



THE QUINTESSENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS

THEODORUS MUNDANUS

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**BY
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The Quintessence of the Philosophers by Theodorus Mundanus.

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THEODORUS MUNDANUS

His answer to W. Dickinson concerning:

Quintessence of the Philosophers

Although very many letters relating both to business and Civility, as is most agreeable to a man of my character, and continually written by me, and no Time does more please and truly delight me, than that which is spent in philosophical reading, and contemplation; yet sometimes I am constrained to give Answers to philosophical letters very unlike the manner of philosophers; because for some reasons (which they cannot but conjecture) I would not appear in the dress of a philosopher; but rather to write in such a form, which may deserve the name of imprudence or ignorance: However my very learned friend, so greatly was I delighted, and as it were ravished, with your most ingenious, elegant, and excellent philosophic letters, dated the last of July 1683, that had not your most courteous and friendly deportment, Chymical Industry, candour of behaviour, and all kind of Learning extorted from me a promise, I could not but at this time give an Answer to them and your demands with so much clearness as may agree with former obligations, and the Rules of Secret Philosophy.

And I ingeniously profess, so far as those Rules will beare an Amplification, without a rupture, I shall for your sake, dilate and extend them.

About 20 years ago in my travels through all England, where in my passage and short stay at that harmonious and splendid University of Oxford, I had the favour and happiness to come to your acquaintance and be an eye witness of your great Labour and Cost bestowed on the Chymical Art.

I was filled with great joy that I found to meet together in one man, probity of behaviour, variety of ingenuity, a Studious genius of Pyrotechny, with the true principles of philosophy: that I had a mind in my letters to promote and illustrate the principles of my philosophy to you, to confirm your earnest and

diligent search of the True Science: And if you will remember I gave my counsel in this Thing in a letter from London, wherein I payed my Thanks for that most courteous entertainment I received from you at oxford; which undoubtedly I had performed, had I now afterwards heard that your weighty employ in Medicine, and great esteem would not hereafter permit you -to be at leasure, for chymical experiments. For this cause I altered my purpose, of having further acquaintance and commerce with; although I can never recruit the Veneration I have towards your signal Eminency. But when on my return to England in 1679, I heard again of your Name and fame at London; and at that time when meeting together with my friend Beckett, I found your Love of Chymistry, not altogether extinct, but contracted, and covered over with business, like fire with hot ashes. And perceived by the furnaces newly built by which, your Chymical desire, like fire afresh stirred up, I greatly rejoiced at this Sight, both for your own sake, (being well persuaded that by the blessing of God) prospering your painfull sagacity, at length you would obtain that, which would abundantly recompence your labour and Cost; as also for the sake of the Art itself, which in my opinion such an ingenious, honest and prudent Lover of it, by an undoubted Argument, how great an opinion I had of you, and how honorably I thought of you, and that I might the more confirm you in the principles and practice of philosophy, not long after in your presence, I made those two projections; And what I say ought not to be questioned, If I affirm for certain, that, although I have been an Adept philosopher more than 40 years, I never made known myself, or the Verity of the Art to 3 persons, besides yourself. But this my silence and recess, is not to be imputed to pravity of mind, or envy, but to a just fear, and necessary care, which becomes every wise man to use, for his own safety.

There are many examples and proofs of Dangers, Imprisonments, and untimely deaths, which philosophers have brought upon themselves, to the knowledge of others. If other arguments were wanting, the things which have of late happened to my friends the philosophers of France, would give me sufficient admonition and what happened in times past to Raymond Lully in England, they may also teach you to be wary, if at any time the Almighty God shall Crown your Chymical Endeavours with a desired event.

Some portions of the Elixir, or Transmuting Powder have come to the hands of wicked men; but it has been a snare, and destruction to them.

But my dear friend, be fully persuaded of this, that those philosophers which know the nature and intimate Mysteries of this Art, were eminent in Piety and honesty, and had performed many magnificent and famous works to the Glory of God, the good of Mankind, and the peculiar profit of the common weale where they lived, if they doubt discover their faculty of doing those things, but such is the parvity of mortal man, such the covetousness no less of the superiour, than inferiour; but no sooner has a philosopher made himself known, but he is presently exposed to imprisonment by the injurious and treacherous inclinations of ill men; nevertheless, there is extant in many countries great Monuments of liberality and magnificence and in every age great works have been performed by them which have not been publically known to be by the help of the Elixir, or to proceed from their beneficence, who were indeed the author.

I shall only produce 2 examples of their magnificence; first, that which was done by a philosopher of your own land: The 2nd. because it was done in your own country, for a Regent of unblainable credit, hath noted that your countryman Ripley for many years successively sent 100,000 pounds annually to the Knights of Rhodes, to sustaine the War against the Turks.

And Raymund Lully gave to Edward Vth. King of England, six minards (?) of gold, to be spent in the holy War, waged in the Holy Land, which he made in St. Catharines Church near the Tower of London.

But it may clearly appear how little the philosophers esteemed vain glory, or popular applause, very many of them who set forth books have not affixed their names to the writings; and those that founded Convents, Monestarys, Hospitals, Temples, and other public Houses (many among them having taken care that such places should be erected) have not suffered their Statues to be seen in the frontispiece of the Buildings, or their names to be read or Known, they were greatly pleased with Religious words at their own proper costs, although they were built in the name of others, and serving to propagate the fame (of) other men, being abundantly content with that private applause which they had in the Theatre of their own conscience.

For this my dear friend, I would have you know, that this Mystical (and to speak with other philosophers) divine science, doth indowe and replenish the breasts of the happy Adepts, with cogitations and affections aspiring far above the basis of this world, so that Ambition, Avarice, with other passions torturing and corrupting the minds of other mens have little or no dominion in them and therefore they more esteem the virtues of the great Elixir for the perfect vigour of body, and most high Tranquility of mind, joined to a wonderful perspicuity which it doth stedfastly produce; than for those immense riches which at their pleasure they may obtain from it.

Yet do not so interprete my sayings as tho' I would have it believed that the Philosophers did altogether dispise the Treasures of the earth, so as to employ no part of silver or gold lawfully possessed, by them from this blessed science to their own proper uses, & etc.

For this only reason they have endeavoured carefully, by what means and methods they might, to conseale the first matter and cover and darken the verity of it, with obscure appolations: and so they do affleict, and confound the curious searchers, with Hyroglyphics, traps, Allegories, windings, and divers feigned names, which are taken from the various forms seen in its preparation.

As from the Blackness seen in the beginning, they call it a crow, Black lead, Pitch, and any other thing that is under a black colour. From the Whiteness which from a further coction it acquires to itself the name of the Swan, White Lead and other things that by nature are Whiteish, from the divers colours which by intermediate vicisitudes appear, it is called the Peacocks Tail, the rainbow and the tide. From the redness which at the last it is cloathed withall, it is noted by the names of the Red Lion, Minium, and other things of a red colour: Moreover from the stink it sendeth forth in the beginning of its preparation its distinguished by the tittle of Asafoedita, and other bodies of a stinking odour.

But under these coverings the truth is veiled with artifice that it may shine to the studious and wise searchers if so be they observe these rules which you before hath propounded, and heartily implore the Divine Grace, to succour their indeavours without which the great mystery cannot be understood, or

at the least acquired. However let the writings of the philosophers seem never so difficult or mysterious, nevertheless the Disciples of this science are obliged to them for the pains they have sustained in composing of them. For the writers neither acquired fame, nor gain to themselves, in regard they concealed their names and persons; Therefore they did proceed from a desire to hold forth as it were Ariadines Clue that might lead the Sons of Art through the Labyrinth of Chymistry, and in what they could to succour their industry yet withall not to expose the Art naked to the profane vulgar, to prostitute chaste Diana to the lust of the potent and rich, who are very ready, if money could do it, to procure the possession of her.

