

ARMAND BARBAULT

GOLD
OF A THOUSAND MORNINGS

Translated from the French by

ROBIN CAMPBELL



LONDON

NEVILLE SPEARMAN

First published in Great Britain in 1975 by
Neville Spearman Limited
112 Whitfield Street, London W1P 6DP

© 1975 Neville Spearman Limited

This book appeared under the title
L'or du Millième Matin
in France

© 1969 Editions Publications Premieres

SBN 85433 052 7

Set in 12 pt. Baskerville, 1 pt. leaded and printed by
Western Printing Services Ltd, Bristol
using Dalmore A/W paper
supplied by Frank Grunfield Ltd., London
Bound by the Pitman Press, Bath

CONTENTS

| | <i>page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| Preface | vii |
| ONE The Alchemist's Elixir for Long Life | 1 |
| TWO The Observation of Nature; Astrology | 11 |
| THREE The Alchemist's First Matter and how to obtain it | 32 |
| FOUR Treatment of the First Matter | 54 |
| FIVE Our Spagiric Preparation and Traditional Teaching | 73 |
| SIX The Hermetic Treasures of the Alchemists | 91 |
| SEVEN Experimental and Clinical Verification | 101 |
| EIGHT Other Metallic Tinctures of the First Degree | 113 |
| NINE Introduction to Preparations of the Second Order | 122 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIRST RESEARCHES

between pages 40 and 41

Armand Barbault experiments
The first drops of Gold
The new laboratory
The importance of astrology
Collecting dew

IN SEARCH OF THE FIRST DEGREE ELIXIR OF LONG LIFE

between pages 72 and 73

Collecting plants
Mixing earth and plants
Adding dew
The regenerate peat
Sifting
Preparing coctions
Inserting test tubes in a circular oven
Filtering coctions
At long last the liquor of gold

RESEARCH ON THE SECOND ORDER

between pages 104 and 105

Gathering plants
Recovery of the sap
The Blood of the Green Lion
Enriched Matter
'Marcassite'
Collection of distilled sap
'Virginal Milk'

PREFACE

It is high time that activities such as astrology and alchemy, which are wrongly termed 'occult', provoked some reaction other than the customary blind acceptance or sarcasm. I feel it is necessary to point out to those deep thinkers who have shed all their illusions without having gained anything else in the process, that to denounce the charlatanism of certain 'seers' or the naïve attitude of 'believers' is not a sufficient investigation of these secular disciplines. One wishes that orthodox scholars would bring to bear judgements based on practical knowledge and would at the very least agree to learn the rules of the game. Instead, they oppose on principle arts of which they have no knowledge and about which they fabricate quite fantastic ideas. When several industrialists, often less short-sighted than scholars, heard of the results which Armand Barbault had achieved after fifteen years' work on what Paracelsus calls potable gold, they expressed at least an impartial sort of curiosity. Some of them became really enthusiastic, for as industrialists they are obliged by the laws of competition to be always on the look-out for new ideas. Faced with this liquor which had taken on the very colour of gold and which had failed to respond to normal methods of analysis, it was they and not the alchemist himself who were moved to speak of *a new state of matter*, endowed with strange, possibly very fundamental properties.

Armand Barbault began as an engineer with the Technical Radio Company and then worked in the biological department of the Armand Carrel Institute. He possesses

all the qualities necessary for laboratory research. Above all, though, he belongs to the earth and is in contact with the forces of nature. Those who have been fortunate enough to follow his work in astrology will be aware how he refers everything back to the *natural* foundations of the art. For him, the highly analytic and detailed aspects of science are fused with that unity and spontaneity of vision which is the mark of real knowledge.

In the late 1940's Armand Barbault could, had he so wanted, have become a fashionable astrologer. His astrological handbook, published in 1952, carried great weight. Society ladies and politicians sought him out, placed their trust in him and threatened to drag him into the facile existence inherent in this approach to the art. The course of his life was completely changed when, after the war, he met his second wife. This man, who led an extremely comfortable urban existence, suddenly gave it all up and went to live in the country. The decision which he took to devote his life to alchemy was no free, deliberate choice but rather was in obedience to a call, maybe even a command, which was transmitted by the woman. Suddenly, a life which had threatened to become banal became a *destiny*. This role of the woman in alchemy is traditional and fundamental. She is the guide and the channel for forces which we must call superior since we do not have them at our command: rather, they have us at their command. No training prepares us better than astrology for this obedience, for it shows the reason why.

For Armand Barbault there followed a dozen years of tentative yet strenuous work. Then, at the beginning of the 1960's, came the first results, since confirmed. In this book, written by Barbault once the initial excitement of his discoveries had subsided, the reader will immediately feel himself projected into another world. It is a world of perpetual morning. The elements which compose it are the rising sun, dew and sap. In it one touches every blade of grass with religious respect. It is, too, a world of obscure

forces in earth and sky, brought together in a kind of uneasy truce and which become almost tangible and familiar. From them, man seems to expect some unknown form of sacrament. Finally, the thousandth morning arrives and the gold yields up its soul.

Perhaps it is this profound and effective sort of poetry which sustained the seeker over a twenty-year period. However, this is an insufficient explanation; this book is vital for precise practical and scientific reasons. The poetry is no more than a bonus. I do not consider it rash to say that this book quite possibly opens new paths for medicine, or rather it reopens long forgotten ones. I cannot be more assertive, since I have no expertise of my own and hence no real right to speak. I have, though, treated myself with the drops of potable gold over a two-year period, with beneficial results. The one thing above all others that I want to draw to public attention at this time is that this is the first book ever about alchemy *which says it all* and does not seek to drown the subject in obscurity or in secrecy. Armand Barbault tells all he knows and explains everything he does, even, and indeed above all, when he refers to highly symbolic ancient texts. These are thereby illumined in new and direct fashion. 'To hide things is the glory of God, to find them is the glory of man' says the Book of Proverbs. But what of the famous vow of secrecy which, according to all the ancient texts, is imposed on the seeker and the accompanying threat to the profaner of the secret? There is nothing more deceptive than the sort of treatise on the occult whose author gives us to understand that he can reveal only a small part of what he knows, since his reader is unworthy to receive such knowledge. One feels like replying 'Why did you write the book, then? Practise your secret science in secret and don't keep talking to us about it.' One is almost tempted to quote the old saying 'He who can, does, he who can't, teaches.' It seems to me that this obscure secret, which one is obliged to keep because of an equally obscure decree, is

based on a misunderstanding. The spirit of our age is that of Faust, who would accept no prohibition and took his risks all across the board. Indeed, what wise man is there on whom the hint of unsanctioned danger does not act as a powerful spur? In fact the best defences are those inherent in the difficulty of the task itself.

When Armand Barbault succeeded in obtaining his first tincture in the early 1960's, he sent them for analysis to well-equipped pharmaceutical laboratories. After experiments which proved conclusive, the chemists asked how one might manufacture industrial quantities of the tincture, i.e. large quantities, cheaply produced. To the laboratory researchers, twelve long years of preparation of the 'first matter', constant technical sleight of hand, the need for the seeker to be up before dawn for months on end to gather dew from the meadows or young plants swollen with sap, all the trial and error, the sheer volume of labour, seemed not only unprofitable in the financial sense, but also a sheer waste of time. Could one not simplify, speed up, synthesise? Vain hope. Not only could the liquor not be analysed, it could not be compared with anything even remotely similar. Yet Armand Barbault hid nothing. One may, during the first stage of its preparation, find the alchemist's mysterious *materia prima* almost anywhere. One has only to take, at random, a sample of clean, healthy soil. Completely at random? Perhaps not. Definitely not any old time and any old place. Two different orders of conditions converge here, neither of which can be measured quantitatively and so escape the clutches of ordinary, experimental science. The first depends on the inspiration of the alchemist, or, if one prefers, on his intuition; better still, on the instructions he receives. Tradition is firm on this point. The future is acted upon more than he himself acts. Very often he is guided by his wife, perhaps in dreams, perhaps in a series of paranormal perceptions in which she, in a medium-like trance, perceives things more or less intensely in terms of images.

