

An Anonymous Treatise on the Philosophers' Stone

The Almighty, Alone-Wise, and Omniscient God and Lord hath given understanding to Man, above all other creatures, so that he may know his works and not leave them unexplored. Now since this Man, whom the All-wise God hath inspired thereto, hath this high and profound secret Work and the great secret of the ancient Water-Stone of the Wise, he must needs prove himself aright. If ever there is a natural thing on earth, it is the Preparation and the Magisterium of the Philosopher's Stone, natural and not of man's making, but wholly the work of Nature, for the Artist addeth nothing thereto. Nature alone directeth the growing, as doth every tiller of the soil with his fruits and plants; only he must be subtle in mind and have the grace of God, so that he may direct the same as the work becomes evident in the boiling and through successive time: namely, in the beginning there is the Subjectum, which one doth receive from Nature directly into the hand. Therein lieth hidden the Universal Tincture of all metals, animals, and plants. It is a rough Corpus, having neither the figure nor form of an animal or plant, but is in the beginning a rough, earthy, heavy, viscous, tough and nebulous substance on which Nature hath stopped: but when the enlightened man openeth these matters, investigateth them in Digestion, and with its thick foggy shadows with which it is surrounded, he purifieth and permitteth the hidden to emerge, and through further Sublimation its innermost soul, which is hidden therein, is also separated from it and brought into a bodily form. Then one will find what Nature hath hidden in such a once shapeless substance and what power and Magnalia the Supreme Creator hath given to and implanted in this Creato. For God hath this Creato for all other creatures, as in the beginning of He still giveth it daily, so that it would otherwise not only be impossible for a man to bring such natural work to the desired end, much less to create herein anything useful. But the good and gracious God doth not begrudge man the treasures and goods which He hath implanted in Nature, else He would not have granted such things to His creatures; nay, He hath created everything good for man, and hath made him to be Lord over His creation. Therefore it is fitting for man to understand and to undertake such a natural philosophical work, for otherwise such a highly-gifted and wonderful creation would have been in vain, and we would view Nature like the dumb animals which run about, and we would go vainly after God's counsel and we would not fit into the ends of Nature. *Deus autem et Natura, nihil faciunt frustra.* [But God and Nature do nothing in vain]. But God Almighty ruleth in all such things. He ordereth and provideth that oats and fodder be placed before the ass and the horse, but that the rational human being be served with more costly and more delicious food. Therefore those who try to investigate and who long for such a deeply hidden Arcanum and great treasure, in the proper way, do not have to depend upon the harvest of the ignorant, who have no understanding under the Light of our Sun.

The Philosophers and wise men, as well as Neoterici and Veteres, have had many disputations about this secret art, and have tried to point out, with many different names, allegories, and wondrously strange sophistical words what that Subjectum and its Essentia are, and what kind of a Materia, what kind of a Corpus. what kind of a Subjectum, and what a wonderful thing and secret a Creatura it is, which hath embodied such mighty, strange, which, marvellous things with it. Nevertheless all those who were and still are true Philosophi, have unanimously pointed out one single Scopum and one only Materiam, the Filii Sapientiat, writing various and manifold speeches and scripts about it. Concerning the essential thing, however, there is only silence, and that silence hath fast-locked their mouths, and placed a solid Sigil upon them, for if it should become as common knowledge as brewing and baking, the world would soon perish.

There are many who have searched for that only Res, which soluit se ipsum, coagulat se ipsum, se ipsum impraegnat, mortificat et vivicat [dissolveth itself, coagulateth itself impregnateth itself, killeth and bringeth to life again], but most of these searchers, who have lost themselves while searching, failed. Then it is such a thing as is nearest gold; and it is such a thing as the poor as well as the rich can gain, be it whatever it may. But it threateneth the Philosophi execrationem divinam, and invoceth the curse of God upon him who with his own mouth might expressly speak on this Subjectum.

