

# ALCHEMIST'S HANDBOOK

*A Manual of Practical Laboratory Alchemy*

(Abridged – Including all original text to chapter 5)

BY

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Transcribed by

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Editors note: This version of Fra.Albertus' handbook includes only those chapters up to and including the fifth. This is the complete basic theory of the practice of herbal alchemy, a taught by Albertus.

Foreward.....	4
Preface .....	6
To the First Edition.....	6
Preface .....	8
To The Second Revised Edition.....	8
CHAPTER 1 .....	9
<b>INTRODUCTION TO ALCHEMY</b> .....	9
CHAPTER 2.....	15
<b>THE LESSER CIRCULATION</b> .....	15
How to Collect and Prepare Plants.....	15
CHAPTER 3 .....	20
<b>THE HERBAL ELIXIR</b> .....	20
CHAPTER 4 .....	25
<b>MEDICINAL USES</b> .....	25
CHAPTER 5.....	27
<b>HERBS AND STARS</b> .....	27

## FOREWARD

This is the age of “how to do it” books. There is one on almost any subject you can think of. Since they fill a variety of needs, they have proven a boon. From them you can learn to paint, sew, plant a herb garden, build a brick barbecue in the backyard, become an interior decorator, and re-wire your home. Almost every imaginable topic has been covered by these books. So if you assumed that this Manual falls in this category, you would be right – save for the simple fact that it is a great deal more.

Alchemy has exerted a strange fascination over mankind for centuries. The underlying philosophical theorem was that if the Divine Will had originally acted upon the *prima materia* to produce the precious metals and all else, why should not the alchemist – purified in mind and body, and an expert in the then known laboratory techniques – seek to emulate the same natural process in a shorter span of time? One has only to read a good history of chemistry, or to peruse a little of the vast alchemical literature, to become aware of its awful seductiveness. Men have left homes and families, squandered fortunes, incurred sickness and disease, gambled away prestige, social and other positions in quest of the goals perceived in the alchemical dream – longevity, perfect health, and the ability to transmute base metals into gold.

One must not be deluded by superficialities here. The alchemical adepts were patently dedicated and God-fearing men, holding the highest spiritual ideals conceivable. It is too bad more practitioners of the art did not perceive these goals.

Only recently, a journalist wrote that the Paracelsus Research Society which sponsors this Manual, offered to teach alchemy in two *weeks*. How could one be so myopic? Or illiterate?

In the early fourteenth century, Bonus of Ferrara spoke of Alchemy as “the key of all good things, the Art of Art, the Science of Sciences.” Not only was the alchemist to be concerned with the purification of metals and the elimination of sickness and disease from the human race, but he affirmed that Alchemy as Science and Art provided both a means to synthesize all the other science and a training of the intellectual and spiritual faculties.

The fascination that Alchemy has always held over mankind has surely been tainted in that rarely were there higher institutions of learning where promising students might study the ancient Art. Or where the proper techniques and methods might be learned as with other arts and sciences. No doubt, after the manner of the mysterious seventeenth century Rosicrucians, individual disciples were selected and trained by a master alchemist. We know that they had assistants and apprentices – for who would have kept the fires stoked in the furnaces, and washed the unending stream of glass and clay utensils employed in calcining, separating and distilling? Or who would have done all the thousand and one menial things that are so easily performed today that we barely have to think about them? But whether or not these assistants were ever encouraged to learn or to acquire the requisite disciplines and procedures – this is problematical.

In the vast literature on the subject, there is nothing that I have ever found that even pretended to demonstrate fundamental principles. Traditional alchemy, with its emphasis on piety, secrecy and allegory, is admittedly obscure. Over the years, I have met many men who could talk a good line about alchemy, but nothing practical ever emerged from them. Nor did anyone volunteer to demonstrate its basic truths in a laboratory or over the kitchen stove. Not one – until I met the author of this Manual some years ago. Not one – until I read the first limited edition of this Manual which literally is worth its weight in gold.