Wherefore seeing the philosophers have so well acted their parts, it behoves the Disciples of the Art to act theirs; likewise, viz. to accustome themselves to labours and pains, and by intent meditation and well weighed daily experiment (which are to be accounted the best comments of their Books) to obtain the interpretation of them. As to the contradictions which frequently seem to occur in chymical writings, they are not so really if well understood, for first, when the Philosophers Stone is by some assumed to be a natural thing; everywhere to be had, and of mean price; by others an artificial thing, no where to be found, nor to be obtained without great cost; nevertheless they speak true on either side, if they be discretely and with different grains of salt apprehended.

For when the original stone is taken for a concrete matter of which it does consist, it is rightly called natural and everywhere to be found, as well in things of small as of a great moment. But when it is considered in the State of Perfection for the immediate proper object of the Philosophic Work it is equally said to be the effort of Art, nowhere in nature to be had, nor to be possessed without great cost. By the same distinction the Contradictions used by divers philosophers concerning their Mercury are made perspicuous, and reduced to harmony.

Secondly. There are some that say the Stone is made only of one matter, viz. Argent Vive; some of two; others of three; yet neither do these sentences oppose one another. For it is compounded of Sulphur and Mercury, both which are one Thing: And although it is said to consist of 3 things, viz,

individuals of SAL, SULPHUR, & MERCURY, in the purity of its nature it is simple Mercury, of a 3fold form only in its external shape.

Although many things are brought together for our use, yet all these things ought to come into one, before they are fit ingredients for our Work.

Thirdly. There are Philosophers that declare the Work to be short and easily done; there are some that say it is a long business, and Herculean Labour, they record not from the truth who affirm the first preparation of the natural matter to be painfull and very Tedious; nor they who say the Coction of the prepared subject to be easily and expeditions, but the different progress of the operations makes the work short to these and long to others.

Fourthly. Some do determine the matter of the Philosophic Stone to be meerly metalline; others both Vegetable and Animal, which diversity is to be taken in and showing in reality there is no difference. For all the true and general searchers of Nature agree in this, that the stone may be made of any subject of those kinds; and thus it is best of all made of the 3 conjoined in one; but because it is necessary that the Sulphur and Mercury of the other two bodies are to be reduced into a pure Homogenious and unctuous substance, (which is the condition of a metallic nature) before they can be accomodated to the great work, therefore the matter may rightly be called metalline-- a metal.

Fifthly. Some report the Elixir to be made only of Vitriol; others declare that of Vitriol alone it is by no means to be made. The same possibility of divers other subjects, both Animal sensitive (vegetable?) or Mineral, is alledged and decryed, yet an easy distinction will bring these different positions into concord:

For it being supposed, that Vitriol is that general substance, out of whose inward parts our Mercury may be copiously drawn, and of which alone the Philosophers Stone may be made. Yet Vitriol, as VITRIOL cannot effect this; nor Sulphur as SULPHUR; nor blood as BLOOD; nor oil as OIL, nor Lead as LEAD, nor Gold as GOLD, can any way conduce to its production:

Nevertheless in every one of these individual bodies there is more or less a mercurial nature, the Spirit of Mercury, or Gold of Gold; which is efficacious

and fit to perfect this work. For which cause Mercury, no less by the Philosophers than the Poets, is said to compose all contentions, and discords with his Caducean Rod, because all the Repugnations and opposite propositions of Philosophers, are softened, and reconciled by oppositions TAKEN from the various forms and conditions of MERCURY, which agrees to all Things. So that if the writings of Philosophers are read with due vigilancy of mind, and one sentence compared with another and one book with another, every one, but a little initiated in the Knowledge of nature, being exercised in the books, will plainly perceive the truth contained enough, not altogether, but dispersed in them. What one Author omits, another contains, the things that one place is silent in, are exprest in another; neither can any thing more with modesty be hoped for from them it being most insolent to expect that the philosophers should set their closets wide open, and expose their Immense Treasures to the Liberty, and Rapines of all Men.

Let the sluggish Drones of this science well consider, who rejoice in honey prepared and other labours whether he does not sufficiently express his Love and Good will, who shows the woods to others, where plenty of Pheasants and wood Cocks flock together, and the ground where Quails and Partridges frequent? And with what decency and modesty can they ask that they should be caught for their woe; cooked and dressed and put in their mouths, as meat ready chewed is thrust into the mouths of little Children?

Let a Disciple know for certain that it behoves him to play the Vulcan, and to work out his own Lot for himself.

To read, to meditate, with the highest study, to spend very much labour, and (which is a harder Task to many who thus desire philosophical daintys) to pray frequently and beseech the Grace of God, who is the Giver of all good things and knows the Secrets of Hearts, whether their desires aim at a good, or evil end; for he that searches into this immense Treasure thus by this means he might satisfy the passions of the mind, or more freely indulge the Wicked pleasures of the Body, shall never bring his endeavours to the desired end, for such an abuse nature cannot; the philosopher ought not.

Divine providence will not Instruct. For although the general matter of the Stone is natural, and the Method of working to be performed by the

initiation of the daily works of Nature, and the work itself is nothing else than a due application of *ACTIVES & PASSIVES*; Yet the subject matter in which the Work immediately begins, is a subtile Composition, prepared by the hands of the philosophers; and although it behoves him for a little space to follow nature, yet afterwards it is necessary that he go beyond her, otherwise he will never come to his Mark. It becomes him then to separate, and conjoin things by some means, which Nature by herself cannot make use of, so that Industry with, and sagacity by the alone conduct of nature cannot direct and show all the meanders of this work: But with how great difficulty, and with what rare success this work has been finished by the Institutions of writers, they have known by sad exposition, who being conversant in daily reading of books have made many and great fruitless experiments, whereby they find nothing but dangers, Impediments and almost *IMPOSSIBLE* Inevitable frustrations meeting every one in this work. I add that the work itself is, by the philosophers almost rendered Inseparable, as speaking of one operation when they mean another, or by omitting its beginning or end they miserably confound the most Knowing Searchers.

You may consider that a Carpenter (who in a structure of stairs, makes many steps not well joined together, or leaves out some, in the middle or near the top, makes rather a precipice than a right ascent) to build the same way by which our Philosophers have delivered their processes to posterity to be read, and such is the frame of the ladder which they have ingeniously erected; for how many steps in the beginning have you left unmade and how many afterwards, before you have come to the top; there are many gaps between the purification and the fixation of the matter, of which I believe you are not ignorant. For purification is a Thing so difficult so many and great the turnings between purification and fixation. That even they who understand everything to be so aptly explained to render the work probably easy, and clear, are at length compelled to confess, that without the help of a Master or the special favour of the Deity, it cannot be performed.

I readily grant (what before is said) the matter of our Work to be natural, and that nature does daily teach and show the manner of preparing our Tincture, by distillations, sublimations, solutions, purifications, and fixations

which she continually forms, but want how occult the mediate matter is which is inclosed in the Casket of Nature, which is the Center of all things, and how greatly the way to come to it is observed by the most subtile endeavours and wit of the Philosophers.

