

ALCHEMY AND THE ALCHEMISTS

Giving the Secret of the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Youth, and
the Universal Solvent. Also showing that the TRUE Alchem-
ists did not seek to Transmute base metals into gold,
but sought the Highest Initiation or the Devel-
opment of the Spiritual Nature in Man

"Know Thyself"



Vol. 2

BY

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"Philosophy of Fire," "Ancient Mystic Oriental
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DEDICATION

To all those who are truly interested in the Higher Science and the Search for the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life; to those who have helped me form a Complete Philosophy and especially to one without whose help these Works would not be possible.

PREFACE.

In the volume now before the reader, the original preface to "Remarks upon Alchemy and the Alchemists" is given. As stated in the first volume of the present work, the book was issued in the year 1857, by "E. A. H." It was a volume of some 300 pages of large print. I consider it one of the best works ever issued on the "Philosopher's Stone," "The Elixir of Youth," and "Universal Solvent." In the present work, much material has been sought from nearly every known author or Alchemist of any repute. Some of the quotations are from works which could not be bought at the present time, others which command any price that the owner may ask for them. The present work should, therefore, be almost invaluable to every true seeker after Truth.

The work contains at least four times the matter that the work by "E. A. H." contained, and it is

hoped that all readers will be pleased in the way it is prepared, for while all the original matter is contained in the present work, what is added is done in such a way as to make one harmonious whole, and the added quotations and new matter do not interrupt the original work.

Ethan Allen Hitchcock was a son of Judge Samuel Hitchcock, of Vermont, and the grandson of the celebrated Ethan Allen, whom you will remember, at the beginning of the War of the Revolution, demanded the surrender of Fort Ticonderoga, "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!" General Hitchcock was born in 1798, graduated at West Point in 1817, served with his regiment in the Southern States, where, before he was twenty-one, he became noted for his metaphysical ideas and knowledge of the Platonic philosophy. He became commandant of the cadets at West Point, in 1831. Next, he served with distinction in the Florida and Mexican wars. After the latter, he traveled for two years in Europe, a student, and returned, singularly fitted to communicate the mystical ideas of the Hermetic philosophers, of whose writings he had become the possessor of more than one thousand volumes and pamphlets. He then became the General commanding our troops in California, where he continued from 1851 to 1854, during which time he frustrated attempts designed to separate our newly acquired territory on the Pacific slope from the Union. In consequence of this patriotic conduct he was soon involved in an *unpleasantness* with the Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, which led to his resignation in 1855. After this event he made his home in St. Louis, devoted himself solely to the acquisition of knowledge, and the writing and publishing his philosophical speculations. I pass over these now, soon to return to

them, in order to state, that when the signs of the rebellion began to take form, after the election of Mr. Lincoln, he wielded the ablest pen in the West, publishing his articles in the St. Louis *Republican*, persuading the State of Missouri and the other border States to stand by the flag. In accordance with his noble principles, he was one of the first of the retired officers to volunteer his services to the Union. I shall not detail the facts that led to their tardy acceptance by the government; but, on the tenth of February, 1862, he was commissioned a Major General, and assigned to duty at the war department, where he rendered valuable services. He soon acquired the entire confidence of Mr. Stanton, the sagacious Secretary of War, and a higher place, the *love* of Mr. Lincoln.

General Hitchcock's first publication on what he used to call *The Problem of Life* was "Remarks on Alchemy," published in 1857, showing that the Philosopher's Stone was a symbol.

His second book, published in 1858, was entitled "Swedenborg, a Hermetic Philosopher," in which he proves that that remarkable man who quoted no works of other authors, was a master of all the writings of the Alchemists; and that his method, as far as he had any, was built out of Spinoza.

Next followed, in 1860, two volumes, "Christ the Spirit," being an attempt to state the primitive view of Christianity. He interprets the Gospels so as to present their divine truths as the *Spirit of Christ*, which dwells in all men who are the true sons of God. The spirit of virtue, the spirit of conscience, the spirit of the soul communing with the Infinite, and obedient to *His* will. He makes clear to his readers, that among the Jews at the advent of Christ there was a secret

society called the Essenes,* whose ethical principles and religious observances were essentially the same as those taught in the New Testament—love God, love of virtue, love of man. This sect is often spoken of in the Gospels, there called “the brethren.” He makes it appear probable that the Gospels were the secret books of this society, and he is sustained in his interpretation of them by the writings of the learned Philo the Jew, of Alexandria, who was born twenty years before Jesus, and lived to an extreme age; and by Origen, one of the most learned of the Christian Fathers. I shall recommend this book to all readers by quoting the words of an eminent clergyman, who says of it:

“A sweeter moral atmosphere we never breathed than pervades every paragraph of these two volumes. There is no harshness, there is no intolerance, there is no dogmatism, no assumption of superior wisdom. Its charity is perfect, for there is no air of charitableness about it; it is the good will of an honest, believing and gentle mind. We can scarcely think of a theologian who might not with profit sit at the feet of this brave soldier and listen as he talks of religion.”

Next, in 1863, he published “The Red Book of Appin,” a fairy story. It, with other fairy stories, are interpreted. In it one may learn how to interpret the deepest mystics, and the most imaginative poets.

In 1865, he published “Remarks on the Sonnets of Shakespeare,” which has proven a key for the understanding of that most wonderful work, the puzzle of the scholars and commentators for nearly three centuries, now made as clear as they are beautiful and wise.

*See “The Rosicrucians; their Teachings,” and “Philosophy of Fire.”

The same year he published the poem of Spenser, "Collin Clouts Come Home Againe," explained, to which he happily applies the insight and the learning exhibited in the previous volumes.

And last, in 1866, he published "Notes on the Vita Nuova" of Dante. He proves these three works were written in the Hermetic vein, and by understanding that science we at once see that Beatrice was not a mere woman, but to Dante a celestial vision—Heavenly Wisdom personified.

Now to my work. Our author has proved that *Man* was the *subject* of Alchemy, and that the *object* of the *Art* was the perfection, or at least, the improvement of man. The salvation of man, his transformation from evil to good, or his passage from a state of nature to a state of grace, was symbolized under the figure of the transmutation of metals. The Alchemists all symbolized under words, gold, silver, lead; salt, sulphur, mercury; sol, luna, wine, etc. The various opinions of the writers on the questions of God, nature, and man, all developed from *one* central point, which is *Man*, the image of God. Now if these symbolic works had found no echo in the human heart, they would have perished; but, the fact is, they have been preserved through all past ages, awakening as much interest now in the minds of those who study them as when first published, which proves they have struck a vein of imperishable truth.

The Alchemists were the reformers in the dark ages, when the spirit of religion was buried under forms and ceremonies; when superstition was taught for truth and the hierarchy was armed with civil power and used it to suppress all intellectual freedom. In that midnight of moral and intellectual darkness, it was a light from Heaven; but the truth was treated of in their books as the elixir of life, the universal medi-

cine, the philosopher's stone, only understood by the initiated. The writings of these peculiar thinkers, these spiritually-minded free men, were necessarily written in symbols, to secure them from the persecutions of the hierarchy of the inquisition. Many of the writers were monks. The truth, when it finds a lodgment in the human heart, is predominant. The "still small voice" was their secret. They were the genuinely religious men of their time. Their writings prove that they were students of Plato and Aristotle; also of mathematics and astronomy. It was they who were preparing the world for the discoveries in chemistry, in medicine, and the laws of the natural world, which have been steadily increasing up to this time.*

The true student should bear in mind that the way to the *true* Knowledge, to true Initiation, the finding of the "Philosopher's Stone" and the "Elixir of Youth," is open to-day as never before. There is a Secret School in which these things are thoroughly taught. Not the Mysteries themselves, for these can never be taught, but the *way* to them is taught clearly and practically. It is not an easy work, nor the work of a day, but the work of true Physical, Mental and Spiritual training.

There is also a school of Ceremonial Initiation, in which the Initiation, the same as once given in the Pyramids, is fully and thoroughly taught. The Ancient Mysteries are as clear as day, and within the Archives of this school are found the Secrets of Religions themselves.

With these few remarks, I deem it safe to let the reader read and consider what is before him.

R. SWINBURNE CLYMER.

*Gen. N. B. Buford, in "The Rosicrucian Brotherhood."

PREFACE TO FIRST EDITION.

It may seem superfluous in the author of the following remarks to disclaim the purpose of reviving the study of Alchemy, or the method of teaching adopted by the Alchemists. Alchemical works stand related to moral and intellectual geography, somewhat as the skeletons of the Saurian tribe are related to geology. They are skeletons of thought in past ages.

It is chiefly from this point of view that the writer of the following pages submits his opinions upon Alchemy to the public. He is convinced that the character of the Alchemists, and the object of their study, have been almost universally misconceived; and as a matter of *fact*, though of the past, he thinks it of sufficient importance to take a step in the right direction for developing the true nature of the studies of that extraordinary class of thinkers.

The opinion has become almost universal, that Alchemy was a "pretended science by which gold and silver were to be made by the transmutation of the baser metals into these substances, the agent of the transmutation being called the Philosopher's Stone." Those who professed this *Art* are supposed to have been either imposters, or under a delusion created by imposters and mountebanks. This opinion has found its way into works on Science. It has been stereotyped in biographical dictionaries and in encyclopaedias, large and small; and, in general, allusions to Alchemy and the Alchemists, in histories, romances, and novels, are of but one character, and imply that the professors of the *Art* either deluders or deluded, were guilty of fraud or the victims of it.

It may be a hopeless task to announce a different persuasion with the expectation of superseding this deeply-rooted prejudice; but the author thinks it a duty to declare the opinion he has derived from a

careful reading of many alchemical volumes, and in the work before the reader he has taken for his thesis the proposition that *Man* was the *subject* of Alchemy; and that the *object* of the Art was the perfection, or at least the improvement, of Man.

The salvation of man—his transformation from evil to good, or his passage from a state of nature to a state of grace—was symbolized under the figure of the transmutation of metals. Under this point of view, the works of the Alchemists may be regarded as treatises upon religious education, though they may now only serve to show past opinions upon this important subject.

The writings of the Alchemists are all symbolical; and under the words gold, silver, lead; salt, sulphur, mercury; sol, luna, wine, and a thousand other words and expressions, infinitely varied, may be found the opinions of the several writers upon the great question of God, nature, and man, all brought into or developed from one central point, which is Man, the Image of God.

The author is aware of the latitude of interpretation in which all symbolical writings are exposed, and that it is possible for an undisciplined imagination to make from such writings almost *anything of anything*, and indeed to make almost anything of *nothing*. He needs no schooling on this subject, but feels himself, on the contrary, in a position to justify his warning the readers of all symbolical works, that they cannot be too cautious and guarded against supplying from their own imaginations, interpretations to such works. They should hold themselves absolutely upon the immovable foundation of nature and truth (or nature, as truth) whereby alone they can save themselves from misapprehensions and from the danger of being carried entirely away from reality into mere dreams

and fictions. But with the proper guards, supplied by sound theory and a knowledge of nature, it is extremely interesting, and the author thinks instructive, to interpret by-gone forms of thought, even in alchemical volumes, in which it is quite possible that many precious jewels may be found, though the Philosopher's Stone may be missed.

It would be a useless labor to enter here upon a defense of symbolic writing, when nothing is more certain than that men of genius in all ages, seemingly by a constraint of nature, have fallen into it. That the Sacred Scriptures are full of it must be confessed by all who are not in a condition to read as literal truth the history of Robinson Crusoe and of Gulliver's travels;—not that the author would institute a comparison between these works and the sacred writings. He only means, by a reference to the Revelation, to the story of the man of Uz, to the beautiful parables of the New Testament, etc., to show that teachings by way of similitude, parable, fable, allegory; or, in one word, by symbolism, is as old as writing itself.

While this form of teaching appears naturally to have been adopted by men of genius, from the earliest time, its preservation seems due to a corresponding working in the human mind, to which all symbolism is addressed. It is plain that, if a symbolic work finds no echo in the human heart, it must perish; while, for this very reason, where such works have been preserved through many ages, it affords a fair presumption that their authors have struck a vein of imperishable truth.

This species of writing is also the most innocent in the world; for the reason that, while its literal sense is very frequently no sense at all, and if, therefore, not positively harmless, its hidden sense, as intended by its authors, must be equally harmless; for if the sense

intended does not exist in nature, no counterpart is discoverable, and nothing permanent can come from it; while, if an echo is readily found, the symbolism must be true;—and all truth is valuable.

In the case of the Alchemists, who promised heaps of riches, it is admitted that multitudes of men were deluded by the mere literal reading of their works; or rather, by their own absorbing desire for riches. Some men were said, by the Alchemists, to have had the gold fever, which had darkened their senses. Men wholly bent on worldly treasures were rather the dupes of their own passions than deceived by the writings of Alchemists, more especially since their writings are full of cautions against this very misunderstanding. The riches they promised were “the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God” and “of his grace.” (Rom. xi:33; Ephes. ii:7.)

The Alchemists were *Reformers* in their time, obliged indeed to work in secret, but nevertheless making their impression upon the public. They lived, for the most part, in an age when an open expression of their opinions would have brought them into conflict with the superstition of the time, by which they would have been exposed to the stake;—where, indeed, many of them perished, not having been sufficiently guarded in their language.

They were religious men when the spirit of religion was buried in forms and ceremonies, and when the priesthood had armed itself with civil power to put down all opposition, and suppress all freedom, intellectual, civil, moral, and religious.

In that midnight of moral and intellectual darkness, a light from heaven, as it seemed, was treated of, in books for the initiated, as the Elixir of Life, the Water of Life, the Universal Medicine, and the Philosopher's Stone.

The volumes in which this thought of the time was enshrined were written in symbolic form, to hide the subject from the crowd, not in a condition to profit by it, and to screen the authors from persecution. They are now measurably forgotten, and, the occasion for them having passed away, will never be revived and studied on their own account; but they yet exist for us and for future times as marvelous relics, where may be found abundant evidences that there were "giants in those days," though they made but little show in the world, living, as they did in retirement, upon the "*still small voice*," wherein lay chiefly their so-much-talked-of secret.

In reading their works, with a knowledge of the historical position of the writers, we are strongly reminded of the query of Sir Thomas Browne. "Who knows," says this quaint writer, "whether better men have not been forgotten than stand recorded in the book of time, who nevertheless may be registered in the book of God!"

I have examined a great many alchemical works, at a time of life and under circumstances when the imagination, if it ever deceived me, has "yielded its plumage," and I feel entirely able, as I am certainly willing, to see things as they are. I therefore say, after much study and deliberation, that the works of the *genuine* Alchemists—excluding those of ignorant imitators and mischievous impostors—are essentially religious; and that the best external assistance for their interpretation may be found in a study of the Holy Scriptures, and chiefly in the New Testament,—that "light which was, before the light," being by no means, and on no account, overlooked.

There were no doubt an abundance of impostors who played upon the credulity and supidity of the public, but the genuine Alchemists were religious men,

who passed their time in legitimate pursuits, earning, like St. Paul, an honest subsistence, and in religious contemplations; studying how to realize in themselves the union of the Divine and human nature, manifested in man by an enlightened submission to God's will; and they thought out and published, after a manner of their own, a method of attaining or entering upon this state, as the only rest of the soul.

The following little poem admirably "shadows" the life the Adepts sought to reach:

"There is an isle*

Full, as they say, of good things;—fruit and trees
 And pleasant verdure: a very masterpiece
 Of nature's; where the men immortally
 Live, following all delights and pleasures. There
 Is not, nor ever hath been, Winter's cold
 Or Summer's heat, the season still the same,—
 Our gracious Spring, where all, e'en those worst used
 By fortune, are content. Earth willingly
 Pours out her blessing: the words 'thine' and 'mine'
 Are not known 'mongst them: all is common, free
 From pain and jealous grudging. Reason rules,
 Not fantasy: every one knows well
 What he would ask of others; every one
 What to command; thus every one hath that
 Which he doth ask; what is commanded, does.
 This island hath the name of Fortunate:
 And, as they tell, is governed by a Queen
 Well spoken and discreet, and therewithal
 So beautiful, that, with one single beam
 Of her great beauty, all the country round
 Is rendered shining. When she sees arrive
 (As there are many so exceeding curious

*The "Isle" is *in man*; or man becomes himself, under due discipline, the Isle.

They have no fear of danger 'fore their eyes)
 Those who come sueing to her, and aspire
 After the happiness which she to each
 Doth promise in her city, she doth make
 The strangers come together; and forthwith,
 Ere she consenteth to retain them there,
 Sends for a certain season all to sleep.
 When they have slept so much as there is need,
 Then wake they them again, and summon them
 Into her presence. There avails them not
 Excuse or caution; speech however bland,
 Or importunity of cries. Each bears
 That on his forehead written visibly,
 Whereof he hath been dreaming. They whose dreams
 Have been of birds and hounds, are straight dismissed;
 And at her royal mandate led away,
 To dwell thenceforth with such beasts as these.
 He who hath dreamed of sconces broken, war,
 And turmoil, and sedition, glory won,
 And highest feats achieved, is, in like guise,
 An exile from her court; whilst one whose brow
 Is pale, and dead, and withered, showing care
 Of pelf and riches, she no less denies
 To be his queen and mistress. None, in brief,
 Reserves she of the dreamers in her isle,
 Save him, that, when awakened he returns,
 Betrayeth tokens that of her rare beauty
 His dreams have been. So great delight hath she
 In being and in seeming beautiful,
 Such dreamer is right welcome to her isle.
 All this is held a fable; but who first
 Made and recited it hath, in this fable shadowed a
 truth.''*

**Heriot de Borderie* (sixteenth century), translated by Cary.

“The Philosophers,” says Flammel, “have a garden,* where the sun, as well morning as evening, remains with a most sweet dew, without ceasing, with which it is moistened; whose earth brings forth trees and fruit (used in a figurative sense), which are transplanted thither, where they receive nourishment from the pleasant meadows. And this is done daily. And there they are corroborated and quickened, without ever fading; and this more in one year than in a thousand where the cold affects them.”

Let an idea of the isle, or garden, gleam upon the soul as an attainable object, and the experience of that idea will explain much of the literature of the past ages; especially such poems as the “Romaunt of the Rose,” translated by Chaucer. It may afford a hint in explanation of those *Love Tales*, and abuse of which style of writing brought out Cervantes; and, indeed, the large class of poems, as well as tales (excluding the base imitations, the counterfeit coin), known as the Love-Literature of the Middle Ages, will find their interpretation in that idea, including the Sonnets and the Triumphs of Petrarch, and even the *Divina Commedia* itself.

If to yearn for such a life was folly, and is judged incompatible with the practical demands upon man living under the so-called curse of labor, it was at least an innocent folly, with which the world has never been overburdened; and the few who found, or thought they found, their rest in that Eden, may be pardoned by those who glory in what they call a more enlightened age. Even to seek it had a charm which smoothed the hardest external fate, as undoubtedly it supported many while suffering in the flames lighted

*This garden is *in* the man where Truth ever prevails in prosperity and in adversity.

by the Inquisition.

But (as I have elsewhere said) such a Life is like an Art, which must be sought, if sought at all, for *itself*, and not for its rewards. Admission into the gardens of the Hesperides is accorded only to those whose "dreams" are exclusively upon the "beauty" of the presiding queen; for—and the reader may ponder on this principle—the success is contained in the dream itself, and is developed from it; just as every desire contains an essence of its own; which works itself into manifestation, whether it be good or whether it be evil:—its quality, however, is not to be estimated by what it accomplishes outwardly, but by what it deposits, that is, to use the language of Alchemy, by the *salt* it leaves in the Soul where it originates.

It is proper to add, that my original design in preparing these Remarks was simply to express a mere opinion, and support it by a few citations from works on Alchemy, and I thought a small pamphlet would answer the purpose. I have unexpectedly exceeded the size of a pamphlet, and find it necessary to go to press in a book-form, though I did not aspire to "write a book." Although my appearance must be more formal than I intended, I desire to say that nothing original, as coming from myself, need be looked for in this work. Whatever interest the work may have will be due to the class of men I have written about, who have furnished me materials, and especially with extracts from their own writings, which I have used freely in support of a simple opinion as to their labors and studies.

This opinion, I am very sure, will have some novelty to the present generation, and, if well founded, must have some interest; though it may command itself principally to speculative men who delight in a study, but little regarded in our "practical age." But

neither steam power nor telegraphs, with all their admitted wonders, themselves the product of the human mind, can ever destroy in man the tendency to search into the arcana of his own sublime and all but infinite nature, in whose "heart," as we read in the Holy Scriptures, God hath "set the world."

"E. A. H."

St. Louis, Missouri, January, 1857.

CHAPTER I.

Since my curiosity was awakened on this subject, I have gathered a considerable number of works on Alchemy and Hermetic Philosophy, and I confess I have read them with the best attention in my power, and with a continually increasing interest. If called upon to justify this sort of reading, I might refer to the declaratons of Schelling. After this German philosopher had exhausted all sorts of recognized treatises upon philosophy, he confessed that he found more "fullness and great heart-language" in Jacob Behmen (Boehme), than in all of them put together: and Jacob Behmen (Boehme) was an Alchemist, though very far from among the best of them.

2. No Alchemist supports his views by appeals to authority. He would have every doctrine tested by "the possibility of nature," and repudiates the practice of testing nature by authority. The Alchemist settles no questions by an *ipse dixit*, or "the master has said it." He acknowledges "no master but one;" unless, in the spirit of 1 Cor. xv:27, 28, he would have all things brought to the standard of truth; but truth must be submitted to God, who is All in All—the one

Master.

3. We have endeavored, as the reader will please notice, to point out chiefly *the base*, or introduction to Alchemy; and have not been disposed to say much of *the end* thus far, which, it is easy to see, must be developed in the experience of those who put themselves in a condition for it. If any man would realize the blessings of goodness, he must become good; or if he would enjoy the advantages of truth, he must be true. There is no mystery to this, and yet, this is good Alchemy, so far as it goes.”

“Man begins this work by purifying the desire-nature, and he takes this lower self in hand to purge out of it everything which is personal. How shall he purify himself? He does not want to destroy; for that which he has gathered together is experience, and experience has been built into faculty and transmuted into power, and he now needs all these powers that he has been gathering during the climb that lies below him, and it will not do to destroy all that he has gathered; he wants to take these powers on with him, but to take them purified instead of foul. How then shall he purify them? It would need so much less

patience to kill some of these qualities that he has; he feels as if he could strike at them and slay them, and so be rid of them. But it is not thus that he can enter into the Temple; for he must take there as his sacrifice that has to be offered on the very threshold of the Temple, everything that he has gathered in his past, that he has turned into power and faculty; he must not go in thither empty-handed, he must take with him all that he has gathered in his lower life. So that he dares not destroy; he must perform the harder work of purification; he must keep the essence of all the qualities, while he strikes away from them everything that is personal. All the lessons that he has learnt of virtue and of vice, all these are the experiences that in the pilgrimage behind him he has gathered; he must take the essence of every quality with him, for these are the results of all his climbing; but he must take them as pure gold to the altar, and no dross must be mingled with the gold.

“Let us take one or two of these qualities in order to see clearly what purification means; for if we understand it as to one or two qualities, then at our leisure we can work it out for the rest, and the lesson

is all-important as to how the purification is to be worked.

“Let us take first a mighty force which is in every human being, which he develops in the low stages of his growth, which he carries on with him as he evolves, and which it is now his work to purify. Let us take the quality that in its lowest stage we know as anger, as wrath, as that tremendous power that the man develops, by which he fights his way through the world, by which he struggles, and by which he often times overcomes all opposition: that tremendous energy of the Soul rushing out through the lower nature and breaking a man’s way for him through difficulties in the earlier stages of his growth ere yet he has learned to guide and to control it; an undisciplined energy, destructive because it is undisciplined; a tremendous force, valuable because it is force, although destructive in its workings as we see it in the lower world. The man ere yet he has entered the Outer Court has somewhat changed that energy of the Soul; he has changed it into a virtue, a very real virtue, and he has had this virtue long as his possession in the outside world; then it went by the names (when it had reached the

stage of virtue) of noble indignation, of passion against injustice, of hatred of all that was wrong, and that was base, and that was vile, and that was cruel, and it did good service in the outer world under these many forms of destructive energy. For this man, ere yet he came into the Outer Court, had been working for the world, and had been practicing this virtue; and when he saw the cruelty that was done upon the weak his passion broke forth against it, and when an injustice was wrought by a tyrant then he arose up against it in indignation; he had learned, as he practiced his virtue, to purify it from much of the dross; for the anger that he had in his earlier life was anger for himself—he was wrathful when he was injured, he struck back when some one struck at him; but he had long ago conquered that mere brute wrath in the lower nature which guards itself by destructive energy against a wrong, and pays back evil with evil and hate with hate. He had learned to some extent to transform that energy of anger in him; he had purified it to a great extent from the personal element, and he had learned to be angry less because he himself was injured, than because some one else was wronged; he

had learned to be indignant less because he suffered, than because some one else was put to pain; and when he saw some cruel creature trampling on a helpless one, he sprang forward to rescue that helpless creature and struck at the wrong-doer and cast him to one side; in that way he had used the higher anger to conquer the lower, in that way he had used the nobler passion to slay the more animal passion of his lower life, and he had learned in these lives that now lie far behind him, to get rid so far of the grosser qualities of the passion; he had learned to be no longer angry for himself, but angry only for those whom he desired to help. For he was a man, remember, who had long recognized service as duty, and one of his ways of service was by striking down oppressors and by casting aside those who were inflicting suffering; this anger of his blazed up hotly against all forms of wrong, and he worked for the weaker, and perchance did hero's work in the world.

“The aspirant has now to learn that those who do the wrong are also his brothers, and that they suffer more in their wrong-doing than do their fellow-men by the injury that they may inflict; he has to learn

that this noble indignation of his, and this passion of his against the wrong, and this fire that blazed forth to consume a tyranny that touched not himself, that that is not the characteristic of the Soul that is striving onwards towards the Divine; for the Divine Life loves all the children that *it* sends into the world, no matter what may be their position, nor how low the grade of their evolution. For the Love of the Divine that emanated all has nothing outside Itself. The Life that is Divine is the core of everything that exists, and there is God present in the heart of the evil-doer as well as in the heart of the saint. This must be recognized, no matter how thick are the veils that hide it, for there the eyes of the Spirit are to be opened, and there is no veil between it and the Self of other men; therefore this noble indignation is to be purified until it is purged of everything that is of anger, and is changed into an energy that leaves nothing outside its helpful range; until this great energy of the Soul becomes an energy that is absolutely pure, that goes out to help the tyrant as well as the slave and that embraces within its limit the one who is trampling as well as the one who is trampled; for the Saviours of men

choose not whom They will serve—their service is a service that knows no limitations, and they that are the servants of all hate none within the Universe. That which once was anger has to become by purification, protection for the weak, impersonal opposition to strong evil-doing, perfect justice to all.”*

4. It is contended that the real doctrine of the Alchemists lies within the field of human nature. They find their principles in the common life of man, and acknowledge that “many honest men of good consciences and affections do secretly enjoy this light of God.” The chief peculiarity about it is, that it takes up some of the most universally experienced instincts of man, relating to every-day duties, such as many *honest* men practice unconsciously, and erect them into a doctrine of life, and finds *sanctions* in the reality of the instincts and experiences, without building upon any mere passion whatever.