When the Philosophers pronounced an Execration, Almighty God did respect and grant their appeal, and gave unto them what He had until then kept in His own hands for several thousand years. Now the aforesaid Subjectum is of such a nature that it, our Magnesia, doth not only contain a small proportioned quantity of the universal Spiritus Vitalis in itself, but also hath some of the heavenly power condensed and compressed within it. Many who found it were so intoxicated by its fumes that they remained in their place and could no longer raise themselves. Only a wise man and one who knoweth these things can take a measure of this same fluid and carry it home from whatever place he may have found it, be it from the depths of the mountains or any other place where it may be met. The poor and the rich are quite free, by the singular and abounding grace of God, to take this, so that he goeth homeward

with it to his house, and placeth it behind the furnace or in any other room where it pleaseth him, and where it is convenient for him, and he may begin to work and to experiment with it, for he can leave off so quickly that even his own servants do not notice it. For it doth not go so slovenly with this natural work as it doth with the common alchemists with their bungling work, with their charcoal-burning, smelting and refining, and whatever more they may do. But it is a work which one can keep in a closed casket in whatever room he wisheth, alone that not even a cat come upon it, and, should it be necessary, he can well carry on his craft, only taking care that the furnace have a threefold testing, and that he keep it at the right heat, and let Nature takes its own course. When finally the Solution is taken out of the Terrestriaet, and is strengthened by long Digestion, it is set free from the Crudae Materiae, and is prepared and reborn in the most subtle form. Subsequently, of course, this sharp and potent Spiritus is at certain times given a well-measured quantity, after the fashion of drinking and nourishing, per modum inbibitionis et nutritionis. And its potency is thus condensed and daily becometh as new supports for its brethren, and active therein. Dost thou indeed think that one canst bring forth such work and such potency in unmeasured hidden intensity, a Spiritus Vitalis? The crudae materiae or Subjectum cometh from the Astris and Constellation of the heavens into its earthly kingdom, from which is then the spiritus universi secretur of the Philosophers, which Mercurius of the Wise, and it is the beginning, the end, in which the Aurum Physicum is determined and hidden, which the common alchemist thinks to extract out of common gold, but in vain. Meanwhile, the Philosophi deal much in their writings with Sol and Luna, which of all metals are the most durable in the fire. But this is not to be understood literally, for their Sol and Luna, when they are brought to their inner puritaet, through true, natural, seemly. and philosophical praeparation may well be compared with the celestial bodies, such as the Sun and the Moon, which with their brightness illuminate day and night, the upper and the lower Frimament. Therefore these two noble metals, like the Sol and Luna of the Philosophers, resemble by nature the human body, and to him who knoweth how to prepare them wisely they give much except else is to be prepared, but the one three-fold point of the Universalis, for the Spiritus to be

found in these two said things produceth consistency, strength and virtue, amongst other things.

Now the man pardoned by God can prepare and make ready an object or substance of the above mentioned red or white, of Sol and Luna, which is called the Lapidem Philosophorum, or the very ancient Water-Stone of the Wise, from the substance in which God placed such potency at the creation or genesis of the world, or the oft-mentioned materials or Subjectum which God, out of love and grace, implanted in the highly-endowed divine man. But I believe, therefore, that the divine substance which was left to him in the first Creation of the world, of the Spiritu Vitali, of the Inspiration, hath survived in all kinds of creatures. All received the same Spiritum in the aforesaid Massam, and firmly secluded in the lowest depths of the earth, and it was indicated and left to the Wise Men to disinter it, to extract it, to use it, and to perform the same Miracula with it, through the holy wisdom which is still implanted in it and with which it is supplied daily.

Both substances mentioned above as Sun and Moon or red and white, or rather the Praeparation Veneris and Mercurii, are the ingredients in the Composition of our Lapidis Philosophorum. Now then the Materia are in the beginning through sufficient and oft-repeated Sublimentiones purified and cleansed, and then weighed carefully, and then soon composed; also thou must not be ignorant of what is the potency and occasion of both of the said ingredients, but thou must know how to arrange both Pondera, secundum proportionem Physicam [according to the analogy of Physics], for a good portion of the Mercurii is encumbered with a small portion of animae Solis vel Sulphuris, and then unite both with a delicate hand, so that finally the Praeparation and the most difficult work is completed.