Scholars see this as a hangover from the naïve and primitive animist age and treat it as an unfortunate incursion of magic into today's world. Let us leave to more enlightened times the task of contrasting the literal interpretation of such 'revelations' with their symbolic meaning, thereby doing justice to the phenomenon of 'seeing'. We cannot miss this opportunity of helping in a powerful return to a more subjective approach to the so-called human sciences. These are, in fact, governed by mathematics and are drained of their vitality by a structuralism which, in other aspects, is highly effective. For the time being, we repeat simply that in Armand Barbault's case his wife played the important role laid down for her by tradition.

The second order of conditions in fact underlines the necessary pre-eminence of subjectivity which we have already mentioned. The factor which really governed Armand Barbault's work was the configuration of the planets at any given moment. When the stars were especially favourable he chose the spot from which he would take his First Matter. The moment for this was chosen in the same way. Time and place were unique and valid only for that particular individual. The alchemist's frame of reference was his astrological birth chart and the aspects prevalent at this moment which caused the focus of cosmic forces on his work. There, truly, are conjunctions and aspects which will never be exactly reproduced. Of course this does not mean that other alchemists, working at different times and in different places, did not encounter equally propitious and inspiring conditions. What it does mean is that this 'science' is really an art which is not susceptible to objective experiment or banal repetition.

This leads me to a point which I think it is essential to grasp if one wants to understand the differences between chemistry and alchemy. The chemist confidently repeats his experiments at will. He is master of his data, which is all measurable. Additionally, in any one experiment he is

only dealing with a small, finite number of variables. What these are is precisely known; they are susceptible to what Descartes calls *entire* enumeration, i.e. it is complete. However, it must be admitted that no experiment can be devised which deals with a given, closed number of variables. Every experiment is grounded in the close-grained and indivisible texture of universal experience. There will always be an infinite, or better, an unknown number of parameters. The known facts are never entirely enumerable; the laws of physics and chemistry remain only approximate, always open to revision and improvement, as previously unknown or ignored variables are incorporated.

There is, for example, no ideal crucible, no crucible so perfectly sealed and protected that it can be considered a closed system, a unit absolutely isolated from the rest of the universe. Are we aware of every action which may be exerted by a distant planet or star, every radiation, every means of energy exchange at work in the world? It would be unscientific to presume so. For that matter, do we even know how to locate, isolate and measure our own telepathic influences, influences which American and Russian scientists are beginning to take extremely seriously, yet which are doubtless only a minute part of the telekinetic spectrum? Nevertheless, it is the business and indeed the essence of science to attach the label scientific only to those phenomena for which the importance of certain variables allows one to consider the rest, in all their variety, as infinitely small, without real significance and hence able to be ignored. It goes without saying that this is only because the variables considered by science are measurable, i.e. reducible to quantities which can always be compared with one another in the knowledge that anything which one ignores or rejects is 'too small' to distort the phenomenon.

A typical example concerns the ranging tables used by the artillery. In calculating a particular shot trajectory, the gunner evidently does not take into account an enormous number of more or less subtle secondary variables.

To take the example to its absurd limits, he ignores the attraction exerted on the shell by the distant planets. As a result, each shot deviates from the ideal, which it would only be possible to gauge using the variables which are ignored. All the shots fall around the objective in what is called the bracket. This is as narrow as possible, but it exists nonetheless.

Nothing of this sort exists in alchemy. Here, phenomena escape measures of quantity more often than not; nor can any one variable be considered infinitely small compared with the others. Everything, or almost everything, is measured not quantitatively but qualitatively and so the marginal becomes the essential. The forces in play are not identified and the smallest depletion of any one of them can side-track the whole process. Success or failure can never be foreseen. Hence the stress which tradition places on the *qualification* of the operator. It is said that he is the channel by which cosmic forces reach the work, so he must provide these forces with a free passage. This is identified as a sort of absolute transparency, with which are associated wisdom, detachment and disinterest, necessary conditions for the freedom and effectiveness of the spirit.

In fact I think that to speak of the special qualification of the would-be adept and the *infinity* of conditions in alchemy is one and the same thing. Precisely because the process obeys an infinite number of conditions, the operator must be a channel entirely free of the earthly contingencies which enslave the average man, so making him incapable of synthesising and of true vision.

Such is the nature of the world of alchemy, a world full of fascination yet very hard to pin down. Nature, however, places these forces which it is so hard to measure before our very eyes, the simplest yet the most universal of effects. Armand Barbault's book contains highly penetrating observations on the nature of dew and the sap of plants. These are essential ingredients of his operations, natural

receptacles for forces which, for want of a better word, we call etheric. They are forces which vary according to hour, day and season. For their capture they demand precautions which border on ritual and on an almost religious state of mind. In these areas advanced science has now begun to confirm the teachings of the ancients. For example, in the January 1969 issue of the English magazine *Endeavour* you will find precise information on the differing rate of flow and variable composition of sap at different times of the day. The concentration of forces is at maximum just before sunrise. These statements and the proof that movement of sap in the ducts or fibres of plants takes place by capillary action have been arrived at after much patient observation and measurement. These will obviously continue and increase, though they will never entirely solve the problem. In general, the limits of modern science are expanded further and further by its own observations; it is less and less able to fall back on the facile attitude of denying what it does not understand. That we are entering a revolutionary period is easily enough said, of course. But even yesterday, science flatly denied the existence of what it termed 'mystery'. Today, it is obliged to turn the mystery into an enigma and to grapple with it. Again, it is easily said, but in fifty years' time a strictly negative attitude to astrology will be unthinkable, as unlikely as the literal application to the phenomena of biology of the second law of thermodynamics today. And this in spite of all that scientific sectarianism still affirmed barely thirty years ago.

Alchemy seeks to salvage the hidden properties of these cosmic forces en bloc and orthodox science is obliged at least to admit their existence, even if it is as yet unable to analyse, to name and to list the components of them. If I were an optimist, I would say that in this respect chemistry and alchemy, the profane science and the sacred science, were converging. Maybe they are converging but they will not become identical. There will always be an unbridge-

able gap between the two disciplines. This is so for the simple and self-evident reason that infinity will never be exhausted by a series of finite operations. Nevertheless, alchemy and indeed the whole field of cosmic forces can and must play the role of a marvellous stimulant. In Michel Gauquelin's book on astrology (published in France by Planète) there is a long and passionate account of this science born of cosmic influence, as founded by scholars such as Tchijewsky, Takata and Piccardi. The story of the researches of Giorgio Piccardi, director of the Institute of Physical Chemistry at the University of Florence, is a marvellous intellectual adventure in its own right. It started from a little, almost insignificant fact concerned with the descaling of boilers by means of what is called *activated water*. This phenomenon was not constant; sometimes it happened, sometimes it didn't. It varied with the occasion, though all 'scientific' conditions appeared identical. Piccardi was obliged to attribute these variations to changes of *space* in his set-up. This in turn led, incidentally, to many other inexplicable phenomena. To speak of *activation of space* gets one decidedly nowhere. It is simply a picturesque and handy term, yet one which is heard more and more often. I first encountered it in the description of the patent taken out in 1950 by the Russian engineer Sprink, who runs a cement-manufacturing company in France. In it, he states that the creation of an electric field nearby greatly speeds up reactions inside his ovens. He is unable to explain why. In the same context, one sees that the cosmos changes the structure of water which, it would seem, is thus linked to the movement of the earth through its connection with the galaxy and its force field. Perhaps the most extraordinary observation is that made by the Japanese doctor Maki Takata. Testing the albumen in blood serum, he recorded complete upset of his results in January 1938, a kind of panic of the human blood. Today, there are established connections between human blood and extra-terrestrial forces. These are global

Preface

effects which we are by no means in control of. They destroy man's pretensions to be able both to isolate a phenomenon and to isolate himself. Instead, they expose us to a world of vertiginous heights, a world which seizes the seeker with desire and with trembling, two equally sacred emotions.