5. It is admitted, however, that there are references to mysteries in the writings of the Alchemists, about which there is no wish to speak at length. Some of the writers, for example, say that no true philosopher,

*“In the Outer Court,” Annie Beasant.

who knows it, has ever named, or will ever name, what they call the *first matter*,—as if this was not a name!

As to this *first matter*, let us see what A. E. Waite has to say and we will find some light on this important subject. In his "Azoth" we find: "All natures, however diversified, have a common origin; there is but one substance in the universe; the latent powers which assist in any species are the capacities of the *First Matter*; it is impossible to ameliorate or to improve species except by having recourse to the fontal substance and source, whence all multiplication, all generation, all energy of development proceed. By recourse to this storehouse of Universal Potency every species can be ameliorated and developed. Development proceeds under the providence of Nature up to a certain point, beyond which it can be carried by Art, and to the highest point and pitch of this evolutionary Art the Hermetic Adepts apply the name of Alchemy. No recognized Initiate and no intelligent disciple who has followed in the footsteps of a Master has ever attempted to confine the scope of Alchemy to the mere conversion of metals. Paracelsus defines it as artificial generation or production, of what kind soever, and it

includes the education of the potencies in plants, animals and men, as much as the 'augmentation of Sol.' Referring to the transmutation of metals, Alexander Seton testifies that there are 'further and higher secrets.' And Sendivogius, his inheritor, states that 'the Philosophers propounded to themselves that they would make trial of the possibility of Nature in the mineral kingdom; which, being discovered, they saw that there were innumerable other arcana, of which, as of Divine secrets, they wrote sparingly.' It is also in this sense that we must understand the explicit information of Thomas Vaughan, already cited, who assures us that *Chemia* is a narrow name which ought not to be applied to the science, as the latter is ancient and infinite."

5. When I say that *Man* is the *subject* upon which the Alchemists employ themselves, I do not mean to say that the phenomenal Man is what they call *first matter*. This word, I presume, expresses a conception which cannot be put into descriptive language without compromising to some extent the feelings of awe with which the Supreme Being should ever be contemplated, and I am, therefore, disposed to think, on this

account, as well as for some other reasons, that, whether there is or is not a Hermetic Philosophy *by name* still in the world, the Art, or whatever it may be called, will always remain among men. Perhaps the answer to the question, "Tell me thy Name?" (Gen. xxxii:28, 29) will always reduce to silence him who receives it, though this may remain forever the one question which "lies at the bottom of every human heart."

Says Dr. P. B. Randolph, the Rosicrucian, in his "Soul; the Soul World": "All human powers and faculties are latent, until time, circumstances, and discipline brings them out. All human beings are created alike in so far forth as the germinal powers are concerned. All men naturally love sweet sounds, and, if this taste be cultivated at an early day, are capable of musical appreciation, if not of vocal or instrumental execution. The seeds of all unfolding lie *perdu*, or *latent*, in every human being; they are the property of Soul; in Soul-soil they are imbedded, and from that soil they must eventually put forth the shoot, the shrub, the tree, the branch, leaf, blossom, and finally the fruit. Every faculty, strictly human,

belongs to, and is a part of, every member of the species; and that—this fact being admitted, though any given one or more may be manifested most powerfully by some, and not at all by others—all of them are one day to be developed, called out, *unfolded*, in all, is a plain inference; nay, an absolute certainty. The power to see without eyes, demonstrated by scores and hundreds of clairvoyants, is *not* a gift peculiar to a certain man or woman, or a certain order of people. It is a power that can be had for the trying, as any good Magnetist will affirm and prove.”

6. Although it is said that the pure in heart shall see God, there is a sense, no doubt, in which it is true no man can see God and live. There is no one of our senses more adapted to metaphorical use than that of sight; and, assuredly, when men “see into the life of things,” they do not use the outward sense. Two of the greatest poets the world has ever known, who *saw* most clearly into the nature of things, were blind. (They were Clairvoyant.)

7. There may be very good reasons to justify the Hindoos in never pronouncing audibly their Mystic word “Aum” and the same reason explains why they

have no image and pay no worship directly to *Brahm*, though they have altars to Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu, and a multitude of other divinities. We do ourselves wrong, not them, when we fail to recognize the reverence implied in this.

8. The Hermetic Philosophers claim a perfect harmony with each other; but this harmony is confined to a few principles of vital importance in their doctrine. Their philosophy relates almost wholly to a certain *practice*;—possibly a complete application of the notion of duty, as explained theoretically by Kant, writing of his celebrated “categorical imperative,” or “apodictic command” (or law of Conscience);—an unreasoning, though not unreasonable, obedience to an experienced imperious sense of duty, leaving the result to God; and this we are disposed to call *the Way*.

9. Now *the End* must be the fruit of this obedience. The man, by a steady preservation of the inward unity, being prepared alike for all outward events, may finally be the subject of some special experience (called in Scripture a manifestation, Rom. iii:21) by which a seal of confirmation is set upon what at first

was a certain divine trust in the ultimate blessing of rectitude. I suppose it to involve a knowledge of the Unity of God, with a sense of participation in it; for, God being "perfect truth and perfect love," it follows, with some appearance of mathematical certainty, that if a man can enter into a life of truth and love, he really enters into the life of God, and must feel, conversely, that the life of God has entered into him. The lesser magnet becomes perfectly adjusted, and rests in the greater magnet.

11. In this state, men who may never have heard of Alchemy—for a life of truth and goodness depends upon God and not upon books—have written volumes with the title *The Life of God in the Soul of Man*.

12. This may be the union of the human and divine so much insisted upon by both philosophers and divines and be itself the seal of Salvation. Allusions to this state are everywhere met in sacred literature; as an example, we take the following from the Rev. John Norris,—writing about 1690:

"These supposals," saye he, "being premised,—first, that that Truth which is perfective is necessary Truth; then, secondly, that this necessary Truth is the

same with the Divine Ideas; then, thirdly, that the Divine *Nous*, or Eternal Wisdom, is intrinsically with or pre-essential to the Mind; then, fourthly, that we see and understand all things (that we properly understand) in him, and that it is He that enlightens us; and that, lastly, though he enlightens all *fundamentally* and *potentially*, yet this illumination is not reduced into *act*, and made *effectual*, but by the intervention of some condition on our parts, which is duly to consult and apply ourselves to Him:—from these premises, I say, it necessarily and evidently follows, that the right and only method of inquiry after the Truth which is perfective, is to consult the Divine *Nous*, or Eternal Wisdom. For this is the region of Truth, and here are hid all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.

“This is that great and universal *Oracle* lodged in every man’s *breast*, whereof the ancient Urim and Thummim* was an expressive type and symbol. This is *reason*; this is *conscience*; this is *truth*; this is that Light *within*, so darkly talked of by some who have, by

*It would be of great value for every true Mason to look into the meaning of these two words. There is great Wisdom in them.

their awkward, untoward, and unskilled way of representing it, discredited one of the noblest theories in the world. But the thing in itself, rightly understood, is true; and if any man shall yet call it Quakerism or Enthusiasm, I shall only make this reply at present, that it is such Quakerism as makes a good part of St. John's Gospel and of St. Augustine's works. But to return; this, I say, is that *Divine Oracle* which we all may and must consult, if we would enrich our minds with Truth,—that Truth which is perfective of the understanding. And this is the method of being truly wise. And this method is no other than what is advised us by the *Divine Nous*, the substantial wisdom of God (Prov. viii:34): 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors;' and again, says the same substantial wisdom (ch. ix:4): 'Whoso is simple (honest), let him turn in hither;' and again (John viii:12): 'I am the light of the world; he that follows me' (or, as the word more properly signifies, he that consorts or keeps company with me) 'walketh not in darkness.'

“This, therefore, is the *via intelligentiae*, the way and method of true knowledge,—to apply ourselves to

the Divine *Nous*, the eternal wisdom of God,"—which Dr. Norris had just expressed by the word *conscience*.

13. This is good Alchemy, without the name. The application only requires that it shall be complete, thorough, and entire, for its practice requires "the whole man."

14. When I turned to this passage, I did not perceive at first that Dr. Norris had spoken of the conscience* as *the Way*,—answering to the view I have been endeavoring to present.

15. The Rev. Dr. Norris, it is true, raised a storm around his ears by his tendency to Platonism and Quakerism, though he thought it good St. Johnism. Some one took the pains to write a book to ridicule his views of the "Ideal and intelligible world," and he was called, as usual in such cases, a *Mystic*. Men who live principally in the sensuous world can never forgive those who take the hint from the melting of a piece of ice, and think it possible that

*In the "Secret Occult Schools" we have what is known as the "Beautiful Philosophy of Initiation" which gives complete instructions and the "Law." Those truly interested should take up the Life Training and obtain same.

“The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve—
And leave not a rack behind,”

and then, by devout contemplation, reach a conviction that, notwithstanding the perishable nature of all outward existences, there is an invisible, imperishable reality, “prepared from the foundation of the world,” for those who properly prepare themselves for it; and that this is the only *real* reality in existence.

“Learn from *within* thyself to know whatsoever is in Heaven and on Earth, that thou mayst be made wise in all things. Thou seest not that Heaven and the elements were once but *one* substance, and were separated one from another by Divine skill to accomplish the generation of thyself and *all* that is. Didst thou know this the rest could not escape thee, else art thou devoid of all capacity. Again, in every generation such a separation is necessary as I have already told thee must thou make before setting still in the study of the *true* philosophy. Never wilt thou extract the one thing which thou desirest out of the many which are round thee till from thyself be extracted that one thing which I have proclaimed to thee.

For such is the will of God, that the devout should perform the devout work which they desire, and the perfect accomplish another on which they have been bent. To men of bad will shall there be no harvest other than they have sown; furthermore, on account of their malice, their good seed shall very often be^e changed into cockle. Perform then the work which thou seekest in such a manner that, so far as may be in thy power thou mayst escape a like misfortune." This is now the true, essential mystery or *regeneration*, or the Spiritual life. This is, and ever was, the only scope and upshot of Magic. But, for your further instruction, ruminatè this his other mystical speech. "Rouse up now, therefore, my Soul, and body also; rise now, follow the flight of your Spirit. Let us go up into that high mountain over against us, from whose pinnacle I will show you that two-fold road which Pythagoras spoke of in cloud and darkness. Our eyes are opened, now shineth forth the Sun of Holiness and Justice, guided by which we cannot possibly turn aside from the way of truth. Turn first thine eyes to the right path, lest they behold vanity before they distinguish wisdom. See you not that

splendid and impregnable tower? Therein is the philosophical love from whose fount floweth living water, and he who once drinks of it shall never more thirst after vanity. From that pleasant and delightful place there is a plain path to that more delightful yet, wherein the Divine Sophia tarries, from whose fount leap waters far more blessed than the first, and which they who give to an enemy, he is forthwith forced to grant them peace. Most of those who go there direct their course still higher, but not all can accomplish their desire. There is another place which mortals may scarcely attain, unless they are received by the Divine Numen into the plane of Immortality, and before they are introduced, they are constrained to put off the world, being weighted by the garments of perishable life. In those who attain it there is no longer any fear of death, much rather do they from day to day welcome it with more favor because they judge that whatsoever is in nature is worthy of their embrace. Whatsoever doth progress beyond these three planes vanishes from the eye of men. If so be that it be granted us to go beyond the second and the third places, let us ascend higher. So, beyond the first

chrySTALLINE arch, ye behold a second of silver, beyond which there is a third of adamant, but the fourth falls not within sense till the third be passed under. This is the golden region of undying felicity, void of care and filled wholly with perpetual joy.”*

15. But to return to the Philosophers themselves:— although they lean upon the conscience as *the Way*, or as the “base” of the work, they rely chiefly upon *Love* as working the greatest of wonders, that of a transformation of the *subject* of it into the *object loved*. We may occasionally meet with detached passages where special opinions are expressed without a systematic purpose, which, nevertheless, may easily be adjusted to the more elaborately stated doctrine under figures and allegories. One of these I find in these words:

“I find the nature of Divine Love to be a perfect unity and simplicity. There is nothing more one, undivided, simple, pure, unmixed, and un compounded, than Love. *You will ask, how this can be proved? Very well; for this Love is God himself (1 John iv:8). Now there is nothing more essential to God than Unity*

*Magical Writings, Thomas Vaughan

and Simplicity; nothing more contrary to the Divine Nature than duality, division, or composition. Besides, it is this Love which gives unity and harmony to all things. There is no unity in Heaven, nor on Earth, but what is derived from Love, and must acknowledge Him for its author. And do you think that Love can want that unity which it gives to all others? No, certainly not; rather conclude, that that which makes all things one, which harmonizeth and agrees the most different and discordant natures, must needs be unity itself.

“In the second place, I find Love to be the most perfect and absolute liberty. Nothing can move Love, but Love; nothing touch Love, but Love; nor nothing constrain Love, but Love. It is free from all things; itself only gives laws to itself, and those laws are the laws of Liberty; for nothing acts more freely than Love, because it always acts from itself, and is moved by itself; by which prerogatives Love shows itself allied to the Divine Nature, yea, to be God himself.

“Thirdly, Love is all strength and power. Make a diligent search through Heaven and Earth, and you will find nothing so powerful as Love. What is

stronger than Hell and Death? Yet Love is the triumphant conqueror of both. What more formidable than the wrath of God? Yet Love overcomes it, and dissolves and changes it into itself. In a word, nothing can withstand the prevailing strength of Love: it is the strength of Mount Zion, which can never be moved.

“In the fourth place: Love is of a transmuting and transforming nature. The great effect of Love is to turn all things into its own nature, which is all goodness, sweetness and perfection. This is that Divine power which turns water into wine; sorrow and anguish into exulting and triumphant joy; and curses into blessings. Where it meets with a barren and healthy desert, it *transmutes* it into a paradise of delights; yea, it changeth evil into good, and all imperfection into perfection. It restores that which is fallen and degenerated to its primary beauty, excellence, and perfection. It is the *Divine Stone, the White Stone with the name written upon it, which no one knows but he that hath it*. In a word, it is the Divine Nature, it is God himself, whose essential property it is to assimilate all things with himself; or (if you will have it in the Scripture phrase) *to reconcile all things to him-*

self, whether they be in Heaven or in Earth; and all by means of this Divine Elixir, whose transformation power and efficiency nothing can withstand."

Says Dr. P. B. Randolph, in "Eulis": "No wicked person can truly love and remain wicked. This is the redemptive, salvatory and *alchemical* power of the Divine Principle! True-heartedness is the Corrective agency of the great human world and human Soul. Without it we are ships on the stormy deep, with a wild rush of angry waters threatening to submerge us at any instant! With it, we are life-boated into fair havens and secure anchorage! With it, we arise into bliss and blessedness; without it, misery is our lot; for it is the telegraphic System wherewith God engirdles the worlds! From Him it goes; to Him it returns, bringing up from the deeps the poor forlorn ones it finds there and stringing them like beads to hang around the neck of the ineffable and viewless Lord of infinite and superlative glory!"

In reading such passages, written by Alchemists, a reader of Alchemical books readily thinks of the language employed upon a certain *Mercury* extracted from *Saturn* (or Antimony, etc.), in which is sown a

certain *philosophical gold*, and may conclude, that, while the first withdraws the subject of it from the entanglements of a merely worldly life, the second is the Divine Love engrafted upon it which binds the soul eternally to God.

“While this love exists as an *affection* it may be what is called “our” Luna, and the “White” state of the Stone; for the Stone is Man. The course of nature seems to be relied upon as sufficient to carry the subject of this affection to a more or less distinct consciousness of the Unity of all things, which, becoming an intellectual conviction, may be called *Sol*, or the *Red State* of the Stone.

16. All of the writers speak of three principal *colors* in the Stone, Black, White, and Red. If the white and red states be supposed hinted at above, the Black state is a certain *humility*, which Pontanus calls a *philosophical contrition*; not necessarily supposing actual guilt, but rather a sense of that purity in the presence of which angels are said to veil their faces as unworthy to look upon it. It may be found very accurately described in Goethe’s “*Confessions of a Fair Saint.*”

17. As an intellectual result, there seems nothing more insisted upon in Alchemical books than the Unity; yet all Alchemists insist also upon a Trinity. In the Microcosm it may be considered as imaged by the Body, Soul, and Spirit. It may somewhat illustrate the subject, so far as man represents it, to refer to the common language by which man says, *I have a Body*; and again, *I have a Soul*; in which double expressions the I may stand for the Unity of the other two; but the expression ought to be,—*I am a Body*, and *I am a Soul*; and, lastly, *I am a Spirit*.

18. Some of the writers might possibly lead their readers to such notions as may be expressed by speaking first of God as Self-existence; then of God regarded as *Active* (cause), and then of God as *Passive* (effect); and finally to conceive these three in, or as One; for while a cause implies necessarily an effect, an effect no less implies a cause; while both cause and effect imply necessary existence.”

Regarding the existence of the Universe and concerning the Creator, Timaios, a philosopher of the time of Plato, has this to say: “Let us ask,” says he, “through what cause the Creator has established ex-

istence and this universe. He was good, and in goodness no ill-will is engendered toward any being whatever. Being without this disposition, he wills that every being whatever shall become to the highest degree like himself. Any individual who shall receive this from intelligent men as the supreme origin of existence and the world, will receive the most correct theory. For the Deity having willed that every one shall be good, as far as it is in their power, and nothing evil, he took whatever was visible and not in repose, but moving violently and disorderly, brought it from disorder into order, regarding this condition as absolutely superior to the other.

“It never was lawful, and it is not, to do anything whatever except what is in the very highest degree worthy and honorable. Having considered the subject, he found that of the things that were naturally visible nothing that is destitute of mind is ever superior to a being that is completely endowed with mind; and besides, that it is impossible for mind to be present, separate from Soul. Hence in pursuance of this reasoning, placing the mind *in* a Soul, and the Soul in a body, he made the Universe, thus bringing to

perfection a work which should be in its nature the most beautiful and the best. So, therefore, we may justly with reasonableness speak of this cosmic world as a *living* being ensouled and endowed with mind, that in very truth has its existence through the forethought of the Divinity.

“This having been accomplished,” he remarks, “it is incumbent upon us to explain these things one after another in regard to how the Creator established it in a form and manner similar to animate beings. We are not to think, therefore, that it would be after the ideal of those that exist as incomplete, for nothing like an incomplete formation can possibly be beautiful. We may consider it as including the various animals, both as one and as in kinds, as parts of the whole. For it comprehends in itself all living things possessing mind, in like manner as this cosmic world contains us and the other creatures that we behold. For the Deity purposing that it should be like the most beautiful and entirely perfect of mental essences, formed one living being perceptible to sight, having *inside* of *itself* all the animate beings of whatever kind which

are akin to it naturally.”*

19. A good deal is said of a certain (which many may think means a very uncertain) *middle* substance,—“which is to be taken,” say some of the writers. This expression implies a Trinity, for there can be no middle without extremes; and so, again, there can be no extremes without a middle, and no one extreme without another. This is illustrated in Plato’s *Statesman*, under the words moderation, excess, and deficiency, where *moderation* is treated as the regulating, self-balancing *permanent* in the ever-variable extremes. It may be regarded as the scientific view of the celebrated poetic *in media*, etc., where alone is found what a modern writer has very happily called the *animated repose* of nature.

20. Whatever be the mode of it, the Hermetic writers all indicate some doctrine of the Trinity, yet on no account is this suffered to veil the Unity. They sometimes speak of three inseparable or co-existing *principles*, and say that either one of the three may be conceived as *the base* of the other two, which then,

*“*Timaius*,” translation by Alexander Wilder, M.D.

relatively only, are regarded as "Superficial," as, the notion of Father implies that of Son; but the idea of the Son no less posits that of the Father; while the two presuppose a nature common to both.

21. In a somewhat similar manner, an essence supposes existence, while existence supposes essence. "One is not without the other," says Swedenborg; whence, though the language may seem unusual at first, it might be said that *God is the essence of Nature, while Nature is the existence of God; and yet both are inseparable in unity.*

22. And here, if it should be asked what is the *nature* of God, the answer might be, it is nature itself; for nature is not the nature of anything but of God, whose essence is nevertheless invisible, while his existence is altogether and absolutely undeniable.

23. In a somewhat similar manner, every *subject* in nature may be regarded as a twofold point of view; as it is in its principles (substantially) and as it is in manifestation (phenominally). Thin Water, Air, Light, etc., are variable, fluctuating things, phenominally considered; but the science of hydrostatics, pneumatics, and optics, drawn from these *subjects*,

express the unchangeable laws according to which the phenomena takes place; yet the permanent and the transient are inseparable in all of them; and if the whole of nature be considered as one *subject*, it may be conceived, from this view, as permanent in its laws, that is, in its science; but variable, phenomenally, to the senses: but the two are inseparable, and in the expressions, one nature, one science, and one manifestation, we find a Trinity.

24. In the view expressed by Swedenborg may be seen something similar, for he says that there is a Trinity in all things, which he calls *end*, *cause* and *effect*; saying that the effect is a manifestation (called by Von Helmont an out-birth) of the *end*, as existing in the Idea of God, the Unity and *Cause* of all. Each of these ideas is correlative, and supposes the other two; hence it would seem to be impossible for man to deny either the Unity or the Trinity, a right conception of which may be the most important idea a philosopher can reach; though in its attainment he may be compelled to undergo a complete revolution of ordinarily received educational notions usually laid upon the sensuous organism, without penetrating, in-

deed, to any great depth.

25. In this view, every discovery is science—for science is a discovery, and not an invention—is an entrance into a knowledge of God's essence by means of which man enters upon the control of nature; for nature is subjected to man's control only by a knowledge of its unchangeable principles or Laws, by means of which (and of his submission to the laws) nature becomes obedient in the art of man; which nevertheless is subordinate to nature, contrary to which, art can accomplish nothing.

26. This is the sense of Lord Bacon,—Sir Francis and not the Friar,—where he says: “Man, as a minister and interpreter of Nature, does and understands as much as his observations on the *order of Nature*, either with regard to things or the *mind*, permit him; and neither knows nor is capable of more.”

27. One of the Alchemical volumes defines *Art* as *Nature working through man*; and we read in Shakespeare:

“*Perdita*. ‘I have heard it said

There is an art, which, in their piedness, shares

With great creating Nature.’
 “*Polixeness*. ‘Say, there be;
 Yet nature is made better by no *mean*,
 But nature makes that *mean*: so, o’er that art,
 Which, you say, adds to nature, is an art
 That nature makes. You see, sweet maid we marry
 A gentler scion to the wildest stock;
 And make conceive a bark of baser kind
 By bud of nobler race. This is an art
 Which does mend nature,—change it rather; but
The art itself is nature.’ ”

28. We repeat, that a notion of the Unity, in some sense, is important with the Alchemists, a number of whom endeavor to indicate a method of arriving at a knowledge of it. It seems, with them, the principle of what they call the “fixation” of the matter of the Stone; for no man can attain to a unity in himself while drawn in opposite directions by principles out of harmony with each other. “No man can serve two masters.” But in the process of this knowledge the reader must see that a principle of self-negation, or self-denial, is involved, yet in such a way that the subject of the new light enters into a higher knowledge.

29. If now, *Love* be a prevailing cause in bringing about this unity in man, both with himself and with

God,—and one cannot be without the other; and if this be the “philosophic gold” we read of in books of Hermetic Philosophy; and if this Love cannot take root except in a conscience purged of all “superfluities,” and yet is something common, or possible, to all men; and if this *purgation* is not genuine except it arises in the subject as proper to it, in order to a preservation and not a destruction of the specific nature of the subject,—then, we may catch a glimpse of what may be called a theory for the explanation of Alchemic books, and may form some remote opinion of the so earnestly sought Philosopher’s Stone, before which all contradictions in life disappear.

30. Here are the waters of Zemzum; this is the Great Elixir, and this Universal Medicine: yet the student of this Divine Science, as the writers call it, are now universally regarded as having devoted their lives to the perishable treasures of the world. That they have brought this reputation upon themselves, by their mystical and symbolical language, is very certain; yet, however much they might have been mistaken, there seems no reason now, in this “enlightened age,” why some attempt should not be made to show

them as they were, in pursuit of the one thing needful, be it what it may."

So much has been thought of *Love* as the *way* and the *key*, that in the Eleusian Initiation or Mysteries, they had the Invocation of Love:

TO LOVE.

"I call, great Love, the source of sweet delight,
 Holy and pure, charming to the sight;
 Darting, and winged, impetuous, fierce desire,
 With Gods and mortals playing, wandering fire:
 Agile and twofold, *keeper of the keys*
 Of Heaven and Earth, the Air, and spreading seas;
 Of all that Ceres' fertile realms contains,
 By which th' all parent Goddess life sustains,
 Or dismal Tartarys is doomed to keep,
 Widely extended, or the sounding deep;
 For thee all Nature's various realms obey,
 Who rulest alone, with universal sway,
 Come, blessed *power, regard these mystic fires*
 And far avert *unlawful mad desires.*"

"The following development of the Nature of the Divinity Love is extracted from the admirable Commentary of Proclus on the First Alcibiades of Plato, as illustrative of the Orphic dogmas respecting this God. Love is neither to be placed in the first nor among the last of beings. Not in the first, because the object of Love is superior to Love; not yet among the last, because the lover participates of Love. It is requisite,

therefore, that Love should be established between the object of Love and the Lover, and that it should be posterior to the beautiful, but prior to every nature endued with Love. Where, then, does it first subsist? How does it extend itself through the Universe, and with what monads does it leap forth?