But thou wilt have to know that thou must first tinge thy Mercurium with the red Tinctur, yet it will not become red in continenti, but remaineth white, for the Mercurius hath the privilege of wanting to be tinged first before all others. The Philosophi also tell what to do in addition with the Anima solis of this Tinctur of the Mercurii, and from whence it shall be taken. The Ferment of gold is gold, just as the Ferment of dough is dough. Moreover, it is the Ferment of gold out of its own nature, and then its potency is perfect when it is

transformed back into earth. And then this is first the beginning of the Philosophers, the right and true Prima Materia Philosophorum metallorum [the first Materia of the metals of the Philosophers]. From then on the true Masters, experienced in the Art, begin to stimulate their Ingeniam and attain to the Great Work. And then the Artifex continues further with such work and, through God's blessing, bringeth it to the end, to which it tendeth and where it is embodied by God, namely, to the highly-blessed Philosopher's Stone. So that from nothing else than per Spiritum universali Secretum the true materia prima Philosophorum is prepared and made ready. Who now understandeth well this Spiritum Secretum understandeth also, without doubt, the secrets and wonders of Nature and hath the perception of the light of Nature. For he is motus harmonicus Sympaticus and magneticus, from which originates the Harmonia and Concordantia, the magnetic and sympathetic power or effect of the uppermost and of the lowermost. But note that the natures of both ingredients are unlike each other in the beginning because of their opposed qualities. For one is warm and dry, the other is cold and moist, and they must of course be united. But when this is about to occur, then their opposed qualities must slowly be changed and equalised, so that neither nature through intense fire divest the other of its potency. For thou canst never collect them, because both natures must rise simultaneously in the fire's power. Then the Discrasia will be taken from the Corpori, and an Aequalitas and good Temperatur is established, which occureth through a moderate and constant boiling.

For when both of the natures Sulphur and Mercurius are enclosed in a very narrow space and are maintained with moderate heat, they begin to abate from their opposed character and to unite, until finally they have all the qualities. They become one Constipation and rise at the same time, and certainly at the top of the glass standeth numero one. They are ready to wed, and then the bridegroom placeth a golden ring on his bride, say the Philosophi. And when thus Mercurius with its Sulphur, like water and earth with each other, become duly boiled (and the longer the more) they cast away all their superfluities and the pure parts join each other and dispose of their corlicibi: otherwise the impure parts prevent unification and the Ingress.

For the Mercurius, as the first Corpus, is entirely crude and can per anima be neither mixed nor perpetuated, for neither Corpus entereth the other nor will be united with it either vere or in radice. But should these things be so helped that a true Tinctur will be formed, there must be prepared out of this a new spiritual Corpus which cometh forth out of both, for after the purification one taketh the virtues of the other, and out of several become one, numero et virtute [in number and power]. But if the fire should be much too intense and should not be controlled according to the requirements of Nature, these two above-mentioned would be either suffocated or separated. If they did not have their right mode of preparation, they would become either nothing or a spoiled work and a Monstrum. But when one proceedeth prudently and with a duly tempered heat, then both substances will rise in the Sublimation uppermost in the glass or cupola. Then when thou pluckest these lovely flowers, thou canst enjoy them already particularia.

But thou canst observe the motum occultum naturae as little as thou canst either hear or see the grass growing, for one can neither observe nor notice the increase and development of these two ingredients, Mercurii and Sulphuris, because of their subtle, hidden, and slow Progressus from hour to hour. Only by marks set from week to week can it be observed and a conclusion drawn, for the inner fire is very delicate and subtle. But however slow it may be, it doth not stand still until it cometh to the end where its intent is to be seen, as in all plants, unless it then be that such subtle and expert boiling is hindered through the all too-strong heat of the sun and is burnt out, or is hindered through suddenly appearing cold; ergo qui scit occultum motum naturae, scit perfectum decoctionem [therefore he who knoweth the hidden movement of Nature, knoweth also the perfect boiling or preparation]. This motum should now take its natural and self-determined course, although one can neither hear nor see it, as also one cannot comprehend the Centra et ignem invisibilem seminum inuisibilium [the Centre and invisible fire of the invisible seed]. Therefore thou must commit such a matter to Nature alone, and observe it and not once try to oppose Nature, but have all confidence in it until it bringeth forth its fruit.

