

THE  
PRACTICE  
OF  
LIGHTS:  
OR AN  
Excellent and Ancient  
TREATISE  
OF THE  
Philosophers Stone.

Anonymous

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**THE  
PRACTICE  
OF  
LIGHTS.**

Surely, without any falsehood, the Science of Alchemy is true and not to be mocked or scorned at, as many blind Asses do. Many men blunder about this blessed Tincture which have neither Learning nor any sight in Philosophy, which causes great slander and mocking to the great rebuke of this noble and glorious Science of Grace, which Science and cunning is contained only in natural moving or circulation and rotation of the Heavens above, as all natural things do in this World by passing their circuit, which the high Creator of Nature kept in His marvelous Divine Power there as he began and not else.

The saying of all the Philosophers is, *“No man shall come to this Science by haste and heady strength, but by Patience, and long time, and true Governance of Fire.”*

First of all this noble Science they describe of Calcination which I have seen and done all manner of ways as Sophisters and Ignorants do write, unto this day (the more the pity.) But truly I have found a Natural Calcination, which rather increased moisture radical than diminishes<sup>1</sup> it: which Calx is of Sun and Mercury without any of her thing as it is written, *nihil demergeretur in Mercurio nisi solem.*<sup>2</sup> I have kept this *compositum Solis & Mercurii*<sup>3</sup> one whole year in firing night and day and in my proportion I lost my purpose. I took 24 to one and left off that Work, then I took 3 to 1: Which I kept in the Fire seven Months standing in such a heat as the Sun in the highest of Leo<sup>4</sup>, in any part of the World. My Glass was but luted, unto which I will never more trust, but only with nipping or closing of my Vessel or closing with Glass Molten. At the seven months end (the matter all molten) I did open my Glass and strongly did cast the matter up and down. The Body so opened and melted with the cooling of the Glass and shaking, cleaved to the high of the Glass and to the sides, and would not descend. That part that descended down to the bottom was black and unctuous. I did let it rest that night in the Fire still, and in the morning it was ascended up to the top again. It was very Black, and cried as it had been fried. So I did let it stand still in the Fire till on the next morrow, and then I found it ascended still. I would have caused it to descend with Fire, and made a Fire on the top. With the violence of the Fire (the Lute being stiff and strong) part passed through the Lute into the Ashes, and that which remained in the Glass was fair and clear cleaving to the Glass: Then turned I up the Glass, and there appeared a thousand sparks, like very crude Mercury bright and shining, marvelous to sight, which I picked out as subtly as I could. Among them I found one that was black on the one side and bright as Pearl on the other side, and another like the colour of the Rainbow. All the other were as bright as anything might be, so that I thought they had been crude.

<sup>1</sup> Original text, *minisheth*.

<sup>2</sup> There is nothing except Mercury swallowed up in the Sun.

<sup>3</sup> Composition of Sol & Mercury

<sup>4</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> July – 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

Then put I a part of them in a strong Fire, and they never blemished, but ever continued white, then I would have quickened them with more quick Water. Raymundi<sup>5</sup> Lullii Testamentum<sup>6</sup> in *Alchymia Tractatus profest.* Chapter 56:<sup>7</sup>

*“Aqua viva est Argentum vivum congelatum in sulphur, sicut menstruale quod congelatur in Substantiam Embrionis”<sup>8</sup>*

: but they would never mingle, neither join with them more together: For the impediment was that these sparks were corrupted among the Ashes in the drying and fixing.

Then I did melt them all together, and never man saw fairer Silver than that was.

Then I thought to prove a shorter way: I took Sol and *our Homogeneous*<sup>9</sup>, sometimes 6 to 1, another 1 to 1 and 4 to 1 and 3 to 1. and within 40 days and less I have made Calces. Raymundus Lullius,

*“ex metallorum limis vel oleis factis de corporibus imperfectis, & in Aquam cristalinum deductis per Artem fit Aqua-Vitae. Menstrum nostrum resolutivum quo terrae oleorum purificantur a macula originali: Aliam Aquam nolite quaerere, quia haec Aqua trahit animas a corporibus, & facit eas visibiliter apparere, si scis hanc Aquam recte disponere, habes totum: sed difficulter fit Aqua ista, & magno ingenio ex Luna fit Elixir cum Aqua illa, & ex Sole absque putrefactione: non sic ex aliis corporibus nisi post putrefactionem. Stude ergo propter istam Aquam habendam sine qua nihil fit in hac Arte.”*