“There are three hypostases among the intelligible and Occult Gods; and the first, indeed, is characterized by *the good*, understanding *the good itself*, and residing in that place where, according to the (Chaldean) Oracle, the paternal monad abides; but the second is characterized by *wisdom*, where the first intelligence flourishes; and the third by *the beautiful*, where, as Timaeus says, the most beautiful of intelligibles abides. But there are three monads according to these intelligible causes, subsisting uniformly according to cause in intelligibles, but first unfolding themselves into light in the Ineffable Order of the Gods, (i. e., in the summit of that order which is called intelligible, and at the same time intellectual,) I mean *Faith, Truth, and Love*. And faith, indeed, establishes all things in good; but *truth unfolds* all the knowledge in beings; and lastly, *Love converts* all things, and

congregates them into the nature of the beautiful. This triad thence proceeds through all the orders of the Gods, and imparts to all things by its light a union with the intelligible itself. It also unfolds itself differently in different orders, every where combining its powers with the peculiarities of the Gods. And among some it subsists ineffably, incomprehensibly, and with transcendent union; but among others, as the cause of connecting and binding; and among others, as endued with a perfective and forming power. Here again, it subsists intellectually and paternally; there, in a manner entirely motive, vivific and effective; here, as governing and assimilating; there, in a liberated and undefiled manner; and elsewhere, according to a multiplied and divided mode. Love, therefore, supernally descends from intelligibles to mundane concerns calling all things *upwards* to Divine Beauty. Truth, also, proceeds through *all* things, illuminating all things with knowledge. And lastly, faith proceeds through the Universe, establishing all things with transcendent union in good. Hence the (Chaldean) Oracles assert, 'that all things are governed by and abide in these.' And, on this account, they order

Theurgists to conjoin themselves to divinity through this Triad. Intelligibles themselves, indeed, do not require the amatory medium, on account of their ineffable union. But where there is a union and separation of beings, there also Love abides. For it is the *binder* and conciliator of natures posterior and prior to itself; by the converter of subsequent to prior, and the *elevating* and *perfecting* cause of imperfect causes.

“The (Chaldean) Oracles, therefore, speak of Love as binding, and residing in *all* things; and hence, if it connects all things, it also copulates us with the governments of daemons. But Diotima calls Love a *great daemon*, because it everywhere fills up the medium between desiring and desirable natures. And, indeed, that which is the object of Love vindicates to itself the first order; but that which loves is in the third order from the beloved object. Lastly, Love usurps a middle situation between each congregating and collecting together that which desires and that which is desired, and filling subordinate from superior natures. But among the intelligible and occult Gods, it unites intelligible intellect to the first and secret beauty, by a certain life better than intelligence.

Hence (Orpheus) the theologist of the Greeks calls this Love *blind*; for he says of intelligible intellect:

“In his breast feeding *eyeless*, rapid Love.”

But in natures posterior to intelligibles, it imparts by *illumination* an indissoluble bond to all things perfected by itself: for a bond is a certain union, but accompanied by much separation. On this account the (Chaldean) Oracles are accustomed to call the fire of this Love *a copulator*: for proceeding from intelligible intellect, it binds all following natures with each other, and with itself. Hence it conjoins all the Gods with intelligible beauty, and daemons with Gods; but it conjoins us with both Gods and daemons. In the Gods, indeed, it has a primary subsistence; in daemons a secondary one; and in partial souls a subsistence through a certain third procession from principles. Again, in the Gods it subsists above essence: for every genus of Gods is super-essential. But in daemons it subsists according to essence: and in souls according to Illumination. And this triple order appears similar to the triple power of intellect. For one intellect subsists as imparticipable, being exempt from all partial genera; but another as participated of which also the

souls of the Gods participate as of a better nature; and another is from this ingenerated in souls, and which is, indeed, their perfection.”*

Paracelsus, the greatest of all Alchemists, tells us that: “We should know who and what God is, but we can learn to know God only by becoming wise. The works of God will become manifest to us through Wisdom, and God will be most pleased if we become like him. But to become like God we must become attracted to God, who is the universal fountain of all; *and the power that attracts us is Love.* The Love to God will be kindled in our hearts by an ardent love for humanity, and a love for humanity will be caused by a love to God. Thus the God of the Macrocosm and the God of the Microcosm act upon each other, and both are one, for there is only one God and one Law and one Nature, through which Wisdom becomes manifest.

“There is an earthly sun, which is the cause of all heat, and all who are able to see may see the sun; and those who are blind and cannot see him may feel his heat. There is an eternal Sun, which is the source of all Wisdom, and those whose Spiritual senses have

*“Mystical Hymns of Orpheus,” Thomas Taylor.

awakened to life will see that Sun, and be conscious of His existence; but those who have not attained Spiritual Consciousness may yet feel His power by an *inner* faculty which is called Intuition. Animal reason is active in the animal soul, and angelic wisdom in the Spiritual Soul. The former sees by the light of Nature, which is produced by a reflection of the rays of the Divine Light acting in Nature; but the light of the spirit is not a product of Nature, but the supreme cause of all which in Nature becomes manifest. Nature does not produce a sage; she merely furnishes a natural form for the sage. Nature is not perfect, but produces cripples and diseases, abnormalities and monstrosities, the blind and the lame; but that which comes from God is perfect. It is a germ which is planted into the Soul of man and man is the gardner and cultivator (the Alchemist), whose business it is to surround it with the elements necessary for its growth, so that when the earthly tabernacle is broken, the spirit, attracted by His love, His eternal home, may return to it, having grown in knowledge, being clothed in purity and illuminated by wisdom.

“Spirit passes into the body, and out of it, like a

breath of air passing through the strings of an Aeolian harp. If we succeed in binding it here, we will create a source of undying Harmony, and create an Immortal being. But to bind spirit we must be able to bind thought. Man is a materialized thought; he is what he thinks. To change his nature from the mortal to the Immortal state he must *change his mode of thinking*; he must cease to hold fast in his thoughts to that which is illusory and perishing, and hold on to that which is eternal. The visible universe is a thought of the eternal mind thrown into objectivity by its will, and crystallized into matter by its powers. Look at the everlasting stars, look at the indestructible mountain-peaks. They are the thoughts of the Universal mind, and they will remain as long as the thoughts of that mind do not change. If we could hold on to a thought, we would be able to create. But who but the enlightened can hold on to a thought? Are not the illusions of the senses continually destroying that which we attempt to create? Men do not think what they choose but that which comes into their minds. If they could control the action of their minds, they would be able to control their *own natures*

and the nature by which their forms are surrounded."*

"Thought is the Basis of Life. Thought clothed in the atom attracts to itself, as a Magnet (by that law of affinity called in the natural world gravitation, in the Spiritual, *love*) elements that correspond to itself. These atoms, drawn together, form the molecule, an aggregation of which builds the cell; the cells grouping around the mental image, till lo! the form is materialized, and a statue of flesh and blood, throbbing with life, appears. 'The Thinker' has sculptured the statue after his own 'image and likeness,' galvanized it into life, and in his own work the artist stands revealed. This is the Temple in which 'neither hammer, nor ax, nor any tool of iron' was heard during its building.

"That which animates and governs the body, absolutely, is thought. In order then to keep the physical frame healthy, the thought currents reflected upon the molecules composing it must be pure; free from discord and disease.

"The Universal Mind, before referred to as the true

*Hartmann, "Paracelsus."

and only source of Life, is pure and perfect, enduring and beautiful, the principle of principles, the Truth of truths, the Law of laws, the Life of lives, and he who has awakened to the Consciousness of being in harmony with this *principle*, one with this *Mind*, merged in this *Eternal Source* possesses the *Philosopher's Stone*—the true *Elixir of Life*. Such a one is in the highest sense of the term an Alchemist, knowing how to *transmute* the baser metals of the 'animal nature into pure nature of Spirit.' '*

In this we have the secret of the Philosopher's Stone, but it is not such an easy matter to become the Alchemist. Training is necessary, and the fountain from which we drink, in all our acts, must be from the Fountain of Love. God is Love, as is all Life, and I doubt much whether the selfish man can accomplish anything, for the very reason that selfishness kills all the good that is in man, and it sours the very life of man. God is Love, and only in Love can we find either God or Life:

“God's nature is *pure love*, He cannot help but love,
And if thou wilt be God, thou must do naught but love.

*“Vita.”

"There is no name that would express our God,
 Yet Love His name may be, So great is Love.
 "Love is a flood and glow; if thou feel it *within*
 It quenches God's wrath and burns away all sin.
 "The nature of Holiness is pure love, therefore, oh
 Christian man,
 The purer thou canst love, the holier art thou.
 "Hope ceases and faith becometh sight, Speaking
 with tongue is not, and all
 We build is passing with its time;
 But love alone remains—so let us practice Love.
 "All beauty comes from love; even God's own face
 doth owe its loveliness to love or else it could not shine
 nor show its grace.
 "The measure of happiness is measured thee by love;
 The fuller thou of love, the happier thou'lt prove.
 "That which thou lovest, man, in *that* will be thy birth.
 Love God, thou wilt be God; love earth, thou wilt be
 earth.
 "Love's like unto a magnet it draws me up to God;
 And what is greater still, it draws God down to earth.
 "Love is the quickest thing, unaided and alone;
 Instanter it can be before the Eternal throne."*

31. I would be thought strenuous in setting forth what I call *the way* to the Philosopher's Stone, and yet there is not wanting a variety in the modes adopted for carrying the student to a comprehension of the Mysteries about which the writers employ themselves.

32. Eyræneus Philalethes sometimes called Cosmopolita, for he wrote under both names, in one place,

*"Pearls of Wisdom," Conrad Fuhrer.

seems to point very plainly to the two processes, *analysis* and *synthesis*, both of which have one end, To seek the Unity through Sol, may be to employ the intellect upon the *idea* of the Unity, but analysis to terminate in the parts; whereas to study upon Mercury, here used for nature at large, is to work synthetically, and, by combining the parts, reach an idea of the Unity. The two lead theoretically to the same thing, beginning as it were from opposite extremes; for the analysis of any one thing, completely made, must terminate in the parts; while the parts, upon a synthetical reconstruction, must reproduce the Unity. One of the two ways indicated by Eyræneus is spoken of as a Herculean labor, which must be the second, the reconstruction of the unity by a recombination of the parts; which, in respect to nature, is undoubtedly a Herculean, not to say an impossible undertaking. The more hopeful method is by meditation under the preparations pointed out so earnestly by Basil Valentine.

33. Some of the writers tell us to put "one of the Bodies into the Alembic," that is,—for this is what is meant,—take the Soul into the thought or study, and apply the *fire* (of intellect) to it until it "comes over"

into spirit. Then "putting this by for use," put in "the other Body," which is to be subjected to a similar trial until it "comes over" also; after which the two may be united, being found essentially or substantially the same. Such experiments are not intended for novices.

34. Others point out some sort of affinity between the Spirit and the Soul, and then undertake to show a similar affinity between the Soul and the Body, and thus carry the mind (?) to a recognition, in some way, of a mutual and inseparable interdependence of all upon all. But this is all done in figures and symbols, being a work of meditation.

35. This may seem a very strange mode of dealing with metaphysical questions, but no one will ever know anything of the import of the books of Hermetic Philosophy who shuts his mind to it, and persists in the vulgar opinion that the Alchemists were in pursuit of Gold.

36. Whoever examines the "Six Keys," published at the end of the Hermetic Triumph (an excellent work, by the way), may discover that the *third key* is the explanation of the Unity; but, of course, in the

usual veiled language. An every-day reader, or one who reads for amusement, would not gather a single idea from the perusal of these "Six Keys;" but a student "germane to the matter," after repeated perusals, in connection with other books treating of the same subject, may at least discover enough to perceive the general object of the author, and cannot fail to conclude that, whatever he was writing about, it was not gold.

37. "Man is not born into a knowledge of the Unity; his first acquaintance with Nature is through the 'Many.' But a knowledge of the many in one, is the crowning end of discipline.

"The knowledge of the first number (that is, of the Unity)," says Socrates, in the Seventh Book of the Republic, "is one of the things that exalt the mind, and, by separating it from sensuous things, leads it to the contemplation of that which is."

38. The Alchemists were of the opinion that a knowledge of the One cannot be directly taught; and this was the opinion of Plato, as it is of many modern divines of the highest learning and genius; those who hold this opinion lose sight of their own principles

when they attempt directly to teach it. They resort, therefore, to numbers, figures, and allegories.

39. The Unity is said to be ineffable, and can only be indicated by shadows and similitudes; while yet a true knowledge of it is "all" one needs, because, in short, it is the knowledge of God, who is All in All. Such passages as refer to it ought not to be considered alone, but should be read in connection with entire works on the subject, in which one part may throw light upon every other. Alchemic books are everywhere filled with enigmas "hard to be understood" (like St. Paul's epistles); but with patience and application a student will meet with a great deal, if not entire satisfaction. Almost every position or opinion found in these works is expressed enigmatically. Witness what Basil says of the Unicorn's-horn, where the Unity is indicated, and with it, the doctrine of its freedom from evil, being in its nature incapable of it. This doctrine is easily stated, but not so easily conceived."

Let us look at what Eliphas Levi has to say concerning the Unity of Spirits: "According to the Kabbalists (Alchemists), God creates eternally the

great Adam, the Universal and perfect man, who contains in a *single* spirit *all* Spirits and *all* Souls. Intelligences, therefore, live two lives *at once*, one general, which is common to them all, and the other special and individual. Solidarity and reversibility among spirits depend, therefore, on their living really in one another, all being illumined by the radiance of the one, all afflicted by the darkness of the one. The different degrees of purity among spirits corresponds to their merits and their efforts to respond to grace. They rise from grade to grade by voluntary renunciation of the egoistic attractions of the lower grades.

“The great Adam is represented by the tree of Life, which extends above and below the earth by roots and branches; the trunk is Humanity at large, the various races are the branches, and the innumerable individuals are the leaves. Each leaf has its own form, its special life, and its share of the sap, but it lives by means of the branch alone, as the life of the branch itself depends on the trunk. The wicked are the dry leaves and dead bark of the tree. They fall, decay, and are transformed into manure, which returns to the tree through the roots.

“The Kabbalists (Alchemists) further compare the wicked, or reprobate, to the excrement of the great body of humanity. These excretions also serve as manure to the earth, which brings forth fruits to nourish the body; thus death reverts always *to life*, and evil itself serves for the renewal and nourishment of good. Death in this way has no existence, and man never departs from the Universal life. Those who we call dead still survive in us, and we subsist in them; they are on the earth because we are here, and we are in heaven because they are located there.

“The more we live in others, the less we need to fear to die. Our life, after death, is prolonged on earth in those we Love, and we draw on heaven to give them tranquility and peace. The communion of spirits in heaven with earth, and on earth with heaven, is accomplished naturally, without disturbance and without prodigies; universal intelligence is like the sun’s light, which falls at once on all the planets, while the planets in turn reflect it to illuminate one another in the night.

“The saints suffer and toil in us, and their perfect beatitude will not be attained till the whole of

humanity shall be blessed, for they are a part of that indivisible humanity which in heaven has a radiant and smiling face, on earth a toiling and suffering body, while in hell, which for sages is but a purgatory, it has fettered and burning feet. We are all members of one body, and the man who endeavors to supplant and destroy another man is like the *right hand seeking to cut off the left through jealousy*. He who kills another slays himself, he who steals from another defrauds himself, he who wounds another maims himself, for others exist in us and we in them.

“The rich weary themselves, detest each other, and turn in disgust from life, their wealth itself tortures and burdens them, because there are poor in want of bread. The weariness of the rich is the distress of the poor, who suffer in their persons. God exercises His justice by the medium of Nature and His mercy by the meditation of His elect. If you thrust your hand into the fire, Nature will burn you without pity, but a charitable man can dress and soothe the burn. Law is inflexible, but Charity is unlimited. Law damns, but Charity pardons. The gulf of itself will never dis-

gorge its prey, but a rope can be let down to him who has allowed himself to fall therein.”

40. Von Helmont, to teach that more can be accomplished by following nature than by attempting to force nature to follow us, gravely tells a story of two ships being built, upon one of which the plank was laid with the top ends, as they grew in the tree, towards the bow; while upon the other they were nailed without regard to this principle; and he tells us that the first was by far the best sailer.

41. Von Helmont's readers may remember his remarkable story of a man who had a *nose* supplied from the arm of another man, who submitted to an operation for a consideration. The nose answered very well for a time, and appeared quite natural; but one day, suddenly, in Strasburg, the *nose fell off*; and it was soon after ascertained that the original owner of the nose had died coincident with the loss of it! Von Helmont meant to teach that doctrines originating in time perish with their sources. This was all he intended by that strange story.

42. This mode of teaching may be stigmatized as trivial and ridiculous; but whoever denounces it ought

at least to understand the object of it. Hermetic Philosophy, so far as it is philosophy at all, is nothing but the truth of nature clothed or set out under a veil; that is, hid in figures, symbols, and enigmas. It obliges the student to appeal to the source of it, and what cannot be found there may be neglected, or at least held in reserve.

43. Norton, in the fifth chapter of his *Ordinall*, refers to the *seven* virtues for amending the "faults" of man (the stone) as follows:—the virtues being the four cardinal virtues,—prudence, temperance, fortitude, justice; and the three theological virtues,—Faith, Hope and Charity.

“Moreover it helpeth in Alchemy
 To know Seven waters effectually;
 Which be copied with many a man;
 While they be common, seek them as you can;
 Desire not this Book to show things all,
 For this book is but an *Ordinall*.
 By those *Waters* men weene in mind
 All *faults* to amend of *metallic kind*.

* * * * *

For they suppose with confidence unfeigned,
 That all virtues requisite in them be contained;
 Some to mollify Metals hard wrought,
 And some to harden Metals that be soft," etc.

44. It must be admitted that books of Alchemy had no charm for the so-called general reader, who required pictorial scenes for the fancy, or occasions for sentiment; but as for thinking—that was too much of a task, and must be had at second hand. This sort of writing was never intended for ordinary readers of the age when they were written; but now, as the age has gone by, it is surely interesting to learn how men of thought communicated with each other all over Europe, by means of a conventional language, forced into existence and use, in part, no doubt, by the persecution to which all free thought was exposed. The language was called by those who used it *Lingua magica*, *Lingua Angelorum*, and sometimes *Lingua ipsius Ternarii Sancti*,—in the use of which the writers admit that all who attempted it were not equally successful. One small work has this significant title: *Zoroaster's Cave; or, the Philosophers' Intellectual Echo to one another from their Cells.*

This Compendium of the “Work” opens abruptly, thus:

“Dry water from the Philosopher's clouds! Look for it, and be sure to have it, for it is the key to in-

accessibles and to those *locks* that would otherwise keep thee out.

“It is a middle nature between Fixed and Not Fixed, and partakes of a Sulphur *Azarine*.

“It is a raw, cooling, feminine Fire, and expects its impregnation from a Masculine, Solar Sulphur.”

45. The interpretation of this, according to the view we take of Alchemy, is simply this:—A pure conscience (or a pure heart),—look for it, and be sure to have it, for it is the key, etc. It is of a middle nature between Soul and Body (called the Sun and Moon), and partakes of a heavenly spirit. It expects (or will receive) life from God (and the birth is Love and Unity).

46. This little work says: “Our water (the Antimonial Vinegar of Artephius) is a lustral, or expiating essence, and the cause efficient of the clarity of the whole Body, and medicine. Two things it works in the Earth (i. e., in man). It washes it; it tinges it. As it washes, it is Water; as it tinges, it is Air.”

47. The reader can hardly fail to see that these writers enjoin upon all who seek the Truth a pure heart, and a preparation for an entrance into high

experiences. They tell us the latter is not possible without the former;—as if acting upon the principle that everything in the universe has its proper “cause efficient,” without which the effect cannot follow. The simplicity of the doctrine ought not to be an objection to it. There are mysteries enough independently of it.

Eliphas Levi tells us that: “The man who is enslaved by his passions or worldly prejudices can in no way be Initiated; he must alter or he will never attain; hence he cannot be an Adept, for the word signifies a person who has attained by will and by work. The man who loves his own opinions and fears to part with them, who suspects new truths, who is unprepared to doubt everything rather than admit anything on chance, should close this book; for him it is useless and dangerous; he will fail to understand it, and it will trouble him, while if he should divine its meaning, it will be a still greater source of disquietude. If you hold by anything in the world more than by reason, truth, and justice; if your will be uncertain and vacillating, either in good or evil; if logic alarm you, or the naked truth make you blush; if you

are hurt when accepted errors are assailed; condemn this work straight away; do not read it; let it cease to exist for you; but at the same time do not cry it down as dangerous. The secrets which it records will be understood by an elect few, and will be held back by those who understand them. Shew light to the birds of the night-time, and you hide their light; it is the light which blinds them, and for them it is more dark than the darkness. I shall, therefore, speak clearly and make known everything, with the firm conviction that Initiates alone, of those who deserve initiation, will read all and understand in part.

“To attain the *sanctum regnum*, in other words, the knowledge and power of the Magi, there are four indispensable conditions—an intelligence, illuminated by study, an intrepidity which nothing can check, a Will which nothing can break, and a discretion which nothing can corrupt and nothing intoxicate. To know, to dare, to will, to keep silence—such are the four words of the Magus, inscribed upon the four symbolic forms of the Sphinx. These four words can be combined after four manners, and explained four times by one another.

“The Magus is truly what the Hebrew Kaballists call the *Microprosopus*, that is, the creator of the little world. The first of all Magical sciences being the knowledge of self, so is one’s own creation first of all works of science; it contains the others, and is the principle of the Great Work. The term, however, requires explanation. Supreme reason being the sole invariable and consequently imperishable principle—what we term death being change—hence the intelligence which cleaves closely to this principle and, in a manner, identifies itself therewith, does hereby make itself unchangeable, and, as a result, immortal. To cleave invariably to reason, it will be understood that it is necessary to attain independence of all those forces which by their fatal and inevitable movement produce the alternatives of life and death. To know how to suffer, to forbear, and to die—such are the first secrets which place us beyond reach of affliction, the desires of the flesh, and the fear of annihilation. To man who seeks and finds a glorious death, has faith in immortality and universal humanity, believes in it with him and for him, raising altars and statutes to his memory in token of eternal life.

“Man becomes king of the brutes *only* by *subduing* or taming them; otherwise he will be their victim or slave. Brutes are the *types* of our passions; they are instinctive forces of nature. The world is a field of battle where liberty struggles with inertia by the opposition of active force. Physical laws are millstones; if you cannot be the miller you *must* be the grain. You are called to be king of the air, water, earth, and fire; but to reign over these four animals of symbolism, it is necessary to conquer and enchain them. He who aspires to be a sage and to know the great enigma of nature must be the heir and despoiler of the sphinx; his the human head in order to possess speech, his the eagle’s wings in order to scale the heights, his the bull’s flanks in order to furrow the depths, his the lion’s talons to make a way on the right and the left, before and behind.

“You, therefore, who seek initiation (to become an Alchemist), are you learned as Faust? Are you insensible as Job? No, is it not so? But you may become equal to both if you will. Have you overcome the vortices of vague thoughts? Are you without indecision or capriciousness? Do you consent to

pleasure only when you will, and do you wish for it only when you should? No, is it not so? Not invariably at least, but it may become so if you choose. The sphinx has not only a man's head, it has woman's breasts; do you know how to resist feminine charms? No, is it not so? And you laugh outright in replying, vaunting your moral weakness for the glorification of your physical and vital force. Be it so; I allow you to render this homage to the ass of Sterne or Apuleius. The ass has its merits, I agree; it was consecrated to Priapus as was the goat to the god of Mendes. But take it for what it is worth, and decide whether ass or man shall be master. He alone can possess truly the pleasure of Love who has conquered the love of pleasure. To be able and to forbear is to be twice able. Woman enchains you by your desires. Master your desires and *you will enchain her*. The greatest injury that can be inflicted on a man is to call him a coward. Now, what is a cowardly person? One who neglects his moral dignity in order to obey blindly the instincts of nature. As a fact, in the presence of danger it is natural to be afraid and seek flight; why, then, is it shameful? Because honor has erected it into a law

that we must prefer our duty to our inclinations or fears. What is honor from this point of view? It is universal presentience of immortality and appreciation of the means which can lead to it. The last trophy which man can win from death is to triumph over the appetite for life, not by desire, but by a more exalted hope, which is contained in faith, for all that is noble and honest, by the undivided consent of the world. To learn self-conquest is, therefore, to learn life, and the austerities of stoicism were no vain parade of freedom! To yield to the forces of nature is to follow the stream of collective life, and to be the slave of secondary causes. To resist and subdue nature is to make one's self a personal and imperishable life; it is to break free from the vicissitudes of life and death. Every man who is prepared to die rather than renounce truth and justice is most truly living, for immortality abides in his soul. To find or to form such men was the *end of all ancient initiations*. Pythagoras disciplined his pupils by silence and all kinds of self-denial; candidates in Egypt were tried by the four elements; and we know the self-inflicted austerities of fakirs and brahmans in India for attaining the

kingdom of free will and divine independence. All macerations of asceticism are borrowed from the initiations of ancient mysteries; they have ceased because those qualified for initiation, no longer finding initiators, and the leaders of conscience becoming in the lapse of time as uninstructed as the vulgar, the blind have grown weary of following the blind, and no one has cared to pass through ordeals the end of which was now only in doubt and despair; for the Path of light was lost. To succeed in performing something, we must know what it is proposed to do, or at least must have faith in some one who does know it. But shall I stake my life on a venture, or follow someone at chance who himself knows not where he is going?

“We must not set out rashly along the path of the Transcendent Sciences, but, once started, we must reach the end or perish. To doubt is to become a fool; to pause is to fall; to recoil is to cast one’s self into an abyss. You, therefore, who are undertaking the study of this book, if you persevere with it to the close and understand it, it will make you either a monarch or a madman. Do what you will with the volume, you will

be unable to despise or to forget it. If you are pure, it will be your light; if strong, your arm; if holy, your religion; if wise, the rule of your wisdom. But if you are wicked, for you it will be an infernal torch; it will lacerate your breast like a poniard; it will rankle in your memory like a remorse; it will people your imagination with chimeras, and will drive you through folly to despair. You will endeavor to laugh at it, and will only gnash your teeth; this book will be the file in the fable which the serpent tried to bite, but it destroyed all his teeth.”

48. There are many signs in alchemical volumes of a Secret Society, in which possibly the language used was conventionally determined. Members of the Masonic fraternity might have found the secret language of the Alchemists a convenient mode of publishing, or rather of circulating among the initiated, doctrines of which they had taken “an oath” not to speak directly, or to make known except to a brother.

49. It is quite certain that books in a mysterious language were written by members of the Rosicrucian

Society,* who, we think it would be easy to show, had agreed to speak and write of each other before the uninitiated as sylphs, fairies, elves, gnomes, and salamanders. The small volume under the title of the *Comte de Gabalis*, appears to have been written by a Rosicrucian, and exhibits something of the manner by which the members of that fraternity approached strangers, and sounded them upon the subject of becoming members. The work was well known in its day, and has made some talk recently; but it is not the work of an Alchemist.