My sole aim in writing this preface is to help Armand Barbault find his Takata or his Piccardi, someone who will experiment systematically and objectively with his elixir. In this way the gulf between chemistry and alchemy will be bridged. At the end of the book will be found a brief resumé of the tests carried out according to the method of Professor Theodor Schwenk, a member of the anthroposophical movement founded by Rudolf Steiner. Researchers from this movement are almost certainly the most readily disposed to understand the labours of men like Armand Barbault and the most likely to be able to expand them. In many respects they are themselves pioneers, though basing their work on firmly established principles. Studying the problem of water, without doubt the most complex and paradoxical fluid which the ordinary doctor has to deal with, Theodor Schwenk works from the idea that the internal surfaces formed in water which is in motion are nothing short of entry point for cosmic or etheric forces. Thus the study of these forces can yield precious information on the ability or otherwise of a given sample of water to receive and broadcast these forces. So if one wants to discover the 'value' of some water, one has only to photograph the complex 'forms' which result when a drop of that water falls into a control liquid. The greater the charge of cosmic energy in a sample of water, the richer and more harmonious the forms which it yields.

The photographs of Armand Barbault's liquor reveal magnificent multi-petalled flowers, quite different from the impoverished patterns issuing from the dead water normally supplied as human drinking water. Here, then, is one way in which the constancy of the elixir can be

Preface

checked. There will doubtless be many others. I do not think that it is asking too much to hope for fair, objective tests from biologists and doctors, so that the rebirth of spagiric medicine may quite simply be a milestone for all science.

Raymond Abellio

ONE

THE ALCHEMIST'S ELIXIR FOR LONG LIFE

The story of a twentieth-century alchemist who has succeeded, after twenty years' research, in reconstituting the Golden Elixir of the First Degree, so opening the way to anti-atomic medicine in the future.

The essential preoccupation of the wise men of old was to discover and capture the universal energies surrounding them. Above all they aimed at preparing a *universal medicine* which prolonged life-span by maintaining the body in good health. This allowed groups treated with it to accomplish special tasks entrusted to them, thanks to the enhanced experience they were thus able to amass.

We may legitimately postulate that initiates of other ages possessing knowledge which has now partly vanished, had access to the secret of continuing youth.

There are many legends about such an *elixir of long life*. Nearer our own time, the potable gold of the alchemists was reputed to possess marvellous healing properties. It was said to be effective against the most tenacious illnesses, regenerating the organism and assuring the user of a ripe old age.

Today we know nothing of all this. Civilisation, doubtless, offers certain compensations. Previously unknown

medical and surgical techniques fight disease with great effectiveness. Yet the turmoil of modern life, the pollution of air and ocean, the spread of radiation all bear and nourish new diseases against which we are all too often helpless. For this reason many researchers consider that we need to lay the foundations of a new kind of medicine, one drawing inspiration from the most ancient ideas. This is the true path, the path which this book sets out to describe.

Initial observations and essential analogies

To grasp the importance of the subject, one needs to be a diligent observer of nature, able to give attention to the smaller details of natural phenomena when they appear to obey laws unknown to or even flatly contradictory to the physical laws we take for granted. In fact we are surrounded by energies which are invisible to us. These are the universal etheric or fluidic forces which take part in the life processes of plants and animals. Their laws are in no way the laws of gravity. Look at plants or creepers as they raise their flexible, sap-filled stems into the spring sky. See how the buds on the rose bushes in your garden firm and swell. The fragile supporting stem does not seem aware of this excess weight. Is one not led to think that gravity has lost its power? It seems as if the sap which fills the stems is under pressure from some invisible pump hidden deep in the roots, keeping the stem at its customary degree of rigidity. But try pulling up a rose bush in order to transplant it. You will be surprised to find that, during the short time the plant is out of the earth, the compression effect completely ceases. The stems bend under the weight of the buds, straightening up again only several days after replanting. Further, you may notice that this straightening-up process does not happen progressively but is most marked at sunrise. The stems then tend to wilt again dur-

ing the day. In this way you will have been shown that the invisible life forces which operate in the reverse manner to gravity are more in evidence in the morning than at night.

It was on observations such as these that the wise men of old built a large part of their knowledge. The invisible forces, whose action on a rose bush has just been demonstrated, act similarly on the whole vegetable kingdom. They achieve their most powerful effects in the spring and at daybreak. They act in exactly the same manner on human beings, too. Look at a child running, jumping or simply walking along. As the stem does not feel the weight of the buds it supports, so the child seems not to experience the weight of its body. An old man, on the other hand, proceeds slowly and deliberately. His tread is heavy, his head withdrawn into his shoulders, as if with age the physical deadweight of the body has gained the upper hand. Suppose one could find a way of capturing these life forces, of condensing and encapsulating them in a scientific preparation. The man to whom such a preparation was given could, one imagines, regenerate his entire organism and probably prolong his life considerably. This was the idea in the minds of the wise men as they researched into the Universal Medicine or Elixir of Long Life.

There is another phenomenon, much stranger than the first, which is of enormous interest. One may observe it in a field of wheat on a fine, clear spring morning. It is the phenomenon of the dewdrop. At dawn, before the temperature has risen, one can see humidity rising out of the ground and on up the blades of grass to form marvellous drops of dew at the tips. These evaporate at sunrise and produce a covering of mist. Here, again, gravity seems to have been overcome. Dew behaves in a fashion diametrically opposed to rain whose drops *fall* on condensation. Dew, like sap in plants, possesses special properties. The ancient spagirists made use of both of them in their concoctions which were designed to capture universal energies.

We will return repeatedly to these matters in the course of this book. It was important to show from the outset why the Tradition has paid so much attention to the preparations which will now be described.

The Dawn of the Magicians begins at daybreak on a Spring morning

The ancients were bent on capturing the life forces which they sensed in young plants swollen with spring sap. They also researched ways of producing a hermetic preparation which would condense these forces and make them assimilable by the human body. The body, thus plugged in to sources necessary for its balanced functioning, would be able effectively to combat decay.

At this point, then, they sought a 'First Matter' capable of preserving these life forces. But at the same time it was necessary to find a way of preserving plants exactly as they were when picked at daybreak, in order to ensure conservation of the most subtle elements. To this end, plants were kept in containers filled with fresh dew, gathered in its turn at daybreak. Many ancient texts report such general techniques. I refer to them in a previous book published in 1948.

On the other hand, the alchemists remain silent when it comes to designating the First Matter whose unique nature they all recognise. It is known that it condenses the life forces encapsulated in its centre and 'fixes' them during a slow and progressive process which results in the metamorphosis of the matter itself. It now becomes the Major Leaven, which has the property of opening metals, separating the richest and most subtle part from the material remainder. It is this subtle part which, once extracted, is suitable for the preparation of hermetic remedies. For a long time I, in common with many others, thought that it was possible, given plants, sap and dew, to produce a stable

and effective elixir. I thought, too, that it was possible to proceed in a similar way with regard to the mineral kingdom. It never entered my head that it was necessary to combine vegetable with mineral. But it is, for the First Matter is a whole containing all those living elements capable of evolution and dependent on the processes to which the adept subjects them. It was only after having filled numerous vessels with fresh plants steeped in dew and having sealed them hermetically that, thanks to inspiration and to the guides which accompanied me on all these spiritual labours, I was led to seek out a new substance to act in a supporting capacity. The matter thus becomes what the ancients called the Philosopher's Peat. All the characteristics of this substance, its choice, preparation and acquisition, will be described in a separate chapter. For now it is enough to say that it was extracted from the earth at a depth of approximately ten centimetres and was then mixed with the contents of the vessels when they had been subjected to the gentle fire of the first coction.