Chap 86. *Hoc Argentum vivum cum corpore onjunctum sunt duo spermata, de quibus facimus asci Aquam-vivam: quae est Argentum vivum ostrum, & Aqua-vitae quae corpora mortua resuscitat.*

*Argentum vivum constructum & congelatum dat omnem calorem quo indigemus, fiat ergo oleum de ipso cum corrosiva & abhin trabatur aqua quae dissolvit omnia: vel cum ipso oleo misceatur oleum fermenti album vel rubrum & putrefiat totum per alneum & fac inde Elixir,*

as red as the Ruby, and in likewise white calx with Luna; bright shining and as soft as Silk, which Calx I have examined and proved oft times after this manner. I have put the Calce of Luna into one of *our vegetable Menstrues*, and after I have put him into a Limbeck and have distilled from the said Calce the said Menstrue, and the said Calce hath been like a Sponge Spongy and full of strange Colours, and shining white marvelous to see. Then have I taken this Substance and put it in a clean Vessel and stopped it fast, and so have I sublimed out all the Spirit; and the Body remained beneath as soft as Oil, and impalpable that no man can express the subtleness

<sup>5</sup> Original text, *Regm.*

<sup>6</sup> Original text, *Test.*

<sup>7</sup> Available in *“Bibliotheca chemico curiosa, seu rerum ad alchymiam pertinentium thesaurus intructissimus”*, Volume 2. By Jean-Jacques Manget (1701). *Subsectio V. Celebriores RRaymundi Lullii in Alchymia Tractus profert. Testamentum Raymundi Lullii, Doctissimo & Celebrissimi Philosophi, duobus Libris Universam Artem Chymicam complectens. In Nomine D.N.I.C. incipit.* Chapter 56 on page 742. Titled *“De Principiis naturalibus confusis. Et quomodo generantur per virtutem successivae operationis in altis Naturis.”*

<sup>8</sup> Silver's Aqua Viva is congealed with sulphur, like a flower is within it's bud.

<sup>9</sup> Original text, [h]-*Omogeneum*.

thereof: Upon the which Calce I gave my whole Confidence: For what learned men so ever had seen this Calce, would verily have known that it had been the very true and right calce after the teaching of wise Philosophers, for this Body is open and subtilizate, and his radical humidity saved by his *Menstruum fatens*.

And this Calce is apt to receive liquefaction and all other Operations to it naturally conserving. Now I perceive verily and without doubt how they declare one thing which is true, first of the *putting to of the Earth and the Water together* in the Philosophers Egg, which is likened to the Masculine and the Feminine, the which shall bring and gender betwixt them the Child of the Fire, which after shall never dread the Fire, for himself is the very Fire natural and retrograde to Water and Earth again. After so nourished in the Fire till he be perfect white called by his Name *Magnesia*.

*Magnesia est Aqua composita & congelata, quae repugnat Igni, & postea nunquam dubitat illum in aliquo, eoque ipsamet est Ignis & de Natura Ignis fit, & in Igne crevit, & suum intinctum fuit ignis.*

Raymundi Lullii. Testamentum. Cap. 63.

John Dastin<sup>10</sup>, "*Magnesia sanè est Aqua composita Igni repugnans, congelata, corpus totum redigens in cinerem.*" Note how here in this wonderful Preparation is hid all that ever the Wisemen had in the which is the *Menstruum faetens*, or *Ignis contra Naturam*<sup>11</sup>; it is the wonderful marvelous and *secret life* of the Stone, as by any Practice I have seen and approved; for in the beginning of the first corruption it smelt like foul Brass: and after that he changed from favor to favor, and in Colour range, and at the last he is fragrant and sweet smelling.

This I have truly proved by the very experience in making of my foresaid Calce notwithstanding the Preparations the Philosophers have hid and nothing else which I have truly proved, for I have continued our Mercury and Sol in firing ten Months and more. In the which process, I have seen the natural Acts with marvelous things incredible, except to them that have seen the changing of them as in manner of other Vegetable things growing by their own radical moisture and heat of the Sun, both in burnishing and in divers Colours, springing with leaves like an Hawthorn-tree with Flowers marvelous in sight to behold. After this ten months I wearied and hasted with Fire above. My Body did melt and rise from the Ground and ascended, and the Spirit brake part out, and the other part of the work was marvelous to see; for part of the Sun was turned into Moon, and I assure all good and well-disposed men; but not to Asses and foolish People: for I would not that they should see my Book. But note the *Testament* of Raymond, where he declared in the 55 Chapter, and showed of the changing of common Mercury first before he may change the Body, for he said:

*"The common Mercury may never change the Body but himself be first changed an made pure Water"*,

and as he is changed so will he change the Body, and

Preparation I never considered till now at the last labour. *Wherefore let never man labour, nor busy himself till his Mercury be turned into pure Water an distilled*, and every Element well rectified and the Earth well calcinated. The same Earth from his original corruption well washed, and that once well and truly done, that the *Sun and Moon joined together* with this foresaid Mercury. Then beginning your work, and then with the volatile matter thou shalt have both Earth and Water all of one thing and not of divers kinds. When I thought to be at an end, there was but the beginning, and I never perceived it till I had studied the 55 Chapter of Raymond's *Testament* for I never could find in all the Authors that ever I did read or see the Preparation so plainly declared. You may read in the Book of *Artephius*, called "*Clavis sapientiae majoris*"<sup>12</sup>, where he writes, "*nihil occultaverunt praeter Praeparationem*"<sup>13</sup>. This is the very and true way to the Stone of the Philosophers: For all their wonderful writing is but one thing, and of one thing, and in one thing, which I have showed you here. Notwithstanding with my Calce you may make right good Medicine both man and *Venus*. But the Royal Stone must be prepared as I have showed thee: *And after this Preparation done put the Man and the Woman in their Bed and keep them close, and in the Egg shall be brought forth a Child*, and here is all that the Philosophers say that is but one thing, one work, one Vessel, one Furnace, though it change into many things after his natures, as you may see in the *Testament* about the 67 Chapter, and there he shown of the four good Elements: and it is called in the Mastery the first solution, after depuration, and then reduction which cometh before Fixation. But I assure and certify you, that I have seen with mine Eyes visible like as I have declared. I take to witness Raymond in the 67 Chapter, where he makes thereof an open certification to all his Friends that he and others have done and proved visible these Acts. Here I leave to write other general sayings of Philosophers, for I intend but only to proceed in this peculiar thing, which I know is possible to be done: But it is the hardest Science in the World to an unknowing Man. It is lightest after it is understood and known; as I have proved myself by Experience of my Calces divers ways, sometime with *Blood of common Vitriol*, and after I have decocted it in the Vegetable Mercury ten or twelve days, and of that Powder I have had fine Silver after the quantity. Also I have examined this Calce of Silver and *Homogeneum* in common Aqua-fortis. They have dried and congealed therein marvelously bright shining like a Diamond which will melt in the Vegetable Mercury like Wax, and the Secret of this I have not concluded nor many other Secrets of the Calce for divers Considerations that I fear by the Enemies of the World. The second cause why I do not conclude is part for Poverty: for this Science required three things special to conclude it: One is great ingenuity<sup>14</sup> and a perfect reason in understanding and handling thereof. *The second is many Books to lead a man from one dark saying to another that gives Light*. The third is Worldly goods to maintain the

<sup>10</sup> In "Miscellanea Alchemica XXI" (1746). Wellcome Collection, MS.3563 (36) by John Dombelay.

<sup>11</sup> Nature's contrary Fire.

<sup>12</sup> Door-key of Greater Wisdom.

<sup>13</sup> There is nothing concealed besides the preparations.

<sup>14</sup> Original text, *ingeny*.

Expenses and Labour, the Substance of the two Lights which the *Mercury* must have to work upon, *Sol* and *Luna* for that Substance shall never be lost, though the Workman do err in his work, but it shall be rather finer and better then it was at the beginning. Nevertheless, a man may labour against Nature and destroy and spoil the good Bodies. Wherefore I advise every man not to meddle with this Science unless they are well learned and practiced. Many men do boldly meddle and clatter therein saying,

*"It is a thing cast in the Street and costs naught. Every man hath it, as well the Poor as the Rich; Every time and place; It is in every Hill and in every Dale. The Value at the beginning costs not past fifty pence".*