Incidentally, a few years ago I wrote something in recommendation of this manual, yet expressing criticism of its literary style, its form of expression, the innumerable typographical errors. This was silly and arrogant. For even if, theoretically, the book were written in the worst possible style, it would

still be unique and a genuine masterpiece. Had it not been written and published, we would be the losers by far. It teaches with clarity, simplicity and accuracy the technical means whereby the lesser circulation may be accomplished. It should be a revelation to those who have not previously been introduced to this method of dealing with herbs. The Great Work is said to be essentially an extension of the same process, the same techniques, with the same universal philosophy. Many an alchemist of former years would have given his eye-teeth – or surely a small fortune – for this information. Many might have been spared disaster and destruction had they been familiar with the data contained in this Manual.

Descriptions of the alchemical processes are not readily understood in terms of modern chemistry. This is not to say that some formal training in high school or first-year college chemistry would not be useful. At the very least, it would have provided the dexterity to use the equipment also used in alchemy. But even if it were possible to translate the one system into the terminology of the other, the alchemists are haunted by the fear of revealing too much, too easily, or too soon – thus opening the way to abuse. Modern man has shown himself to be an adept in the art of abusing nature, as all our current emphasis on ecology and environmental pollution has indicated. So there is considerable justification for their doubts and for the allegorical mode of expression they have deliberately chosen.

But do not be deceived. Simply as this book is written, alchemy is a hard taskmaster. It demands patient and laborious service. There is no simple or easy path to the Great Work. It requires great dedication of purpose, sincerity and willingness to peruse this path to the bitter end – not matter at what cost.

One of the older alchemists stated that the fundamental process is so simple that even women and children could accomplish it. Maybe! It is only after one has arrived at the other shore, as it were, that one can realize that “except ye become as little children ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” Meanwhile, it requires effort, labor and prayer – or its equivalents – to achieve the simple child-like state capable of achieving the goals of alchemy. Not many have been blessed with the special genetic or psychological structure, or the perseverance, or the grace of God to find it.

But, if you really want to learn the basic principles of practical alchemy, here they are in this wonderful little Manual. There is no other book that I have ever encountered in all my long years in this movement that is one fraction as clear or as helpful. Forty years ago, I would have found it far more intriguing and illuminating than Mrs Atwood’s heavy and ponderous tome on which I exercised my wisdom teeth. Study it – and work at the processes described. Practice is so much more rewarding and enlightening than a sterile “head-trip.” *Ora et labore*. Pry and work – but *work*. Without this you cannot even begin. And this book describes *how* to go to work, and with what.

ISRAEL REGARDIE

## PREFACE

### *To the First Edition*

This little volume has been prepared under great difficulties, due to the immense scope of the subject matter and the consequent necessity of abbreviating so much valuable material. And yet it is almost impossible to condense this presentation of arcane knowledge without running the risk of causing greater confusion in the reader's mind.

For the neophyte on the path, Alchemy undoubtedly represents a great quest. To help ease somewhat the commencement of its study, the contents of this book – in the author's opinion – represent an aid in the form of an essential, yet simple, outline for the pursuance of practical laboratory Alchemy.

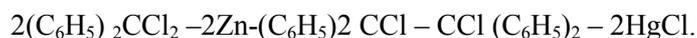
Whoever cannot comprehend what follows, has no alternative but to forget the whole matter for the time being.

I sense the rebuff awaiting me from students of the abstract sciences, and their accusation of empiricism, for presenting this work. However, this does not justify an apology on my part for what has been set forth in these pages. It represents an honest conviction based on practical experimentation in a university laboratory, as well as extensive tests and investigation in my private laboratory, originally founded on a firm belief in the truth to be discovered in the concealed teachings of the Alchemists – especially those of Paracelsus and Basilius Valentinus, and the authors of the *Collectanea Chemica*.

The ushering in of the Atomic Age should have made it comparatively easy to lay aside some of the prejudices which were previously held, yet they are still partially sustained by an incongruous criterion.

