

...Concerning the Philosophical Stone

A Very Brief Tract Concerning the Philosophical Stone.

Written by an unknown German Sage,
About 200 years ago,
And called the Book of Alze.
But now published for the first time.

The Book of Alze.

Do not, gentle Reader, find fault with me for speaking first about the Moon, then about the Sun, and the other planets, and only in the third place about our most excellent Medicine, ALZE. In this case that which is last is better and more honourable than that which is first. The substance must first become white, and then red; it cannot become red unless it have first become white. Hence Simon the Sage says: "Know that unless you first make the Stone white, you cannot make it red." For by the red are the rest of the planets united, and the Medicine appears unawares unless this order is observed in the matter of the white and red. So is the Moon first taken and makes, with the white, Elixir, that is, the white of the Moon to the white of Mercury out of bodies comes to the red. Whence our Sages say that the red is hidden in the white, which they do not dare to extract, until the whole substance has become red. When the substance has been subjected to the influence of the Moon, it may then, in the second place, be brought under the influence of the Sun, which will bring the Medicine to perfection without any aid from the other planets. By which you may understand why the Medicine comes last, even as from the Father proceeds the Son, and the Holy Spirit from both of these. He that hath ears to hear let him hear, and comprehend the brief statement of our Art, which is given in "The Crowd": "Know that the true Tincture can be prepared only out of our ore." Concerning this ore I therefore propose to give you the only explanation that is required, and I shall be careful to supplement and confirm my own opinion by quotations from other Sages. I shall speak not only about our ore, but also about our union or conjunction of water and mercury. For Eximenus says: "Nothing profitable can arise out of the elements without conjunction and gentle coction." Our ore Lucas calls the white ore, and it goes by many other names on account of the many colours which it exhibits in the various stages of the chemical process. But though the jealousy of the Sages has described it under various names, it is, and remains only one substance. Pythagoras says: "Many names are given to it; nevertheless, it is nothing else but the one and true Matter, and this is by reason of the development of its nature. The envious have described it by the names of all bodies, as, for instance, a coin, lead, copper, etc., according to the variety of its colours." So Lucas tells us that we have no need of many things but only of one thing. Diamedes and Basan say: "Do not add to it any foreign substance; for the common substance of metals is one thing, and more excellent than all other things." Hence our whole Art is concerned with water, and a twin substance that ameliorates the water. Synon tells us that sulphur and our ore are derived from one thing, and changed into four. Lucas says: "The white ore is subjected to coction till it generates itself. Thus it becomes united in all its four elements, and receives a living soul. It is never more than one thing, but as a man consists of body, soul, and spirit, and yet is no more than one person, so our substance consists of body, soul, and spirit. The ore receives its strength, spirit, and growth from the water." The Sages say: "If the ore be often deadened in its coction, it becomes all the more excellent, and if the body have a soul after the manner of man." "The body does not penetrate the soul, but the soul penetrates the body, because it is volatile. The soul which is hidden in the four parts of the body, is called sulphur. These bodies are male and female, and by their mutual operation our substance becomes water. Aristeus says: "Observe the indestructible water which issues from it." Take the humidity which it gives off. Hence other Sages say: "Take water with its twin substances, and let it be dried up by means of the vapour which is like it, and coagulated in its own water." That water is also called poison; it is the principle of life, because it is a soul, and extracted from many things. All bodies that this Tincture enters are quickened; all bodies from which it is extracted are destroyed. Its potency is spiritual blood, which, if well mixed with bodies, transmutes them. into spirits, and

combines with them into one substance. The body attracts the spirit, and the spirit tinges the body with a spiritual substance like blood. For the Sages say that whatever has a spirit has blood. If the venom penetrate the body, it imparts to it an indestructible colour, and then the soul cannot be separated from the body any more. If in flying it faces round and meets its pursuer, then is the flight at an end. The two belong together, and Nature always tends to assimilate kindred substances. The final colour is indestructible, because the soul pervades every part of the body, and is inseparably bound up with it. Though the water is naturally cold, yet we must beware of too fierce a degree of heat; for if the moisture of the substance be dried up, our work must come to nought.