This may all seem simple and logical but the truth was much more complex. The different operations, in all their range and detail, had to coincide with certain natural processes, to coordinate themselves according to a strict system and finally to take a perfectly predetermined path. Once I possessed the First Matter and the sealed vessels containing green plants, sap and dew, I had to imagine in what way the ancients brought about the transformation of the Peat so that it evolved and continually renewed its capacity for accumulating the life forces, as if nourished by them. I had also to observe its successive metamorphoses and to perpetuate them as many times as was necessary for the Peat to evolve in conformity with the traditional hermetic process. I watched it take on little by little the required black colour, becoming tainted at its lowest point and then changing to the Absolute Black. Only having succeeded in all this can one turn one's attention to Incineration. By this process the Peat, having attained its first perfection,

becomes the Major Leaven. The Major Leaven is a saline powder which contains all the salts originating in the vegetable substances whose combustible parts have disappeared during incineration. The salts, liberated by this separation of compounds, contain the life forces. These are imprisoned from now on and cannot be reclaimed by nature. The First Matter was impregnated with them during the different preparations. With regard to this, it is necessary to understand fully the complementary but opposite roles of sap and of dew. These two liquids are poles apart. Sap nourishes the matter; dew, on the other hand, 'burns' it. Dew should in some ways be considered the excrement of the plant since it is exuded from it. It acts on the First Matter in rather the same way that urine helps in the disintegration of a dung-heap, a vital stage in the enriching of dung.

It should not, however, be thought that this metamorphosis takes place rapidly. Though I started impregnating plants with dew in 1948, it was not until 1960 that the Matter reached maturity.

For twelve consecutive years I had continually to repeat the same processes, adding together plants, sap and dew, then waiting for nature to accomplish her work of putrefaction. Finally the Matter had to be dried at a temperature never in excess of 40°C. I was then ready to begin again. My continual aim was to enrich the First Matter. It had to nourish itself on vegetable substances to maintain the life forces in it. These had been concentrated and fixed in the salts when, at the height of disintegration, the separation of mixtures took place. This process constitutes one of the secrets of the spagirists.*

During their visits, some of my friends saw the alambic

* Spagitic, spagirist: these words are formed from the conjunction of two Greek roots, 'span' to extract or uproot and 'ageirein' to gather together, and were doubtless coined by Paracelsus. They characterise the two opposed yet complementary activities of alchemy (solve and coagula).

operating in the open air. Others were curious enough to come at daybreak and see how the plants and dew were gathered. Few believed that I would ever succeed in my task and were reinforced in their doubt by the fact that the results from one year to the next were minimal. Yet however little the progress made, it was sufficient to arouse enthusiasm and prompt the continuing of operations just as long as was necessary to obtain the sought-after perfection. It is quite obvious that spiritual forces were involved here. Their presence was indeed continually felt and, as long as one persevered, they showed the way to success. Remember that, up till now, no hermetic or alchemical work inherited from the ancients has given detail of the *modus operandi*. The silence is even more complete when it comes to indicating the exact nature of the First Matter, or to describing the process needed to capture the etheric and universal energies which, once held in this substance, will allow the required solvent to be obtained.

For twelve years I worked towards the state of Absolute Black, when the First Matter crumbles like powder. Having once obtained Matter in this state, with white particles beginning to make their appearance at the end of the drying process, I decided to add some Philosopher's Peat to the Major Leaven. This operation demanded total incineration of a complete redness, so that all combustible matter might be reduced to ash. The separation of compounds allows the life forces imprisoned in the plants, the sap and the dew to become fixed in the salts. These accumulate as ash at the bottom of the crucible. It is said that at this stage the living particles no longer fear the fire but on the contrary settle willingly in the salts, thereby acquiring the power to separate the soul of the metal from its physical matrix. The medicine we seek is composed of this metallic soul.

Having obtained this power enriched with salts and other extremely active particles, I proceeded in the following way with the preparation of the First Medicine: into a

glass tube sealed at one end I put a few cubic centimetres of the new powder to which I added a few grammes of powdered gold. I then distilled dew until it rose 10 to 15 mm above the mass of aurified ashes. Next, I hermetically sealed the open end of the tube, in order to carry out the coction in a closed vessel. When exposed to progressive, yet gentle heat, the mixture soon begins to bubble and a sort of rhythmic movement is observed which allows the gold particles to be attacked. After several hours of cooking, the gold imparts its colour to the preparation. Once the mixture has settled, one can in fact see the dew at the top become gold in colour, evidence of the internal work which has been accomplished during the coction. To obtain this first elixir, one must resort to many coctions each of several hours' duration and separated by several hours of inactivity during which an examination is made of the colouring which the preparation has adopted. Watch for the apparition of the symbolic Star which is seen floating on the surface. It is the appearance of this star which indicates that the Elixir is perfect, but a further period of waiting is needed before use can be made of it, as certain elements have to be deposited at the base of the receptacle.

The same experiment undertaken with the same dissolving powder and with dew but **WITHOUT METALLIC GOLD**, also produces an alkaline liquid but one **WITHOUT COLOUR. THE GOLDEN COLOUR ONLY APPEARS IN THE PRESENCE OF POWDERED GOLD.**

Spectrum analysis of the liquid, however, has never revealed the existence of the gold. One is therefore bound to admit that the colour of the gold is not evident, in its essential state, to the laws of optics. This corresponds with the theories of the ancient alchemists who thought that gold possesses a soul and a body and that this soul, **WHICH IS ITS COLOUR**, contains in itself the medicinal and therapeutic properties of the metal. In the

operations described above, we can say that the gold is in some way separated from its material envelope and transported to a higher dimension which still remains to be discovered by science.

Having obtained this specimen, I sent it for experimental purposes to several organisations open to this kind of science. To be interested in such a preparation of course presupposes that one admits, in addition to the physical body, the existence of an etheric body and of other ultimate states of being.

This aurified liquor, which according to spectrum analysis contains not the slightest trace of gold, is alkaline and has no toxic element which would prohibit its use. But what in fact is it in relation to the ancient alchemical terms? Is it **POTABLE GOLD, VEGETABLE GOLD** or **VEGETABILISED GOLD**? Or again is it **FLOWER OF GOLD**, so called because of a golden star which floats above the liquor? It is difficult to say. However, as I shall stress a little later on, I am tempted to see in it, comparing it with certain ancient texts, that Vegetable Gold so called because the corresponding solvent is neither a metal nor a mineral. It comes from the earth and is transformed after years of preparation. After it has several times produced its **INTERNAL FIRE** and become totally neutral and inactive, the Leaven can regain its energy if it is mixed with a large quantity of green plants, sap and dew, alternatively being moistened and dried.

After several alterations, the Leaven regains its black colour and can again start to calcinate. By this means one obtains a new powder, regenerated and capable in its turn after coction in a closed vessel on a gentle and long-burning fire in the presence of dew, of separating out the colour from gold.

Finally, a fact worth mentioning: at the beginning of operations in 1948 we obtained from a mass of First Matter weighing a little over 2 kg in the raw state, a quantity of Matter dried and freed of a thousand little

stones, which weighed 1.80 kg. During twelve years, considerable quantities of plants, sap and dew were added to this Matter. In 1960, after incineration, the weight was still 1.80 kg. Thus the addition of nutritious elements had absolutely no effect on the weight of the First Matter, in spite of the transformation which the latter had undergone.