Why is it so unreasonable to assume – casting aside the overwhelming percentage of charlatans and imposters who called themselves Alchemists – that men such as Paracelsus and Valentinus did speak the truth about their discoveries? Is it because of what may seem an absurd terminology intermixed with metaphysical symbolism?

Suppose, then, that this represents one of the main arguments. A “Red Lion” or “Peacock's Tail” become, therefore, impossible childish nonsense, for the simple reason that, in current technical terminology, word combination such as “tetraphenylethylene dichloride”<sup>1</sup> are standard expression in the world of science. Similar letter and number combinations are no puzzle to one initiated into the marvels of chemistry. When such a term as “tetraphenylethylene dichloride” is expressed by means of its chemical symbols as:



this makes sense to the chemist. However, to the layman it represents only a meaningless scramble of letters and numbers. The chemical terminology, likewise, conveys no meaning to him.

Valentinus, who, with Paracelsus, shares fame as the Father of Modern Chemistry and Medicine, writes about himself: “Though I have a peculiar style in writing, which will seem strange unto many, causing strange thoughts and fancies in their brains, yet there is reason enough for me so doing; I say enough that I may remain by my own experience, not esteeming much of others prating, because it is concealed in by knowledge, seeing having alwaies the preheminece before hearing, and reason hath the praise before folly.”

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<sup>1</sup> One of the aromatic halogen derivatives.

To the scientist, this may smack too much of empiricism and will be disparagingly discarded by him.

Is it really so unreasonable to accept the symbolism and word combinations of the Alchemists of the Middle ages in the same light that we now take for granted the assertions of science?

The foregoing certainly deserves an honest answer.

In the following pages, should my hypotheses become evident to the reader, may they represent an attempt to keep the torch gleaming in these times of Stygian darkness. Centuries ago this flame was lighted by Alchemists whose names eventually will be honoured by the children by those now making vain efforts to ridicule them.

It is anticipated that this handbook will not see an enormously large edition, since only a few may want to own a work on a subject which has fallen into such ill repute. Yet, those who have tried for some time to start experimentation in their laboratories in order to discover if there really is truth to be found in Alchemy, will find welcome and perhaps valuable help in its contents. There is no doubt in the author's mind that serious and prepared students can accomplish what is outlined in these pages.

Many years have elapsed since the writing of the present manuscript. After due deliberation, it has been considered timely now to hand it to the printer, so that others may benefit from it.

May it become what the title indicates, namely: a handbook for alchemical novices.

With Peace profound,  
FRATER ALBERTUS

Salt Lake City, Utah, U.S.A.  
May 6, 1960

## **PREFACE**

### *To The Second Revised Edition*

It is with thanks that acknowledgment is given to Stanley Hurbert and Percy Robert Bremer, both Paracelsus Research Society students, for their efforts to revise the first edition of "The Alchemist's Handbook." Their help in this second edition is much appreciated since in its first appearance the book was full of typographical and grammatical error. The final proofs were read but the corrections not made before going to press. These errors have now been corrected.

It is to be hoped that by carefully following the instruction the practical results which may be obtained will prove of help to the serious student of Alchemy with visible manifestations in the laboratory. That such results are obtainable is beyond question as a great number of the students who have studied practical alchemy with the Paracelsus Research Society can testify. This applies not only to the Lesser Work with plants, but also to minerals and metals.

More than a decade of practical laboratory work taught openly with no cloak of secrecy or any oath of silence should be proof of the validity of this work.

FRATER ALBERTUS

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION TO ALCHEMY

What is Alchemy? This is the first and most vital question to be answered before a study of the following pages should be undertaken. This question can be answered to the satisfaction of the inquiring mind, but all careless paging through this book will be to no avail. If the reader has no previous knowledge of Alchemy and, moreover, no knowledge through conscientious study concerning mysticism, occultism, or related subjects, the answer to the above question will have little meaning. What, then, is Alchemy? It is “the raising of vibrations”.