That which is called the spirit, is the active, or male principle, and can only be obtained by the dissolution of the body. Accordingly, we must understand this of the humidity which results, namely, that which is produced, as long as two spouses are conjoined after a lawful manner, even unto the white. Would you know when the body has been rendered liquid by coction? Hear what Bonellus answers: "When you see a black substance floating in the water, you may know that the body has been dissolved."

These two, body and spirit, have a third thing which represents their common substance, and is, in its turn, called their body. It is also called a round cloud, death, blackness, darkness, shadow, ashy lead, or a metallic and subtle ore; or it is described, after that which is obtained from it, as gold that was hidden in the body of Magnesia. Hence it is said: "Extract the shadow thereof from the splendour." This also is the substance of which so many have spoken. Three things constitute the true ore, viz., body, soul, and spirit. Hence it is compared to an egg, because in an egg, too, the chicken is developed out of three things. Thus also Alchemy is produced out of the above-mentioned three things, as many philosophers do testify in "The Crowd." The male principle, or the water, is also called the "nature"; for water is a natural agent which dissolves the elements of bodies, and then again unites them. Concerning this water, it is said by Fictes, that its nature has the wonderful power of transmuting the body into spirit. Where it is found alone it overcomes all other things, and is an excellent, harsh, and bitter acid, which transmutes gold into pure spirit. Without this acid we cannot attain either the red, or the black, or the white. When it is combined with bodies, then the body changes into spirit, by a heavenly fire, and immutable, indestructible tincture. Know also that the union must be brought about by a gentle fire, since the elements cannot stand a fierce fire, until the union has taken place. When the gentle heat is applied, the elements devour and consume each other, and yet again, on the other hand, comfort and strengthen each other, and teach each other to stand the test of fire. Hence the Sages say: "Invert the elements, and you will find what you seek." To invert the elements is to make that which is moist, dry, and that which is volatile, fixed. The husband also enforces conjunction that he may reproduce his own likeness. Many strive to accomplish this separation and conjunction; but few succeed in bringing about an union which can stand the test of fire. The composition which is prepared out of our precious substance is not even in the slightest degree diminished in volume by fire. Rather, it is nourished by fire, as a mother nourishes her child. These are the only things that have the power of making red and white, both inwardly and outwardly. Remember that at first they can only bear a gentle fire. When you see that a whiteness begins to appear it must be your next care to extract it from the black substance; then you should develop the redness which is hidden in it. But the latter object you must attain, not by extraction, but by gentle coction. Do not marvel that the Sages describe our ore under many names, and as consisting of body, soul, and spirit. They are also referred to as brothers, or as husband and wife. But Geber says that sometimes the whole substance is only called body, or spirit; and unless there be a dissolution into water, our work cannot be brought to a successful issue. Of course, we do not mean the water of the clouds, as the foolish say, but a permanent water, which, however, cannot be permanent without its body. Thus Hermogenes says that we are to take the hidden spirit, and not to despise it, because it shares its great power with its brother. For only the union of the two can give us the right Tincture. The water is also called a most sharp acid with which the body must be washed; this is what Socrates calls is woman's work, and child's play. "The secret of our Art is the union of man and woman: the husband receives the tinging spirit from his wife. The union of husband and wife coagulates the female principle; and if the whole be transmuted into red, we have the treasure of the world, of which Synon says: "If the water be changed into the body, the body is changed, first into earth, then into dust and ashes, and you have what you want."

Then the work is over, and the Stone contains within itself the Tincture in the body of Magnesia. Therefore, the Sages say, in conclusion: "My son, extract from the splendour its shadow." Accordingly, we need exertion, and exercise is beneficial to us, seeing that milk is for infants, but that strong men require stronger food. So also is it in this operation of the Stone.