Whatever may be the fact with regard to some of the books, as *excrescences*, having some appearance of belonging to the class of Hermetic works, but without value, there can be no doubt of the antiquity of the subject, or of the enigmatical mode of treating it. This would still be true, even admitted that the works under the name of Hermes are all supposititious.

51. It can never be ascertained who wrote the *Smaragdine Table*, or when it was written; but, for all

*See "The Rosicrucians; Their Teachings." Also the works of Dr. P. B. Randolph, and Freeman B. Dowd.

practical purposes, such questions are of no importance; because the point always is,—not as to the authorship, but as to the truth of the doctrines published.

Concerning the Doctrine of Hermes, Eliphas Levi tells us that: “There are two Hermetic operations, the one Spiritual, the other material, and these are mutually dependent. For the rest, all Hermetic science is contained in the Doctrine of Hermes, which is said to have been originally inscribed upon an emerald tablet. Its first articles have been expounded, and those follow which are concerned with the operation of the great work:—‘Thou shalt separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, gently, with great industry. It rises from earth to heaven, and again it descends to earth, and it receives the power of things above and of things below. By this means shalt thou obtain the glory of the whole world, and all darkness shall depart from thee. It is the strong power of every power, for it will overcome all that is subtle and penetrate all that is solid. Thus was the world created.’ To separate the subtle from the gross, in the first operation, which is wholly *interior*, is to set

the Soul *free* from *prejudice* and all *vice*, which is accomplished by the use of the Philosophical salt, that is to say, *wisdom*; of mercury, that is *personal skill* and *application*; finally, of sulphur, representing *vital energy* and *fire of will*. By these are we enabled to change into spiritual gold things which are of all least precious, even the refuse of the earth. In this *sense we must interpret the parables of the choir of philosophers*, Bernard Trevisan, Basil Valentine, Mary, the Egyptian, and other prophets of Alchemy; but in their works, as in the Great Work, we must adroitly separate the subtle from the gross, the mystical from the positive, allegory from theory. If we would read them with profit and understanding, we must take them first of all as allegorical in their entirety, and then descend from allegories to realities by the way of the correspondences or analogies indicated in the one dogma:—That which is above is proportional to that which is below, and reciprocally. The word *art* when reversed, or read after the manner of sacred and primitive characters from right to left, gives three initials which express the different grades of the Great Work. T signifies triad, theory, and travail; R,

realization; A, adaptation. * * * * * In this place we may indicate for the researches of our readers an admirable treatise attributed to Hermes Trismegistus, entitled *Minerva Mundi*. It is found only in certain editions of Hermes, and contains, beneath allegories full of profundity and poetry, the doctrine of individual self-creation, or the creative law consequent on the accordance between two forces, which are termed fixed and volatile by Alchemists, and are necessity and liberty in the absolute order. The diversity of the forms which abound in nature is explained, in this treatise, by the diversity of spirits, and monstrosities by the divergence of efforts; its reading and assimilation are indispensable for all Adepts who would fathom the mysteries of nature and devote themselves seriously to the search after the Great Work.

“When the masters in Alchemy say that a short time and little money are needed to accomplish the works of science, above all when they affirm that one vessel is alone needed, when they speak of the great and unique athanor, which all can use, which is ready to each man’s hand, which all possess without knowing it, they allude to philosophical and moral Alchemy.

As a fact, a strong and determined Will can arrive in a short time at absolute independence, and we are all in possession of the chemical instrument, the great and sole athanor which answers for the separation of the subtle from the gross and the fixed from the volatile. This instrument, complete as the world and precise as mathematics, is represented by the sages under the emblem of the pentagram or the five-pointed star, which is the absolute sign of human intelligence."

52. Questions of science cannot be determined upon testimony, except for the unscientific, who must receive upon trust what they are incapable of verifying by an appeal to what may be called scientific principles.

53. In matters of history, where testimony to *facts* is important, it is otherwise. In this case, the veracity and competency in judgment of the historian must be established, or the facts recorded may be looked upon as without authority and comparatively unimportant.

54. But no question dependent upon outward testimony for solution is essentially important for the *inner* well-being of man, which, by Divine Providence,

or, we ought to say, Divine Justice, rests upon quite other grounds, making it possible, as the Alchemists say, for the poor to be "employed in making the Philosopher's Stone;" that is, the most humble man living may be honest and enjoy the blessings of probity. Whoever is conscious of a failure on this point is disqualified for passing an adverse judgment upon the *results* claimed as the fruit of well-doing; for the work is one of experience, as all of the writers testify,—in the spirit of the text, John vii:17: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself." Whoever will rightly interpret this text, and abide by it, will find the "Pearl of great price;" and what does it signify whether it be called a pearl, or a stone, the Magaritte of Chaucer's Testament of Love, the "Rose" of the Romaunt, the *one* of the Smaragdine Table, or the one thing needful, figured in Scripture by the pearl of great price.

55. It may surprise many to be told that Chaucer was an Alchemist, yet he is claimed and quoted as one by many of the writers. The truth is, he understood Alchemy in the sense that Robert Boyle did

after him, and approved of it; but he saw the errors of false or misled Alchemists, and wrote the *Canon's Tale* to bring them to their senses; but the Tale itself is nevertheless an alchemical work;—as is that of Otto Tachenius, already referred to, written for the same purpose.

“Simplicity or plainness,” says A. E. Waite, “has been said by a Hermetic writer to be ‘the seal of truth,’ and if it were needful to define the whole scope of transcendental wisdom in the plainness and simplicity of one unadorned phase, we should say, in the language of Sendivogius, that it is ‘to make that which is occult manifest.’ It is thus the education of powers and the elaboration or latencies. The definition covers all and includes all, from the parabolic mystification of Paracelsus concerning that ‘mineral water’ by which gold can be made to grow, and the ‘imbibitions’ and ‘distillations’ of Alchemy, even to those high altitudes of mystic action by which the lost memory of the soul’s anterior states can be recovered. Now as we have affirmed, there is a doctrine of Development which is *not* merely discernible, but is present beyond all possi-

bility of misconception mystical literature. The transcendental theology of Christendom deals wholly with the *evolution* of man's Spiritual Potencies in the direction of perfect life in Christ. But the physical perfection of Humanity is forgotten or ignored therein. Side by side, however, with transcendental theology, there flourished the Hermetic school of science in the West, nominally deriving its arcana from the theurgic philosophical traditions of the Graeco-Alexandrian period. The disciples of this College present themselves before us under two aspects—as Magi and Alchemists. They both operated in the region of Phenomena, and the magicians represent the connecting link between transcendental evolutionary Mysticism and what may be called the physical Mysticism of the transmutatory process. The theurgic wisdom of which they were inheritors gave them in each case an illumination which transcended their mission. The evokers of spirits aspired to Deific union; many Alchemists, while they exploited the capacities of metals, dreamed of the Soul's *evolution*. Some of these forgot their physical purpose, and surrendered their search after wealth for the purely

Spiritual research, led on by the resources of their terminology and the suggestions of their profound symbolism, which possessed, as we shall see, a dual field of application—in man and in the mineral world. This application was not arbitrary, and it was not forced. There is a parity and parallel between all mystical processes, because *all* are evolutionary. The transcendental illumination of the illuminated Christian Mystic is the application of the evolutionary law to the Soul of man. The physical Mysticism of the Alchemists applied the same principle in the metallic kingdom, while the magician was concerned with the creation of an environment which acted as a species of forcing-house for external education of the transcendental faculties of the *inner* man.

“But the experimental foundation had also a philosophical basis in the great Dogmas of Hermes. It was in virtue of this Central analogical theorem of Hermetic science—to which we shall again have occasion to refer—that the process in all Mystic action was identical in nature and principle, but applied with due regard to formal difference. The seven states of the Stone in Alchemy are intimately related to the

seven stages in the castle of the *interior* man. Both are allied to the Mysteries—that is to say, to the sequence of hierarchic pagentry by which, in the penetralia of the so-called pagan temples, the elect of those ages were induced to the methods of the Supreme Illumination. God alone knoweth after what precise manner the Mysteries were connected with that Holy Assembly, the existence of which we shall have occasion to affirm, but we do know, and are convinced beyond the possibility of indecision, that they produced a royal issue to the line of Mysticism, and that even in the light and joy of Christ, wherein, as children of the transcendental, we ourselves believe that we can experience all joy, and be enlightened with all light, there is neither peace, nor joy, nor charity of perfect Spiritual seeing, to surpass that which was experienced by such vessels of election as Plotinus.”

56. The poems of Jean de Meung are all alchemical, including the *Remonstrance of Nature against Wandering Alchemists*; which was *not* written against Alchemy, but against “*erring* Alchemists,” designed to bring them back to Nature and Truth.

The Roman de la Rose, begun by William de Lorris, was completed by Jean de Meung, and is itself a complete specimen of Hermetic Philosophy, the *Rose* being a symbol of Philosophic gold. The edition of this Romance, published at Amsterdam in 1735, is, in fact, a collection of Alchemical Tracts.

57. As a mere question of literature, there is more in this subject than is generally imagined. There is undoubtedly an unexplored mass of secret writing in existence, which proceeded from men of thought in past ages, especially near the period of the Reformation, which, if it could be disciphered, would throw a great deal of light upon the history of the time and upon the nature of man; but to enter this field fully would require both patience and genius. To examine this subject properly, it would be necessary to look into many works on Magic, Astrology, and Chiromancy, for there were men who wrote on these sciences who were not themselves duped, however much they might have misled others. This has often been suggested; but no one, so far as we know, has recently undertaken to explore these writings, except from idle curiosity.

58. In the Diary of Elias Ashmole may be seen repeated entries, that he attended the "*Feast of the Astrologers,*" without the smallest notice of their proceedings. It is extremely improbable that an association, including such men as Ashmole, were deluded by astrological nonsense, though it is quite possible that under astrological figures the wits of the time might have found a freedom denied them in public.

59. I may be told that, in the same Diary, Ashmole tells us of his curing some distemper by hanging *three* spiders around his neck. This may or may not have a literal significance. Ashmole was willing to be classed among Alchemists, and published two collections of alchemical works, besides writing a work on Alchemy himself; which, however, does not rank very high.

60. It is remarkable that the best works on Alchemy are short, and most of them anonymous. Notwithstanding the unity of doctrine among them, the mode of treatment is so diversified that it is impossible to classify them. A few hold something like a regular order in their treatises; others purposely invert everything, commencing with the end or the middle of the

work. Some speak of a *first* work, others of a second, calling it the first, etc.; so that the books at first sight are perfectly chaotic, and one knows not what to make of them. If I had fallen in with them in early life, I should probably have despised them; but meeting with them at a mature age, after I had been sufficiently schooled in the difficulties of what is commonly called Philosophy, I was quite ready to believe that so much labor could hardly have been undertaken without a respectable purpose, by men who manifestly looked for no earthly reward. During the last two years, I have done little else than read these works, and, though I would not recommend any one to follow my example, I do not regret the time employed upon this study, even though I have not yet come to a definite conclusion beyond what I have chosen to call *the way*, about which I am very sure I am not mistaken. *The End* points at some sense of the Unity which I think very few men reach, except in words; for what, indeed, is the real sense involved in the first article of Creed? Undoubtedly it lies out of the common observation of man, and can only be obtained by a discipline unknown to ordinary teachers. On this point I

have no desire to dogmatize, and am willing to leave the subject where I found it, under the rose. The subject cannot be approached with too much gravity, and if I have said a word that may seem to imply any other disposition, I most cheerfully retract it.

61. In reading books of Alchemy the reader will often find such expressions as these "herein lies the whole secret;" or, "this the whole work;" or, "this is all you need;" and the like; but, upon comparing what is said in one place as exhibiting the whole work with what is said in another, no likeness will be discovered. This arises from the fact, or what is claimed as such, that the work is "*circular*," and is concatenated or connected in all its (inseparable) parts, that whoever gets a clew to any one of the parts may be said to have found the whole. Hence, one writer may say that the whole secret lies in extracting the Philosophic mercury, although this is but a practical beginning of the work. Another insists that the whole secret lies in making the visible invisible, and the invisible visible. Another may say that the secret lies in dissolution and coagulation, which refers to the two extremes of the work (said, nevertheless, to be one

work), dissolution being considered the unprisoning of the mercury, while coagulation or fixation refers to the indissoluble *union*. Other writers point to the *union* alone as containing the whole secret.

Another tells us: "The first step then is to let Love rule supreme; to leave no room in the soul for hate." To do this is to recognize the utility and beauty of all existence. "Love your enemies," says the supreme Alchemist—the Saviour—and we soon learn to know that our greatest enemies are the carnal *passions* and *desires within us*. "A man's worst foes are those of his own household." But it is not difficult to love these when we realize their past utility—that they have been the means of our evolutionary advancement and of our ascent from animality, for through sensation they gave us experience. But now we have learned the lesson, we have assimilated all that the passions in their lower aspect can teach us; what then are we to do with them? Are we to cast out or destroy an old servant, merely because his apparent usefulness is ended? To do so will prove a fatal mistake, though this would be a much less difficult task than what is required of us, for it is far easier to destroy a passion

than to purify or *transmute* it; yet such transmutation is the evolutionary function of the higher self, "who comes not to judge, but to save."

"As we advance every faculty must be *uplifted* and trained to serve us on a higher level of manifestation, for the opposite pole of every vice is a virtue into which that vice may be *transmuted*. Remember this.

"Take covetousness, the cruel, grasping passion, which is pre-eminently the vice of this competitive age. When it completely possesses a man there is no depth of selfishness or degradation to which he may not descend. He may stand unmoved, steeped in luxury, while all around him are misery and want; it may induce him to 'corner' one of the necessities of life, so that thousands of the poor will suffer for lack of food and fuel, 'a la Baer,' and all for something of which he has already a superfluity, and which in reality can gain him nothing. But when the Light of the Higher Self and the Love of the Soul is turned on this low aspect, all changes instantly, as our point of view is changed. No longer do the material things of the world seem desirable. The narrow self, which has seemed so separate from our fellow men, enlarges and

includes them also, for we realize that they are but an extension of ourselves. Though, as of old, we still long to have and to hold, the things we covet now are Spiritual 'treasures,' and we desire them not only for our individual selves, but for our larger selves, which include our brother pilgrims also.

"As we expand interiorly, and redeem and regenerate each vice and passion, we may awake to find that we have made a wonderful advance in *consciousness*; that we have *raised* our attachment from the heterogeneous to the homogeneous; from the differentiated—Satan—to the Unity—God."*

62. "Our Art," says one, "is to compound two principles,—one in which the Salt, and another in which the Sulphur of Nature doth abound, (the reader may consider that the author is referring to the Sol and Luna of Artephius and others,)—which are not yet perfect, nor altogether imperfect, and by consequence, therefore, may be exalted by our Art, which cannot be effected upon that which is already perfect; and then by common mercury, to extract, not

*"The Altar in the Wilderness," Ethelbert Johnson.

the *pondus* (i. e. the substance of the subject), but the celestial virtue out of the compound.

63. "The compound is man, and the common mercury is the conscience, (or, nature conscientiously accepted,) by means of which the subject is to be brought under the influence of Divine Love; for 'the Love of man for God, and the Love of God for man, is one thing.' This 'celestial virtue,' the author goes on to say, 'being *fermented*, begets in the common mercury an offspring more noble than itself, which is our true Hermaphrodite (this expression we understand as referring to nature in its double character, as the 'master-mistress' of the Twentieth Sonnet of Shakespeare), which will congeal itself.

"Three kinds of most beautiful flowers," says another, "are to be sought, and may be found in the garden of the Wise: damask-colored Violets (love), the milk-white Lily (purity), and the Immortal Amaranthus (Immortality). Not far from the fountain, at the entrance, fresh violets do first salute thee, which, being watered by streams from the great golden river, put on the most delicate color of the dark sapphire; the sun will give thee signs. Thou must not

sever such precious flowers from their root until thou makest the Stone; for the fresh ones cropped off have more juice and tincture; and then pick them carefully with a gentle and discreet hand; if fates frown not, they will easily follow, and, one flower being plucked, the other golden one will not be wanting. Let the Lily and the Amaranth succeed with greater care and labor." This was considered a synopsis of the whole work.

While treating of the Violets (Love), the Lily (Purity), and the Amaranthus (Immortality), as Alchemical problems, let us look at the Canons of Jean d'Espagnet, in the *Hermetic Arcanum*:

I.

Within the golden portal
 Of the garden of the Wise,
 Watching by the seven sprayed fountain
 The Hesperian Dragon lies.
 Like the ever-burning Branches
 In the dream of Holy Seer;
 Like the types of Asia's churches,
 Those glorious jest appear.
 Three times the magic waters
 Must the Winged Dragon drain,
 Then his scales shall burst asunder
 And his Heart be reft in twain.
 Forth shall flow an emanation,
 Forth shall spring a shape Divine,
 And if Sol and Cynthia aid thee,
 Shall the charmed Key be thine.

II.

In the solemn groves of Wisdom,
 Where black pines their shadows fling
 Near the haunted cell of Hermes,
Three Lovely flowerlets Spring:
 The Violet, damask tinted,
 In scents all flowers above;
 The milk white vestal Lily,
 And the purple flower of Love.
 Red Sol a sign shall give thee
 Where the sapphire violets gleam,
 Watered by the rills that wander
 From the viewless golden stream;
 One Violet shalt thou gather,—
 But ah—beware, beware!—
 The Lily and the Amaranth
 Demand thy chiefest care.

III.

Within the lake of crystal,
 Roseate as Sol's first ray,
 With eyes of diamond lustre,
 A thousand fishes play.
 A net within that water,
 A net with web of gold,
 It cast where air-bells glitter
 One shining fish shall hold.

IV.

Amid the oldest mountains,
 Whose tops are next the Sun,
 The everlasting rivers
 Through glowing rivers run;
 Those mountains are of silver,
 Those channels are of gold,
 And thence the countless treasures
 Of the Kings of Earth are rolled.
 But far, far must he wander

O'er realms and seas unknown
Who seek the Ancient Mountains
Where shines the Wondrous Stone.

CHAPTER II.

There are many detached descriptions of the work pointing more especially to the Unity, passing over or touching but slightly upon the *means* or *the Way*. Here is one entitled :

A DESCRIPTION OF THE STONE.

“Thou *Daphne* (Luna) fly from *Phoebus* (Sol) bright,
 Yet shall they both be *one*,
 And if you understand this right,
 You have our hidden stone.
 For *Daphne*, she is fair and white;
 But *Volatile* is she;
Phoebus, a fixed God of might,
 And red as blood is he.
Daphne is a Water Nymph,
 And hath of moisture store,
 Which *Phoebus* doth consume with heat,
 And dries her very sore.
 They being dried into one,
 Of *crystal flood* must drink,
 Till they be brought to a White Stone;
 Which was with *virgin's milk*,
 So long until they flow as wax,
 And no *fume* you can see;
 Then have you all you need to ask:
 Praise God, and thankful be.”

2. The “flowing like wax” is the pliability of the subject, becomes “as a little child.” Matt. xviii :3.

Here is another sample, entitled :

ENIGMA PHILOSOPHICUM.

“There is no light (truth) but what lives in the *Sun*
(man);

There is no Sun but what is twice begot,
Nature and Art the parents first begun;
By Nature 't was, but Nature perfects not.
Art then what Nature left in hand doth take,
And out of one a twofold work doth make.

“A twofold work doth make; but such a work
As doth admit division, none at all,
(See here wherein the secret most doth lurk,)
Unless it be a mathematical.

It must be two; yet make it one and one,
And you do take the way to make it none.

“Lo here the *Primer Secret* of this Art:

Condemn it not, but understand it right;
Who faileth to attain this foremost part,
Shall never know *Art's force* nor *Nature's might*,
Nor yet have power of *one* and *one* so mixed,
To make by *one fixed, one unfixed fixed.*”

3. The above points to the *End* of the work, and says nothing directly of the means of attaining it; but, for its purpose, it is one of the most complete descriptions to be found anywhere.

Here is still another, entitled:

THOMAS ROBINSON'S DE LAPIDE
PHILOSOPHORUM.

“The Heavens, the Earth, and all that in them is,
Were in six days perfected from abyss:
From one sprung four; from four a second one;
The last a *gritt* (man); the *first* the corner stone.
Without the *first*, the *last* may not be had;
Yet to the *first*, the *last* is too, too bad,
When from the Earth the Heavens are separated
(Gen. 1),

Were not the Heavens with Earth first cohobated?
 And when the Heavens, and Earth, and All were not,
 Were only Heavens create, and Earth forgot?
 No: Heavens and Earth sprung all from *one* at first:
 Then who can say, Heavens or Earth is worst?
 Is not the Earth the *mother* of them all?
 And what the Heavens, but Earth's essential?
 Although they have in Heaven no Earthly residence,
 Yet in the Earth doth rest their Heavenly influence.
 Were not the Earth, what were the other three?
 (Referring to the so-called four elements.)
 Were not the Heavens, what on Earth could be?
 Thus as they came, so shall they pass together;
 But unto man not known from *whence*, or *whither*
 (John iii:8).

And for the time of Earth's Heaven purifying,
 Six thousand years they live, and have their dying:
 Then all shall rest eternal and Divine,
 And by the beauty of the Godhead shine (1 Cor.
 xv:24).

I swear there is no other truth but this

Of that great *Stone*; which many seek and miss."

4. The "six thousand years" is not to be understood as a definite period. A sublime faith and trust is inculcated.

5. The *Marrow of Alchemy*, though the versification is rather of the doggerel order, contains many useful directions, of which I will give the following as a specimen:

"Consider well the danger, and be sure
 That better 't is in safety than in fear
 To live, and so you shall yourself inure
 To secrecy, that none from you may hear,
 Either in boasting way what you can do,
 Nor yet for price procure the secret true."

The danger here referred to was that of persecution

for opinion's sake, to guard against which secrecy is recommended.

“Of drink and eke of company beware,
The one besots, the other eke allures :
Secrets he cannot be, to drink that dare
Too largely ; Temperance best assures :

 This is the Bar that doth command the tongue,
 Without which can it not be bridled long.

“All these things ordered right, next I advise
Thee not to expect with over-greedy mind
The event, but mind the saying of the wise,
By patience long, the end you sure will find ;

 He that hopes in short time to receive
 His harvest, doth himself in fine deceive.

“Some cannot let *their glass* (themselves) stand quiet
long,

But they it move, or turn, or jog, or shake ;
Thereby they do to *Nature's work* much wrong,
Which forced is her own Path to forsake.

 And follow these fond Artists' foolish mind ;
 Which whoso violates, may reap the wind.

“Commit thyself, and work, to God above ;
Intreat his grace, and help, and from all sin
And vice thee keep, which God's laws do reprove ;
With him alone see that thou do begin,

 This is the way sure success to attain,
 Else mayst thou toil, but always toil in vain.

“And if thou hap so blessed for to be,
As this rare Jewel to attain, which many
Do miss, few find, be sure in thy degree
That God thou honor ; neither do to any
 Wrong in the least, for so to God thou wilt
 Obnoxious be under a heinous guilt.

“The poor relieve, the sick from danger free ;
In napkin bury not this talent great ;
Charitable works pursue ; so shalt thou see

God's blessing on thee resting, and on thy seat,
 Whilst thou with mortals haste; yet O resolve
 With God at least to live; this oft resolve:
 "For this of all the blessings of this life
 The greatest is, and of the highest price;
 Nor is it given but to such, whose strife
 Is to improve it; such who (truly wise)
 Do not doat on that which fading is
 And to neglect the everlasting bliss.
 "Now shall I briefly, plainly, and indeed,
 The real workings of our Stone disclose,
 With all its colors, and its days: my rede
 Whoso observes, shall find it truly shows
 More than by any man hath been revealed,
 And yet there's something herein lies concealed.
 "The Fire thy compound (thyself) shall no sooner
 feel,
 But altogether like to lead will flow;
 The tender Body, which the soul of steel
 Is, doth such mighty efficacy show,
 That Sol is whitened, and it is devoured;
 On both *Media's broth* must then be poured.
 "This is our Sea, in which Two fishes swim, (the ever-
 recurring two,)

Yet neither Fish hath scale or bone;
 The Sea is ever round, yet hath no brim,
 The *Sea* and *Fishes* eke are all, but (or only) *one*
 (Trinity in unity);
 These we digest until a broth they make, (experience
 in life,)

That all may in the Unity partake.
 "Attend thou *forty* days; then shall appear
 Black of the blackest, like a well-burnt coal (called in
 Scripture repentance);
 When this thou seest, thou shalt not need to fear,
 But White at last shall show without control;

And so unto the sparkling Red you come,
 Having at first of *blackness* passed the doom.
 (Christ, in the creed, we see, first descends, and then
 rises in glory.)

“Thus Blackness is the gate by which we enter
 To Light of Paradise; this is the way;
 The Bodies here reduced are, to their centre;
 A dismal night brings forth a glorious day,
 Let this thy study be, this Black t’ attain,
 Or else all other signs shall be in vain.

“The color first is Argent, for the *Sun*
 In the womb of *Luna* must descend,
 (“He descended into Hell.”)

And both unto their Matter First must run,
 By *Mercury* alone, which doth amend
 Nature in its kind, the Sun and Moon
 Are both eclipsed in this *water* soon.
 (The Fire, “Mercury,” “water,” and “*fire*” signify
 one thing, under different conditions.)

“The *Fire* still working is the only cause
 Of all this alteration which doth
 Appear; by means of this the Water drawn
 Water of Life from Sun and Luna both:
 This *water* hides a *spirit* of great might,
 The proper seed of *Sol* and *Luna* bright.”
 (Thus the work is “circular,” and ends where it be-
 gins.)

6. We will follow this no farther, for here, as in other extracts, the object is not to attempt a complete exhibition of the “Great Work,” but to show that the Alchemists were students of *man*; and to justify the hint by Dr. Kopp, that, if it be allowed to consider man, as a microcosm, the interpretation of the writings

of the Alchemists will be "easy;" for this is his judgment upon the very extracts cited by the French writer, and copied by the English Reviewer, to show how absurdly the Alchemists went to work to make gold.

To prove that *man* was the subject of the Philosophers or Alchemists, we need but turn to one of the Masters,—Benedict Figulus, who, in his "A Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels," one of the Alchemic text-books, tells us:

"Other Philosophy can never teach us to 'Know Thyself,' nor the foundation of Natural Revelation, in which some heathen philosophers, particularly Pythagoras, had progressed so far that they with reason might be preferred to many professed Christians of to-day. He especially, from the stars and the creatures of this earth, learnt more about Nature than our arrogant, boasting philosophers, who, at bottom, understanding nothing themselves, would fain teach others.