When one treateth Nature with a gentle and agreeable heat, it doeth and effecteth everything out of itself, which for the furnishing of a Creati or the introduction of a new form is a matter of necessity: for the Divine Word Fiat still abideth in all creatures and in all plants, and hath its mighty power in these times as well is in the beginning.

There are, however, four chief Virtutes and potentias of which noble Nature maketh use in every boiling; thereby it doth complete its work and bringeth it to an end.

The First Virtus

Is and is called *appellativa et attractiva*, for it is possible for it to attract to itself from far or near, food of which it is desirous out of results and places agreeable to its nature, and it can grow and increase. And here it hath a magnetic power, like that of a man for a woman, the Mercurius for the Sulphur, the dry for the moist, the Materia for the form. Therefore the axiom of the Philosophers is: *natura naturam amat, amplectitur prosequitur. Omnia namquam crescentia, dum radices agunt et vivant, succum ex Terra attrahunt, atque avidè arripiunt illud, quo vivere et augmentari sentiunt.* [Nature loveth nature, surroundeth it, and followeth it. For all plants, when they strike root and begin to live, suck sap out of the earth, and draw to themselves avidly that whereby they sense they can live and multiply themselves.] For where there is hunger and thirst, food and drink will be received with avidity and this Virtus potentia will be aroused, and it cometh from the heat and average dryness.

The Second Virtus and Potentia

Is and is called *natura retentiva et coagulativa*. For Nature not only alone is useful to it and serveth it for its continuation and is advantageous when it lacketh that which it eagerly produceth from itself, but hath also with it the bond with which it draweth and bringeth and holdeth it to itself. Yea, Nature even changeth it into itself, for as it hath chosen of these two the purest parts, it separateth the rest and bringeth to the mouth and maketh it grow, and is in no need of any other calcination or fixation; *natura naturam continet* [Nature retaineth nature], and such skill cometh from its dryness, for the cold constricteth the gained and evenly-formed parts and drieth them in the Terrae.

The Third Virtus and Potentia

Naturae in rebus generandis et augmentandis.

Est Virtus digestiva, quae fit per putrefactionem seu in putrefactione [is the digestive power, which occurs through the putrefaction or in the putrefaction], in moderate and temperate heat and moisture. For Nature directeth, changeth, and introduceth one kind and quality, the crudeness is done away with, the bitter is made sweet, the harsh is made mild, the rough is made smooth, the immature and wild is made tame, that which was formerly incapable is now made skillful and efficient, and leadeth to the final intended execution and perfection of the Work, and representeth the Ingredientia to the Composition.

The Fourth Potentia naturae

Est virtus expulsiva mundificativa, segregativa [the expelling, purifying, separating power] which separateth and divideth, which purifieth and cleanseth, which washeth during the Sublimation or Decoction. It setteth from Sordibus and darkness and bringeth forth a pure, transparent, powerful or illuminated Corpus or substance; it collecteth the Partes homogeneis, and is gradually set free from the heterogeneis, repulseth the Vitia and everything alien, inspecteth the crude, and giveth every part a special place. This is caused by and cometh from the agreeable constant heat in appropriate moisture, and that is the Sublimation and mature fruit, which will now fall out of the husk. Therefore it is in the beginning designed by Nature and artisans, namely the Patiens is set free from the Agente, and will be perfected. Nam liberatio illa a partibus heterogeneis est vita et perfectio omnis Rei, [for the liberation of these unequal and opposed parts is the life and perfection of all things]. For the Agens and Patiens which until now have been contending with each other, so that each affecteth and rendereth resistance according to its opponent's resistance — i.e., as much as possible it would like to break its opponent's resistance and they must not unite during the time of their Decoction, but the best part must gain the victory and expell the impure, and subjugate it.