This also being granted, with which great labours, experiences, and dangers is encompassed, and are with me persuaded without without the help of much eloquence to this belief, that Heaven hath the chief disposing of this precious matter, and Lays it up for the use of the Pious and prudent yea; truly the evils which would be perpetuated by this Art, were it more common, are of that nature for its quantity and quality that its publication would by no means conduce to the benefit of mankind, nor consist with the duty of a philosopher; Yea, I am persuaded that although an imprudent, and rash Master of this Art, should too openly make known his great Mystery (which certainly hath been done by some, nevertheless by the difficulties on the one hand, and the Incredulity of men on the other, it would be hidden and it seems to happen out not without a certain special providence, that not only the rude, and illiterate vulgar, but the Learned and most Ingenious part of men, do stiffly deny and deride the thing itself and deride the Art as the most vague and foolish of the World, without any examination, or search of the fact, whether the matter be according to nature and any way profitable. In other controversies sober men, and endued with Judgement endeavour to apprehend what may be understood by the thing itself before they begin. But here diffidence and denial for the most part proceed the Encamen of the question. This prejudice and incredulity hath deferred Thousands from the search and scrutiny of this Secret; for why, would they who believe that in India no gold is to be found, take so long and dangerous a journey thither to fetch gold from thence? Certainly such obstacles will cast them in a doubtful circumstance in their journey, who set upon this work before they understand the nature of the thing, or the Right manner of proceeding, which may make void the endeavours of the hesitant. For how can any one of a weak and unstable faith keep constant in undergoing Labours, Cost, Study, Watchings, whilst he sees no other effort, but troublesome doubtings, and discouraging misfortunes, which are to be expected by all that are not well instructed in the true matter, and right manner of working.

Poritanus does expressly affirm that after he knew the true matter; yet he had erred 200 times, before he had compleated the work itself.

But I have enough harped on this string; And your Aenigmatical Stinubigavi (?) And your Ex: Sarcastical Epistle; which newly, and on purpose coyness by them, or you, to upbraid the sublime and Mystical Wisdom of the Wise, I could easily pardon: They, in the mean time no less disdain such words then the traving of Goose, or that I may repay your Ex-new Latin Word with an old French word; *Magicanori crepi ruditum*.

Such reproaches will not stain your fame, because it is necessary both for the security of their persons, as well as their Secrets.

Yet they walk in the Clouds, and their writings ought not to be reproached because they are above the capacity and Intellect of the Vulgar: Besides it is an Argument of their Love and Virtue, honesty and Industry, that they do not communicate this Arcanum to the people, and it is a proof of their ingenuous subtilty, that they can make this thing obscure, when its matter is so vile and common, and its operation so simple and easy, and so agreeable to the daily work of nature. Furthermore the whole mystery hath been plainly shewed by some imprudent men, that the Philosophers have been fain to strain their wits to keep the Knowledge from diligent but undeserving inquirers.

Wherefore that great Philosopher Lully saith, that the Composition of our books is nothing else than a subtilty of sagacious Art to conceal the Art. But this they could not do unless they had hidden the matter, and manner of working under the thick voices of AEnigmatical speeches, and disturbed the braines of men with equivocal words and appearing contradictions; I confess, some contradictions may be found in the writings of some Adepts, which deserve your Ex-reproach, because they do not only disturb the candidates of this Art, but also are Injurious to nature, and derogate from her in making her less large & bountifull than indeed she is. For some do confidently assert that the secret matter is to be found in no subject but gold and Mercury: Others profess that it is hid only in Vitriol, in which subject they have wrought with success. And there are some who determine Antimony to be the only subject of the Hermetical Science and Operation.

Yea almost everything which is positively affirmed by some to be the matter of this Majesty, is with the same confidence, and show of reason too, stifly derided by others, each one thinking that there is no other way to Corinth but that which himself hath gone.

But this comes to pass (as you yourself hath wisely observed, and very acutely expressed) because they were so shut up within such narrow bounds of knowledge that they have plainly been ignorant, what Universal Nature can produce, and what affinity there is between the essences of all things, especially of Minerals; and how eagerly Nature herself hath laid the most solid foundation of making gold. From whence it is evident that not only the subtile endeavours of very many; but also the ignorance of some Adepts, hath obscured the Art; and rendered it so difficult, as not to be acquired without a Master, or by revelation.

There is no need for me longer to swell on this Theme, of which, as well as other things we have so accurately discoursed and certainly above all other that ever I have known; and therefore I had here made a conclusion, if we had not obtained particular solutions to some questions annexed to your Epistle, which now I shall subjoin, with all the clearness I may.

Of the Matter of the Stone.

As to the Matter of the Stone, you yourself who have made so fair a description of it, and so sagaciously searched it out, then to its original, cannot be altogether unable to answer your own question, because, as you have well known; It is the Virtue of the Heaven and Earth, and all the Elements, and so diffused through the whole world, and essential to everything, that nothing can remain one moment without it, By it the Sun rejoices as a Giant to run his race; by it he governs the day, and gives his masculine heat to all things; by it the Moon governs the night, and lets down his fertile Menstruum to the Earth; by it the clouds drop fatness, and the ground brings forth its timely fruits; the Birds of the Air the fish of the Sea, the Beasts of the Earth bring it to you. Adam brought it into the World with him; and dying, brought it into his Sepulchre; neither can the Vilest creature of the World; nor any element be without this fiery essence and this subtile Earth; which joined together make a viscous and oily water, which is the

matter of the Majesty. So that it may rightly be called a Thing of small price, because it is so common; and at the same time esteemed most precious, for its wonderful power and difficult Acquisition; for it is covered and locked up in the Center of all the Concretes; so that neither human Art without Industry and Cost; nor riches and labour, without the Divine Blessing, can find or obtain it; nevertheless without much difficulty it is extracted out of many things of the Universe, by a common distillation, as oil out of Vegetables, and Animals. But unless the Art of separating the elements be well understood, and unless the way of extracting water out of Air, air out of fire, fire out of earth, be known, you will effect little or nothing in chymistry. But if you are skilled in the Art; Viz, to divide the 4 elements according to the doctrine of the wise, you may easily purify them and with a geometrical proportion join them and digest them so that they make a viscous fiery water which is the matter of which you state the question.

I say this fiery water is found in every one of those compounds which are called elements; for, as you rightly assert, after the division of the matter of which constitute the Chaos, and first compaction of all things which constitute this Adorned World, there was no simple element extant, every one containing it itself more or less the other 3; but this our matter, seeing it is an Aethereal and celestial substance, joined with a most subtile Earth, is chiefly found in the element of fire, whence the philosophers ought to fetch it, It is indeed a Luminous substance, yea, truly a fire to be kindled by Distillation.

Yet it is necessary, that by a manual and artificial operation, you reduce this fiery water into the condition of a metalline sulphur, which being highly purified from all faeces, and freed from all watery and Airy redundancy, will be Inseperable united to gold and dilate and multiply its Tincture, this Sulphur is the hot and dry part of our Argent Vive, so far as it is considered distinct from its oleaginous humidity, although both are really one and the same thing, and only one matter to be had (as I said before) as well from Vegetables and Animals as from Minerals: However we must add that this Mercury cannot be usefull in Alchemy, so long as it remains in its Vegetable and Animal State: Wherefore the sulphur or Oleyness ought to be made metalline, exactly pure and unctuous, which the Chymist may performe, by

repeated, putrefactions, distillations, and separations. For by these means Artificially performed it is brought to the highest degree of purity and perfection and then the first work of the philosophers and primitive preparation of the matter is performed.

And here I would admonish you, that the Confection of this pure Oiliness is the great and hidden Mystery of this Art, yet it is performed by setting of it free from all Earthy and Watery feculency, and excess.