"But this our Hermetic Philosophy, which comprises the true Astronomy, Alchemy, and Magic, as also Cabala, etc., is an extremely ancient, true,

Natural Science, derived from Adam, who, both before and after the Fall, had full knowledge of all things, and handed it down from father to son through the patriarchs and dear friends of God. After the Flood the general understanding and knowledge of this true natural philosophy became weakened in force and scattered in fragments in all directions; hence arose a subdividing of the whole into parts—and one has become an Astronomer, another a Magician, a third a Cabalist, a fourth an Alchemist, and especially did it afterwards flourish in Egypt. For instance, the smith, Abraham Tubalkain, past master in all kinds of brass and iron work, and also an excellent Astrologer and Arithmetician, brought these arts with him from Egypt into the Land of Canaan. And the great skill, wisdom, and knowledge in the above arts attained by the Egyptians was by them also communicated to other nations.

“The Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians, Egyptians, have also always possessed and cultivated this knowledge, together with Theology and instructions in Divine things. Thus, Moses was so informed by all good arts in the schools of the Egyptians that he be-

came perfect in Wisdom, and therefore was not in vain chosen of God to be the leader of the people of Israel.

“Thus also Daniel, from his youth up, learnt and imbibed this art in the Schools of the Chaldeans, as his Prophecies, and his skill in all kinds of interpretations before King Nebuchadnezzar and King Belshazzar, clearly and wonderfully testify. Such Philosophers and Magi were also the Three Wise Men from the East, who sought Christ Jesus from the Rising of the Sun, and found him in a manger at Bethlehem.

“But subsequent to the origin of this Divine Magic and natural true Philosophy, namely, twenty-seven years after the Flood—about the year 1680, A. M.—among the Chaldeans, Persians, and afterwards in Egypt, having heard of the same, their noblest and sagest men proceeded to Chaldea and Egypt, in order that they might learn such wisdom in their Schools. But they did not relish the teaching of God’s word from the Holy Bible and the Law of Moses, and, depending upon their reason and understanding, wished to be cleverer and wiser than God Himself, as is the

wont of Lucifer and his disciples; for it always happens that where God builds a Church, the devil sets his chapel up beside it; as is also recorded in the New Testament, for when Christ, the greatest Spagyric Philosopher and Heavenly Sower, sowed His good seed, the Enemy immediately threw his tares and weeds upon it, which, alas, happens to this day. Therefore have they fallen away from the foundation and essence of all Natural Mysteries and hidden Arts, and have sought wisdom in the senseless, stupid, erroneous and deceptive Star of Satan (materialism), with which they have obscured and diluted the truth. For their own pride and presumption have hindered, befooled, and plunged them into error. For, after having learnt a little from the Chaldeans and Egyptians, they became so puffed up and proud, depending more than was meet on their own understanding, that they began to criticise things with many false and vain inventions, and took upon themselves to ascribe them to a false philosophy, concocted in their own subtle brains, under the influence of that evil star; which false philosophy not only got the upper hand among the Greeks, but spread from them to the Latins,

who, not less than the former, also wished to shew their own understanding immediately they had acquired a little knowledge, whence, instead of improving, increasing, or adorning, they have only made things worse.

“Now, by these this so-called Philosophy has been disseminated through entire Europe. Almost all Academies and High Schools teach it, to the neglect of Moses and the Prophets, even of Christ Himself, not only in Germany, but in almost all other nations. When anyone advances aught of the true Philosophy, grounded in the Word of God, but which is contrary to theirs, he is not only condemned, mocked, and laughed at, but is called an eccentric, a heretic, and haeresiarch—as has happened to me at the hands of certain pseudo-levites—or is even persecuted. The old proverb remains true: ‘The world wishes to be deceived.’ Satan is a clever juggler, using many deceptions with which he leads astray all Christendom, shewing the way into the eternal night of hell with his dark lantern, which they take to be a true guiding light.

“But, generous Masters and Friends, if we would

follow after the true Natural Philosophy, founded on the Light of Nature; if we would acquire the same as our Spagyric Philosophy, true Astronomy, and Magic, where and under whom shall we study this? Shall we seek the teachers and professors in the Universities? Verily, we shall not find it there, for they are the true enemies, mockers, and persecutors of our Philosophy, and of all its adherents. 'Art has no haters but the ignorant.' They would rather remain with the husks and chaff, which the wind strews hither and thither, than with the good nourishing grain, rye, and wheat from the great store-house or treasury of the Eternal God and Bountiful Lord, which he gives, and invites us to partake of. Where then, I ask, shall we seek it, and in what School? Dear Masters and Friends, we neither can, nor should, nor must look for it elsewhere than in the Stars; there is the school from which everything is learned.

“Now, there are two bodies in man, one formed from the elements, and the other from the stars. Through death the elementary body, with its spirit, is brought to the grave, and the Ethereal body and spirit are consumed in their firmament. But the spirit of

the Image goes to him in whose image it is. Thus each one dies in that of which he is, and is buried in the same. Thus, also, does death divide from each other the three spirits of man. Therefore, the wise man is he who lives in the wisdom given him by God; lives in the image of the Lord, the same ruling over his planetary and elementary body. But, brethren, man should walk, as regards his earthly body, according to the law of Nature, as did the old heathen Sages; and, for the rest, in the Will of God and the Holy Spirit, and not set the mortal body with its wisdom above the Immortal Image (as almost all the world now does, with its fancied, spurious wisdom). Neither should he reject the Eternal Image for the animal body in his fancied wisdom, wherefore the Lord Jesus has not said in vain in His Gospel concerning the tax penny: 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' What did He mean to convey by that? Why this, that the body, according to the natural life, belongs to Caesar, and shall be subject to him as to its earthly head upon earth. But the soul belongs to God, and the same shall be given again to God, and shall make

answer for its work. That is, he shall return to Him His Image according to the Spiritual life, as to his Heavenly Lord, from whom body and soul each separately come. Therefore, he shall walk in His laws according to the Will of God, that he may return to God His Image, and the eternal fiery breath of life entrusted him, as it were, shall be given unto Abraham's bosom, and not be cast out from before His Face eternally into outermost darkness on account of godless, devilish life and conversation. Such was Christ's meaning and object. Now he who lives according to the Image of the Lord, overcomes the stars, and should with reason be considered a wise man, although by a blind and senseless world he may be held as a fool. •

“But to philosophise further concerning these things belongs not in this place to mortal philosophy, but to the Eternal, Immortal wisdom, which we have alluded to, which has Christ Jesus as its Founder, concerning whom we have the voice of the Esther, saying: ‘Hear ye him;’ so also His own voice calls to us (Matthew xi): ‘Come unto Me all ye who are heavy laden. Learn from Me, for I am meek and

lowly in heart,' etc. From Him must we derive the Heavenly and Eternal Philosophy in order that we may come up to the Kingdom of Heaven.....I am, and will remain to my grave, the fervent disciple and follower of the Natural and Mortal, and the Supernatural Heavenly Instruction, having totally repudiated the false, heathen wisdom which proceeds not from the true light and groundwork of Nature, since besides Christ and His Wisdom there is in the world only vanity of vanities. But to return to our intention of exploring Nature. Generous Masters and Friends, this cannot be done by sitting at the fireside nor by pouring over philosophical tomes. No, if we would explore Nature in our Philosophy, and attain the desired successful results, we must tread the books of Nature with our feet. Writings are examined by means of letters, but Nature by going from land to land. In this way one finds occasionally pious and faithful Nicodemuses, Naturalists, Philosophers, Explorers of Nature, and Lovers of our Spagyric Philosophy (I speak not now of the knavish, vagabond, false Alchemists, on whose account I would not move a step). From such as these, in addition to one's own

observations, one can often obtain much useful knowledge. Hence each fresh country is a new leaf in the Book of Nature. This is our *Codex Naturae* sufficiently large and ample, the leaves of which must be turned over with our feet, and examined with the spirit of understanding, and, although we be called vagabonds and land loupers by the big wigged doctors and syrup boilers, that matters nothing to me. The disciple should not fare better than his master, and the same thing has happened to Theophrastus, our dear Preceptor and Monarch of Arts, also to Alex. von Suchten, Phoedro, and others. Therefore, on my journeys I regard but little what is made by men's hands, though others think much of it, but the works of God alone, these I regard, admire, and seek to explore. To find out their three principles, to separate the pure from the impure, and thereby, to the praise and glory of God, to benefit myself and my neighbors in body and soul, is my highest endeavor. For all created things are living letters and books in which can be deciphered the origin of man, in which also may be read what man is. Before all things, let everyone commend to himself the *Nosce Ttipsum*, that

he may know himself, as Aristotle said to Alexander the Great: 'Know Thyself and thou shalt possess all things;' and Morienus: 'those who do in themselves hold all things are in need of no other aid.'

* * * * *

"Therefore, also am I content with these three books, from which I may learn very wisdom.

"The first is the great, full-meaning Book of Nature, written not with ink or stylus, but by the finger of God, wherein, lying open before our eyes, are inscribed and registered Heaven, Earth, and all creatures therein, through the sacred impress of the Three in One—which volume is called Macrocosmus.

"The second is the Small Book, which with all its leaves and pieces is taken from the larger work, and this is Man himself, for whose sake all that God has ever created is there; the same also is called Microcosmus. And man alone is the instrument of Natural Light, to fulfill and shew by arts and wisdom what God has ordered in the firmament. Also He has further ordered that man have a twofold magnet—*viz.*, one composed of three elements (his body), and hence also he attracts them to himself—another of the

stars, by which he attracts from the stars the Microcosmic tense. Therefore, the Reason of man has a Magnet which attracts into itself the mind and thoughts of the Stars. From these, I say, yet another arises in the true believers, Magi, and Cabalists, and this third Magnet is hidden in the Image of God, in man's Soul. The same penetrates, through faith, to Him from whom it came, and seeks eternal Wisdom from the Holy Ghost, promised by Christ to it. It must be well remembered that there are two souls in man, the Eternal and the Natural, that is, two lives. One is subject to death, the other resists death. Thus also there are two souls, the Eternal and the Natural,—the Natural soul is in the starry body, and the starry (astral) body in the fleshy one, and these two together form one man but two bodies.

“There are also two heavens in man, the one is *Luna Cerebrum*, the Cagastrian heaven. But in the heart of man is the true Iliastic, Necrocosmic heaven. Yes, the heart of man itself is the true heaven of Immortal being, out of which the Soul has never yet come, which New Olympus and Heaven Christ Jesus has chosen for a dwelling in all true believers. The

third Book is the Holy Bible, the Holy Writ of the Old and New Testament, which explains to us the two preceding Books. The Divine Chronicles, inspired by the Holy Ghost, shew how the Great World was created for the Small World (Man), who in the great world is fed, nourished, and preserved by God the Father. The same, after the Fall, was by God's Son delivered from everlasting punishment; who also has been born again through water and the Spirit, is fed with the Heavenly Manna and Immortal Food of the New Creature, and is guided by the Holy Ghost to the Knowledge of all Truth.

“But to return to our occult Hermetic Philosophy: Beloved Masters and Friends, we, with others, have to complain not a little that, although innumerable devilish philosophers have written about the Universal Medicine and the Philosopher's Stone, yet both Heathens and Christians have left us true writings, which godless Cacosophists and pseudo-sophists have, for the most part, either wholly kept back or altered.

“We have further to complain of those who mutilate and falsify the works of true seekers after Natural Wisdom and Art, for I have clearly discovered defects,

alterations, and foreign matter in the 'Triumphal Chariot' of Fr. Basilius, and also in the writings of A. von Suchten and Theophrastus. More especially, dear Friends, have we to complain of the devilish cunning way in which the works of Theophrastus have hitherto been suppressed, only a few of which (and those to be reckoned the very worst) having appeared in print. For although they have been collected together from all countries in which Theophrastus has lived and traveled—the books he has written in Astronomy, Philosophy, Chemistry, Cabala, and Theology, numbering some thousand volumes—yet the same has only been done from avarice to get riches."

The above from this great work has been given thus fully for the reason that it fully proves that the subject of the Alchemists was Man and furthermore, the foregoing gives the Key to the whole mystery, so that he who reads may understand.

In explanation of much of the above, Paracelsus tells us that: "Man's soul is made up of the same elements as the stars; but as the wisdom of the Supreme guides the motions of the stars, so the reason of man rules the influences which rotate and circulate

in his soul. The essence of man's sidereal body, which he attracts from the stars, is of a substantial nature; still, we consider it as being something spiritual on account of the ethereality of its substance, and on account of the great dimensions of its invisible body. The essence in man's sidereal body are intimately related to the sidereal essences of the stars, and the former attracts the power of the latter; but man is the Master over his own soul, and he can permit those attractions to take place in an irregular manner, or he may control his passions and repulse influences which he does not desire.

“There is an attractive power *in the soul of man*, which attracts physical, mental, and moral diseases from the Chaos. The planetary influences extend through all Nature, and man attracts poisonous qualities from the moon, from the stars and from other things; but the moon, and the stars, and other things also attract evil influences from man, and distribute them again by their rays, because Nature is an undivided whole, whose parts are intimately connected.

“Three spirits, united in one, live and act in man; three worlds, united in one, throw their rays upon

him; but all three are only the reflection, image, or echo of one primordial creation. The first is the essence of the elements; the second the soul of the stars; and the third the spirit—*the life*. The lower instincts of man are caused by the life of the elements, but there is only *one life*, and the life that causes the instincts of man is contained in all elements—in the stars as well as in vegetable and animal forms. The activity of the life essence is modified in vegetable, animal, and human forms; it becomes the life of the earth, and the life of the earth is radiated back to the stars. Stars attract and repulse each other; they have their sympathies and antipathies; and these living antipathies and sympathies, attractions and repulsions, could not exist if no vehicle of life existed between them.”*

7. The warnings of Espagnet are worthy of all consideration: “Whosoever is disposed to seek the Philosopher’s Stone, let him resolve to make a long journey, for it is necessary that he see both the Indies,” i. e., he must examine and understand the

*Hartmann, “Paracelsus.”

extreme boundaries of Nature, as defined and terminated by active and passive; spirit and matter; soul and body; Sol and Luna; Daphne and Phoebus; Heaven and Earth; the doves of Diana; the two Fishes, without "scale or bone," in the sea without brim; and must discover the mediating principle by which all contraries are reconciled; to do which he must understand the nature of the fixed and the volatile, in order—as Espagnet proceeds,—“that from thence he may bring the most precious gems and the purest gold.”

“Whoever affirmeth that the Philosopher’s Grand Secret is above the strength of nature and art is blind; because he knows not the *Sun* and *Moon*.”

“Metals (meaning man), we must confess, cannot be perfected by the instinct and labor of Nature only (1 Cor. ii:14); yet we may affirm that the perfecting virtue is hid in their profundity, and manifesteth itself by the help of the Art. In this work Nature standeth in need of the aid of Art; and both doth perfect the whole.”

“Let those who are desirous of a knowledge of Chemistry (meaning Alchemy), and have hitherto

followed imposters and mountebanks, sound a retreat, spare time and cost, and give their minds to a work truly philosophical, lest the *Phrygians* be wise too late, and at length be compelled to cry out with the prophet, '*Strangers have eaten up my strength.*'" (Hosea vii:9.)

"In the Philosopher's work, more toil and time than cost is expended; for he that hath convenient matter need be at little expense: besides, those that hunt after great store of money, and place their chief end in wealth, trust more to their riches than to their own Art. Let, therefore, the too credulous freshman beware of those pilfering pickpockets that lay in wait for gold; they demand bright ushering *Sol*, because they walk in darkness."

"As those that sail between *Scylla* and *Charybdis* are in danger on both sides, unto no less hazard are they subject who, pursuing the prey of the golden fleece, are carried between the uncertain rocks of the Philosopher's *Sulphur* and *Mercury*. The more acute, by their constant reading of grave and credible authors, and by the irradiant *Sun*, have attained unto the knowledge of *Sulphur*, but are at a stand in the

entrance of the Philosopher's *Mercury*;* for writers have twisted it with so many windlings and meanders, and involved it with so many equivocal names, that it may be sooner met with by the force of the *seeker's intellect*, than be found by reason of toil."

8. The "Sun" here spoken of is the same *Sun* that illuminated the *two* precious jewels at the bottom of the well in the *Romaunt of the Rose*, for that poem is a perfect specimen of Hermetic Philosophy, mistaken as it commonly is for a *love-tale*. What Espagnet calls

*The reason why so many are at a stand upon the Philosopher's Mercury is because it means many things, as *man*, the conscience, spirit, as also nature and the spirit of nature; the universal, the mean, middle; the *equilibrium*, etc. It has a multitude of names. It is sometimes used for Life, as one thing in all, and, though in itself invisible, it is yet the most apparent of all things; but it takes its appearance from that through which it is seen. Hence it appears as a man in a man, but as a dog in a dog, etc. One writer speaks of it under the name of *magnesia*, and says:

"It is of such convertibility,
To every proportion, and to every degree,
As crystal to its subject is found;
For of everything that is upon the ground,
Which that ye will crystal set under,
Such color hath crystal; therefore
Cease to wonder."

the "seeker's intellect" is the same thing he has just called the *irradiant sun*.

"Nature proceedeth thus in making and perfecting her works" (Espagnet is still before me), "that from an inchoate generation it may bring a thing by diverse means, as it were by degrees, to the ultimate term of perfection. She therefore attaineth her end by little and little, and not by leaps, confining and including her work between two extremes, distinct and severed as by spaces. The practice of Philosophy, which is the ape of Nature, ought not to decline from the way and example of Nature in its working and direction, to find out its happy Stone; for *whosoever is without the bounds of Nature is either in error, or nearest one.*"

"The whole progress of the Philosopher's work is nothing but *solution* and *congelation* (dishearten a man first, and then encourage and fortify him, but according to the laws of his own nature, and without violence),—the solution of the body, and the congelation of the spirit; nevertheless, there is but one operation of both; the fixed and the volatile are perfectly mixed and united in the spirit, which cannot be done unless the fixed body be first made soluble and

volatile. By reduction is the volatile body fixed into a permanent body, and volatile nature doth at last change into a fixed one, as the fixed nature had before passed into a volatile one. Now, so long as the natures were confused in the spirit, that mixed spirit keeps a middle nature between body and spirit, fixed and volatile.

“The generation of the Stone is made after the pattern of the creation of the world; for it is necessary that it have its chaos and first matter, wherein the confused elements do fluctuate, until they be separated by the Fiery Spirit. They being separated, the light elements are carried upwards, and the heavy ones downwards. The Light arising, the Darkness retreats; the waters are gathered into one, and the dry land (or *reason*) appears. At length the *two great luminaries* arise, and mineral virtues, vegetable and animal, are produced in the Philosopher’s Earth” (that is, in man).

“The Elixir’s perfection consisteth in the strict union and indissoluble matrimony of *Siccum* and *Humidum* (of Phoebus and Daphne), so that they may not be separated, but the *siccum* may flow, with

moderate heat into the humidum, abiding every pressure of the Fire. (James i:12.)

“A Three-headed Dragon keeps the Golden Fleece. The First Head proceedeth from the Waters; the Second, from the Earth; the Third, from the Air. It is necessary that these Three Heads do end in One most Potent, which shall devour all the other Dragons; then a way is laid open for thee to the Golden Fleece. (Body, Soul, and Spirit, in a crude state, are the three Dragons; these must be united into ‘one potent most potent,’ which must devour all the rest.)

“Farewell, diligent reader. In reading these things, invoke the Spirit of Eternal Light; speak little, meditate much, and judge aright.”

9. This is good advice, whether the Truth be sought in one direction or another.

10. As the union of *Sol* and *Luna* is so much insisted on by these writers, we will adduce another example of it from an Alchemist of considerable authority, or rather distinction; for we must not forget that mere authority is but of little importance with this class of students, with whom the Truth alone is the sovereign authority.

“Now, that you may avoid false processes, and have a sure foundation to build upon, as to particulars, so as to make them profitable, and fail neither in the beginning, continuation, or end of your Work, I shall lay down the following *Philosophic verity*, for a Rule, viz:

“*You must unite Sol and Luna (here are the two fishes in Medea’s broth, Phoebus and Daphne, Siccum and Humidum, intellect and the affections,) so firmly and absolutely, that they may be for ever inseparable.* (The reader, surely, need not be told that this is not a work of the hands.) If you know not how to do this, you know nothing truly in our Art.

“Understand this thing rightly, and lay hold of it with diligence, so will the veil of Ignorance be taken from your eyes; for all processes which centre not in this verity are vain and false.

“Now, that you may have no cause to complain of the brevity of the afore-declared *Philosophic verity*, hear further what the Ancients and great men in this Art say:—*You must so join or mix gold and silver (Sol and Luna again) that they may not, by any possible means whatever, be separated.*

“What think you, if I should so perfectly unite these two Bodies,—what would this Union come to? The Searcher after Truth must judge.

“But truly I tell thee, this united *Sol* and *Luna*, if perfectly effected, can never be separated; no, neither by *Aqua fortis*, nor by any other *trial* whatever.

“And when they are thus united, it is a very great and profitable particular: for here *Luna*, by the virtue and power of *Sol*, is totally *fixed*, graduated, and made ponderous.

“This is the particular which the Ancients, learned in this *Art*, bid you to understand; that you may be able to proceed on to the conclusion of the great Word.

* * * * *

“And here the true *Filius Hermetis* may see, that the doctrine of the true Philosophers differs much from the juggling processes of the deceivers, *for that our particulars have their offspring from the Root of the true universal subject.*

“And it is the greatest of Truths, *that the conjunction and union of the Bodies of Sol and Luna is the real beginning of our true medicine, elixir, or tincture,*

“Among the vulgar processes there is nothing but

falsehood and deceit, wherein the *Luna* is never *fixed*, but is wanting in ponderosity, and black; having been only washed, and fixed (as they call it) with Salt, and graduated with the Sulphurs of *Mars and Venus*, and make ponderous with *Saturn*.

“O foolishness! O blindness of mind! Can common Salt be the Soap (another name for the water of Hollandus, the vinegar of Artephius, etc.) of the Philosophers? Can common Saturn, or its virtum, ever become *our ponderous Ruby Star, our Red Fixed Eagle, our Red Fixed Sulphur of Sol, or our Fixed Salamander*, ever living in the Fire?

“He that hath once truly obtained the right *augmentum*, is assured that he has met with the infallible verity, with an incorruptible Tincture, yea, with an infinite Treasure; and needs the help of no other Instructor.

“This *Augmentum* in the particular and universal way, is to be kept in the profundity of Philosophic Silence; and when discoursed of, to be done only in parables, riddles, and similitudes, and as it were at a distance, that profane and vile persons may be kept from the knowledge thereof. (This writer has not

then, in violation of his own rule, told us anything openly.)

“The possessor of this Treasure has no occasion to run to kings, princes, lords, nobles, or great men; they who do so have none of the Secret, but desire to try conclusions at other men’s charges.

“The true possessor seeks not after such friendship, or earthly glories; he is content with his *modicum*, or little, and has enough, even the whole world, in his Philosophic egg,* which he can carry about with him wherever he goes.”

11. If the reader can discover the two Bodies so constantly referred to by these writers, he will make a great step towards understanding their theory. But he must not imagine he knows them by any mere *names* whatever, for these vary indefinitely under a constantly prevailing idea. In the Sophist of Plato the idea may be sought, perhaps successfully, in the discussion upon the words *entity* and *nonentity*, the student carefully noticing how *entity* is made to dis-

*The *Philosopher’s Egg* is of course his Head; but his head must be in the Heavens, in Swedenborg’s sense, or he sees nothing truly.

appear, and how *nonentity* is brought in among things that *are*, the difficulty of understanding either being very fully illustrated and insisted on.

12. It may also greatly assist to read Cratylus some half a dozen times, under the idea that it is a symbolical discussion upon the nature of *things* under the form of an inquiry about *names*. "What is this very thing, *name?*" that is, what is a *thing?* The "name-founder" is God.

13. The question of the Trinity in Unity, is involved in this subject, to wit, in what sense two (somethings) can be conceived as one, which, with the two, constitutes a Trinity in Unity. It is a considerable step towards satisfaction, when the student is impressed with the notion that the Truth, whatever it be, is irrevocable and irreversible; and that it is our business to discover it, if possible; not to change it, or to influence it in any manner, contrary to its nature, but to accommodate ourselves to it.

Perhaps we can find the Key to all Alchemical processes by giving careful attention to the teachings of Eliphas Levi concerning what he calls the "Great Magic Agent, or the Mysteries of the Astral Light.

This will also help to explain much of the great secret power of the Rosicrucians (Magnetists) if carefully read and *studied*.

“There exists a Force in nature which is far more powerful than steam, by means of which a single man, who can master it and *knows* how to direct it, might throw the world into confusion and transform its force. It is diffused through infinity; it is the substance of heaven and earth, for it is either fixed or volatile according to its degree of polarization. It was termed by Hermes Trismegistus the Grand Telesma. When it produces radiance it is called Light. It is that substance which was created by God before all else when He said: ‘Let there be light.’ It is substance and motion at one and the same time; it is a fluid and a perpetual vibration. The inherent force by which it is put into activity is called *magnetism*. In infinite space, it is ether or etherized light; it becomes astral light in the stars which it magnetizes, while in organized beings it becomes *magnetic light* or *fluid*. In man it forms the astral body, or plastic mediator. The will of intelligent beings acts directly on this light, and, by means thereof, upon all nature,

which is made subject to the modifications of intelligence. This force was known to the ancients; it consists of a Universal Agent having equilibrium for its supreme law, while its direction depends immediately on the Great Arcanum of Transcendent Magic. By the direction of this agent we can change the very order of the seasons, produce in the night the phenomena of day, correspond instantaneously from one end of the earth to the other, discern, like Apollonius, what is taking place at the Antipodes, *heal* or hurt at a distance, and endow human speech with a universal reverberation and success. This agent, which barely manifests under the uncertainties of the art of Mesmer and his followers, is precisely what the mediaeval Adepts called the *first matter* of the *magnus opus*. The Gnostics represented it as the burning body of the Holy Ghost, and this it was which adored in the Secret Rites of the Sabbath or the Temple under the Symbolic figure of Baphomet, or of the Androgyne Goat of Mendes.