Now when all Naturalis potentia have done their officium, then cometh forth the new birth and as the mature fruit presenteth itself in all other plants, so also now in our Subjecto and natural work which, when perfected, quite

surprisingly doth not at all resemble any more its first beginning and hath no more quality, and is neither cold nor dry, neither moist nor warm, and is neither masculus nor foemina. For cold is there itself turned into heat, and the dry into the moist, the heavy into the light, for it is a new Quinta Essentia, a Corpus Spirituale and hath become a Spiritus corporalis, such a Corpus as is clear and pure, transparent and crystal like; one which Nature itself, could never have produced as long as the world hath stood. The Artifex and the enlightened man, however, auxiliante Deo et natura [by the aid of God and Nature], produceth through his intellect and art, and he placeth it there by itself. So that subsequently he encountereth a Miracula and that is called: Unguenturn anima, aurum Philosophorum, flos auri [the unguent, the soul, the philosophers' gold, the flower of gold]. Theophrastus and others call it Gluten aquilae.

Now what is shown about the four potentiis naturae, the same had been effected by means of the fire, which must be incombustible, pleasing to Nature, and according to Nature it must continue steadily and must also be advantageous to the Work: but in this Work two kinds of fires are to be particularly well attended to, namely: the outer elementary fire which the Artifex constructeth and which he applieth to the Work, and after that the inner, innate, and natural fire of the substances. Though in all three primary things or genera there is to be found a natural fire as in the Animalibus, Vegetabilibus, and Mineralibus, through which it started and moved, maintained life, was strengthened and increased; and can continue its innate power of bringing forth and of implanted virtue according to the character of each.

But the fire which is in our Subjecto is in itself not least amongst creatures and minerals. It hath hidden within itself the most wonderful, the most potent fire against which the outer fire seemeth like water, for no common elementary fire can consume and destroy the pure gold which is the most durable substance amongst all metals, however intense the fire may be, but the essential fire and water of the Philosophers alone doeth it.

If we had today that fire with which Moses burned the golden calf and ground it to powder and strewed it upon the water and which he gave to and made

the Children of Israel drink of it (Exodus, chapter 32) - let such be a piece of alchemical work of Moses, the man of God! For he was instructed in the Egyptian art and skilled therein. Or the fire which the prophet Jeremias hid beneath the foot of the mountain, from which Moses saw the Promised Land and whereon he died, the fire which was recovered seventy years later by the Wise Men, the descendants of the old priests after the return from the Babylonian Captivity. But in the meantime the fire was changed in the mountain and became dense water (II Maccab., chapters 1 and 2). What thinkest thou? should we not warm ourselves at it and keep from us the frost in winter?

Such fire slumbereth in our Subjecto quietly and peacefully and hath no movement of itself. Should now this secret and hidden fire help its own Corpori, so that it may rise and have its effect, and manifest its might and power, so that the Artist may reach the desired and predestined end, it must be aroused through the outer elementary fire, be kindled and be brought into its course. This fire may be in lamps, or of whatever kind thou dost like, or contrive, for it alone is sufficiently capable of executing the activity with ease, and such fire and outer heat must be tended and maintained all the time until the end of the Sublimation, so that the inner and essential fire be kept alive, in order that the two indicated fires may help each other and the outer fire let the inner fire be worthy, until in its appointed time it becometh so strong and intense a fire that it will soon burn to ashes, pulverise, turn into itself, and make equal to itself all that is put into it but which is nevertheless of its own kind and nature.

Nevertheless it is necessary for every Artifex at the cost of his desired end, to know that between these two above-mentioned fires, he maintaineth certain proportions between the outermost and the innermost, and that he kindle his fire rightly, for if he maketh it too weak, then the Work cometh to a standstill, and the outermost fire is not able to raise the inner one, and in so far as he stirreth it up moderately several times, it yieldeth a slow effect and a very long process, and when he hath waited with such patience and hath his data, he then finally reacheth his intended goal. But if one maketh a stronger fire than befitteth this process, and it be speeded up, then the inner fire suffereth, it is

entirely incapable, the Work will surely be destroyed, and the hasty one will never attain his end.