In all Corrosive Waters, which are called AQUA FORTIS is something of pure Oiliness, by which they can add vigour to gold, and increase its Tincture; for this end the philosophers use them; for the acute and penetrable parts of AQUA FORTIS, being most fit to enter into, and penetrate gold, carry that oily and unctuous essence into the inner parts, and so performe the first resolutions of it, which when it is (by) distillation again drawn off from the gold leaves this oiliness behind it, which makes it more fit for an intimate dissolution by a mild, homogeneous, and permanent Menstruum, which truly is a vegetative liquor, endued from hence, with a mighty power to encrease and multiply the Tincture of Metals; for the vegetable and animal dissolvents owe their vegetable force to a corrosive and many of the philosophers do attribute the quick dispatch of their great Work to it; For the Ancients, being ignorant of the use of AQUA FORTIS, performed their works slowly, and troublesomely, but after they understood the force and use of AQUA FORTIS, they performed them in a few days, which before they could not under a years time. And for this the Disciples of Chymistry are more obliged to Paracelsus then the Ignorant and ungrateful are wont to acknowledge: But this digestion I hope will not be unseasonable, to those, who would willingly know, what is the pure oily Nature, and how it may be gotten.

But the desire to know, where the matter of the Philosophers Stone may be found in such a disposition and quantity, which may invite the labours and Industry of the Students in this Art. You have very well observed out of the writings of the Hermetic Chymists that man is the richest mine of this Mercurial Sulphur, and physical matter; you may also learn from them in what part of the mine the best and most plentiful Sulphur is contained. BASIL VALENTINE, that skillfull philosopher, saith: "There is a Limbus or

viscous globe of Earth in the Microcosm which issues out of a certain permanent water, which hath in itself, all extrincicals, being removed whatsoever is necessary to the Compleating of the Work". And your Countryman Ripley, doth dogmatically relate, that our Stone, or Matter, which is generated in an Ingenious Earth, and in the Spring, when the Sun is in Aries, does grow and Vegetate and begin to fly, out to be extracted in its own minera entire, not corrupted by a Martial man. HAIMO, that he might show the place with that clearness as is lawfull, thus speaking to the Sons of Art, that they might easily, and with a small price obtaine the desirable matter of the Philosophers. Go you secretly, and slowly, with great silence to the posterior parts of the World (viz, the little) and you shall hear a sounding thunder. You shall perceive the wind blow, and you shall see hail and rains falling on the Earth, and this is the thing you desire, and which in the Chymical Artifice exceeds in value every stone of the Mineral Mountain, by which adumbrations, you may really conceive where famous Ore of our Gold remains and whence it may plentifully be digged: There is no need you should fear danger about the Preparation of this Animal Matter (which I see does somewhat deter you from this work, if only you follow the council of MEDEA to JASON, when he was to PLOW with Bulls breathing flames of Fire, that not to plow with an adverse wind, lest the force of the flames should beat upon him.). I do not doubt but your signal understanding in chymical affairs and dilligent care, may prevent those conflagrations, that happen through niglegence and and a sagacious, and experienced genious, will invent such glass vessels; instruments, and methods of working with that Matter whereby you may prevent the penetrating and pernicious vapour which at any time can arise from it to the danger of the sight, health, and Life, and here I must observe that the green and vegetable substance of our Argent Vive is the food of the philosophers BASILISK, which being not only an Animal, but Vegetable, and also Mineral Matter in its preparation will exhale noxious vapours; therefore also in your preparations of these subjects care is to be used that the subtile and unwholesome vapours of Mercury may be avoided, for the matter of our Philosophic Work is Mercury.

Of the Mercury of the Philosophers.

But I know that you cannot imagine that I now speak of common Mercury, or Argent Vive; for our Mercury, whether it be considered in its natural State and Condition, or as it is prepared to our Majesty, and made fit by the hand of the Artist, differs very much from common Mercury. First the Vulgar is found only in some places, and mines of our Earth; Ours is everywhere, because no Concrete Body in the Whole World, or Element is without it. Secondly; The vulgar is the Son of Nature, generated, and produced under the dominion and influences of the planet Mercury, of an unctuous Moistness, and subtile Earth. Ours is the Son of Art, born and produced of 2 Saline substances, which have the same root and stock, by the helping hand of the Chymist.

Thirdly: The common when it is joined by Amalgamation to the substances of other metals, receives not into itself the natures and qualities of the different metals, nor retains properties so communicable as are agreeable to the Planet Mercury. For he, viz. the planet Mercury assumes the nature and quality of all the planets with whom he is aspected in Conjunction.

But ours admits the nature of every one of the minerals (for these are the Inferiour planets) and mixed bodys, with whom it is mixed.

Fourthly: The Common is a fluid substance, which will move and run upon a plain superficies.

Ours, (in whose composition the quality of the Earth transcends the quality of the water) is a dry thing, or, as the philosophers term it, a dry and coagulated Water, of a Salt Nature.

Fifthly: The Vulgar is cold and moist; Ours is hot and dry.

Sixthly: The common, the more it is distilled the more subtile, and volatile it is made. Ours by coction and distillation is made thicker and less fluid.

Seventhly: The Common after distillation, remains the same Thing it was before, viz. Mercury. Ours, by a gentle distillation is formed into a watery Spirit and fixed Earth.

Eighthly: The Common is dissolved with a black and combustible Sulphur. Ours hath in it a most white, most red fixed and incombustible Sulphur.

Ninthly: By the Common the Metalline bodys are made black. By Ours they are Whitened, and brought to a metalline brightness.

Tenthly: The Common defiles and destroys everything. Ours produces and vivifyes all Things, and is truly the Radical Moisture of all Things.

Eleventhly: The Common, unless it first may putrify and be reduced into its first matter, will afford no salt from its body.

Ours contains in its bowels both a white and red salt; and is really altogether salt flowing from a salt Fountain.

Twelvly: The Common is of a Metalline Nature and truly a fluid and Liquid Metal. Ours, although it may, is not to be called Metafljne, by reason of its principles of which it consists; yet indeed is no more so than a vegetable or Animal; for it is Airy, Watery, fiery and Earthy.

Thirteenly: The Vulgar is not the seed of Metals, but is produced from the same or like metalline seed of which the other metals are produced; and is a metalline fruit, like all other Metals.

Fourteen-thly: The Common can neither dissolve gold, nor silver, nor be incorporated with them otherwise but that it may remain separable from them by Art. But Ours doth throughly and radically dissolve both gold and silver, and is so intimately united with them as to be made one individual, for ever inseparable; for which cause it is called a permanent Water.

Fifteenthly: Out of the Vulgar, by itself, gold or silver by no artificial or artifice can be drawn. Out of Ours having in itself both a White and Red Tincture, both by the Work of Pyrotechny is made.

Sixteenthly: The Common will not dissolve nor congeal itself, nor by itself be brought to the perfection of the Elixir. But Ours dissolves itself, Coagulates itself, and without any addition, by a simple Coction ascends to the Super Eminency of the Elixir, and true Tincture of the Ancient Philosophers, fit to impart perfection, not only to other Metals, but to Mercury itself. The Catholic and mutable Nature, and attributes and various appearances of this Mercury, were the cause why the Ancients compared it to very many things, and gave to it divers names, whence many errors, and daily deceptions arise

to the searchers of it and much loss of time, and money did insue for which cause perhaps it may seem Mercury hath not undeservedly suffered the Animadversion of your wit. Yet Sir, I would admonish you, that the Ancients assigned those different appellations put on it, not without great reason taken from the Nature of the thing; and for just cause taken from its eminent force and power indeavoured to render the attainment of it difficult and abstruse, which truly they did effectually.