“This ancient and all-penetrating fluid, this ray detached from the sun’s splendor, and fixed by the weight of the atmosphere and by the power of central

attraction, this body of the Holy Ghost, which we call the Astral Light and the Universal Agent, this Electro-Magnetic Ether, this Vital and luminous caloric, is represented on ancient monuments by the girdle of Isis, which twines in a love-knot round two poles, by the bull-headed serpent, by the serpent with the head of a goat or dog, in the ancient theogonies, and by the serpent devouring its own tail, emblem of prudence and of Saturn. It is the winged Dragon of Medea, the double serpent of the Caduceus, and the tempter of Genesis; but it is also the brazen snake of Moses, encircling the Tau, that is, the generative lingam; it is the Hyle of the Gnostics, and the double tail which forms the legs of the solar cock of Abraxos. Lastly, it is the devil of exoteric dogmatism, and is really the blind force which souls must conquer, in order to detach themselves from the chains of earth; for if their Will does not free them from its fatal attraction, they will be absorbed in the current by the same power which first produced them, and will return to the central and eternal fire. (This is the legend of the snakes fascinating men.)

“The Great Magic Agent is revealed by four kinds

of phenomena, and has been subjected to the uncertain manipulation of profane science under four names—caloric, light, electricity, magnetism. These four imponderable fluids are, therefore, the diverse manifestations of one and the same force, which is that substance created, as already declared, by God, before all else, when He said, 'Let there be Light!' and there was light. Everything which exists has been evolved from it, and it preserves and reproduces all forms. (Here is the Key to Alchemy.)

“The Great Magic Agent is the fourth emanation of the life-principle of which the sun is the third form, for the day-star is only the reflection and material shadow of the sun of Truth which illuminates the intellectual world, which itself is in turn but a gleam borrowed from the Absolute. The sun of the Divine world is the infinite, spiritual, and uncreated light; this light is, so to speak, verbalised in the Philosophical world, and becomes the focus of souls and of truth; then it is incorporated and changed into visible light in the sun of the third world, the central sun of suns, of which the fixed stars are the immortal sparks.

“The Astral Light, *being the instrument of life*, naturally collects at *living* centres; it cleaves to the kernel of planets as to the Heart of man (and by the heart we understand, in magic, the great sympathetic), but it identifies itself with the individual life of the existence which it animates. Thus it is terrestrial in its connections with the earth, and exclusively human in its connection with man. We are, in fact, saturated with this light and continually project it to make room for more; by this projection the personal atmosphere of Swedenborg is created. The settlement and polarization of light about a centre produces a living being; it attracts all the matter necessary to perfect and preserve it, but it is not the immortal spirit, as the Indian hierophants, and every school of Goethic magic, have imagined. It is by no means the body of the *protoplasts*, as was supposed by the Theurgists of the Alexandrian sect; it is the first physical manifestation of the Divine Breath. God creates it eternally, and man, in the image of the Deity, modifies and apparently multiplies it in the reproduction of his species.

“The Astral Light or terrestrial fluid is saturated with images or reflections of all kinds, which can be evoked by our souls and submitted to its Diaphane, as the Kabbalists call it; this is the *modus operandi* of all visions. What we call imagination is simply the inherent faculty of the soul to assimilate the images and reflections contained in the living light which is the Great Magnetic Agent. The Astral Light preserves the images of all that has taken place in the past, the reflections of worlds gone by, and analogical foreshadowing of worlds to come. It is by means of this light that statical visionaries place themselves in communication with all the worlds, as so frequently occurred to Emanuel Swedenborg, who was, nevertheless, not perfectly lucid, since he could not distinguish between direct rays and reflections. Clairvoyants merely evoke the images of places in the Astral Light; they do not actually travel to those places, and they can see nothing but what exists in this light, which is latent, and, acting on the nerves, enables somnambulists to perceive by means of the nerves only and without the help of radiating light.

“The Book of Consciences, which, according to the

Christian doctrine, will be opened on the Last Day, is nothing more than the Astral Light, in which are preserved the impressions of every Logos, that is, every action and every form. (Truly some of us will not be delighted to see this open before our vision.) There are no solitary acts and there are no secret acts; all that we truly will, that is, all that we confirm by our deeds, is written in the Astral Light. It is in this light that the forms of those no longer on earth are evoked, and by its means are accomplished the contested but veritable mysteries of necromancy. When summoned by an illumined reason, these forms are harmoniously manifested; summoned by folly, they appear disorderly and monstrous.

“The Great Magic Agent, when subordinated to a blind mechanism and proceeding from centres automatically produced, is a dead light which works mathematically according to given impulses or necessary laws. On the contrary, the human light is only fatal to the ignorant; it is subject to the intelligence, subordinate to the imagination, and dependent on the Will of man. It is a compound agent, natural and divine, material and spiritual; ever active, ever rich

in *seve*, ever alive with ravishing dreams and luxurious images; it may be called, in a certain sense, the Imagination of Nature, as we have said. Blind in itself, and subordinated to every will, either for *good* or *evil*, this *circulus* always renewing an unconquerable life which causes vertigo in the imprudent, this Universal Seducer, conveys light, yet propagates darkness; it may be named as equally Lucifer and Lucifuge; it is a serpent but also a nimbus; it is of the nature of Fire, but it may belong equally to the torments of hell and to the incense-offerings dedicated to Heaven. To Master it, we must, like the pre-destined woman, set a foot upon its head.

“The Astral Light (Magnetic fluid) is the Key to all dominion, the secret of *all* powers, the Universal glass of visions, the bond of sympathies, the source of Love, prophecy, and glory, the instrument of thau-maturgic art and of divination. To know how to master this agent so as to profit by and to direct its currents is to accomplish the *magnus opus* (to become an Alchemist of the highest order), to be Master of the world, and *the depository even of the power of God*. The absolute secret of this direction has been pos-

essed by certain men, and can yet be recovered—it is the Great Magic Arcanum; it depends on an incommunicable axiom, and on an instrument which is the great and unique Athanor of the Hermetists of the higher grade. All Magic Science consists in the knowledge of this secret. To know it and to *dare* to make use of it is human omnipotence; to reveal it to an outsider is to loose it; to reveal it to a disciple is to abdicate in favor of such disciple, who, from that moment, has the right of life and death over his Initiator, and will certainly kill him for fear of dying himself. (This has nothing in common with deeds defined as murder in criminal legislation; practical philosophy, the basis of ordinary laws, denies the facts of bewitchment and occult influences.)

“The Great Magic Agent has four properties—to dissolve, to consolidate, to quicken, and to moderate. These four properties, directed by the Will of man, can modify all phases of Nature. In making use of the term fluid in connection with this force, we employ a received expression, but we are far from determining that the latent light is a fluid; everything, on the contrary, leads us to prefer the system of vibrations,

in the explanation of this phenomenal force. However this may be, the coming synthesis of chemistry will probably lead our physicists to a knowledge of the Universal Agents, and then what will hinder them from determining the strength, number and direction of its magnets? A complete revolution in science will follow, and we shall *return* to the Transcendent Magic of the Chaldeans.”

14. In the *Sanskrit Bhagvat Gita*, translated by Wilford, it is declared to be the height of wisdom to perceive *action in inaction*, and *inaction in action*; which means, if it means anything, that cause (active) and effect (passive) are two modes of the manifestation of one thing.

15.—In harmony with this view, Plato says, in the *Philebus*, that causes, taken universally, and effects, taken universally, are one and the same; for, in the nature of things, every particular cause of something must itself be the particular effect of something; and so, in like manner, every particular effect becomes a cause, or, more strictly speaking, the *occasion* or *condition* under which the uncaused existence in itself acts within itself.

“But there is need,” says Plato, in the *Parentides*, “of a person naturally clever to discover these things, and of a person still more wonderful to be able to explain them in a sufficiently clear manner.”

16. The Alchemists all refer the student to God, the uncaused cause of all things, who alone commands, “Let there be Light;”—and they tell us that the mere study of books cannot attain to it; which is, no doubt, one reason among others for their mystical mode of writing of *Salt*, *Sulphur*, and *Mercury*. They say it can only be learned by inspiration, or by the teaching of one who has so learned it; but yet it should be stated, that they consider a sound understanding as the gift of God;—and he certainly must, of all men, be the most blind, who denies that his faculties are gifts of the Most High. (1 Cor. iv:7.)

CHAPTER III.

We should not have accomplished our work, if we were to omit to notice the History of the Alchemists published by Charles Mackay, LL.D., included in a couple of volumes (1852) entitled, *Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions, and the Madness of Crowds*. Dr. Mackay had devoted some hundred and thirty pages of close print, duodecimo, to the Alchemists, and has given sketches, or what purport to be such, of some forty *Searchers for the Philosopher's Stone, and the Water of Life*.

2. In the whole of this work there is not a single paragraph to show that Dr. Mackay took any other than the most literal view of the *work* of the class of men whose memoirs he assumed to write. He seems not to have had the slightest suspicion that the Hermetic Philosophers had any other object in their studies and labors than gold, or the discovery of an agent for lengthening life. He nowhere shows that the improvement, not to say perfection of life, can ever have been an object with them, but has brought together all sorts of ridiculous stories, most of which

carry their refutation on their face, while many of the extracts he has given from the writings of the Alchemists are of such a character as to suggest, one would think, a double sense, even to the most ordinary reader. Many of those peculiar men, according to Dr. Mackay's own account, sacrificed ease, honors, and wealth, and submitted even to the loss of life, in the absorbing pursuit of one only object: and yet he nowhere shows the slightest capacity for discovering the nature of that object.

3. When I first saw these Memoirs, my curiosity, chiefly, was awakened; and I searched the volume to discover the real object of the Alchemists, hoping that it might indirectly appear, for it very soon became plain that the author knew nothing of it. This History now strikes me as one of the saddest books I ever had in my hands.

4. Here is an entire class of men, scattered through many centuries, devoting their whole lives to the highest objects that can engage the attention of man,—to the study of Wisdom, the Knowledge of God, and the nature of the human Soul,—and yet, almost without exception, they are represented as a parcel of

fools, vagabonds, and impostors! Though some of them are admitted by the author of this History to have possessed the highest genius, he was incapable of even surmising a hidden purpose in all their industrious "folly" in pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone, but with the greatest pains he has labored to consign their memory to the contempt of all after ages.

5. That some of the individuals whose lives (?) have been written by Dr. Mackay were impostors, is willingly conceded, as freely as I confess that multitudes of men have led the lives of wolves under the mask of following the Lamb of God; but where is the excuse for one who formally attempts to instruct the world by an historical memoir, without information as a foundation, and without the ability to discriminate between the true and the false; and most likely, in this case, without even consulting the writings of the men of whom he assumed to write the history, where, at least, he would have found the most abundant warnings not to be understood literally?

6. "The Philosophers," says one, "even discourse in parables and figures; nor is it fit that all things should be revealed to everybody. The matter is to be

inquired after, and diligently searched into;—without labor and pains nothing is to be obtained; but wisdom enters not into profane souls, nor dwells in a body subject to sin, as the wise man affirms.

“Let the studious reader,” says another, “have a care of the manifold signification of words, for by deceitful windings, and doubtful, yea, contrary speeches, (as it should seem,) philosophers unfold their mysteries, with a desire of concealing and hiding the truth from the *unworthy*, not of sophisticating or destroying it.”

7. Flammel illustrated the subject with hieroglyphic figures, *which he explained at length, but still in cypher*. That he refers to the Christian mystery, is sufficiently plain. In one place he refers to “the Three Persons rising again, clothed in sparkling white, which represents,” says he, “The *Body, Soul, and Spirit* of our White Stone.”

“The Philosophers,” says he, “do commonly use these terms to hide the secret from *unworthy* men. They call the Body the *black earth*, which is obscure and dark, and which we make white. They call the Soul the other half, divided from the body, which, by

the purpose of God, and work of nature, gives to the Body, by its Imbibitions and Fermentations, a *vegetable* Soul; viz., a Power and Virtue to bud, or spring, increase, multiply, and become *alike*, like a naked, shining sword.

“They call the Spirit the Tincture and Dryness; which, as a spirit, has power to pierce all things.

“It would be tedious to tell you how great reason the philosophers had to say always, and in all places, *Our Stone hath, answerable to human kind, a Body, a Soul, and a Spirit.*

“I will only inculcate to you, that as a man endued with *Body, Soul, and Spirit* is, notwithstanding, one man, or substance; so likewise in this your *White Compositum* (yourself, reader), you have got one only substance, yet containing a *Body, Soul, and Spirit*, which are inseparably united.

“I could easily give you most clear comparisons and expositions of this *Body, Soul, and Spirit*, not fit to be divulged; but should I explicate them, I must, of necessity, declare things which God reserves to Himself, to reveal to a select few of such as fear and love

him, and therefore ought not to be written." (Matt. vii:6.)

"Let me entreat you," says Combachius, in his *Epistle to the Reader*, "to take notice that when you find any mention made of *Heaven, Earth, Soul, Spirits* or *our Heaven*, etc., these are not meant the *celestial heaven*, or *natural earth*, but terms used by the philosophers to obscure their sayings from the *wicked*; spoken with all due and holy reverence to the *Divine Majesty*."

"I would have the courteous Reader be here admonished," says Sandivogius, "that he understand my writings, not so much from my words, merely, as from the possibility of nature; lest afterwards he bewail his time, pains, and costs, all spent in vain. Let him consider that this Art is for the wise, not for the ignorant." (Dan. xii:10; 1 Cor. iii:18.)

8. There is scarcely a single writer upon this *Art*, who does not give similar warnings to guard against being understood *literally*. Their writings, therefore, are nothing but *suggestions* giving occasion for thought in the reader, who must look into *himself* and into nature for an interpretation.

Let us go a little further into the teachings of the Alchemist Sandivogius, who lived and wrote in 1650.

“There is,” he tells us, “abundance of Knowledge, yet but *little truth known*. I know of but two ways that are ordained for getting of wisdom, namely: the Book of God and the book of Nature; and these also, but as they are read with reason. Many look upon the former as a thing below them; upon the latter, as a ground for atheism, and therefore neglect both. It is my judgment, that as to search the Scripture is most necessary; so without reason it is impossible to understand them. Faith without reason is but implicity. If I cannot understand by reason how a thing is, yet I see that a thing is so, before I will believe it to be so. I will ground my believing upon reason; I will improve my reason by philosophy.

“When God made man after his own image, how was that? Was it not by making him a rational creature? Men, therefore, that lay aside reason, in the reading of Sacred Mysteries, do but *un-man* themselves, and become involved in labyrinths of errors. Hence, their religion is degenerated into irrational notions.

“The Most High Creator was willing to manifest all natural things unto man; wherefore, He showed to us that celestial things themselves were naturally made, by which His absolute and incomprehensible power and wisdom might be so much the more freely acknowledged; of all which things the Alchemists in the light of nature, as in a looking-glass, have a clear sight. For which cause they esteemed this Art, not out of covetousness for gold and silver, but for *knowledge's sake*, not only of all natural things, but also the power of the Creator; but they were willing to speak of these things only sparingly and figuratively, lest the Divine mysteries by which nature is illustrated should be discovered by the unworthy; which thou (reader), if thou knowest how to know thyself, and are not of a stiff neck, mayest easily comprehend, created as thou art in the likeness of the great world, yea, after the Image of God.”

One of the clearest articles on the work of the Alchemists, or the Philosopher's Stone, is that by Gen. N. B. Buford, published in “The Rosicrucian Brotherhood,” April, 1907, and brings out clearly what the Alchemists sought and contradicts the accusation of

Dr. Mackay that the Alchemists were fools or Impostors. In fact, no student of the present day would make such accusation unless he himself were a fool or had been misled by one of the many who advertise themselves as teachers of the Occult and Divine Sciences which no *true* teacher will ever do. Says Gen. Bulford:

“The Arabians, at the highest of their power, when they had conquered Alexandria, all the North of Africa, and Spain, were for a time the most advanced Philosophers and Physicians of the civilized world. I quote one of them, Alipilli:

“ ‘The highest wisdom consists in this, for man to *know himself*, because in him God has placed His eternal word, by which all things were made and upheld, to be his light and life, by which he is capable of knowing *all* things in time and eternity. * * * Therefore, let the high inquirers and reachers into the deep mysteries of nature, learn first to know what they have *in* themselves, before they seek into foreign matters without them; and by the divine power *within* them, let them first heal themselves, and *transmute* their own Souls; then they may go on prosperously,

and seek with good success the mysteries and wonders of God in all natural things.'

I admonish thee that desirest to dive into the inmost parts of nature, if that which thou seekest thou findest not *within* thee, thou wilt never find it without thee. The universal orb of the world contains not so great mysteries and excellencies as a little man, formed by God in his own image. And he who desires the primacy among the students of nature, will nowhere find a greater or better field of study than *himself*. So, with a loud voice I proclaim: 'O, man, *know thyself!* In thee is hid the treasure of treasures!''

In as clear a manner, George Ripley declares the subject of the Stone, in the following lines:

"For as of one mass was made all things
Right, so must it in our practice be,
All our secrets of one image must spring:
In philosopher's books, therefore, who wishes may see,
Our stone is called the less world, one and three."

That is, the Stone is *man*, of one nature, of Body, Soul, and Spirit.

In the "Alchemists's Enchiridon," published in 1672, man is indicated as the stone, as follows:

“Now will I manifest to thee the nature of the stone of the philosophers, appareled with a triple garment, even this stone of riches and charity, the stone of relief from languishment; in which is contained every secret, being a divine mystery and gift of God, than which there is nothing in this world more sublime.

“Therefore diligently observe: it is appareled with a triple garment, that is to say, with a body, soul, and spirit.”

Thus, again, it appears man is the central object in all alchemical books; yet not man as he is an individual, but as he is a Nature, containing or manifesting the great world, or as he is the Image of God.

I will next quote Geber, another Arabian, whose strange mode of expression gave rise to our word “gibberish.”

“The artist should be intent on the true end only, because our art is reserved in the divine will of God, and is given to, or withheld from, whom He will.”

He speaks of the stone as a “medicine rejoicing and preserving the body in youth.” This in alchemical language is immortality, and how can it be better preserved than as perpetual youth?

Here is one of the prescriptions for obtaining perpetual youth :

“Take a pound of persistence, and wash it with the water of your eyes; then let lie by your heart; then take of the best faith, hope, and charity, you can get a like quantity, and mix all together; use this confection every day. Then take both your hands full of good works and keep them close in a clear conscience, and use as occasion requires.” (Quoted before.)

Had Ponce de Leon understood this recipe, he might have been saved his trials and journeys in Florida in pursuit of the fountain of perpetual youth.

No Alchemist supports his views by appeals to authority. He would have every doctrine tested by “the possibility of nature.” He acknowledges no master but One. He would have all things brought to the standard of truth; but truth must be submitted to God, who is All in All—the One Master.

The Alchemists in Christian countries received the doctrines of Jesus as true in themselves, or in the nature of things; but they were not accepted as true simply on the ground that Jesus announced them. With them the “wisdom of the doctrine established

the truth of Christianity, not the miracles. The wisdom of the doctrine is the truth of it, and this is the authority of God.”

I now come to the announcement that the Conscience is the starting point in pursuit of the Philosopher's Stone. A consideration of more importance than all others is that Conscience cannot be said to err; in other words, the Conscience cannot sin. It sits in judgment upon every man, approving the good and condemning the bad, but in itself it is incorruptible. When we say a man has a bad conscience, we do not properly speak of the conscience, but of the man, whom a good conscience condemns! The error is not in the conscience, but in the judgment employed in applying means for the accomplishment of ends. The conscience has reference to ends, and not to means. A man is approved or condemned according to the end he aims at. If the end is approved by the wise, a mistake in the means, however lamented, commands pity and not condemnation.

The highest of all religious duties is that of obedience to God. It is right for the creature to obey the Creator. An obedience rendered on any other ground

than right would not be free; and if produced by hope of reward or fear of punishment is destitute of virtue. A sense of duty made cheerful by love is the true ground of that perfect obedience to God which it is the object of all pure religion to secure. Fear never made, or can make, a man religious.

The key to a true life is nothing else but a true life itself; and this is the root of all philosophy which aims at the elevation of man, and in fine it is the root itself, or rather it is root, body, and branches. In vain, then, do men go out of themselves for that which can only be found within themselves.

By symbolism the Alchemists escape the difficulty of treating the subject in ordinary language; for the meaning of the terms employed must be taught by the nature of things; they must be tested by "the possibility of nature." They tell us, whoever departs from nature is lost, and must commence his work anew. Whoever is without the bounds of nature is in error.

When the Alchemists speak of a long life as one of the gifts of the Stone, *they mean immortality*; when they attribute to the Stone the virtues of a Universal

Medicine, the cure of all diseases; they mean to deny the positive nature of evil, and thus deny its perpetuity; when they tell us that the Stone is "the cut throat of covetousness and of all evil desires," they mean that all evil affections disappear in the light of truth, as darkness yields to the presence of light.

Hermetic philosophy is not a doctrine; *it is properly a practice*. It is the practice of truth, justice, and goodness. Now the law of Conscience being the Law of God in the Soul of man, obedience to it becomes of the first importance to all men. Very few, in these days, recognize the conscience as the oracle of God, the Immanuel, and guide to his presence.

The power of man is defined by the knowledge of God—his acceptance of it, and his submission to it. A right view of this will explain the power and weakness of man, the power being measured by reason, the weakness by passion.

Such lessons as these eminently fit the Hermetic philosopher for the instruction of young men. Passion unseats reason. They repeatedly cry out: "*O Man, Know Thyself.*"

All the Hermetic writers quote the Egyptian

Hermes, not the later Greek one, as of men, the highest source of thought and knowledge, or the *Logos* embodied, and hence called him Trismegitus. The Neoplatonists also attributed to him the same superiority. The Hermetic creed is embraced in what is called the Smaragdine (or Emerald) Table. It is attributed to Hermes; but its real history, like that of the church creed itself, is entirely unknown. I shall proceed to compare them. It is admitted both by the churchmen and philosophers that the principal points are in harmony in the two creeds on the vital points of both of them.

The Hermetic creed on the Smaragdine Table reads thus:

I. This is true and far distant from a lie: whatsoever is below is like that which is above; and that which is above is like that which is below. By this is acquired and perfected the miracle of one thing.

Here is a positive affirmation of something as true; and God is truth; in the above and below we recognize the heaven and earth of the creed: for these are declared to be the work of God, who cannot make anything contrary to his own nature. Now, the clear par-

allel to the first article of the church creed is as follows:

(1) I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

The second article of the Hermetic creed is:

II. Also, as all things were made from one, by the help of one; so all things are made from one thing by conjunction.

By this (one) we recognize the *Logos*, word, in the Gospel of John. This word, in the creed, is the person. The second article of the church creed reads:

(2) And in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord.

The third article of the Hermetic creed reads:

III. The father thereof is the sun, and the mother is the moon; the wind carries it in its belly, and the nurse thereof is the earth.

Here the sun and the moon must be taken as symbols of the invisible father and the visible mother of all things, commonly called nature. The allusion to wind and to the earth is a declaration that living things must have air and body, life being the subject of both creeds.

The third article of the church creed expresses this, thus:

(3) Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, (and) born of the Virgin Mary.

The fourth article of the Hermetic creed reads:

IV. This the mother or fountain of all perfection; and its power is perfect and entire, if it be changed into earth.

This article will recall to your minds the fact that John, the beloved disciple, was perfected at the foot of the cross by the reception of the mother, which in the Hermetic creed is called the mother, or fountain of all perfection.

The earth is here used as a symbol of what the Hermetic philosophers call the fixation of the matter of the philosopher's stone, which is their mode of teaching the necessity of practice; no doctrine being considered as established until introduced into life and made actual by practice.

The fifth article of the Hermetic creed reads thus:

V. Separate the earth from the fire, and the subtle and thin from the gross and thick; but prudently, with

long suffering, gentleness, and patience, and with wisdom and judgment.

This means the preparation of their Art: *the purification of the matter of the stone*; in one word, *the purification of man*; the separation of the earth from the fire, the pure from the impure, which can only be done by wisdom and patience; there being nothing more difficult in our lives than to bring about a reformation of a man confirmed in evil habits.

The sixth article of the Hermetic creed still refers to the one.

VI. It ascends from earth up to heaven, and descends again from the heavens to the earth, and receives the powers and efficacy of the superiors and inferiors.

The parallel of this is found in the articles of the church creed from the fourth to the eighth. They all refer to the one, who is the subject of both creeds.

(4) (He, the one) suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried;

(5) He descended into hell;

(6) The third day he arose from the dead;

(7) He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;

(8) From whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

In the church creed, the one is said to pass from earth to heaven, and from thence descend again to earth with wonderful powers, which now follows in the seventh and eighth articles of the Hermetic creed.

VII. In this work, you acquire to yourself the wealth and glory of the whole world; drive therefore from you all cloudiness, or obscurity, and darkness, and blindness.

The wealth and glory signify truth and wisdom, which the spirit may acquire in the successful experiences of life.

The parallel of the eighth church article above recited, is found in the article of the Hermetic creed.

VIII. For the work, increasing or going on in strength, adds strength to strength, forestalling and over-topping all other fortitudes and powers, and is able to subjugate and conquer all things, whether they be thin and subtle, or thick and solid bodies.

Here the power of the one over the quick and the

dead, the power over all things in the church creed, is paralleled by the thin and subtle (the living), and the thick and solid (the dead) in the Hermetic creed.

The two creeds are evidently couched in mystical language, and they refer to the same mystery, represented as history in the visible church, but spiritually discerned, by the followers of the esoteric view. The remaining articles of the church creed are instructions in points of faith.

(9) I believe in the Holy Ghost,

(10) The Holy Catholic Church; the communion of saints;

(11) The forgiveness of sins;

(12) The resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Hermetic creed concludes as follows:

IX. In this manner was the world made; and hence are wonderful conjunctions or joinings together of matter and parts there, and the marvelous, when in this way it was done, by which these wonders are effected.

X. And for this cause I am called Hermes Trismegistus; for that I have the knowledge and under-

standing of the philosophy of the three principles of the universe. My doctrine or discourse, which I have here delivered concerning the solar work, is complete and perfect.

This is the whole of the creed of the Hermetic philosophers, who saw in it the doctrine of what they call the Great Work of making the Philosopher's Stone. The three principles of the universe is another expression for the trinity, which they all believed in, though they entered into no controversies about persons, substances or things.

That Swedenborg was one of the most remarkable men of modern times is believed by all the scholars who have studied his writings. He was a proficient in all the sciences, an engineer of genius, and was noble in the highest attributes of man. When about fifty years old his thoughts were exclusively turned to religion. He calls his new state the opening of his internal sight; as if a supernatural influence had been exerted upon him, which we attributed to the Lord. General Hitchcock has proved that he was thoroughly acquainted with the principles of the Hermetic writers, and also with Spinoza. The principle upon which

the heavenly arcana was written is usually called that of correspondence. He thus states it:

“There is not anything in the mind to which something of the body does not correspond; and this which corresponds may be called the embodying of that.”