If after lasting Decoction and Sublimation the noble and pure parts of the Subjecti are gradually, with the advantage of a calculated time, separated and set free from the crude earthly and useless substance, the impulse in such activity must be according to Nature and must be adjusted with such moderation that it will be agreeable, pleasing, and advantageous to the inner fire, in order that the inner essential fire be not destroyed through all too-intense heat, or even extinguished and made useless. Nay, rather it will be maintained in its natural degree, be strengthened, whilst the pure and subtle parts come together and convene, the crude being separated, so that they combine and the best will achieve the aforesaid end in view. Therefore thou must learn from Nature that degree of fire which Nature useth in its operations until it bringeth its fruit to maturity, and from this learn Reason and make calculation. For the inner essential fire is really that which bringeth the Mercurium Philosophorum to aequalitaet; but the outer fire stretcheth forth to it a hand so that the inner fire will not be hindered in its operation, therefore the outer must have concordance with the inner and must adjust itself according to the same, vice versa. Then in such use of the universal elementary fire it must be led toward the inner natural heat, and the outer heat hath to be adjusted to it, so that such doth not surpass in the Creato the power of the moist and warm Spiritus, which is wholly subtil; if other-wise, the warm nature of the said Spiritus would soon be dissolved, and it could not hold itself together any more, and would have no potency: it followeth therefrom that a fire more intense than is necessary for reviving and maintaining the inner natural fire implanted in our Materiae can only be for hindrance and deterioration. In natura et illius Creatis et generationibus sit tua Imaginatio, [upon Nature and what hath been created or brought forth by her, mediate thou]. Therefore bring the moist Spiritum into the earth, make it dry, agglutinirs and figurs, with an agreeable fire. Thus shalt thou also bring the Animam into the dead Corpus and restore what thou hast taken away, and thou restorest the soulless and dead to life and to rise again and be equipped, but whatever hath driven it will not stand the heat, for it will not become

constant as if it were to be received spontaneously from itself with good will, with joy and with desire, and be deeply impressed.

And that is sicci cum hurnido naturalis unio et ligamen tum optimum [the natural unification of the dry with the moist and also the best tie]. Yea, if one really desireth to discuss this matter: the Wise Men mention three kinds of fire, each of which taketh charge of the operis magni, so that each best form in particular must in wisdom and good readiness have governed this also. And so he will not work as one blind, but in an understanding and prudent manner, as befitteth an intelligent Philosophus.

The first is the outer fire, which the Artist or watchman maketh, which the Wise Men call ignem frontem, upon which Regimen dependeth the safety or the ruin of the entire Work, and this in two ways: nemium sumiget cave [take heed that it doth not smoke too much], but it is also said: combure igne fortissimo [burn it with the strongest fire].

The second fire is the nest wherein the Phoenix of the Philosophers hath its abode, and hatcheth itself therein ad regenerationem. This is nothing else than the Vas Philosophorum. The Wise Men call it ignem corticum, for it is written that the Phoenix bird collected all fragrant wood whereon it cremateth itself. If this were not so, the Phoenix would freeze to death and it could not attain to its Perfection. Sulphura Sulphuribus continentur [Sulphurs are maintained by sulphurs]. For the nest should protect, assist, cherish and keep the brood of the bird unto the final end.

The third however is the true innate fire of the noble Sulphuris, itself to be found in radice subjecti, and is an Ingredient, and it quieteth the Mercurium and fashioneth it: that is the real Master, yea, the true Sigillum Hermetis.

Concerning this fire Crebrerus writeth: In profundo mercurii est Sulphur, quod tandem vincit frigiditatem et humiditatem in Mercurio. Hoc nihil aliud est, quam parvus ignis occultus in mercurio, quod in mineris nostris exitatur et longo temporis successe digerit frigiditatem et humiditatem in mercurio, [In the essence of the Mercurii is a sulphur which finally conquereth the coldness and the moisture in the Mercurio. This is nothing else than a small fire hidden in the Mercurio, which is aroused in our Mineris, and in the fulness of time it

absorbeth the coldness and moisture in the Mercurio or removeth them, and that is also said about the fire.]