However, that I might satisfy your desire in this description, both of the vulgar and sophic Mercury, I have sufficiently explained the nature of that thing we call Mercury, so that, there is no need of more words, although I cannot speak too much of that which is the chieftest part of every thing necessary to the existence and life of all the Creatures, because most certainly it is the Radical Moisture of all things. A moisture it is that no fire will consume; an oil that will not burn, an Air produced from the Earth, a real Earth, not such as we tread upon, but such as is above your heads, which no heat can dry, for it is a sulphureous liquor which increases our fire, and is of that same matter, as the oil of a lamp in the matter of Light.

A Liquor made of the most subtile parts of nature, a Liquor which cleansing and nourishing all things, will consume nothing; a fat-salt and so truly dry; as it will not wet your hands, withall so moist, that it is the fountain of all salt liquors of the Universe, a liquor which is properly called Our Stone.

Of which, if you would make the great Elixir, or Medicine for Men and Metals, it is necessary that you first turn it into a substance like to an Homogenous Oil; then after you have putrified this luminous body, it is needftfl that it be turned into the 4 humours, and lastly these humour's must be turned into a pure Sulphur; viz, a sulphur whose moisture increaseth in the fire, and is made a more cocted and mature Mercury. For our Mercury and Sulphur are one and the same thing, (as you have very well observed) differing in such a manner, as the fiery moistness of the body, IS distinguished from its heat and dryness; This Sulphur or Mercury (call it which you please) is hidden in the belly or center of all things, and whenever anything is brought to its perfection it appears, and is called not improperly the Gold of that Thing.

Of the Gold of the Philosophers.

You must therefore believe that our Gold is not the same with that Metal commonly so called, for the Hermetic philosophers have their secret metals of which they are to be understood, when they speak of a metal with respect to their great Work and not of the common Metals.

It is true that among the Philosophers there are 3 kinds of Gold, Astral, Elementary, and Metalline.

The Astrals Is the pure and fiery Salt which the Sun, by his potent Rays produces in the Stars, and it is carried hither and thither by the effluvioms of those stars through the whole firmament.

The Elementary is that pure and fixed salt, which by the name of the Son is generated in every body Compounded of elements; yea, and is generated in every element.

The Metalline known to every one; is more loved by the Ambitious and Covetious than the philosophers; for although they can open common gold and make it crude, so that it may be made the matter of the work; yet they always chiefly desire the other two, as more fit subject for their operations, and more capable of effects more stupendous than common Gold: Therefore the goodness of the Creator is to be adored; who hath made our gold and silver more common than the gold and silver vulgar, and hath placed them there to be found where our Mercury shows itself; for they are really no other thing, than the red and white fixed parts of Mercury, by which the volatile and flying part, is made fixt and permanent. Therefore I have said, the matter of the Mercury and Gold is the same; but the Oil or Sulphur, is better concocted in gold, than that that is in Mercury. Our Gold and Silver are unctuous and liquid substances, both extracted out of the same body, where they lay hid, left there crude, and imperfect by nature; but when by Art exactly purified and concocted, they are made a thousand times more efficacious, and potent, than common gold can ever be made. Common Gold is dead and buried in the Tomb of Indurate Concoction; where nature, after it had acted to the utmost of its powers, left it without any capacity of rising to a higher degree of perfection or of imparting perfection to viler substances, unless first it be reduced to its original and

crude condition, or to the nature of our Gold, which is a moist substance opened, green, vital, and of a vegetative power, and apt to be higher and higher exalted, till it puts on a superlative energie, far above human power, whose weak and limited faculties cannot carry up our gold to such a wonderfull height, to which its growing and multiplying nature could continually lift up itself. Without such a gold (whatever vain boasters prate) the true Aurem Potabile cannot be made.

Now I know that the ignorant will wonder (and let them do it) that I declare this stupendous matter, which is called gold, a vile common and unctuous Liquor. But those who are not altogether ignorant of our Mine Work, only ask me, out of which Mountain this golden Salt may be most plentifully digged?

Let Ripley answer for me, who declares that our best Mercury, or which is all one, our best gold is brought to us in Skins from the Mountain Passebauus; But that I may speak to the comfort of the dilignet searchers, not only India, (or to bring them nearer home) Hungary; But your Britania also abounds with most rich mines of it; but the divinatory Rod, by which these Mines are to be sought out ought to be of a Metalline Nature: I understand that some physicans have tarsely written, of golden teeth which grow in the mouth of a Silecian boy; but they might with greater truth, largeness and elegancy discourse of our Gold, which grows in the bowels of every Man, yea in every part of him, but in some parts more plentifully than others, or I have said before, and acknowledged by you. But this is a most certain and clear axiome; that, of whatever matter our gold is had, that matter is called the Philosophers Mountain.

Of the Mountain of the Philosophers.

This matter is therefore called Our Mountain, because our White and Red Tinging Sulphur's (which only are the true gold and silver of the Wise Men) are plentifully generated in it, and are extracted thence, by the Art, and Labour of a prudent Miner.

And I may lawfully assert (notwithstanding your facetious tauats); that there lies in our Mountain, a more precious treasure, than in all the Mountains of the whole World; because, not only an influence and inexhaustible quantity

of gold and silver, but also of Gems, abundantly transcending the Natural may be had from them. Those Mountains are of a Saltish Nature bursting out with an unctuous Humidity which humidity is the Sea of the Philosophers.

The Sea of the Philosophers

For out of these Mountains of Salt (the Philosophers striking the Rock) flows a perpetual and copious River, of an unctuous, or fat Water which moistens the whole Mountains, neither can it ever be dried by the heat of the Son (Sun), or exhausted by any Rivers which can flow from them. This Water, from the Abundance of gold which it carries in its Streams deserves the highest praises and commendations of the Philosophers much greater than TAGNS and PARTOLUS the sublime encominjums of the Poets; neither is it improperly and undeservedly Termed an Ocean because it is diffused through »all things, as it is the Radical Moisture of all the concretes of the Universe. You may fitly, and Ingeniously enough call it the Mediteranjan Sea because it passes through the Center of our Earth, or Salt Mountain; the possession of this vast Sea is esteemed of great moment by the Philosophers, therefore it is counted by them of the highest price, because it abounds with a kind of fat fishes (well observed and described by you) which some do call Sea LAMPERIES, or REMORAES, because they can hinder the motions of the tall and towering ships which swim in our Sea and destroy them. These tall ships (that I may speak plainly) are the volatile spirits of the World, which fluctuate in our Sea, and by the Salt which is in that Briny Water, are retained and fixed and for that cause, that fish is in so great honour among the philosophers, because from it they distill their vegetable Menstruum, or AQUA VITAE.

Of the AQUA VITAE of the Philosophers.

Indeed our AQUA VITAE, or vegetable dissolvant is drawn from a fat and unctuous matter, and although it may be made of the common Spirit of Wine, yet it will never be made, unless it be joined, and united with another vegetable nature which bears the Character of a trefoyle, and therefore by some it is called our Trefoyle, by others our Grapes, because it yields a Wine so Wonderful.

But now to speak and Judge ingeniously: This AQUA VITAE is pure Oil which is distilled like common Ardent Water and in distillation leaves nothing behind it and is incombustible.

This clear and subtile oil is our Mercury prepared, and the natural sister of our Earth or Salt, which this oil or Mercury does most lovingly embrace; most readily dissolve and unites itself inseparably with her; The most intimate union~of this spirit with the Salt, does give unto it a certain Kind of Volatility, so that they can be sublimed together by which means they make that incomparable Sal Armoniacujn, or white Sulphur of Nature, which is called our fair DIANA.

Of the Diana of the Philosophers.