In the Smaragdine Table, just read, this principle was thus announced:

“That which is above is as that which is beneath, and that which is beneath is as that which is above, to work the miracles of one thing.”

The “above” and “beneath” are the spiritual and natural worlds of Swedenborg; and the “one thing” is the Lord, the life of the two worlds. In the language of Swedenborg, the Lord is the end, the spiritual world the cause, and the natural world is the effect; yet the effect contains the cause, and both express the life. Call them *salt*, *sulphur*, and *mercury*, and we shall express the same in alchemical language. The natural world, the visible is a world of effect, and symbolizes or “corresponds,” to the spiritual world, and would be nothing without it, as the spiritual, in its turn, would be nothing without the life, the “one thing” in all.

This doctrine has been thus expressed: "Heaven above, heaven beneath, stars above, stars beneath. All that is above is also beneath. Understand this and be happy."

The principle of correspondence is also found in Plato:

"His intelligible world, or world of ideas, contains the types or patterns of all natural things in the universe; our houses, our ships, our furniture, and our implements."

The Alchemists were of the opinion that true religion cannot be taught. It may be preached about, talked about, and written about; but there always remains something in the depths of a religious soul which cannot be expressed in language. Hence the line: "Expressive silence muse his praise," is the best utterance of a true religious feeling. The final step, the entrance into "light," is not taken by any force of mere human will. This is one of the reasons for the use in all past ages of symbolic writing.

We may now see how the Hermetic philosophers handled the subject of man's free will. To obtain the idea of God's omnipotence in the usual sense, and of

the eternity and immutability of His decrees, as extending to all things, and at the same time, the notion of man's free agency, as if he possessed an actual power of his own, is impossible. Whoever holds these two opinions must necessarily carry about a conflict within himself. One or both sets of ideas should be purified, in order to produce harmony. If the philosopher's stone could solve this question, it might be worth seeking if for nothing else. Let us hear the Hermetic writers :

“Let the power of God be called sulphur, and the power of man, mercury ; then find a salt that shall be their unity. This is the problem. The philosopher may find that the controversy lies between two of the elements or principles of man, and must last until the third principle is recognized, which, though last discovered, is the first in order, and stands above, as it were, the other two, and through it decides, though it takes no part in the controversy. This third principle, when *awakened* in man, his God-given intuition, he no longer ‘opines’ about things, but ‘knows.’ The Alchemist call this knowledge ‘The gift of God.’ God

must be the author and finisher of our faith, if we have a true faith!"

Perhaps you may discover an analogy in what I shall next quote.

"Two of the principles of the Alchemists are called extremes, but an invisible one includes the two inseparably, as one idea with two images. When the idea is realized, its illustrations become multitudinous. Let us examine this one: Wronging and being wronged are the two extremes, caused by excess and deficiency; then comes justice by equality in the middle. Justice is the regulating principle of the universe, operating silently and invisibly, but as surely, as it is absolutely beyond the control of man. The link between the human and Divine, matter and spirit, has never been revealed. Is not this the Philosopher's Stone?"

It is impossible in a limited space to more than indicate the symbolism used by the Hermetic philosophers. I shall indicate a few of them: *salt*, *sulphur*, and *mercury* are the words commonly used for *body*, *soul* and *spirit*, but not invariably. The way indicates the conscience. A circle indicates nature now return-

ing into itself. We use the word nature for the true mother; she gives us a clue to walk by, to guide us; if we lose the clue, we fall into difficulties; her laws are everlasting commandments. The hand is used as the symbol of power; a *fearful beast for a bad passion*; a *tree for a firm principle*, rooted in the ground with its branches ascending to heaven. The black state of the matter is the one that can only be made white, by repentance.

Six boys and a little girl, the seven champions of Christendom, Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, Faith, Hope, and Charity. The plain ring indicates Humility. His horse, his pride. He turns his horse, indicates he reflects. The sun, the all-seeing eye, the moon, are used as emblems of the reason, the conscience, and the affections. The flail, that which separates the wheat from the straw, truth from error. The sea, life. Gold, truth.

I shall next quote Eckhart, one of the German mystics, born 1250, became a monk, and died in 1329. He did not use Hermetic language, and so was condemned by the hierarchy, but escaped punishment by dying.

He affirmed: "All religious truth lay within the sphere of human reason. The universe is that which truly exists. The soul is immaterial. The faculties of the soul are the external senses, and the lower and higher faculties. The lower faculties are the empirical understanding, the heart (organ of passions) and the appetitive faculty. The higher faculties are memory, reason, and will. The soul is not subject to the conditions of time and space. The soul is something intermediate between God and created things. The highest activity of the soul is that of cognition. There are three species of cognition: sensible, rational, and super-rational; only the last reaches the whole truth. Whatever can be expressed by words is comprehended by the lower faculties, but the higher ones are not satisfied with so little; they constantly press farther on, till they reach the source from whence the soul originally flowed forth. Knowledge is the foundation of all essence, the ground of love, the determining power of the will. Love is the principle of all virtues; love strives after the good.

The lowest faculties of the soul must be subordinated to the highest, and the highest to God. At the

judgment day, it is not God who pronounces judgment, *but man, who passes judgment on himself!*''

I have quoted enough to show that the mystical elements in Eckhart were his conception of the highest activity of the reason as an immediate intellectual intuition; his demand that the individual self should be given up, and his doctrine of complete union with God as the supreme end of man.

It was from reading General Hitchcock's books, commencing fifteen years ago, that my mind became fixed in the study of philosophy. I discovered the difference between thinking, essences, and opinions. The doctrine of an unchangeable order of Providence is as old as philosophy. The art of prophesying is divination concerning the future from things that are present and past. For neither is the original of anything without a cause, nor the foreknowledge of anything without a reason. It *is* this, that *preceded*; again, if this *is*, that *shall be*. The knowledge of the consequence is a rational thing; but sense gives the anticipation to reason.

The union of sense and reason in the soul is said to be a mystical marriage. On the one side nature is

seen as a blind force; on the other a life perfectly free. That there is a combination of these views resulting in a beautiful harmony, is the assertion of the Hermetic philosophers, while they have told us that their view is an incommunicable secret through the senses. This, in religion, I take to be a species of inspiration which has been felt in all ages. It is the common ground of true poetry, true philosophy, and true religion. The philosopher alone may attempt to explain this unity, but he is not satisfied with what he says. He told of it as the immutable; upon which, those who hear infer a fatality, that he does not mean at all. But after exhausting words and endeavoring to enunciate the unspeakable, the pious soul calls it God, and forbids all attempts to represent it by images.

In one word, the spirit is free, but finds its freedom only in recognizing itself in God, and then can submit to nothing else.

Nothing in the universe can be proved but by the assumption of something unchangeable, not requiring proof; but this is God, conceived in His immutability. It is because God does not change, and anything remains true from one instant to another."

To refute all of the absurdities to be found in Dr. Mackay's book would greatly exceed our limits. We have already shown with sufficient clearness, except to those who will not or cannot see, that the genuine Alchemists, confessed to be such by Dr. Mackay himself, were not in pursuit of either gold, or even of a long life, but simply of a good life; as, Geber, Artephius, Basil, Valentine, and some others not named by him, as Hollandus and Von Suchten; and by these examples, though few, have sufficiently proved that the so-called Memoirs must be worthless, and not only worthless, but entirely a fake in every sense of the word, except to feed the gaping stupidity of fools and knaves and such as *want* to be entirely ignorant of all that is good or which does not agree with their own *pet* belief.

9. Dr. Mackay, after telling thus that Peter Aponus was an "Eminent physician," closes the sad story of this martyr with didactic coldness, and without one syllable of sympathy, in these words:

"Having given utterance to some sentiments regarded religion (He should have said,—superstition,) which were the very reverse of orthodox, he was sum-

moned before the tribunal of the Inquisition (the hell of orthodoxism,) to answer for his crimes as a heretic and a sorcerer. He loudly protested his innocence, even upon the rack, where he suffered more torture than nature could support. He died in prison ere his trial was concluded, but was afterwards found guilty. His bones were ordered to be dug up and publicly burned. He was also burned in effigy in the streets of Padua.”

10. It may seem hardly charitable to say so, but one may almost think that the writer of this account would have assisted in the proceedings he so coldly records, had he been present, and never once have thought that the guiding spirit of these horrible abominations was the very same that presided in the dreadful scene enacted in Jerusalem in the reign of Tiberius.

11. Peter Aponus, the Alchemist, would have done better to have kept his speech within the charmed language of the class of men with whom he held sympathy. He might then freely have talked of Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury, (or God, Nature and Man,) and would have escaped the persecution and tyranny of the

most abominable of all tribunals that ever disgraced the world.

12. The reader, in view of this account of an "eminent physician," is requested to bear in mind one of the reasons we have assigned for the *esoteric* writings of the Hermetic Philosophers. In the age of Aponus, 1250, Luther himself would have been burned at the stake; but, by such men as Aponus, *the way had been prepared for the great reformation*, who merely proclaimed doctrines, the seeds of which had been sown some centuries in advance of his appearance in the world and Luther belonged to those very Impostors, otherwise the true Alchemists. It was by the labors of such men as Peter Aponus in the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, that Europe was sufficiently indoctrinated in the principles of free inquiry to make it comparatively safe to speak openly, as Luther did. The result, in our day, is perfect freedom of speech and writing, except from the low and vulgar tyranny of popular opinion; and it is the duty of all who know how to prize the privileges of religious freedom, to do justice to those who prepared the way to it.

13. One of the finest philosophic wits of his time, an Alchemist, was Bernard of Treves, sometimes called Trevisan, and often the *good* Trevisan. "He was born at Treves or Padua," says Mackay, "in the year 1406." Dr. Mackay introduces him to his readers in these words:

"The life of this philosopher is a remarkable instance of talent and perseverance misapplied. In the search of his chimera, nothing could daunt him. Repeated disappointment never diminished his hopes; and from the age of fourteen to that of eighty-five, he was incessantly employed among *the drugs and furnaces of his laboratory*, wasting his life with a view of prolonging it, and reducing himself to beggary in the hopes of growing rich."

14. If Dr. Mackay had simply said that Bernard of Treves employed a long life in the pursuit and practice of truth and goodness, he would have summed up all that need be said of him; except to give some account of his writings; instead of the which the historian has occupied several pages in recording a series of absurd stories, not one of which can possibly have been true of the man who wrote the *Letters to Thomas*

of *Bononia*, in which Bernard treats of Alchemy. In order to be sure of this, it is only necessary to know something of Alchemy and of the *style* of writing about it, and then to read the *Letters* with some, even faint, shadow of the critical spirit of Niebuhr. The author of the *Letters* never was guilty of the follies attributed to him.

15. I will make a short extract from the *Letters*, by which any one may see that Bernard was of a spirit kindred to that of Artephius, Valentine, and others, who wrote of Truth symbolically, when it was dangerous to speak openly.

16. The reader will please remember the principles of Artephius, and observe the parallel.

“He, therefore, that knows the art and secret of *dissolution*, hath attained the secret point of the art, which is to mingle thoroughly the *natures*, and out of natures (he means, of the Soul and Body), to extract natures which are effectually hid in them.”

17. You must bear in mind the doctrine of Hollandus and others, that *Saturn* is gold internally; that is, man contains a seed of goodness and truth *within* him, and the only point is to bring it out and make it

active without destroying the subject of it. For this purpose *dissolution* is here declared to be necessary, which means that the man must by gentle means, naturally, and not violently, be made modest and humble; or, in short, must be brought into the state of simplicity and truthfulness which Christ declared essential in him who would enter the kingdom of heaven.

18. Bernard next proceeds to oppose the practice of those who use violent means for this object, and says: "How then can it be said that he hath found the truth, who destroys the moist nature of Quicksilver? (By Quicksilver here, we are to understand the *water* of Hollandus and the *antimonial vinegar* of Artephius, i. e., the conscience, in the sight of God.) As those fools who deform its nature from its metallic (heavenly) disposition; and, dissolving its radical moisture, corrupt it, and thus disproportion (or turn aside) *quicksilver* from its first mineral quality,—which needs nothing but purity and simple decoction."

19. The point in this doctrine, and, as we have said repeatedly, it is the essential *starting-point* in Hermetic discipline (or philosophy), is, not to act upon the conscience through any of the passions; hope,

fear, or any other passion, to improve man; but, as far as possible, allay these or neutralize them, so as to open the way for the conscience to act freely, and according to its own essential, heavenly nature; and this, then, according to Pontanus, "will do the whole work, without any laying on of hands."

Bernard proceeds to enforce his view:

"For example: They who defile it with salts, vitriols, and aluminous things, do destroy it, and change it into some thing other than is the nature of *Quick-silver*. For the *seed* (the conscience) which Nature by its sagacity composed, they endeavor to perfect by violence; which undoubtedly is destructive to it, so far as it is useful and effective in *our* work. . . . For example: Fools draw corrosive waters from inferior minerals (pernicious doctrines from inferior teachers), into which they cast the species of metals, and corrode them: for they think that they are thereby dissolved with a natural solution; but this solution, to be permanent, requires a permanency of the *dissolver and the dissolved*, that a new Seed may result from both the masculine and feminine seed (i. e., the Soul and Body naturally dissolved by a divine conscience,

which belongs to them, and remains with them, are prepared [as Arthephius writes] for a new birth "in the air," that is, in the Spirit).

"I tell you assuredly," continues Bernard, "that no *water* dissolves any metallic species by a *natural solution*, save that which abides with them in matter and form, and which the metals themselves, being dissolved, can recongeal; which happens not when *Aqua-fortis* are used, which do rather defile the compound, that is, the Body (to wit: the man) to be dissolved; neither is that water proper for solution, which abides not with them in their coagulations, and finally *mercury* (the conscience) is of this sort, and not *Aqua-fortis* (the passions); nor that which fools imagine to be a limpid and diaphanous mercuria water (a mere imagination): for if they divide or abstract the homogeneity of Mercury, how can the first proportion of the feminine seed consist and be preserved? Because *mercury* cannot receive coagulation with the dissolved Bodies, neither will the true nature be renovated afterwards in the administration of the *art*; nay, but some other filthy and unprofitable thing."

"Yet thus they think they dissolve, mistaking na-

ture, but dissolved not: for *aquafortis* being abstracted, or taken away, (the external causes of excitement being removed,) the Body becometh *meltable* as before, and that water abides not with, nor subsists in, the Body, as its radical moisture. The Bodies indeed are *corroded*, but not dissolved; and by how much more they are corroded, they are so much the more estranged from a true metallic (heavenly) nature.”

20. The *bodies* that are here spoken of are the two constituents of man, called the Soul and Body, commonly supposed to be well known by their mere names. These in what, for convenience, is called their natural state,—not that, strictly speaking, there is or can be an unnatural state,—are supposed to be at feud with each other, (Romans vii:2, 3,) and in order to their being brought into unity, amity, peace, and concord, the doctrine requires that the man, the “compound,” shall be first *dissolved*, that is, humiliated, and brought into the state required in Scripture (the man must become as a little child); but this must take place naturally, by an agent that comes from the compound, and by one that after action abides naturally in it.

This agent is the conscience, and no other element in man, such as his passions, his hopes, or his fears; for these are called *aquafortis* and *corrosives*, and are said to destroy the composition instead of perfecting it; and they do not abide with it, but may fly away and leave a "filthy and unprofitable thing," instead of an improved or perfected man.

21. Bernard is here enforcing upon his friend, Thomas of Bononia, "physician to King Charles the Eighth," the point that all violent action upon man with a view of his improvement is injurious, and this is the doctrine of Plato: not but that the safety of society may require the use of violent means to restrain criminals who disturb its peace; but in this case the subjects of such action are unfit for the *work* which the philosophic humanitarian aims at. So, when a man is humbled through his pride, and cannot say with Juliet in *Measure for Measure*, "I do repent me as it is an evil, and take the shame with joy;" or when he is arrested by external disappointments, he is not in a proper state to fulfill the condition required by philosophy for natural and permanent improvement,

but he is driven violently out of the true channel for it.

“These solutions, therefore,” continues Bernard, “are not the foundation of the *art of transmutation*, but they are rather the impostures of sophistical Alchemists (false or ignorant teachers, the ‘erring Alchemists,’ addressed by Jean de Meung in his *Remonstrance*), who think that this Sacred Art is hid in them. They say, indeed, that they make solutions, but they cannot make perfect *metallic species*, because they do not naturally remain under the first proportion or nature which *mercury* should be corrupted (in the sense of John xii:24) by way of alteration, not dissipation; because Bodies dissolved therein are never separated from it, as in Aquafortis and other *corrosives*, but one nature puts on and hides another, retaining it secretly and perfectly: so, Sol and Luna dissolved, are secretly retained in it. For their nature is hid in Mercury, even unto its condensation, of which they lying hid in it are the cause, inasmuch as they are latent in it: and as Mercury dissolves them, and hides them in its Belly, so they also congeal it; and what was hard is made soft, what was soft, hard (it is

the property of the conscience to subdue the strong and strengthen the weak) : and yet the nature, that is, metals and *quicksilver* abide still. . . . So the Lord in the Gospel speaks by way of similitude of vegetables, *unless a grain of corn fallen on earth do die, it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.* Therefore, this alternative corruption hides forms, perfects natures, preserves proportions, and changes colors (passions) from the beginning to the end.”

22. If the reader has duly weighed and understood the methods described by Artephius and others, in the preceding pages, he cannot fail to see the drift of this doctrine of Bernard, and that the subject of all these writers is one, to wit, *man*, and the object is also one, to wit, his *improvement*; while the method is no less one, to wit, *nature*, directed by art acquired in the school of nature, and acting in conformity with it; for true art is nothing but “nature acting through man.”

23. But here, as everywhere, I am anxious to impress upon the reader that this, so far, is but the beginning of or the “base” of the “Great Work.” When the man is by a due process and without violence

brought into Unity with himself, so that his intellect and will work in harmony, he is prepared to understand that higher Unity which is the perfection of the whole of nature; for what is called the "absolute," the "Absolute perfection," and the "perfection of nature," are one and the same; which can never be understood except by a process in nature itself proper to it. In no case is there any violation of nature, and, as these writers are perpetually repeating, "men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles."

24. The whole of this epistle of Bernard is a grave discussion upon the nature of man; yet it is all carried on in the symbolic language, no doubt perfectly understood by the adepts of the time, when those who used the language had opportunity to personal intercourse in which full explanations could be made without interruption from the Inquisition or its emissaries.

25. Occasionally, some of the philosophers, not the best of them, as we suppose, carried away not precisely by philosophy, but by a passion or enthusiasm for it, spoke too openly, and brought themselves into danger;

and many fell victims to the most relentless spirit that ever disturbed the world.

26. Let any one, with the above explanations, read the epistles of Bernard of Treves, the "good Trevisan," and then turn to the farrago of nonsensical stories collected by the misemployed industry of Dr. Mackay, LL.D., as "Memoirs" of a man who spent his whole life in the pursuit of truth and goodness, and he must be struck with the absurd position of the historian who undertook to write "Memoirs of Extraordinary Popular Delusions."

Let us look at this science in another light and see what other late authors have to say concerning it and the Alchemists. In "Azoth," under the title of "Alchemy as a Supernatural Science," Dr. Waite says:

"Supposing that Alchemy was either not concerned with the transmutation of metals, except as with a *veil* and an *evasion*, or that it was concerned with it actually, but only as an inferior or collateral branch of experiment, there is one mark which we ought to find in its literature to distinguish it from an operation of merely physical science, and that is the Mark of the Supernatural. Now, Alchemy comes actually before

us in every case, and under all its forms of presentation, even in each country of its practice, as an *essentially sacred science*. It is sacred in its fabulous pedigree; sacred in its End and Intention; Sacred in its concealed methods, and classes among the *magnalia dei et naturae* as a special gift communicated from on high.

“Most happy is the son of that man,” says the author of the *Golden Calf*, “who, by his prayers, obtains this art of arts, unto the glory of God. For it is most certain that this Mystery can be known no other way, unless it be drawn and imbibed from God, the Fountain of Fountains. Therefore, let every serious lover of this inestimable Art judge that the whole work of him required is that he constantly, with the prayer of true faith, in all his labors implore and solicit the Divine Grace of the Holy Spirit. For the solemn manner of God alone is, candidly and liberally, either mediately or immediately, to communicate His gifts and benefits, but unto none unless to candid and liberal minds. In this holy way of practical piety, all inquisitors of profound Art find what they seek, when they in their work exercise themselves theosophi-

cally by solitary colloquies with Jehovah, religiously, with a pure heart and mouth. For the Heavenly Sophia indeed willingly embraces our friendship, presenting and offering us her inexhaustible rivulets, most full of gracious goodness and benevolence. But happy is he to whom the Royal Way in which he is to walk shall be shown by some one expert in this Arcanum.”

“So also the *new light of Alchemy* assures us that the ‘commendable art’ is ‘The gift of God, and truly it is not to be attained to but by the alone favor of God.’ The *Hermetical triumph* describes it as ‘a divine Science’ which is communicated from God, and that only ‘to those who will make a good use of it.’ The mode in which it is imparted is like that of all revelation, an ‘illumination of Mind,’ for ‘knowledge of our Magistrty,’ says the *Key to the Secret Philosophy*, comes by ‘the inspiration of Heaven,’ and ‘this truth is acknowledged by all Philosophers.’ It is acknowledged by Geber when he forbids his disciples to meddle with sophistical operations, ‘because our Art is reserved in the Divine Will of God, and is given to or withheld from whom He will, who is glorious, su-

blime, and full of all justice and goodness.' It is not therefore to be degraded or misused, and those who pervert it should be 'blasphemed to eternity, because they have left to their posterity blasphemies, a curse by their error, and a diabolical instigation instead of the invention of verity.' It is equally acknowledged by the Initiates of the French school, and by the mediaeval German adepts. 'Let no one expect to be enlightened on the mysteries of the Stone of the Philosophers who is blind in the mysteries of faith,' and the spirit of Christ, says Benedictus Figulus, is 'the true Theosopher, Christ the true astronomer, Christ the universal physician, and to Him alone is the glory.' It is acknowledged by the English alchemists, for whom, as for Elias Ashmole, the physical work was but the lowest achievement of the Great Work of philosophy."

27. Before publishing another edition of his work, Dr. Mackay should endeavor to understand the delusion of almost the whole world in regard to the object of the Alchemists, in which he himself has shared. The Alchemists themselves were under no delusion,

but were the philosophers of the world when philosophy could not speak openly.

28. To show the necessity of *esoteric* writing we need only to look at the fate of Vanini, and Bruno; though there were thousands of others, burned at the stake, or otherwise cruelly destroyed, by the ignorant of the time, and why? Because

“Out of their heart’s fullness they needs must gabble,
And show their thoughts and feelings to the rabble.”

(Brooks, translation of Faust.)

Of Vanini, Gorton says:

“Being *suspected* of inculcating atheistical opinions, he was denounced, prosecuted, and condemned to have his tongue cut out, and to be burnt to death, which sentence was executed February 19, 1619. At his trial, so far from denying the existence of God, he took up a straw, and said, that it obliged him to acknowledge the existence of one. Gramont, President of the Parliament of Toulouse, gives an evidently prejudiced and sophisticated account of his deportment at his death, where it seems that, on refusing to put out his tongue for the executioner to cut it off, it was torn from his mouth with pincers, such being

the Christianity of the French District, which afterwards got up the tragedy of *Calas*. He suffered this cruel punishment in the thirty-fourth year of his age. Morsheim remarks that several learned and respectable writers regard this unhappy man rather as the victim of bigotry and prejudice than as a martyr to impiety and atheism, and deny that his writings were so absurd or so impious as they were said to be."

29. Jordan Bruno was burnt at the stake at Venice in the year 1600. After his arrest he was allowed "eighty days," says history, "to retract his errors," but refused to deny his convictions, and suffered the fate which Galileo escaped by admitting that the world stood still,—which he might have said with a clear conscience of the clerical world of his day; for they would neither advance themselves, nor suffer others to do so.

30. Bruno addressed one of his works to Lord Castelnau, then minister from the French government at the court of England, in which he says:

"If I had held the plough, most illustrious Lord, or fed a flock, or cultivated a garden, or mended old clothes, none would distinguish and few regard me;

fewer yet would reprehend me, and I might easily become agreeable to everybody. But now, for describing the Field of Nature; for being solicitous about the pasture of the Soul; for being curious about the improvement of the understanding, and for showing some skill about the faculties of the mind: one man, as if I had an eye to him, does menace me; another, for being only observed, does assault me; for coming near this man, he bites me; and for laying hold of that other, he devours me. 'Tis not one who treats me in this manner, nor are they a few; they are many, and almost all.

“If you would know whence this doth proceed, my Lord, the true reason is, that I am displeas'd with the bulk of mankind; I hate the vulgar rout; I despise the authority of the multitude, and am enamored with *one particular lady*. 'Tis for her that I am free in servitude, content in pain, rich in necessity, and alive in death; and therefore 'tis likewise for her that I envy not those who are slaves in the midst of liberty, who suffer pain in their overflowing with riches, and dead when they are reputed to live: for in their body they have the chain that pinches them, and in their

judgment the lethargy that kills them ; having neither generosity to undertake, nor perseverance to succeed, nor splendor to illustrate their names. Hence it is, even for my *passion for this beauty*, that, as being weary, I draw not back my feet from the difficult road, nor, as being lazy, hang down my hands from the work that is before me ; I turn not my shoulders, as grown desperate, to the enemy that contends with me ; nor, as dazzled, divert my eyes from the Divine object.

“In the mean time I know myself to be for the most part accounted a Sophister, more desirous to appear subtle, than to be really solid ; an ambitious fellow, that studies rather to set up a new and false set, than to confirm the ancient and true doctrine ; a deceiver, that aims at purchasing brightness to his own fame, by engaging others in the darkness of error ; a restless spirit, that overturns the edifice of sound discipline, and makes himself a founder of some hut of perversity.

