulphur a grievous wound, out of which there flowed, instead of blood, pure, milk-white water, that swelled into a great river. In this river the virgin goddess, Diana, came to bathe; and a certain bold prince, who was passing by, was inflamed with great love towards her; which she, perceiving and returning, pretended to be sinking under water. The prince bade his attendants assist her; but they excused themselves, saying that the river, though it looked small and all but dried up, was most dangerous. "And," said they, "many of those who have passed here before have perished in it." Then that prince threw off his thick cloak, plunged into the river, and stretched out his arm to save the beautiful Diana; but she grasped it so convulsively that they both sank under water together. Soon afterwards their souls were seen rising upward above the water, and they said, "We have done well, for in no other way could we be delivered from our stained and spotted bodies." *Alchemist* (speaking): Will you ever return into those bodies? *Souls*: Not while they are so polluted -- but when they are cleansed, and the river is dried up by the heat of the sun. *Alchemist*: What do you do in the meantime? *Souls*: We soar above the water till the storm and the mists cease.... Then the Alchemist thought that he

saw a great number of his fellows come to the spot where the body of the Sulphur lay slain by the Salt; and they divided it among themselves, and gave a piece to him also. Then they went home, and began to operate on their (dead) Sulphur, and are at it to this day. Presently Saturn returned, and the Alchemist said: Master, come quickly, I have found Sulphur -- help me to make the Stone. *Saturn*: Gladly, my friend. Prepare the quicksilver, and the sulphur, and give me the vessel. *Alchemist*: Oh, I do not want Mercury. It is a delusion and a snare, as my friend the other Alchemist discovered to his smart. *Saturn*: I can do nothing without quicksilver. *Alchemist*: Oh no, we will make it of Sulphur only. So they set to work on that piece of dead Sulphur, and sublimed, calcined, and subjected it to all manner of chemical operations. But they produced nothing save little bits of sulphurous tow, such as they use for lighting fires. Then the Alchemist confessed the fruitlessness of his endeavours, and bade Saturn set about the work in his own way. Then Saturn took two kinds of quicksilver, of different substance but one root, washed them with his urine, and called them the sulphurs of sulphurs; then he mixed the fixed with the volatile, after which he placed them in a proper vessel, and set a watch to prevent the sulphur from escaping; afterwards he placed them in a bath of very gentle heat -- and thus they made the Philosopher's Stone, which must always follow as the outcome of the right substance. Then the Alchemist took it in his hand, admired its beautiful purple colour, and danced about with it, shouting aloud with joy and delight. Suddenly the glass slipped out of his hand and broke into a thousand pieces; the stone vanished; and the Alchemist awoke with nothing in his hand but some pieces of sulphurous tow.

There are a good many Alchemists who, having an extremely favourable opinion of themselves, and fancying that they can hear the grass grow, rail against this Art, because they think that if the Stone were not a mere delusion, they could not have failed to find it. We, for our part, are not over anxious to rob these people of their comfortable conviction. But to men who were worthy (men both of high and low degree) we have repeatedly proved the reality of our Art by incontestable

ocular evidence. Let me warn those who wish to follow the true method in studying our Art, always to read with constant reference to natural facts, and never, under any circumstances, to do anything contrary to Nature. If the Sages say that fire does not burn, they must not believe it; for Nature is greater than the Sages; but if they say that it is the property of fire to dry and heat things, they will accept this statement, because it is in accordance with the truth of Nature -- and the facts of Nature are always simple and plain. If any one came and taught you to make this Stone, as though he were giving you a receipt for making cheese out of milk, he might speak more plainly than I have done; but I am compelled to veil and conceal my meaning, because of the vow which my Master exacted of me.

My last words shall be addressed to you who have already made some progress in this Art. Have you been where the bridegroom has been married to the bride, and the nuptials were celebrated in the house of Nature ? Have you heard how the vulgar have seen this Sulphur, as much as have you who have taken such pains to seek it ? If you wish that even old women should practise your philosophy, show the dealbation of these sulphurs, and say openly to the common people: Behold, the water is divided, and the Sulphur has gone forth; when it returns it will be whiter than snow, and will congeal the water. Burn the Sulphur with incombustible sulphur, wash it, and make it white and purple until the Sulphur becomes Mercury, and the Mercury Sulphur, and you can proceed to quicken it with the soul of gold. Our Mercury must be corrected by means of Sulphur -- otherwise it is unprofitable. A prince without a people is a wretched sight -- and so is an Alchemist without Sulphur and Mercury. If you understand me, I have spoken.

The Alchemist went home, bewailed the broken Stone, and his folly in not asking Saturn about the Salt of the Sages, and the way of distinguishing between it and ordinary salt. The rest he related to his wife.

Conclusion.

Every student of this Art should first carefully read what is said -- in this and other Treatises -- about the creation, operation, properties, and effects of the four elements; otherwise he cannot

apprehend the nature of the three principles, or find the substance of the Stone, or understand its development. God has created the elements out of chaos; Nature has evolved the three principles out of the elements; and out of these principles she makes all things, and gives power to her beloved disciples to produce marvellous preparations. If Nature produces metals out of the principles, Art must follow her example. It is one of the rules of Nature to act through intermediate substances; and this book should enable the student to judge what substances are intermediate between the elements and metals, and between metals and the Stone. The difference between gold and water is great, that between water and mercury not so great, and that between gold and mercury very small, for mercury is the habitation of gold, water the habitation of mercury, and sulphur is that which coagulates mercury. The whole arcanum lies hidden in the Sulphur of the Sages, which is also contained in the inmost part of their Mercury, which has to be prepared in a certain way that shall be described on another occasion.

I have not written this Treatise with the object of refuting the ancient Sages, but only for the purpose of correcting, explaining, and supplementing their statements. After all, they were only men and they sometimes did make assertions which can now no longer be maintained. For instance, when Albertus Magnus says that gold was once found to have developed in the teeth of a dead man, he is out of harmony with the possibilities of Nature; for an animal substance can never develop into a mineral. It is true that animals and vegetables contain sulphur and mercury, as well as minerals; but these principles are animal and vegetable, not mineral. If there were no animal sulphur in man, the mercury of his blood could not be congealed into flesh and bones; and if plants contained no vegetable sulphur, their mercury or water (sap) would not be congealed into leaves and flowers. The three kinds of sulphur are essentially the same, but, like the three mercuries, they are differentiated according to the three kingdoms, and cannot act outside their own kingdoms. Each kind of mercury can be coagulated by none but its own sulphur, and if gold was found in the teeth of a dead man, it must have been introduced in an artificial manner -- either as gold, or in the shape of some other metal which

by the gradual action of its own metallic sulphur on its metallic mercury, was afterwards transmuted into gold. It is mistaken impressions and superstitious notions, like this one of Albertus Magnus, that we have set ourselves to correct in this Treatise, by stating once for all the true facts of animal, vegetable, and mineral development.

Let the painstaking student be satisfied to have received a true account of the origin of the Three Principles. There is no greater help towards a successful end than a good beginning. I have in this Treatise started the student on the right road, and given him clear and practical directions. With God's blessing, and by dint of diligent and persevering study, he may now fairly hope to reach the glorious goal. But I, having told out all that is lawful for me to utter, now commit myself to the mercy of a loving Creator, who will receive me to Himself; and I commend the gentle and pious Reader to the same great Father of All, to whom be praise and glory, through the endless succession of the ages.

THE END.