I perceive you earnestly desire to have this presented to your View, naked and bathing in her fountain; but you have known how all the Nymphes in the fable did stand about her, to guard her, least Actean (?) should thus behold her. The same thing do all the philosophers, who with great might and study endeavour so to Veil her that she may not be exposed to any, much less the Lacivious and effeminate. As to you (my friend) I have before told you, with what obligations I am bound, by which I am made unable to give you that demonstration which my great opinion of your Virtues, and good will towards your Courteous and generous good disposition would prompt me to gratify your honest desire. But I clearly perceive that from your diligent reading of the philosophic writers, wise observations and experimental operations, you have already known so great a part of this Mystery that I can scarce doubt that if you persist in the search of the Chymical Wisdom, and God does mercifully favour your endeavours, in good time you will throughly understand what you so greatly desire:

It is granted me to say this:

That the fountain in which our Diana doth bath, and wash herself, is nothing else but our AQUA VITAE, in which the Salt, and White Sulphur of Nature that is our Diana is dissolved, and by digestion made wonderfully pure and potent.

This AQUA VITAE is thus made.

Take the choicest Sulphur, which is very Acid, and the best Mercury, which is very oleous, accurately remove all earthly faeculency, by sublimation or distillation, make the Mercury very pure and subtile, with common Salt, Vitriol, or both together; when they are so purified resolve them, and unite them by the means of a distilled water. Afterwards by due firmentation and digestion, you shall have a clear and uniform Liquor which is OUR WINE.

Take this wine and putrify it in horse dung 30 days, or in a good vaporous bath that the elements may the sooner and better be separated; Afterwards, put it into a fit glass vessel and distil an Ardent Water from it, which ought to be rectified till the whole burn away, or inflame any particle of linnen or cotton dipped in it: Then proceed thus with the wine distilling the flegm from it, till there only remains a certain substance like liquid pitch; cohobate the phelgm upon this liquid pitch, distilling it with a moderate heat in Balneo, then take the remaining matter, pour upon it so great a quantity of rectified Ardent Water as may rise 3 or 4 fingers above it, and strongly shake the matter together that they may be well united.

Then distill the Spirit in a gentle heat in Balneo, leaving the moist matter in the bottom like mud. That moist matter put in a putrifying heat for six days, then distill the remaining spirit in ashes; then add fresh spirit to the matter in the bottom and lastly put it in a putrifying heat for six days as before, after that distill the animating Spirit in Balneo and repeat the former course, till the Spirit has extracted the soul from the body; which you may judge to be done if you find the earth hard and dry.

Take this earth after you have weighed it, and put it into a fit vessel for digestion or circulation, and add to it the EI~TH PART of the Animated Spirit, and then circulate till you see all the Spirit exhausted by the earth; then open the circulatory vessel, and put in an Almbick, and extract a little quantity of the moisture, which will proceed from it, and have the taste of common water. Then pour in a 7th. part of the animated spirit, and again put on a blind head, and digest as before, till you perceive all the spirit exhausted, then do as before and pour in a 6th. part, then do as before; then a 5th. part; after that a 4th. part; observing the same method till the earthy matter be made white by the Imitations by the Animated Spirit; Then take this white matter or Earth and put it into a fit vessel, which must

be coated as high as the Matter Ascends, and sublime that which rises from the foeces.

This Sublimate is the White Sulphur of Nature, Our SAL ARMONIACK, Our Fair and fat DIANA.

Which if you behold her in her bath, take her and weigh her, and to every pound of her body, take of the Rectified spirit or water of the Bath 3 pounds, and put her in it, that she may sweat in the vaporous bath 24 hours; then distill the humidity in Ashes by a heat like that of the Sun, and weigh the remaining sublimate and add to it 3 parts of the rectified spirit as before and putrify, 24 hours as before in a vaporous bath, repeating the whole a 4th. time as before, in which space of time the whole sublimate will be distilled over, united with the spirit; then take this spirit thus accuated with the Sal Armoniack, and put it in the heat of horse dung or a vaporous bath, at the least 8 or 9 weeks; thus if you perceive in the bottom of the glass a sediment, like the urinous sediment of a sound man, and a liquor in purity like any Crystal, decant diligently, or any other way separate the clean liquor from the sediment; stop it up most accurately, and put it in a cool place.

This is our AQUA VITAE, the Water of Diana, or the Water of Argent Vive by which we thus performe the radical solution of metals especially of gold.

Rx. Good Calx of Gold.

Prepare after Lully's manner and dissolve in this Aqua Vitae; then digest it a little, and after that distill from it the Aqua Vitae, and by repeated affusions of the spirit, digestions, and distillations, make all the gold ascend with the spirit, which is the true AURAE POTABILE; the great medicine for men and metals, which may yet be made a higher medicine by reducing the dissolved gold into a true oil; This you may do by drawing off the dissolvent, till it comes to the consistency of Oil, which is much more precious than pure gold; with this medicine (to say no more of it) the famous Raymond Lully restored a man to his youthfull vigour, when he was decrepid and at deaths door, besides very many autheutic registers, your country man Ripley gives testimony to it.

And so (my most Learned friend) I have shown our fair Diana to you; in her bath, yet so, as becomes a modest philosopher, I have cast a veil upon her least the matter should appear altogether naked; yet in such a manner have I explained it to you that there seems nothing wanting to make you master of our Secret, but the perfect Knowledge and Regiment of our Fire.

Of the Secret Fire of the Philosophers.

This, as it is the highest Mystery of Nature, so it is the greatest Secret of the Philosophers: The fire of the peripatetics is dry; but that of the Hermetic Philosophers is Moist: The common people calcine and burn with a culinary fire, we with a clear and Chrystalline Liquor; for our fire is a sulphureous water, and the spiritual seed of Sulphur, which is in ours more so with the Mercurial Moistness; the matter of our fire, as the kindled oil in the Lamp is the matter of the Light, and by such a matter is Augmented; nothing is so dark and obscure as our fire and nothing is more occult than the manner of ordering and governing it.

Pontanus, after he knew the true matter (as himself confesses) erred above 200 times, before he could perfect the work, because he knew not this fire. The knowledge yet is so necessary, that, when on a Time, a Society of the Sons of Art met together on purpose to debate on the Great Work, so that they should manifest nor every one knew of it; after various opinions were brought forth and conversed among them; the youngest of the Company being asked what he knew of the Mystery, Answered; that he understood the fire and its regiment, whereupon all rose up, and gave him the Preeminency, as the Chief Master of this Secret, and for he can easily perform all things, who knows it, and without its Knowledge nothing can be performed.

Which, seeing it is so, you may reply to me, that I have given you no satisfaction in any time, which hitherto I have written to you.

Yet my dear friend, the things which I have said, do greatly conduce to your desired end; for whosoever is well furnished in other things, and hetherto instructed, is well adapted for the finding out this Secret fire, which he will probably obtain, if only he continues his inquisition, and God vouchsafe to bless him.

I must confess, that hitherto I have writ to little purpose, unless you seem to have known the things before, however it will be a great comfort to you that what I have written may confirm your opinions, and beget a confidence in you, how more like a philosopher, than a Parrot you have written; and therefore they cannot but be an incitement to promote your beginnings, and progress, to which I heartily wish a most happy Event. Because I suppose you to be a man very fit to be made an Adept. And I seriously propose, had I been so fortunate to have had the Liberty granted me by my Patron, which many Adepts have, I would have opened to you the Whole Secret. But (my good friend) Let me use that Liberty of speech as to say that if without the Tremendous Anathema of the Philosophers, I might open to you the great Arcanum, viz. Their Secret Fire, I do a little doubt, whether by this means I might be an instrument of greater solicity to you. It is worthy to be noted, that sentence of a Chief Father of the Church: GOD IN HIS MERCY DENIES MANY THINGS WHICH HE GRANTS IN HIS ANGER.