“But, my Lord, so may all the holy deities deliver me from those that unjustly hate me ; so may my own God be ever propitious to me ; so may the governors of this our globe show me their favor ; so may the stars

furnish me with such a seed for the field, and such a field for the seed, that the world may reap the useful and glorious fruit of my labor, by awakening the genius and opening the understanding of such as are deprived of *sight*: so may all these things happen, I say, as it is most certain that I neither feign nor pretend. If I err, I am far from thinking that I do so; and whether I speak or write, I dispute not for the love of history (for I look upon all reputation and conquest to be hateful to God,—to be most vile and dishonorable,—without *truth*); but, 'tis for *the love of true wisdom*, and by the studious admiration of this mistress, that I fatigue, that I disquiet, that I torment myself." *

31. This is the spirit which the Inquisition and the power of all the governments in Europe was employed for many centuries in endeavoring to suppress; and is it surprising that it should force into existence secret societies and mysterious modes of intercourse among those who, like Eyrenaeus (*Cosmopolita*),

* The reader may here understand the nature of Dante's passion for Beatrice; and of Petrarch's passion for Laura.

were, as he says, "tossed up and down, and, as it were, beset with *furies*: nor can we," says he, "suppose ourselves safe in any one place long. We travel through many countries like vagabonds. Once I was forced to fly by night, with exceeding great trouble, having changed my garments, shaved my head, put on false hair, and altered by name, else I had fallen into the hands of wicked men that lay in wait for me," merely, he tells us, because a "*rumor* had spread" that he was in possession of the *elixir*;—which meant, in this esoteric account he gives of his persecutions, that he was "suspected," like Aponus, of entertaining opinions adverse to the superstitions of the time. See the thirteenth chapter of *Secrets Revealed, or an Open Way to the Shut Palace of the King*, which now, in this age, may be interpreted, an open way to the Knowledge of God.

31a. This work was written by Eyrenaeus Philoletes (Cosmopolita), and Dr. Mackay gravely informs us, as a precious item of actual history, that he kept some "philosophic powder in a little gold box," with "one *grain* (?) of which he could make five hundred ducats, or a thousand rix dollars;" that "he generally

made his projection upon *quicksilver*,"—with many other absurdities. . . . "What fools these mortals be."

32. Eyrenaeus no doubt made his *projections* upon *quicksilver*; that is, he sought to improve man through his Spiritual nature, as knowing that, "when that is safe, all is safe; but that lost, all is lost."

33. Everywhere in this secret philosophy we meet with the same doctrine, which may be expressed in the very brief sentences: Be just, be honest, be true, be faithful; keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

34. Dr. Mackay, in his sketch of Arnold de Villa Nova, a great name among the Alchemists, says:

"In a very curious work by Monsieur Longeville Harcouet, entitled, "*The History of Persons who have lived several centuries and then grown young again*," there is a receipt to have been given by Arnold de Villaneuve, by means of which any one might prolong his life for a few hundred years or so. In the first place, says Arnold and Monsieur Harcouet, "The person intending so to prolong his life must rub himself well, two or three times a week, with the juices of marrow of Cassia (*moelle de la casse*). (*Cassia*

was formerly used medically, as a purgative, and here signifies that cleansing process which all of the Alchemists write, a moral but not a physical cleansing. The receipt then proceeds :) Every night upon going to bed, he must put upon his *heart* a plaster, (this was indeed a dully way to make gold! a plaster,) composed of a certain quantity of Oriental saffron, red rose-leaves, sandal-wood, aloes, and amber, liquefied in oil of roses, and the best white wax. In the morning he must take it off and enclose it carefully in a leaden box till the next night, when it must be applied again.”

35. It never seems to have occurred to Dr. Mackay, that whoever would live happy, and prosperously, and healthily too, must retire at night with a pure heart, which also must be carefully preserved *during the day*.

36. This was the language by which men communicated with each other all over Europe, and encouraged each other to live honestly; when, in the public estimation, it was necessary rather to say a “certain” number of masses, and contribute largely to an ignorant, debauched, and wicked priesthood, armed with civil power to crush all opposition to the tyranny by

which they enslaved the whole population of Europe.

37. Has it no interest for this age to look back a few hundred years, and see the shifts to which men were obliged to resort for the privilege of living with simple honesty? And is it surprising that this great privilege should be so highly prized, and described as a stone of great price,—the Philosopher's Stone. What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Or what doth it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or the peace of it?

38. The times are changed now, and it should be openly declared that the Alchemists were not the fools their foolish and silly *literal* readers have taken them for. They were the wise men of their times, who couched their wisdom in "dark sayings," calculated purposely to mystify and deceive those who needed the "hangman's whip" to hold them in order; and they felt at liberty to delude and elude the hangman too, who knew not how to discriminate between the true man and the false man.

39. The times have greatly changed, and men can now declare their opinion openly and freely, if only it be done with decency and sincerity. Swedenborg,

though he felt the convenience of writing mystically, said that God is a man; Fichte says man is a God, while Hegel says both are one. Comte publishes works of almost professed Atheism, and Feuerback openly discusses the dogma that Theology is Anthropology. Some few read their books, and take interest in them or throw them aside, according to their taste or genius, while some spectators look on and see in these various efforts only the struggles of speculative men laboring to solve the mysterious problem of man, the Sphinx of the universe.

40. None of these efforts, their authors being left alone, have disturbed the order of events; the sun rises and sets as before, seed-time and harvest have their due returns, and it is now generally acknowledged that the trouble about free opinions has arisen from the vain attempt violently to interfere with and suppress them. The opinion of the "sage of Monticello," is now almost universally received, that error is not dangerous so long as reason is left free to combat it.

41. The real interest of man must be regarded as a power ever at work to secure itself; it must forever be

opposed to whatever is false and mischievous, and most perpetually be employed in discovering and establishing the true, since herein alone is the true interest of man to be found.

42. Bishop Sherlock said that Christianity was as old as the creation, and that the Gospel was a republication of the Laws of Nature. Most likely it was a similar idea that led the Alchemists to claim that their Art was as old as the world; which can only mean that man from the earliest time must have been interested in himself, and anxious to discover "what was that good for the sons of men, which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life." (Eccles. ii:3.)

"The Preacher" concluded that the whole duty of man is comprised in the injunction to fear God and obey the commandments, and this has been echoed in all parts of the world, and in all ages. What, then, is to be understood by the commandments of God? When the preacher announced this law, the commandments in the New Testament had neither been written nor declared, and when the new dispensation was announced, it is conceded on all hands that some portion,

at least, of the ceremonial law of the Old Testament was abrogated.

43. Christ has told us that the whole Law and the Prophets is comprised in the *love* of God and of our neighbor;—God, with all our might and strength and soul, and our neighbor as ourself. By placing these injunctions side by side, with the conclusions of the Preacher we may see that the fear of God must be consistent with the love of God, and if we are to love God with *all* our heart, the love of our neighbor must be included in it. It is but trifling, however, to be critical about words, when we should be considering *things*.

44. There has been suggested a distinction between the Law of God, and a commandment of God, of the highest importance.

45. The Laws of Nature are the eternal decrees (or Laws) of God; and (though unwritten) they are the only certain measures of what are called the commandments of God.

46. The commands may be either verbal or written. We have some of them written by men of old, as they

were moved by what to them appeared to be the Holy Spirit.

48. The Laws always become known to us coupled with conditions; as,—to draw an example from physical nature,—if an organic substance be subjected to fire, it shall be destroyed: this is the law; and a command to protect us from it, would interdict us from such exposure.

49. These two formulas, one of a law and the other of a command, whether in regard to physical or moral nature, embrace or extend, theoretically, to all things by which man may be affected. From the nature of the case, a command always pre-supposes a law, and may always be referred to it and tested by it. This is what may be understood by testing all doctrine by the “possibility of nature.”

50. All commands must be supposed given for our benefit, and have in view either to secure to us some good, or to protect us from some evil; and, in either case, because of some law, which, as the eternal decree of God, must be, like the Nature of God, unalterable.

51. We may disobey a command, but we cannot with impunity violate a law; but if we disobey a command

really founded on a law, we necessarily suffer the penalty of the law; which is only saying that the course of nature never alters. If, now, we construe the fear of the love of God as having reference to the Law, we may clearly see, theoretically, the importance of the text, that all things work together for the good of them that *love* God; that is, to those who love God's Law, and keep it in their hearts, that is, in their Conscience, which perpetually "bear witness." Rom. ii:15.

Must it not be true that the Law of God and the Love for God must be one and the same thing. Must it not follow that this is the foundation of a *true* Religion? Let us see what Eliphas Levi has to say on this subject, for he was not only a Mystic, an Alchemist, but also a Minister of the Gospel, or trained for a Catholic Minister. He tells us that:

"Religion exists in humanity as in Love, and it is one like Love. Like that also, it exists or does not exist in such or such souls, but received or denied, it is in humanity; it is, therefore, in life, it is in nature, it is incontestable before science and even before reason. The *true* religion is that which has *always* existed, which does, and ever will exist. It alone can be called

one, infallible, indefectible, and truly catholic, that is, universal. There is but *one* God, *one* substance, *one* Universe, *One* Law, *One* Life, and so also there is but *one* Religion and *one* Church. Religion consists of four things which are fundamentally a single thing;—the infinite object of faith; faith, infinite like its object; the cultus by which faith becomes fertile; the people, believing and doing. The Church is the outward form of religion, religion creates the Church by exhibiting itself outwardly, the Church creates religion by rendering it manifest. The Church is differentiated by four indissoluble things, a head which is ever the same and is consequently mysterious and divine; an invariable symbol; a perpetual sacrifice; an infallible school of teaching. The Church, like ourselves, possesses an incorruptible spirit and a decaying body, but the spirit thereof renews the body when it decays.

“The religion of the Kabhalists is the religion of religions. It is at once wholly hypotheses and wholly certitude, for it proceeds from the known to the unknown by analogy. The Kabbalist recognizes religion as a need of humanity, and its prayer can be

united with that of all men to direct it by illustrations from science and reason, and to lead it to orthodoxy. If Mary be spoken of, he will reverence that realization of all that is divine in the dreams of innocence, and all that is adorable in the holy folly of every mother's heart. It is not he who will refuse flowers to decorate the altars of the mother of God, or white banners for her chapels, or even tears for her ingenuous legends." It is not he who will deride the newborn God weeping in the manger, or the bruised victim of Calvary, he repeats, nevertheless, from the bottom of his heart, with the sages of Israel and the faithful believers of Islam, "There is no God but God!" Which means for an initiate of the true science, "there is but one Being, and that is Being." But all that is expedient and touching in beliefs, by the splendor of rituals, the pomp of divine creations, the grace of prayers, the magic of heavenly hopes—are not these the lustre of moral life in all its youth and beauty? If anything could alienate the true initiate from public prayers and temples, if anything could raise his disgust or indignation against all religions and religious forms whatsoever, it is the manifested incredulity of

priests or people, what of dignity in the ceremonies of the cultus, the profanation, in a word, of holy things. God is really present when recollected souls and feeling hearts adore Him; He is sensibly and terribly absent when spoken of without light or enthusiasm; that is, without intelligence or love.

“The egotistic dream opposed to faith is heresy: it is the soldier who would be victorious in isolation, the eccentric believer who would monopolize for himself alone the advantages of society, the man who would communicate with God without intermediary and make a revelation for himself alone. As if the God of Humanity could be ex-communicated, as if the base of religion were not the spirit of association or sacrifices and hierarchic concourse for the creation and the social and ecclesiastic preservation of faith! The hierarchy is the guardian of doctrine, and wills that letter and spirit should be both respected. Catholic doctrine deserves its beautiful name because it sums up all the religious aspirations of the world. Before reason and science it is therefore the most perfect doctrine, and the most complete which has yet appeared in the world. All is beautiful in our religion when it is

understood rightly, all is true in our religion, and I would even dare to add that every religion is true, apart from omissions, transpositions, wrong meanings, rash conjectures, and so forth. All is true in the books of Hermes, but in the attempt to conceal them from the profane they have to some extent become useless for the world, and from rendering truth impenetrable except for priests and kings, idolatry, despotism, attacks on the priesthood have resulted. All is true in the doctrine of Moses: what is false is the exclusiveness and despotism of certain rabbins, the claim that the Jewish people are the elect of God and all other nations accursed. All is true in the doctrine of Christianity, but the Catholic priests have fallen into the same errors as the rabbins. Yet these three doctrines complete and explain one another, and their synthesis will be the religion of the future.

“The magnificence of the cultus is the life of religion, and if Christ choose poor ministers, His sovereign divinity did not wish for poor altars. Protestants have failed to understand that the ritual is an instruction, and that a sordid or despicable god must not be created in the imagination of the multitude.

The English, who lavish so much wealth on their own dwelling-places, and affect to prize the Bible so highly, if they remembered the unparalleled pomp of Solomon's Temple, would find their own churches exceedingly cold and bare. But what withers their cultus is the dryness of their own hearts, and with a cultus devoid of magic, dazzlement, and pathos, how can their hearts be ever informed with *life*?

“Forms of worship are *essentially* Magical. They operate of themselves the religious work, that is, the creative exalation of the intuitions of faith and visions, whether celestial or infernal. According to their greater or lesser morality, they are a medicine or a poison to the mind. Religions devoid of ceremonies are cold and inefficacious. Protestantism can, therefore, produce only a rare and isolated enthusiasm, being a negation rather than a religious affirmation. It possesses neither the key of prophecies, nor the source of inspirations, nor the rod of miracles. It is incapable of creating God, and will, therefore, never make great saints, which shows how much those people deceive themselves who imagine rational religions, religions devoid of mysteries, mythology, and sacrifices. Myth-

ologies are the fantastic realizations of the religious dogma; superstitions are the sorcery of mistaken piety; but even mythologies and superstitions are more efficacious to the human will than a purely speculative philosophy, exclusive of all exterior observances.

“The Christian who looks on heaven as his true country, walks, morally speaking, with his feet upward and his head downwards, and it is thus that heaven becomes a reflection of earth. The union of religion and philosophy must be accomplished by the very fact of their distinction, which permits an alliance between them, as between the two triangles of Solomon’s star, as between the sword and sheath, as between the plenum and the void. For this reason the Spiritual must be the negative of the temporal, and the royalty of wealth will be always the downfall of sacerdotal power, by destroying the marvellous character of its mission, and exciting the distrust and jealousy of material instincts. For this reason also the temporal power covers itself with ridicule when it interferes with the Spiritual, as it will be always suspected of an interested motive. A Master is invariably derided who says—“God wills you to obey me.”

But let a man, truly independent of Caesar, say to the world—"Obey Caesar!" and this man will be believed, above all if it be evident that he receives nothing from Caesar. For the same reason priests cannot marry and remain priests. No one is a prophet in his own home, and jealous wives would demand from their husbands an account of their neighbor's confessions. The ancient Magi were celibates; Pythagoras and Appolonius abstained from women; Paganism itself had its vestals. The abnormal and, in one sense, irrational character of the celibate makes him essentially religious; the world is aware of this, for while it inveighs against the celibacy of the priesthood, it despises wedded priests.

"Singular fact! Religion is the most human of all institutions, and philosophy is that which is truly divine in the intellectual life of humanity. Religion is the synthesis of the passions—desire of an infinite good, ambition driven to the delirium of a deific aspiration, despair of a surfeited or unquenchable enjoyment which takes refuge in ecstasy, above all, pride, overweening pride—which thinks to humble itself before God, which accuses itself of offending God and

disturbing the harmony of the spheres! Philosophy, on the contrary, bold in its doubt, modest in its assurance, believes only in experience, and will owe nothing except to industry. But, as we have already suggested, religion alone and philosophy alone are both erroneous. At the bottom of the one are ascetical suicide and all the errors of fanaticism, at the bottom of the other the despair of scepticism and the corruption of absolute indifference. Religion and philosophy, like the Eros and Anteros of old mythology, are made to support each other mutually by struggling continually together. The success of Voltaire was necessary to stimulate the pride of Chateaubriand and without the "Bible Explained" we should never have admired the "Genius of Christianity."

"Neither religion nor philosophy alone makes initiates, but the alliance of the two lights united in one only. Then the initiates create at their will both philosophy and religion for the crowd. Fables on one side, rash speculations on the other, between them the science of faith and the faith of science, which embrace and join to govern the world. Religion is feminine, and it rules by poetry and love. Scientific pro-

gress is made, and it should govern and defend the woman, when needed, by energy and reason. Those who place themselves at Voltaire's extreme and uncompromising standpoint to judge religion must be astonished and indignant to find it still upheld and dominant. In their eyes, as a fact, it is only a degrading series of interested falsehoods and imbecile practices, but they judge it as badly as Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque would judge if she were still living the things of progress in science, and liberty. We must always take actualities into account.

“To instruct the people progressively by the allegories of dogma and the poetry of mysteries, to enoble their souls by the grandeur of hope, to win them to wisdom by sublime and ingenious extravagances, is the sacerdotal art in all its purity, *is the magic of light*, is the Kabbalistic secret of true religion. To avail one's self of blind forces, and to direct them for the construction of the lever of intelligences, is the Great Secret of Magic. To appeal to passions, which are the most blind and illimitable in their play, and to subject them to slavish obedience, is to create omnipotence. To place the mind under the dominion of

dream, to extend cupidity and fear to infinity, by promises and threats which are thought supernatural, because they are against Nature, to make an army out of the multitude of weak heads and effeminate hearts turned generous through interest or fear, and with this army to achieve the conquest of the world—such is the great sacerdotal dream, and all the secret policy of the pontiffs of black magic. On the contrary, to enlighten the ignorant, to set wills free, to make truth and justice accessible to all, to impose on faith only those hypotheses which are necessary to reason, and thus direct all people to a single, simple, consoling and civilizing doctrine, such is divine reality, and it is this which has been published to the world by the Gospel. This is the Law.

“But a great misfortune befell Christianity. The betrayal of the mysteries by the false Gnostics—for the Gnostics, that is, *those who knew*, were the initiates of primitive Christianity—used the Gnosis to be rejected, and alienated the Church from the supreme truths of the Kabbalah, which contains all the secrets of transcendental theology. Thus the people choose the ignorant for their teachers, equality in the

sight of faith was proclaimed, the blind became leaders of the blind, and great obscurations resulted, great lapses and lamentable scandals, all which does not, however, prevent the doctrine itself from being sacred, or the sacraments from being efficacious. The virtues of the inferior grades being almost impossible in the higher, the chiefs of the priesthood found themselves deficient in the knowledge and the virtues necessary for their elevated dignity. They, therefore, constituted themselves into a caste, to support each other in common, and attempted to re-establish the old tests, without, however, *progressive initiation*, so that to subjugate permanently the will of the neophyte, clerical education warps the heart and paralyzes the intellect. Thence comes all religious abuses, and by consequence those of society. This is why the eloquence of preachers is so cold and inefficacious. How can they cause a law to be loved which they bear themselves like a yoke from their childhood? How can they appeal to hearts whose hearts are sentenced to an eternal silence? The existing priesthood, moreover, makes despairing attempts to maintain the dogmas exposed by the eighteenth century in their previous position. But

the veil of Isis cannot be mended, and divinities in patched garments do not inspire confidence. What is needed is a new veil, and popular poetry is already at work on one, for the world is never long without a religion.

“Let the most absolute science, let the highest reason, become once more the patrimony of the leaders of the people; let the sacerdotal art and the royal art take back the double sceptre of antique initiations, and the social world will once more issue from its chaos. Burn the holy images no longer, demolish the temples no more; temples and images are necessary for men; but drive the hirelings from the house of prayer, let the blind be no longer the leaders of the blind, reconstruct the hierarchy of intelligence and holiness, and recognize only those who know as the teachers of those who believe; This book is Catholic, the *Magnum Opus* is a hierarchic and Catholic work, and if our revelations are calculated to alarm the conscience of the simple-minded, it is a consolation to think that they will not read them. We address ourselves to men free from prejudices and we have no more wish to flatter irreligion than fanaticism. But if there be anything

in this world which is essentially unfettered and inviolable, it is belief. It is our duty by knowledge and persuasion to turn misled imagination from what is absurd, but it would invest their errors with all the dignity and truth of the martyr if we attempted to threaten or constrain them. So, in religion, universal and hierarchic orthodoxy, restoration of temples in all their splendor, re-establishment of all ceremonial in its primeval pomp, hierarchic teaching of symbolism, mysteries, miracles, legends for the children, light for the grown men, who will be far from scandalizing the little ones in the simplicity of their faith,—such, in religion, is our whole Utopia; and it is also the desire and the need of humanity.”

52. So far as man can know the *law*, a command based upon it will always seem reasonable and divine, and will find its sanction in the knowledge of the Law; and if “to keep the commandments” means to observe the *law*, there can be no question as to our interest in it, and just as little, with those who love God, as to its imperative obligation; but in the latter case only will the obedience be free, the will being subject

to reason, for the freedom of man does not lie in his will, which is blind, but in its voluntary sub-ordination to reason and conscience, these two being called brethren, who are said to love one another.

Reader: Are you prepared to accept such a religion? Are you prepared to start on the Path that leads to this? If you are, there is a way open for you and all those who are ready. You must be prepared to obey the Law. Secure and read "Ancient Mystic Oriental Masonry."

53. Where the Law is not known,—the condition of nearly all mankind, and, as to some laws, of the whole of mankind,—every man must more or less act under constraint and be subject to some power, other than what he calls his; i. e., the power of God in him.

54. Now, when the commands are deemed to be first in order, and the test of nature instead of being tested by nature, and are urged as imperative independently of all reference to the Laws of nature or of God; and when, too, all inquiries as to the latter are interdicted, —this implies a state of hopeless intellectual slavery, which the Law of Nature avenges in her own way be

the evils of which we read in past ages where this absurd principle has prevailed.

55. Yet for those who do not or cannot satisfy themselves as to the Law, it is but mere prudence to observe the commands, if, only, these can be known; it being a mere common-sense presumption, that they must originally have been grounded upon some supposed experience and observation, especially when they have been the object of reverence for ages.

56. As most men, from the condition of the world, the claims of labor for sustenance, etc., are precluded from seeking a knowledge of many natural laws, under the influence of which they nevertheless live, it seems altogether necessary that they should have the benefit of past experiences, as expressed in the commands. Hence it appears as a wrong to them to withdraw their reverence from it, and thus loosen its hold over them, exposing them thereby to manifold dangers, and thus is the permanent ground for a Hermetic or Secret Philosophy; through which men who have leisure may prosecute their inquiries into Nature, and communicate their discoveries and opinions to each other, hold-

ing them always subject to correction by the "higher Law," which is never to be denied. *

56a. Hermetic Philosophy does not differ from Philosophy in general, both having in view the discovery of Nature, except that the former has been confined to those inquiries which relate more especially to the moral conduct of man; but here, the results of this philosophy may not differ practically from those depending upon traditional commands, the difference being in the nature of the *Sanction*.

57. The Hermetic Philosopher obeys the command because he knows the Law,—and requires no other authority,—just as he keeps out of the fire, as soon as he knows its nature; but those who are ignorant of the Law are moved by the authority of tradition; or they are influenced by hope or fear, or by some other passion.

58. It is manifest that he who knows the Law has, in that knowledge alone, an inexpressibly valuable

* There is such a Secret School in existence, in which the Neophyte is started in the very beginning of Development and taken, if worthy, to the highest point of Supreme Initiation.

treasure; for he obeys freely what is called reason, which is nothing else but a knowledge of the Law; and this again is the knowledge of God, all natural laws being the eternal decrees of God, known and acknowledged as such, from which it is impossible to seduce him. Now the Law of Conscience * being the Law of God in the Soul of man, obedience to it, when truly known, becomes of the first importance for all men, no matter under what circumstances they may be placed; for man can never be placed under conditions which release him from either its presence or its authority.

59. But the knowledge of Law in general must always be limited, and the Hermetic Philosophers must always consider themselves as engaged in a never-ending pursuit, as Espagnet intimates, though a pursuit ever leading him cheerfully onward in proportion to the sincerity and earnestness of his efforts, under the blessing expressed in Matt. v. 6, for his command is founded on the eternal law.

60. Every man who enters upon this pursuit, that

* See the "Beautiful Philosophy of Initiation," open only to the Neophytes in the Secret School.

is, who seeks knowledge by a direct study of nature, disowning the claims of mere tradition, (or "holding fast" to it only when proved to be good, according to the directions of St. Paul,) must prepare as Espagnet says, to make a long journey; for, indeed, he enters upon an endless task, in the prosecution of which, however, he will continually find pleasure and satisfaction, so long as his endeavors are guided exclusively by a conscientious regard for Truth, that is, for true Wisdom,—the Lady so passionately Loved by Bruno, who preferred being burned at the stake to denying his Love. He must never, for an instant, depart from his principle; for, if he does, he must infallibly lose his way, and may find his return next to impossible. (Heb. vi: 4; 6.) Also see "Divine Alchemy."

61. Hence the perpetual cautions of the Alchemists, to wash and cleanse the matter of which the Stone is to be made, since whatever other light be followed, traditionary authority being neglected, will necessarily prove an *ignis fatuus*, which in the end will abandon those who depend upon it.

62. Here is the secret of all those lamentations over the vanities of this world, as riches, honors, and pleas-

ures. It is not that these things are wrong in themselves, but they are almost universally allowed the foremost place in the affections, to the suppression or exclusion of the Divine Law of the Conscience.

“If men cared less for wealth and fame,
 And less for battle-fields of glory ;
If writ in human hearts, a name
 Seemed better than a song or story ;
If man, instead of nursing pride,
 Would learn to hate it and abhor it ;
If more relied on *love* to guide,
 The world would be the better for it.

“If men dealt less in stocks and lands,
 And more in *bonds* and *deeds* fraternal ;
If Love’s work had more willing hands
 To link this world to the supernal ;
If men stored up love’s oil and wine,
 And on bruised human hearts would pour it,
If ‘yours’ and ‘mine’ would once combine,
 The world would be the better for it.

“If more would *act* the play of Life,
 And fewer spoil it by rehearsal ;
If bigotry would sheathe its knife,
 Till God became more universal ;
If custom, gray with ages grown,

Had fewer blind men to adore it ;
 If talent shone in truth alone,
 The world woud be the better for it.
 “If men were wise in little things,
 Affecting less in all their dealings ;
 If hearts had fewer rusted strings,
 To violate their kindly feelings :
 If men, when wrong beats down the Right,
 Would *strive together* and restore it ;
 If Right made Right in every fight,
 The world would be the better for it.”

“Ay, that it would, and *will*, brave lover of thy race, when more shall live the spirit thou hast breathed. But Faith is not yet dead; Hope still lives in human hearts; Charity is beginning to be a power in the world, and these three—Blessed three,— will yet work out the world’s salvation. Strong hands, clear intellects, willing minds, are all that is needed to develop true human individuality, a thing of the future; and then a man and a woman will pass for the self-displayed value, the intrinsic worth manifested by Action.” Dr. P. B. Randolph, in “Soul, the Soul World.”

END OF VOL. II.