To conclude this introductory chapter, I should point out that several years' experience have confirmed that the regeneration of the solvent powder always takes place in the same way: alternate moistening and drying until the black colour is obtained, then incineration. The new powder obtained in this way, equal in weight to the old, possesses the same qualities as it. It will produce liquors with the same therapeutic properties and the same colour as the earlier ones.

Finally, I searched for the means to augment the mass of solvent powder produced in this way. I was able eventually to discover a way of increasing production slowly but surely. It is sufficient to be attentive to the unfolding of the operations and always to act with great caution, for it is easier to lose the powder prepared so painstakingly than it is to conserve or regenerate it. In 1961 I confided the testing of the first liquors of gold which I possessed to certain German laboratories whose way of thinking assured me of a welcome. Following indisputable medical evidence of cures and a whole collection of detailed facts, I decided to persevere and to elaborate this new medicine in the hope of ensuring its application.

THE OBSERVATION OF NATURE; ASTROLOGY

How the astrologers and alchemists observed and imitated the phenomena of nature in preparing the peat and in causing it to undergo successive metamorphoses.

To understand the alchemists, one has to saturate oneself in the fund of knowledge on which their system was based. One has also to assimilate their method according to the rules of astrology, a science which formerly presided over the study of nature. My intention here is not to give an astrology or an alchemy lesson: those of you who are interested in these matters will have no difficulty in finding the necessary texts.

Nevertheless, to understand these texts, it seems to me primarily essential to observe nature and to try and fathom the import of the transformations undergone during the yearly cycle. In other words, to grasp what true alchemy is, to penetrate to the principles and laws, one has to be in the state of mind of the farmer who, from seed time to harvest never loses sight of his crop. If I was not of peasant stock, if circumstances had not enabled me to observe and understand all aspects of nature, if I had not learned about astrology, the principles of occultism and the four

elements, then in all probability the alchemical texts would have remained a complete mystery to me.

It will be clear then why I am going to use this chapter to put you on the right road. You will see how necessary it is to pay close attention to nature so as to imitate and anticipate her in the manner of the ancient alchemists. Let us now go into the laboratory where you will take your first steps.

Begin by forgetting what you have learned, above all the principles of astronomy—however perfect they may be. Adopt instead the point of view of the ancients, of Ptolemy and his geocentric system which judged phenomena on what they appeared to be. In this way you will be attempting to grasp the double nature of things, the visible and the invisible. Just as the Chinese take account of *Yin* and *Yang*, the black and the white, so we always see nature as having two aspects. Similarly, there is good and bad, heaven and hell and so on. By paying particular attention to the objective/subjective duality of things, you will be in a position to understand their profound meaning. We can now get to the heart of the matter.

Imagine for a moment that you are in the open, in the middle of a huge plain. Try and get your bearings. You will see yourself at the centre of a flat surface area. Above your head stretches the hemisphere of heaven. There is also a hemisphere under your feet but it is invisible to you. Very soon you realise that you are *condemned* to be at the centre of this system. In whatever direction you walk, the sky seems to move with you and so you will never reach a given point on the horizon. This is the way the world appears; you are trapped, in spite of your freedom to come and go as you please on its face. Stay in the same spot and observe the movement of the stars and of the Sun in particular. You will see them move slowly from east to west, as if the entire heavens were turning round you once every twenty-four hours. The first impression, and a valid, one, is this: You are at the centre of a flat earth and the

sky is revolving slowly round you. Astrology is founded on exactly these generalisations which take into account only the apparent positions and movements of the stars, ascribing them to a geocentric system.

Now turn your attention away from the daily movement of nature to her annual cycle. Each year, at certain times, you will see nature born afresh, bursting and blossoming, putting forth leaves and producing flowers. Soon the flowers will be superceded by fruit, the seed carriers. In summer, nature will reach maturity and harvesting will begin. Then, with the approach of hard times, you will see nature withdraw little by little, finally falling asleep altogether during winter.

Attentive and detailed observation of the successive stages of growth and decay led the astrologers and alchemists of the past to their discovery of the laws of nature. From this knowledge they elaborated a science of profound interest, yet one which today is scarcely known. Our civilisation, at the height of materialism, must of necessity turn from what was once of prime importance. But let us, using the original terms, rediscover and understand the way in which the ancients reasoned.

The first thing to notice is that nature's cycle can be broken down into two distinct phases:

An outgoing phase covering spring and summer. During this time the plants spring up, bud, flower, fruit and begin to die away.

An ingoing phase covering autumn and winter. Now the plants die away entirely. Their retrogression can be measured from the time of the autumn equinox. Now, too, nights become longer than days and the temperature falls progressively.

Next, the early observers broke the annual cycle down into three equal parts of four months, starting from the spring equinox, which is in a way the departure point of the astrological year. These can be dealt with as follows:

The first period, in which is seen the growth and development of all vegetation. It is the time of plant rebirth, of the first buds, of the growth of leaves; the time, too, of sprouting meadows, of flowering, swelling and ripening fruit in the early summer months. This time coincides with lengthening days and rising temperatures. With each successive day the sun appears to climb higher above the horizon into the celestial sphere.

The second period is the time of fruition, of the harvesting and gathering into barns of grain and cereals. It is vintage time and fruit-picking time. It shows itself in lush vegetation and the profits to be reaped therefrom. It covers the latter two months of summer and the first two of autumn and is the most joyous period of the year, for all nature's bounty is at our disposal. Already, though, the sun has passed the autumn equinox, the days start to draw in and the temperature falls.

The third period extends over the last month of autumn and the whole of winter. The days are shorter, for the sun is heating the opposite hemisphere, thus symbolically vitalising the earth hidden beneath our feet. At this time, too, the earth, exhausted after having nourished a year's vegetation, undergoes the preparation which will renew its regenerative powers.

We are about to see the role played by the *four elements, Fire, Earth, Water and Air*, whose significance nowadays is lost. In fact they are linked with what will be the last of our divisions of the natural cycle, the familiar one of the *four seasons, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter*. We are all aware of the limits of the seasons. They are fixed by the passage of the sun through the equinoxes and the solstices. At the equinoxes, day and night are of equal length. At the summer solstice the days are at their longest, while the nights are at their longest at the winter solstice. The ancients distinguished the seasons in the following manner: they said that *Spring is wet and warm* and corresponds to the element *Air*; *Summer is warm and dry*,

corresponding to *Fire*; *Autumn dry and cold*, corresponding to *Water*.

Correspondences with the four elements are further found in the subdivisions of the seasons. Pythagoras, after dividing the annual cycle into two phases, three periods and four seasons, defines the *Tetraktys* or triple nature of the four elements. He also mentions the twelve signs of the zodiac, of which three make up each season. Before going on to examine the zodiac, it is necessary to make the following point.

The signs of the zodiac, whose symbolism we are about to analyse and link with the natural phenomena defining them and giving them their names, have nothing in common with the astronomer's constellations of the zodiac. These latter are fixed star groupings which can, for a certain length of time, coincide with the corresponding signs of the zodiac. Carried along by the equinoxial precession movement, however, these constellations move away from the correspondingly named signs and bear no relation to the blossoming forth of vegetation. This depends exclusively on the position of the sun. For this reason the signs of the zodiac should be seen simply as seasonal subdivisions, presiding over the same phenomena at the same time each year. In addition, one can say that the signs of the zodiac are empty spaces marking the sun's course throughout the year. Each one marks a period during which some clearly defined facet of nature is in evidence. By transposition, these facets reflect tendencies inherent in people born during the corresponding periods. In this way astrology, alchemy and the study of nature are closely linked by observations whose significance will now be explained.

The twelve Signs of the Zodiac hold the secret of Nature

The twelve signs of the zodiac are well known. What is not generally known, though, is the correspondence between

them and the Elements and also the details which distinguish one from another even when of the same elementary nature. This *triple nature of the four elements*, cited in all astrological texts, seems to be ignored by many astrologers in their interpretations. Here is a resumé of it:

The Fire signs are Aries, Leo and Sagittarius.