For very many gifts of the Infinite Diety, are made rather punishments than benefits.

My most worthy friend, I heartily pray that if you go about the great Work and finish it; this may not be prophetic of you, the Circumstances considered which accompany you. Therefore I would admonish you that whosoever God shall make the Master of the Hermetick Wisdom, they would Employ it about Medicine, and Philosophy but not making of Gold.

Our Quinta Essentia.

As it is a great medicine if handled wisely, and will procure you sufficient riches, with security and glory, and in as much as it does exceedingly help in Philosophy, it will fully satisfy the curiosity of your ingenious Mind; whose faculties will be made marveleously clear and more illustrious, by a sagacious use of it. Also the perfect soundness and vigour of your body, will be conserved by which you will partake of so great solicity, as a mortal in this life is capable of.

Truly Sir, the power of this Elixir is so great, when it is raised up to that sublimity to which it may be raised by the Art of Secret Chymistry, and not only in the 3 families of Vegetables, Minerals, and Animals, but in the whole

Kingdom of Nature so wonderfull, that without any consideration of its power to transmute the base metals into gold, it may highly deserve that your panegyrick elegance, which no other Science or Art (as far as I know) doth so well deserve, and will decently bear those rhetorical dresses, which you elegant past hath adorned her with. So that I cannot wonder that so many wise and ingenious men in every age, have laid out such continual study and vast charges for it. Although they could not but have before their eyes, the great difficulty of the thing, and many examples of adverse event:

Neither can I dissaprove of your eager desire of that thing which makes the Adept Philosophers so rich, so great, so good, and so happy. On the Contrary I greatly praise your prudence that you well take care to be instructed how you shall get to the mark before you begin your race. As to the bad qualities of our Mercury. Recieve after this the Rule of Instruction how you may avoid the harms which happen to many in the first preparation of it. Truly they are many, and sometimes very dolefull. As dolours and heaviness of the head. Palsyes, swoonings, loss of the sight and other senses; sometimes cough, violent cattarrhs, physicks (?), ulcers of the lungs, and pains of the limbs, and generally such coagulations of the blood, which necessarily will be the cause of very many diseases, which you can very well reckon up: For although our Mercury may be drawn from things no less familiar, and safer than bread and wine, and after due preparation is a Thing most friendly to our nature and the most wholesome of the whole world, never the less, in its previous preparations it is very nixious, That it is so, I very well know, but for what reason I would have you learn, whose accute ingeniosity, can penetrate the highest depths of nature, and explicate the causes of the most hidden effects. I do the more earnestly desire this instruction of you, for your new and ingenious excogitation of the nature of Salt, I shall be greatly obliged to you if you send me your conceptions on that Argument a little more large: Also of the Nature of blood; the facts which you have already given of these things makes me sure they will be very acceptable to me, and will abundantly satisfy my friends, which are a Society of good Ingeunities, and who have long since conceived a great opinion of you; for an excelling Idea of a most good, most Ingenious and most learned man, as your letters have shewed you to be; which most accurate letters, which the annexed papers truly have so explained the

original of the Universal Mercury, indeed the basis of true Philosophy, and have so well expounded the Conditions requisite in him who would apply himself to this Philosophy, and have given cautions, and directions so sagacious in reading the Philosophic writers, that they may be of great benefit to the Students of this Art; and moreover they vindicate Chemistry in the estimation of men, First by showing that the labour's about it are not irrational; nor the effects accidental, uncertain, and sophistical, but that its operations are exactly conformed to the operations of nature, whose conduct it follows till it finds her languishing and deficient, and then it excels, and goes beyond her.

Secondly; by demonstrating the sublimety of its subject or matter, and proving by evident means and inference, in what, and by what means that matter may be made so transcendently more black and efficacious than other things:

Thirdly; by taking away that Dung of contempt and obloquy which you learn as well as unlearned and malevolent men have cast upon it; which you do excellently perform, by transferring the blame in some physicans, too much disdained and idle (whose ignorance is too ancient and ostentations, too arrogant for them to receive instructions and on others more credulous than as is meet in rash chymists, who at length hated fair Diana they were ambituous of, because she would not admit of their unworthy addresses. Or as some poor smattering and vainly boasting Distiller; for all these have either malignately, or unwittingly contributed to the Infamy of this most excellent and most profitable science in the whole World. But your Epistle as to the notions aforesaid, hath defended her with so clear reason, wit, and so ingenious phantasy and with the structures of all kinds of Learning that I never met with anything among the Chemical writings, that may so allure, and delight the studious Reader; Therefore I do importunately desire that as soon as you can, you will get it printed; as to the Amplification of your thoughts of the Nature of Salt and blood, pray at leasure send it me not with greater haste than your business will admit of.

The Philosophers Parable, or Romance called the Journey of Phalerius to the Mountains of Mercurius, which came to my hands with your most learned Epistle, I read with great delight: It is a most ingenious design, and his

purpose excellently well expressed by you in the following words. For as much as a great part of Mankind are for following the genius of our Age, which admits of no kind of speaking or teaching, but that which tickles your minds and flows and slides with pleasure unto them!

That is the reason why I treat of grave and physical Things according to the mode, that I might the more easily pass acceptance, for serious Things by merry Things, for true Things by feigned Things, and that I might Secretly introduce the Students of Wisdom, unto the more hidden Mysteries of Nature; by known and familiar things, readily insinuating themselves into our senses that so perhaps I may with a certain new Allurement hereafter intice those very men into the Love of Chemistry, and at length bring them unawares to true Philosophy, who do start back at the tittle of this book, as at the sight of an Hobgoblin or ghost, and after the reading of some pages full perhaps of hard crabbed speaking, afterwards reject the whole writing as Inchantments; The Authors name is not to it; but this Period I guess may be attributed to you for all if it does savour of Dickinson; without doubt it will delight and entertain the reader that is given to the Study of Philosophy, and therefore it will attain the same effect (as I believe) on the Candidates of Natural Science, which you Aim at, namely the increase of Chemic and true Philosophy.

But to return to Mercury, from which I have made a long excursion, seeing its first preparation is very obscure, troublesome and dangerous; therefore many of the later Philosophers have applied themselves to other ways of working. Some to the making of Mercury without separation of the Elements; some have prepared this Mercury out of common gold, and common Mercury; of whom also they who know how to putrefy the bodies make a great work, tho' much inferior to those which can be made by our more general Mercury, and of a Sulphur of a certain well chosen Earth.

Common Mercury but pure and Virgin-like, may be animated, that it can readily and radically dissolve gold without any heat, which being so united nothing is wanting but a Philosophical coction, that they may be made an Elixir, and perfect Tincture and our division of the various manners by which the philosophers made the Mercury, yea, if it be understood with some grains of Philosophical Salt (according to our way of speaking) is sufficiently

true; of which the Heavenly manner was used by some more Ancient, and also later, which made it very secure and produced signal effects; yet notwithstanding the ill savour and danger of the Preparation the philosophers generally made their mercuries of a matter of an Airy and Waterish kind; because they, being well instructed by Medea, know the Art of avoid the Callomitjes of the Dragon Mercury, as also because the Elixir made of those matters yields the most powerful and general Medicine for men.

Of the Universal Medicine.