All these things are true to them that truly understand them. Also they say *it is a Natural Mercury* which cost no Money which is the privy and all the ground of our Wisdom: All this is no easing, but although it cost naught, yet it is not had of naught, and of a little substance for you cannot have as much Wheat of a handful as of a Bushel; then mark well this reason: *If you will have much of this Natural Mercury or privy Corruption, which is the Root and Foundation of all these wonderful things,* thou must have great quantity of their Materials, I say to you as a Friend: If you put 20 pound weight of the Body that Aristotle declared with *nostro homogeneo*<sup>15</sup>, which Body is in Value 24 score pounds of currant Coin, it is not of the price of the secret Stone that we mean of, and it cometh of the qualities of this one thing brought out by Art. I say to you in Charity if you have seen the privy thereof, you would soon believe it, and you would marvel thereof it is so light and ease a thing, and ready at your hand if you have Grace to understand *that Corruption*. But you that labour herein must understand of *two manner of Corruptions* after the definitions of the Philosophers:

*One is Corruption alterative, and the other is Corruption dissipative.*

If you be a very true Philosopher then shalt you know these two Corruptions, as well by the Theory as by the Practice. I say to you of a Truth that of this Corruption is a new Generation that brings forth *this blessed Tincture*, but *corruptio dissipativa* shall never be brought to natural kind again. They that labour in this *Corruption* shall never lose but their time for lack of good understanding for they may save their good Bodies evermore. Now *Corruptio alterativa* is evermore in generation, as the Philosopher doth make mention "*de Generatione & Corruptione, unde Corruptio unius est Generatio alterius, &c.*"<sup>16</sup> And if they err in this *Corruption* yet shall they save all their Substance of the Bodies that shall never be the worse in Comparison in quantity but the better rather in quality, as is aforesaid. Therefore if thou be a wise man thou shalt have thy Substance, as surely as in thy Coffers, for as he stands in the *humidity and Corruption*, so long is he growing in his own natural kind. Therefore consider this Example, and understand well these Corruptions: For that I have seen I testify to you of Truth, I take God

of Heaven to Witness, and advise you well before you begin to make *your Mercury Vegetable and flying*; but first of all before you begin I read you know well your Principles, and take them of *Aristotle* and *Hermes*. Of the fourth Book of *Meteors of Aristotle*<sup>17</sup>, and there you shall find this Principle, where he sayeth,

*"Sciant Artifices Alehymiae spes variae transmutari non possunt nisi prius reducantur ad primam Materiam."*<sup>18</sup>

Now note well what I say, I demand what is the first matter of Mankind? No doubt<sup>19</sup>, I tell you Sperm of man. Then I ask what is the first matter or substance of Sperm? I say to you Food; as Meat and Drink. Then it appears, that Meat and Drink is the first Substance of Sperm, and Sperm is the very true Substance and matter to bring forth man: So likewise in Mercury of white matter, and of white Substance cometh that Mercury: For so he is of a pure subtle Earth, Sulphur most clear and most subtle commixed with pure Water and with Commixtion and heat, these two Elements digested with Temperance of heat and so turned into Mercury the Sperm of Metals. *Therefore Water and Earth is the first matter of Mercury. Mercury is the first matter of all Metals. When they be put into that Water, they all melt and dissolve in him as the Ice doth in warm Water.* Why do they so? Because they were first Water coupled by cold, and now here is *Aristotles' Principle* assoiled<sup>20</sup>.

And although there were two things first, yet nevertheless when they be resolved into clear currant Mercury, and no palpable thing of the Body seen nor felt, but passes through the Philter clean as Water, then is it, but one thing, upon the which all Philosophers accord and ground them, "*est una Sola res*"<sup>21</sup>. Here now I have showed you more plainly then it hath been showed here before. I say to you for truth, this is the very true Key of this Science, for *Merlin* and many others write here of divers ways, as in the verse of *Merlin*, "*dissipare & leviter extracta, &c.*"<sup>22</sup> and *Albertus*<sup>23</sup> in the fifth Book "*De mineralibus de semine Metallorum*"<sup>24</sup>, where he upon a little Gloss teaches Solution, as there you may see. But of all special Books that ever I could read or see, *Stella Complexionis*<sup>25</sup> is the Father of Truth and Doctrine, showing the clear light and the right way of the Preparation of this precious Treasure, and he expounded all the Figures of the Philosophers openly, where I doubt not but God hath his Soul in everlasting bliss: For by the space of thirty years I ever studied and busied myself upon the Mystery, Parables, Figures and Sayings of old Philosophers, in the which I was marvelous blinded and overseen, and specially by one book which is called the *12 Chapters* or *12 Gates* in Metre in English, which was made by a sufficient Clerk<sup>26</sup> and well learned. But I warn very man to beware of him, for by him you shall never

<sup>17</sup> Otherwise known as "On the heavens"

<sup>18</sup> Let Alchemy Artists know that their hopes of transmutation cannot be achieved unless the work is first reducible to the first matter.