The Air signs are Gemini, Libra and Aquarius.

The Earth signs are Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn.

The Water signs are Cancer, Scorpio and Pisces.

Now let us examine each of these twelve signs.

1. *Aries*, the Ram (March 21st–April 20th). The spring Fire sign. This corresponds to the period when the sun, having passed the spring equinox, daily climbs higher above the horizon. Days lengthen, the temperature rises and the element Fire reveals its expansive and beneficent nature giving the initial impetus to plant life. It is the *Fire which glows*, which rises from the roots to the stem. It causes the stem to grow above the ground, the grass to turn green, the buds to swell and burst, the leaves and early flowers to appear. This bursting forth of vegetation takes place with unprecedented dynamism, progressing and accelerating in astounding fashion. The ancient herbalists and alchemists who sought plants from which to capture the vital fluid of nature never failed to observe these phenomena, above all at dawn on a clear, calm morning. At this time they gathered plants which had reached ground level, including the roots. The vital fluid so captured, the expansive fire containing life and the most important elements, enabled them to prepare their elixir. . . . They knew that the ground had lain fallow during the winter months and had been enriched with substances which let the plants develop. The gathering of buds, small shoots and a multiplicity of plants is an important task, all the more so since it is accompanied by sampling of the morning dew. This

activity is shown in one of the plates of the *Mutus Liber*, the silent Bible of the alchemists. The method to be followed is revealed, the ram in the centre of the picture indicating the time of year to perform the task.

From the psychological point of view, those born under the sign of the ram display enterprise, dynamism and enthusiasm, a need to move quickly, to be at the head of the group, leading like the ram. The tendencies expressed by Aries impel such people to action, sometimes inciting them to violent impulses and even to blows.

For these reasons the ancients chose the ram as symbol of the first sector of the zodiac, that which the astrologers placed under the influence of Mars. In the human body Aries corresponds to the head, seat of vitality.

Whether with regard to man or to the vegetable kingdom, one can see that the ram signifies an impetus to rise, to grow under the exceptional dynamism of the fiery element.

2. *Taurus*, the Bull (April 21st–May 20th). The spring Earth sign. Consider the growth of vegetation under this earth sign. The ground is reheated through the impulse of the preceding sign which has released the breath of life held in during the winter. This allows the fixing of those particles which supply the material elements needed by plants for full growth. This growth is rapid. It is additionally aided by the exalted state of the moon, which is linked with the rising sap. During the month of May, sap and dew were the richest elements which the herbalists and alchemists of old took. This they did with the intention of immersing in them the essential plants whose quintessence they wished to extract. In the plate from the *Mutus Liber* already mentioned, the bull is at the side of the ram. This shows that the task is also to be carried out in May. Taurus is the finest and fairest earth sign from nature's point of view and so is said to be under the influence of Venus, the planet to which grace and beauty are ascribed.

This sign produces people of healthy, robust constitution. The animal which symbolises it conveys the notion of slow but steady labour, carried out with patience and perseverance. Such are the qualities attributed to the Taurean. However, Taureans are also said to be capable of obstinacy, going right to the limits of their strength and endurance. This they must be warned against, for such behaviour puts one in mind of a newly enriched piece of land which, under this sign, might yield all its fertilising properties and would then need to be left fallow for a long time in order to regain its strength. If one sows too thick, seeking the maximum profit, one very soon exhausts the resources of this earth so rich at the outset.

From the foregoing one can grasp the meaning of analogies expressed in the Tradition, analogies for which there is usually insufficient explanation.

3. *Gemini*, the Twins (May 21st–June 21st). The spring Air sign. The sun's exaltation at the beginning of the cycle allowed the rebirth of nature's secret fire and the animation of the spirit. The moon's exaltation caused the sap to rise and the plants to become fragrant. The earth in its turn supplied the body-building elements for the process of combustion. All these things bring us to the state existing under Gemini, third sign of the zodiac. Gemini is symbolised by two children. This double sign indicates the perfect birth which corresponds here to the appearance of the various plants and flowers. Just as children change in appearance from one year to the next, so rapid change is the keynote here. Our attention is also focused on the element Air, that is the physical air and our breathing of it. Under this sign the plants are most alive and most intensely green, for this is the time of greatest assimilation of chlorophyll. During the last month of spring the sun rises ever higher above the horizon as the longest day approaches. The plants, too, grow to their maximum height. The action of the sun's rays is seen above all in the

tips of plants, in the flowers and the fruit. Now that they are full grown, the different species of plants are easily distinguishable.

This sign is under the influence of Mercury. Those born under it are as impressionable as nature at this time. They change constantly, adapting their attitude to needs and circumstances. By the same token they are restless and settle down with difficulty. Curious and analytically minded, they are generally intelligent and deft, with an interest in everything around them.

Throughout this month, even on Midsummer Day, the alchemists continued to gather those plants to which they attribute medicinal properties.

4. *Cancer*, the Crab (June 22nd–July 22nd). The summer Water sign. As the sun reaches the summer solstice, the time of its highest and longest trajectory, plants also reach their natural zenith. From now on the process will be one of consolidation. The fruit will swell as the sap continues to rise, as if issue of some pump which, though invisible, is more perfect than anything we can imagine. Cancer is placed under the influence of the moon. Now the alchemists bring the first stage of their work to a close and meditate on the rising of the gap. They question why this phenomenon does not obey the laws of gravity. At the same time they watch the creepers and tall plants point skywards as the sap floods into every pore. They reflect that certain qualities remain hidden from man's objective observation. This is expressed symbolically by the crab which hides under a stone at the bottom of the stream. The analogy also holds good for the stream: from source to river it follows the contours of the ground and its own fancy. Nothing can stop it. It overflows dams and breaks through obstacles. These are the laws which the rising sap obeys.

Those born under Cancer are passive by nature. They display more force of inertia than actual will power. They

live according to their whim, putting up with every constraint—until the final drop bursts the dam.

Alchemists also know the use of the *water of life* which they find in nature. It contains the living particles which enrich the Peat during the long process of wetting and drying. They think, too, of the labours of Hercules. These evoke for them the invisible force which pushes the sap upwards so that the plant may attain its full height. This force is really more obvious than that brought to light by Pascal's well-known bombshell.

'Chemists use fire to burn, we use water', say the alchemists and indeed the only use they make of external fire is to dry their Matter.

5. *Leo*, the Lion (July 23rd–August 23rd). The summer Fire sign. Now we reach the heart of summer, the hottest time of the year. This Fire sign is very different from Aries. In early spring the fire *grows progressively*, while in summer it is fixed at its point of maximum power. Fruit which has swelled under the preceding sign but is still acid and unpalatable is now ripened by solar radiation (the external fire). This brings it to perfection. That which was indigestible and acid becomes soft, sweet and nourishing. The alchemists compare this aspect of nature to the fire of their coction. They know that an elixir, however perfect it appears, must be ripened, prepared and progressively super-heated to obtain even greater perfection. They know that once they have prepared their Alkaest* they will only obtain the elixir by determined super-heating in the form of coction and in the presence of perfect metal. The medicinal properties of the metal will also come into play. Gold is known to be the most perfect of metals and Leo is known to be governed by the sun. As Raymond Lully says, metal has a soul and a body. Its soul is its colour. This contains the metal's regenerative and

* Alkaest or alcaest: word invented by Paracelsus. It seems to be without etymology. It means elixir of health or universal solvent.

medicinal properties. If the Alkaest which has reached the first stage of perfection is mixed with celestial dew containing several particles of powdered gold and then submitted to the fire of coction for many hours it will, thanks to the rhythmic movement to which the gold is subjected, separate the soul of this latter from its body or ashes.