That there is such a Medicine the Adept Philosophers well know by experience therefore they have just cause to assert the verity of it: But wherefore this is accounted possible, and how it produces such general and contrary effects, you have given sagacious and manifest reasons, which become an Accute philosopher, and deserves credit from all Men, but those who will consent to nothing out of the common path of Nature, without a demonstration. Yet this I may freely speak; that although your reasons drawn from the intrinsick nature of the great panacea of the philosophers, most excellently resolves the question, yet there remains an in— trinsick argument taken from the death of the philosophers themselves, wanting our consideration and worthy of an apposite answer.

For the question is, wherefore are not the Ancient and Adept Philosophers yet alive? Strong? Youthfull? And why any Adepts after them have sickened and died, no less untimely than other mortals; if so be they have got a Medicine that can cure all diseases, and keep and restore the hot and radical moisture?

The Answer is not difficult: Because it is certain that God Almighty has prefixed an appointed time, beyond which no Art can extend the age of any Man. Job asserts this truth to you saying in the i4th. Chapter and 5th. V. "His days are determined, the number of his months arein Thy power, thou hast got his bounds, which he cannot pass." So that although that Panacea can conserve health, and youthfull Vigour to the end, yet in the mean time it cannot prolongue the afore appointed end of our days. Neither ought the short life, or sickness of the Adepts to be to the disparagement of this

Medicine, because it is held for certain that many possessors of the Elixir for Metal, were not makers of the Elixir for Medicine; for they are not one and the same thing, at least they are not so Perpetually; besides many who were makers of both Elixirs would make no use of that which was fit for Medicine, not desiring to prolong that life, which detained them from the fruition of a far better; for the full Science of this great Mystery of Nature did imbue them with well wonderful understanding of the Deity, and represents to them so lively an Image of the Eternal life to come, that they cannot in the least doubt of it, for which cause they are induced to live pious lives, and with fervent zeal adore the Creator, and so they desire to be dissolved when so-ever it shall please God, that they may enjoy that beatitude, which is at present to the eyes of their minds, as the face appears in a looking glass; to these things I add, that many Adepts, who in the middle of their age were numbered among the dead, have lived very long after; for they, that they might avoid troubles, and danger which accompany such men, whom others either know or vehemently suspect to be the Possessors of this wonderful Secret, have gone as Strangers out of one Country into another, and changed their names, and so have securely and freely lived to the limit fore appointed by the decree of the Omnipotent God. Therefore to sum up all, those that understood the nature of this Medicine and have made trial of it, and seen its wonderful], effects, cannot deny this Testimony of its Praise, that it hath a natural potency to cure all diseases. And this truly is by much a higher praise than what can justly be ascribed to the best Gallenical remedies; Those triflers which are the cause why so many diseases are esteemed uncurable, and so can know the vigour of languishing bodies.

Lastly that there is a means appointed by God to extend the health and vigour beyond the common custom of Nature, to whom God hath vouchsafed to grant a long series of years. Arterphius, by the help of this Medicine lived more than a thousand years and the Patriarchs of old were very long lived.

Concerning the Long life of the Patriarchs.

Although the Holy Scripture hath hidden in silence the cause of that long life; yet Tradition which flourishes among us hath not been silent of it, and

not only from that, but from Rational Inference we conclude that this great and universal Remedy was the only instrument of their long life and that so great a long life was not common to all before the flood, but only to the Patriarchs, and perhaps a few others: If long life was granted only to the Patriarchs for the sake of Multiplication, that so the World might the sooner be filled with inhabitants, it would seem necessary that others besides the Patriarchs, seeing they were but few, should have been long livers; but that long life was not granted to them for this end is reasonably inferred because each one of them consumed many years, as Adam above a hundred and 80 years before they begot children, whereas before the terme of so many years they might have generated a sufficient number of Children to inhabit many Regions.

Therefore the Providence of God seems for other reasons to have given such long lives to the Patriarchs; First; that they might hereby the better propagate Arts and Sciences, some of which, such as Astronomy, could not be perfected without observations concerning some Centurys of years.

Secondly; that the Creation, the Fall of Man, Gods judgement against him, and the hope of Redemption, might more easily and faithfully be delivered to posterity until Noah, not only by Tradition, which is Liable to Errour and corruption; but by the living voice of him who was an eye and ear witness of things, or by the Testimony and doctrine of some of his sons, who received them immediatly from his mouth, these most probably were the principle causes of the Long Life of the Patriarchs. Wherefore it was not needful that it should be general to all before the flood, when it might suffice if a few sincere, and serious leading men should live so long, who from the very lips of Adam, without the Errors of Tradition might instruct Noah and his Sons; who were to be as well the Teachers, as the Fathers of all the ages after the flood:

Hence it is why I am bold enough to give such credit to our Traditions, as to believe only the Patriarchs, or a few others were so very long lived; But that this long life was procured to them by the benefit of the Great Mystery of Nature, viz, the Universal Medicine, the following reasons seem to confirm the strength of the Witty Argument.

The Patriarchs, those great and Ancient Fathers of the whole World, without doubt very well understood Nature: Therefore it is a reasonable induction that they, at least Adam, who for certainty, perfectly knew Nature, could not be ignorant of the chief part of it, viz, the pure essence from whence every concrete receives its being and operation. From thence the sophists take the Great Medicine and it is very probable that they not only knew the matter of such a purity to exist in the midst of all created things, but also very well knew, with what a wonderful potency it was indued, to conserve life, when it was separated from all Crasistude, and foeculency. Wherefore it is most credible, that the omnipotent God who gave such Virtue to the purest part of matter and which should be able to conserve and restore the Radical principles of Life, and who from the beginning of the world, distributed to us natural benefit, by natural means, vouchsafed to make this pure, and efficacious part of matter a comfortable instrument for the continuance of health and Life by so long a series of years for the end which he has appointed, to wit, that he might prove their natural Science with the complete understanding of the power and effects of this pure matter, and also with the method of making it so wonderfully efficacious.

But we are not to conclude that all the Patriarchs are to be supposed to have an equal knowledge of this matter, or that they did equally alike sublime it, or could sublime it to that highest degree of perfection which it was capable of, and that every one did apply it to the same uses and ends: For Enoch was endued with a most eminent science of this matter, but he made use of it, not so much for making of gold, as the illumination of his intellect, and to make it more capable of supernatural and divine things, and to elevate his cogitations and affections above the fruition of worldly things.

But Cham did chiefly, if not altogether bend the knowledge of this Mystery to gold making, and in that work instructed his children, from whom it is propagated this day in Egypt, Arabia and Lybia.

Enoch in after Ages was known by the Name of Hermes, and was the first of 3 so called, and left some monuments of his Divine Science to posterity. From Cham this Science is so divided and dispersed among the Egyptians that the whole region took its name from him, yea and the Art itself also, which from him is called Chemia, or Chamia; so that the studios of divers

country round about, went to Egypt to be instructed in the Mysteries of this and other Sciences Moses and Soloman obtained this Art from that Nation: Here Orpheus, Eupedocles, Democratus, Osus, Plato, Pythagoras, Hesod, Homer and Osthane the Mede, and Morian the Roman obtained the knowledge of this great Mystery. But this is from my taske, which was to render an Answer by the what means the lives of the Patriarchs were so long continued, which verily I have performed as I was able. And if I have not sent pleary satisfaction to your Chiefest questions, I intreate you of your Candour and charity to believe that this arises either from the defect of knowledge, or want of any Liberty; and you may in no wise doubt, but I am not only a great admirer of yours but also sincerely your most Loving friend, a most humble servent.

Theodorus Mundanus.

Paris the 10 of the Calander of October, 1684.

Liber Nichola Hinckley. 1692.

(British Museum MSS. Slone 3762.)

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