<sup>19</sup> Original text, *Forsooth*

<sup>20</sup> Pardoned or atoned for.

<sup>21</sup> There is only One.

<sup>22</sup> Dissipate and gentle extract

<sup>23</sup> Magnus

<sup>24</sup> *De mineralibus et rebus metallicis libri quinque*

<sup>25</sup> In "Miscellanea Alchemica XXI" (1746). Wellcome Collection, MS.3563 (36) by John Dombelay.

<sup>26</sup> George Ripley

<sup>15</sup> Our Homogeneous

<sup>16</sup> Of generation and corruption; whence corruption of one is generation of another, etc.

know the privity, but rather he leads you out of the way, for he sayeth it is one Vessel, one thing, one furnace and no more.

True it is that it is but one thing, as I have before opened and showed: It is one form of a Vessel as *Stella Complexionis* declares,

*“And I say to you this one thing in the which all the Wise Philosophers have grounded themselves on, it is after the full putrefying and utter rotting of the Elements,”*

Then to be separate and every one of them well rectified. Then reduced again to the Body by Nature in marvelous Sulphur elect. Here I Counsel you to Practice truly, and to remember and consider the saying of the great Philosopher *Constantius Affricanus*<sup>27</sup> in the *Book of Elements*, where he showed that man is made by ingression of contrary things, which is to be understood of the four Elements and after this Body reverted to him simple, then all his humour is turned into Water, the Spirit into Air, the heat into Fire, and the Bones and Flesh into Earth; now may you hear and know by visible Experience. In likewise with our Water one thing by rotting is turned again into his simple Elements and moisture, then separate them, and the first shall ascend as a Smoke and turn into Air as Water, keep that Treasure. Then you shall distil after that an Air more intensive and thicker. One drop of this will swim and go above Water if thou mix it with Water, and in this Air is Fire. Beneath in the bottom of your Cucurbit is your Earth as a dead Body corrupt and infect. Note well here be the four Elements reverted into their Simple, as before is said by the Authority of *Constantius*. I assure you that this is as true as ever God made Gold and Silver and all things else and Heaven and Earth and the Sea. Therefore believe me if you will or choose you to your own folly, and leave off true Doctrine of the Philosophers, and wander forth in the World as Mist in the Wind. So you shall never come to your purpose, *but you must first make the Bodies water*, after digest them not burning nor destroying their radical moisture, which is the life of Tincture of this precious Treasure, and utterly rot them. After divide the Elements and well rectify your Earth by due Calcination, and with washing of his own Water, till it be pure, clear, bright and white shining, and then sublime up all the quintessence again, then thou hast the wonderful Earth called *Terra foliata & Sulphur Elect* of the Philosophers, more noble more precious than Gold or Silver. If you will work it up as you may at your pleasure by continuance of Reiteration and Sublimation, then he will become clear as Heaven Crystalline shining bright, as you may see in the Rosary of the Secrets of all Philosophers in the last work. Therefore may you see and understand when your Tincture is perfect, which is in the fourth Governance plainly in writing, and also mark other Authors of this secret Science. For when he is perfect fixed and stable and will not fume, then he will run through a Plate of Copper, and make it perfect Silver or perfect Gold, better than ever was produced out of the Mine by Nature. Also the very truth of this Secret is more worth

and richer then man can devise; *for of his own sperm or seed he shall evermore increase and multiply to the Worlds end*, for as fire elemental burns all and overcomes all things, and nothing can overcome him, even so this *Magnesia the Child of Fire* shall never be blemished nor vanquished by the Fire. But ever standing and abiding bright shining, clear, so that almost man cannot express the brightness which is incredible to any man except to them that have seen it with their Eyes. You that are a finder of this Book, I charge you as you will answer to God that you never show this but to a virtuous and wise, discreet and well-disposed man, which is ever glad to help the Poor and needy People; for with this glorious Science you may procure many glorious Gifts of the blessed Trinity both in Riches and Soul, which shall never fail you everlastingly.

*Da gloriam Deo*<sup>28</sup>, Amen.

*Magnalium Dei*<sup>29</sup>,

FINIS.

<sup>27</sup> Constantine the African (1017-1087)

<sup>28</sup> Give God the Praise

<sup>29</sup> In Gods Mighty Work,