This is the way to obtain medicine of the first order. The operation is analogous to the bombardment of the sun's rays on the skins of fruit. The fruit gradually ripens until it becomes ideal food.

Those born under Leo are sometimes moved by a great ideal but they are also authoritarian. They accept their responsibilities and like to be obeyed. They may be dominating but they are good protectors and often generous. They can be proud, tyrannical or despotic when the sun is in a bad aspect but in general they are courageous, like the lion whose name they bear.

Leo, under the sun's influence, is oriented towards every life source. Its influence ripens grain and corn and a variety of elements which contribute to the reproduction of the species. In humans, Leo acts on the heart and aids the general equilibrium of the circulation.

6. *Virgo*, the Virgin (August 24th–September 22nd). The summer Earth sign. This last summer sign presides principally over the gradual drying out of vegetation and the harvesting, garnering and storing of it for preservation during the coming months. Hence the ear of grain as symbol. Why then is it also symbolised by the Virgin? Here are the secret reasons: This sterile ground, whose vitality has been drained in nourishing plant life, is without value. Like the Alkaest which gives up its salts and liberates its energies during coction in order to separate the gold, such earth has to be left to rest. It then requires nourishment, so that it may be regenerated during the coming months. Great care must therefore be paid to this element. Why, though, the mysterious name of Virgin? Quite simply

because two signs—Gemini and Virgo—are ruled by Mercury. Between them in the zodiac lies a right angle. One is an Air sign, the other an Earth sign. This elementary difference, plus the intervening right angle, indicates that they are on different levels, Gemini, the more spiritual, sees the growth of flowers and the associated fertility. Under Virgo, though, the situation is more material as fruit and grain reach maturity. But just as the flowers have been physically fertilised so one can say that the Virgin has been spiritually fertilised in order to give birth to the Son of God. The Annunciation has come to her from the Archangel Gabriel. Alchemists speak also of the *Birth of the Prince*, meaning that moment when the Work reaches full perfection.

Virgoans are mysterious people who are often misunderstood. They are careful, painstaking, ordered and methodical in their work. They make the ideal number two, for they often hesitate when faced with heavy responsibilities. In their own special way they await the Annunciation.

7. *Libra*, the Scales (September 23rd–October 23rd). The autumn Air sign. The sun, having crossed the autumn equinox, will now ascribe an ever-increasing arc under the earth. As far as we are concerned, the sun dips further and further below the horizon. The days grow shorter and the temperature falls. *Libra* symbolises a change of balance. It is this balance which must now be maintained through accurate calculation. What nature has given us must be carefully divided up so that it may last until next harvest time.

This sign, indicating a period when all is at our disposal, is usually a fortunate one for those who bear its mark. They tend to be sensitive yet free from care and love the good things in life, both for themselves and for their companions. They often possess great artistic flair, for *Libra* is under the influence of *Venus*. They also yearn to see justice and fair play.

If we turn our attention to the basic nature of the sign we find that its influence, unlike that of Gemini, is restrictive. At the beginning of autumn the leaves wither and gradually fall off. They have stopped breathing and so they die. This inversion of what took place under the spring Air sign is to the advantage of events underground. It is as if nature were exhaling, then drawing new breath. We say that the sap falls back but it is really that it dries out progressively. There is a simultaneous reduction in respiratory function. Alchemists sometimes say that their work begins not at the spring but at the autumn equinox. They are thinking principally of the First Matter which is lying under the ground and which must be chosen, prepared and then removed. This must not take place, though, until it has received the maximum irradiation of etheric energy. They will have to give thought, too, to the regeneration of the Alkaest whose vitality was lost during the final coctions. Looked at from one point of view, all these things form part of the initial task. Finally, the alchemist must grasp that process which begins at the autumn equinox and which will allow regeneration of the earth during the long winter nights. Then, liberal irradiation by the sun's rays of the earth beneath our feet takes place. This is the principal task and one which it is impossible for us to look at objectively.

8. *Scorpio*, the Scorpion (October 24th–November 22nd). The autumn Water sign. After the first autumn rain, nature is quickly stripped of her finery. The action of water under this sign is in a downward direction, whereas under *Cancer* it was an upward one. This is the moment to prepare the ground and to add to it all the organic remains which must be assimilated. At the same time the vegetable matter begins to rot more quickly, forming the humus needed for regeneration. Alchemists are very well aware of this, as are spagirists. They focus all their attention on the phenomenon of corruption, which process is known as

the *key of nature*. In certain operations which cause plants to rot, so that the pure becomes separated from the impure, the spagirists ensure that the plants become black. On the other hand they also make sure that the plants do not burn too much, for this would make the ashes unsuitable for the preparation of their panacea. Nature must be observed stage by stage to see that the process of corruption takes place very slowly when there is an abundance of water. Bear in mind that if autumn is described as dry, this is not with reference to the weather but because the sap no longer rises. The element water here acts in a destructive capacity. It does so slowly and tenaciously, manifesting an incredible passive force in its desire to reduce everything to chaos, the state of undifferentiated matter. The spirit may then be liberated and separated from the inert and combustible matter, just as the body separates from the soul after death.

Placed under the aegis of Mars or Pluto, this sign confers an active, secretive and even corrupt nature on those born under it. They are capable of fighting tenaciously, not with the aim of irrevocable destruction but in order that something new and better might be brought about. Natives of Scorpio are also good at research and at any activity performed in the shadows or in dark, secret places. They work in silence and remain undetected.

This eighth sign of the zodiac corresponds to everything which must pass away. In the eyes of the alchemist, it stands for the renowned operation which brings the First Matter to its initial colour, the black of mortification. 'Nothing can be reborn if it does not first die', is a frequent alchemical saying. The way to the successful completion of this stage, that is to the *Raven*, is one of the most important problems in alchemy.

9. *Sagittarius*, the Centaur (November 23rd–December 22nd). The autumn Fire sign. We know that the first Fire sign—Aries—coincides with a rise in temperature signal-

ling the start of plant growth. The second—Leo—sees an explosion of heat, for it is the moment when the sun's rays achieve their maximum intensity and vegetation reaches full growth. Sagittarius, the third of the Fire signs, presides over falling temperatures. In fact it possesses a double significance, indicated by its symbol the Centaur which is half man, half horse. Medicinal properties are attributed to the sign, for its dominant planet is Jupiter.

What actually takes place at this time? The putrefaction achieved under the preceding Water sign—Scorpio—is well characterised by its symbol, the apparently harmless little creature with a lethal sting. Nature, once dead, behaves in the same way as a man who is killed: the soul detaches itself from the body. In this case the spirit of the vegetable matter, that is its living and energy-possessing qualities, liberates itself from the remaining substances which are then slowly consumed by the secret and regressive fire. If at autumn time you look at the ploughed, manured earth, you will soon grasp that the decayed elements of the dung heap, blackened by interior fire, are rapidly disappearing and that the earth is regaining its original appearance. The phenomena of alchemy are analogous: the Alkaest has lost its salts and its energy during the preceding coctions; it will be regenerated by plants and living matter gathered from nature. The secret fire activates corruption, leading to the absolute black. Then, when the moment arrives, the adept will proceed to incinerate the unusable residue. This will bring about the reappearance of the salts in the heart of the regenerated Alkaest, which in its turn regains the power to separate out gold in future coctions.

This sign is full of instruction for anyone who is able to 'read' nature. Sagittarians make gifted doctors, for they know how to act to combat illness and restore lost energy. The regressive fire is also characteristic of those who are by nature calm, level-headed and able effectively to combat any aggression from outside. The Sagittarian's ability

to prevail over the fragile or vulnerable makes him a successful director of an enterprise. Finally, Sagittarians inspire confidence in others by their own self-confidence, evident in their outward demeanour. By and large, Sagittarius constitutes a good astral signature.