Now, it is laid down by Geber that our Art must do more for the substance than Nature has done for it; otherwise we should never obtain the Medicine which has the power of correcting and perfecting the essences of the seven planets, or metals. For this purpose the Art of Alchemy has been delivered to us by the Sages; but the beginner must be on his guard against being misled by their manner of speaking, and the multiplicity of names which they give to our substance, which has been suggested to them by its great variety of (successive) colouring, and by the fact that it

is composed of the four elements. The Stone must be saturated with its water, that it may imbibe it all, and then subjected to the action of fire, until it turns to a kind of dust, like burnt blood, and becomes indestructible by fire. This Stone is sought by Kings, but is found only by those to whom it is given of God. It is publicly sold for money. But if men knew its precious nature, they would cease to think lightly of it. God, however, has hidden it from the world and he who would accomplish our work should first lay the right foundation, or his building must come to nought. Let me tell you, then, that our Stone requires a gentle fire; and if, after not many days, it die, and lie in the tomb, yet God restores to it its spirit, and removes its disease and its impurity. When it is burnt to ashes, it must be well sprinkled and saturated with its blood, until it becomes like burnt blood. Hermes remarks that both substances rejoice in being united to each other. To the spiritual substance God gives that which Nature could not give it. For Nature has nothing so precious as the true Tincture; and if with its bodies it become liquid, it produces a marvellous effect. For the Tincture changes everything it is mixed with into its own nature, and makes it white both within and without. By one operation and way, by one substance, and by one mixing, the whole work is accomplished, while its purity is also one, and it is perfected in two stages, each consisting of a dissolution and a coction, with the repetition of these.

It must be your first object to elicit the whiteness of the substance by means of gentle and continued coction or heat. I know that the Sages describe this simple process under a great number of misleading names. But this puzzling variety of nomenclature is only intended to veil the fact that nothing is required but simple coction. This process of coction, however, you must patiently keep up, and that with the Divine permission, until the King is crowned, and you receive your great reward. If you ask whether the substance of our Stone be dear, I tell you that the poor possess it as well as the rich.

Many have been reduced to beggary because they foolishly despised that which is highly esteemed by the Sages. If kings and princes knew it, none of us would ever be able to obtain it. Only one vessel is required for the whole process, which should be of stone, and should be capable of resisting fire.

A pound of the body of our ore should be taken, and rendered as pure, refined, and highly rectified, like the virtue of heaven, as the philosophers have it. Then the vessel should be placed in a reverberatory alembic. This should be set over a gentle fire, the vessel being kept tightly closed, in order that it may be able to retain its companion, and permit the same to enkindle the whiteness thereof, as Lucas says. The vessel containing the ore must be placed over the fire, since there can be no perfection without heat and intermixture of elements, seeing that it is produced from blood. When the male and the female principle have been together for a space of forty nights, there is an emission of moist warm seed; and to the same God has liberally given much blood to heat it. This seed develops into an embryo which is supported with a little milk over a moderate fire, and grows stronger day by day. Its growth must be aided by warmth; but the heat of the fire should be temperate, like that of the Sun. This may be effected by placing our vessel over an empty vessel, and that again upon some glowing coals. The process of coction should be continued until the alembic is well dried and the substance begins to assume a liquid aspect; for water alone is sufficient for the coagulation and fixing of the whole, as we are told by Democritus. This water is described under various names, such as sulphur, quicksilver, spirit, and also vapour, for it can scarcely retain its companion. There are in our Art only two substances, and if I speak of two, then I think of four, all which things require one thing, by which Nature, conquering all Nature, is extracted. For Nature, on account of its nature, rejoices in itself, Nature conquers nature, and in itself contains nature. At the same time one is not opposed to the other, but one comprehends the other, whereby it excels the other, and the philosophers call this water the purifying water.