10. *Capricorn* (December 23rd–January 21st). The winter Earth sign. Early winter is the time when the earth, now broken down into its separate elements by the corruption and combustion characteristic of the two previous signs, slowly assimilates the nutritious substances which have been given to it. The symbol of this sign is a mountain animal, evoking the analogy of the earth's work under Capricorn. It also evokes the arid soil, often bare of vegetation, which one finds at high altitudes. This does not mean, however, that the ground is poor. It has been fertilised and often already sown at this point but the work of assimilation and of preparation for a return to the original state favouring vegetation is gradual and time-consuming.

Those born under Capricorn are similarly slow in asserting themselves. They have to persevere in making an effort over a long period of time if they are to benefit from their labours. Often, success comes to them only in the second half of their lives. Their destiny is favourable or otherwise according to the aspect of this star. Alchemists consider this silent period when nothing seems to be happening as a time of preparation and of return to a state of equilibrium. It is also the time when they go in search of the First Matter which will be used in the initial stages of the work. The life of nature is entirely concentrated in the ground and the roots it contains and protects from the cold. Certain alchemical operations require a similar sort of silence and calm. One such example is the soaking of the evolving peat. In this operation the Matter has to be left for a certain time in the cold. It is covered by waters which abstract its interior fire and in so doing becomes gradually

blackier. This operation is well known to those adepts who want to obtain the black of the third degree, that is to say total incineration which leaves nothing except a perfect and powerful salt. This salt is then ready to provide the true Leaven which will open metals and release the essence of their colour.

11. *Aquarius*, the Water Carrier (January 21st–February 19th) The winter Air sign. This sign is certainly the least known and most enigmatic of all. It occurs right in the heart of winter, at the coldest time of year. Its opposite, Leo, is the warmest Fire sign. Because it is so enigmatic an attempt will now be made to explain as fully as possible in what sense it acts as an inspiration to the alchemist. The symbol is a woman pouring out the contents of an urn. This might seem an unlikely symbol for an air sign. The explanation is this: the contents of the urn represent irradiation, the etheric forces of nature which are fully active underground. We know that the first Air sign, Gemini, presides over the time in spring when all vegetation is breathing at maximum intensity. The second, Libra, marks the time in autumn when these respiratory functions are on the wane and plant life is dying. Aquarius, the third Air sign, corresponds to the fullest manifestation of air in the interior of the earth. By irradiation it imparts new life to roots, induces internal breathing and generally awakens that which was sleeping. Compare this with the activity under the opposite sign, Leo, where the fruit is ripened by the sun. The time of Aquarius is, for the alchemist, the moment to acquire his First Matter, while it still possesses etheric forces. Once the Matter has been isolated from the ground, it can be brought to life again by impregnation with vegetable substances and dew whenever the circumstances are appropriate.

Those born under Aquarius live intense interior lives and possess many non-apparent qualities. These hidden riches are aroused by contact with life.

This sign, under the rule of Saturn and Uranus remains by far the most secret, even for astrologers.

12. *Pisces*, the Fish (February 20th–March 20th). The winter Water sign. Under Aquarius, the element Air irradiated seeds and plants with the breath of life, promoting internal breathing in them. *Pisces* the Water Sign will now nourish them; the tissue dried out during winter will gradually swell and regain its capacity to breathe. Buds, too, will swell before bursting under the fire of the Ram. We know that the first Water sign—Cancer—presides at the rising of the sap which ripens the fruit and brings the plant to full growth. The second—Scorpio—which comes after the autumn equinox, sees the draining of the sap and subsequent collapse and decay of the plant. Between the time of Scorpio and the time of *Pisces*, decay is accomplished, while the fire of Sagittarius in some measure burns up the remaining combustible matter. The elements which will catalyse new life are released through decay and, under Capricorn, are assimilated back into the earth, which thus regains its resources.

Pisces is a sign of fertility. The salts and encapsuled energy buried in the ground combine and prepare, drop by drop, the virginal milk whose job is to nourish roots and seeds at the approach of spring. The sign is ruled by Neptune, whose connections with germination for growth and indeed for anything which, like the copulation of fish, takes place in secret. Roots and seeds await only the initial impulse to spring into life, yet hesitate for fear that the cold might prove fatal if they are too early.

Thus the natives of *Pisces* are hesitant and indecisive, yet intuitive. They feel various possibilities within them which will only be actualised according to circumstances. This double nature produces individuals who are apparently passive and sympathetic but who always obey their inner promptings. Sometimes these lead to totally unexpected behaviour.

From these observations alchemists have deduced the way in which progressively to nourish their First Matter, using little known yet highly effective preparations. It consists in drop by drop addition of dew and early plants to the First Matter for forty days in a sealed water-bath. The aim of this process is to extract the first liquor, the *Virginal Milk*, essential for the subsequent preparation of the *Major Leaven*. This Leaven is linked to Neptune as are all things which begin life from scratch, in the manner of seeds.

*Astrology is only one step from Alchemy,
Alchemy only one step from Medicine*

If one examines nature in all her aspects and so regains knowledge of the laws governing the successive stages of plant life, one can easily discover the means of producing that *New Earth* which is used by the spagirists in their work. The moment when the First Matter may be acquired is determined by the cycle of the moon in *Pisces*. It will be at that time of night when there is maximum concentration of etheric forces at the chosen spot.

The forces of life which preside over the rebirth and growth of vegetation are actualised in spring time. After irradiation during Aquarius, roots and buds swell under the double sign of *Pisces*. Already it is possible to collect the initial elements from which one will obtain the *Virginal Milk* with which to nourish the seed. The three spring months which follow see the accumulation of life forces in the plants and dew gathered from nature and which have then to be 'fixed' by the process already described. This process is governed by laws expressed in the signs of the zodiac. Under successive signs the First Matter is gradually impregnated by vegetable elements which it assimilates and digests. After each series of operations—impregnation, rest, digestion and finally drying—

these properties increase. By this means the Matter attains its First Perfection, once the necessary period of time has elapsed. This time is much greater than the cycle of one year in which nature accomplishes the same phenomena.

It is the astrologer who guides the alchemist until a certain moment when the latter has to consider matters from a completely different angle. This is when he has to assess the worth of his results in human terms—and here the notion of medicine makes its entry.

By the principle of analogy it can freely be admitted that the four-season cycle corresponds to the four periods of the human life: spring to *youth*, summer to *virility*, autumn to *maturity*, and winter to *old age*. However, while the seasons are strictly regulated by the annual course of the sun, the length of a man's life is not laid down in any way. Surely it does not therefore seem impossible to prolong human life on condition that one can capture the life-forces at the beginning of spring, and make of them a preparation which the body can assimilate? In this way one should be able to rejuvenate the human body and so postpone old age and decay. Moderate use of Medicine of the First Order does without doubt work in this way. It does require though, that the man who uses it lives a relatively ordered and sensible life.

Furthermore, observations of the various natural cycles brings to light no evidence of absolute regularity in the phenomena of the elements. Some springs are colder than the average, some wetter; some summers are hot and dry, others wet and humid; winter may be severe or simply wet. Irregularities exist in man also. They are seen in different temperaments, in excess or lack in specific areas and in varying degrees of resistance to disease. All these facts prompted the early researchers to experiment with many different medicines, each one intended to fight a particular malady. Similarly, today, the ever-increasing variety of medicines available caters for the infinite variety of illnesses from which we suffer, each in his own way. It

follows that our basic spagiric preparation can in no way be considered a specific remedy. It should be seen rather as an effective energiser and stimulant, a supplier of new life forces. These should allow the sick man to react more readily and the particular medicine to work more effectively. The tests carried out by a large number of doctors tend to confirm this point. This in no way precludes our preparation from having particular effect on heart conditions of vascular origin and on the kidneys and liver as stated in traditional writings. In the long-term it is an excellent regenerative agent for organic cells.