This dissolution first imparts a black appearance to the body. The substance should then turn white, and finally red. The blackness exhibits an intermediate stage between fixedness and volatility. So long as there is blackness, the female principle prevails, till the substance enters into the white stage. This whiteness is called the first power of our Stone, and the water is referred to as that most excellent acid. You must be very careful not to destroy the potency of this water. Avicenna says that natural heat operating in humid bodies, first causes blackness; then removes the blackness; and finally causes whiteness, as may be seen in calx. Hence our substance must become first black, and then white, and be reduced to a kind of powder. Then the soul must be restored to the powder by a powerful fire; and both [be] subjected to coction until they become first black, then white, afterwards red, and finally good venom, the whole being accomplished by the separation of waters. And now, the waters being divided, cook the matter and the vapour till coagulation takes place, and there is made a white stone. Then are the waters divided. Another mortification, or exsiccation, follows, and is called clouds, or smoke. The smoke well coagulated with its feces becomes quick white; roast then the white ore that it may bring forth itself. When the blackness vanishes, the spirit is restored; for the spirit does not die, but rather quickens body and soul. The more perfectly our ore is purged, and subjected to coction, the better it becomes, till it is at length condensed into a Stone. But it must be dissolved again and subjected to a powerful fire, until it looks like burnt blood. If this Stone be added to any substance, it tinges it into gold. The Sages speak of it as a kind of root. Take, they say, the whole virtue of the Tincture, and concentrate it

in the Root. If a body which has no earthy elements receive this Tincture, it receives more benefit than less excellent bodies. The Stone overcomes everything to which it is applied, and tinges foreign bodies with its own colour. The dry fire tinges bodies, the air strengthens them, the white water washes away their blackness, and their earth receives the Tincture. Concerning the coction needed for the development of our substance, the Sages have expressed themselves in a great variety of ways. Observe Hermes, who says that it must be repeated again and again, until the red colour at length is obtained. Herein is the stability of the whole work. Afterwards it assumes many, many colours, not including the red, which appears at the end. For the white must precede it. Set to work by the regimen of fire, and triturate. The above mentioned water volatilizes all bodies; even such as are gross it penetrates until it has assimilated them to its own nature. Know that unless you operate upon bodies until they are destroyed and their soul is extracted, with such you will never tinge any body, for nothing tinges which has not first itself been tinged. If the body be made fluid and burnt, then it bends itself towards its begetter, becoming a subtle Magnesia, and it turns towards the earth, which makes it spiritual and vivifies it. Before the final whiteness of the first stage is attained, the substance turns first of a black, then of an orange, and then of a reddish colour (which, however, is quite different from the final redness of the last stage). These colours, however, need not trouble you, since they are evanescent and merely transitional.

From what I have said you may gather that our substance is found in the gold which is hidden in Magnesia, and that it is one thing composed of sulphur from sulphur and mercury from mercury. And as the substance of our Stone is one, so is the method of its preparation. Therefore, do not listen to those ignorant and fraudulent alchemists who speak of many different kinds of sublimation and distillation. Turn a deaf ear to those who say that the substance of our Stone is the powder of the Basilisk. As to the (length of) time required for the preparation, you must begin it in the winter, which is moist, and extract the moisture until the spring, when all things become green, and when our substance, too, should exhibit a variety of colours. In the summer the substance should be reduced to powder by means of a powerful fire. The autumn, the season of ripeness, should witness its maturity, or final redness. About the motions of the stars or planets you need not trouble yourself. Our substance is a body containing the spirit which makes glass malleable, and turns crystals into carbuncles. One drop of our Elixir, as large as a drop of rain, will suffice to tinge and transmute a body a thousand times as large as itself.

This most noble Remedy was appointed, like all other things, for the use of man, because he is the most glorious of God's creatures, and the lord of the whole earth. It was given to him for the purpose of preserving his youth, expelling disease, preventing suffering, and providing him with all he requires. Our Elixir is better than all the medicinal preparations of Hippocrates, Avicenna, and others. From it may be prepared a potable antidote which has power to cure leprosy. As fire purges and refines metals, so this Remedy restores to the human body its natural heat, expels from it all health-destroying matter, and fortifies it against every conceivable form of disease. Its virtue is infinitely greater than that of the potable gold dust, which is taken as a preventative among the Gentiles.

Great and wonderful is the potency of the gold that slumbers in Magnesia, both for the purifying of the human system, and for the transmuting of metals. What more shall I say? All the things that I have here faithfully described I have seen with my own eyes, and performed with my own hands.

When I was preparing the substance, after discovering the true method, I was so seriously interfered with by the persons with whom I lived that I was almost on the point of giving up the whole thing in despair. At length I communicated my discovery to a friend, who faithfully executed my instructions, and brought the work to a successful issue. For which Blessed Gift may God be praised, world without end. Amen.