For this reason it is wise not to attempt to experiment with the laboratory outlines that follow. These experiments are only for those who have spent considerable time in spagyric research and who have proven to themselves that an honest endeavor has prevailed and that this same endeavor still motivates their true search for the highest Arcana, the lapis philosophorum. As all students of alchemystical literature have come to realize that the exact process for the opus magnum has never been completely revealed in simple language or put into print, they will appreciate the fact that here is given a detailed description of the lesser circulation.

In Alchemy there are the lesser and greater circulations. The former pertains to the herbal kingdom and the latter to the most coveted of them all, the mineral (metallic) realm. A correct understanding, and not just knowledge, of the herbal process will open the gate to the great Arcanum. Months and years of experimentation in your alchemical laboratory will prove the truth of this statement. The fact that Alchemy is a life's work will be accepted by those who have spent months and years behind books and retorts. It is this significant fact which provides our spagyric art with such an armor that no materialist can pierce it. If it were not for the cleansing, purging, and aging of the alchemist-to-be over a great length of time, like the subjectum he is working with, how could it be kept from the profane and the unworthy? Only that which has stood the test of fire has been purified. That there is still a clock of secrecy covering alchemical processes, and that this must yet remain so will have to be accepted by all aspiring alchemists. For personal greed has no place in Alchemy. The aim of all true Adepts is to help relieve a suffering mankind in its physical and spiritual misery. A nonacceptance of this excludes one automatically from the circle of Adepts.

My friends of the medical profession, as well as the pharmaceutical chemists, will readily disagree with me when reading what follows. This must be taken for granted and, in fact, has been so since what is presented here is so foreign to the standardized teachings in present day medical colleges. Since I agree with them, on their terms, it is only fair to ask that they think of the contents of this book in the terms of an alchemist. If this is impossible, then the book should be laid aside for the time being and forgotten until it can be examined by an open mind free from prejudice.

No attempt is being made here to write on allopathic therapeutics. This shall be left to those versed in this particular branch of healing. I am writing here about Alchemy because of the years of studies and experiments that have preceded this book, and because of the work that shall in all likelihood continue to follow. Since the scope of Alchemy is so immense, one earthly incarnation in many, if not most, cases is an insufficient time for the full completion of the work. In climbing the alchemist's ladder, there are many tribulations to consider involving time, money, heartaches – to mention only a few of the difficult steps. The aspirant then should think long and well before undertaking such an ordeal, for if he is not prepared all will prove unsuccessful.

The process in both the lesser and greater circulation is basically not expensive. In fact, it is relatively insignificant. But before this state can be reached much money, time, and effort can and, most likely, will be spent. It is for these reasons that an urgent appeal is made not to venture rashly into Alchemy, not to see oneself sitting in perfect personal health at the end of a rainbow with the world at one's feet and with full pots of glistening gold. These are only illusions and will prove to be but sensational and glamorous *fata morgana*; they will not satisfy the soul. There is more to be gained in Alchemy than

vainglory. This, in fact, cannot be obtained in Alchemy. Such vainglory is as far from the true goals of Alchemy as night is from day. This brings us back to the simple statement made at the beginning of this chapter: "Alchemy is the raising of the vibrations." He who sees no meaning in this seemingly unimportant sentence has no right to attempt alchemical experimentation. Such a person is like one who claims that since he knows all the letters of the alphabet he can, therefore, read any language as they are all composed of letters from the same alphabet. But does he read with understanding when the letters are interchanged, forming words in different languages? A chemist may know all the formulas and all the abbreviations of chemical terminology, but does he also understand what they really are? Their true origin? Their first state? This we shall leave for those who are concerned to answer. If all the foregoing statements do not discourage the aspirant and make him clap the book shut and put it away with disgust, perhaps then it will help him to find himself in this universe and to give peace and contentment to his soul. Hermetic philosophy, with its practical arcanum, repeats itself over and over again in the ancient axiom: "As above, so below. As below, so above."

It is questionable whether or not historical references to Alchemists of the past have a place in these pages. There have been so many books published already that have made it their business to elaborate on the history and romance of Alchemy. For this reason, no attempt is being made here to add to the wealth of biographical material supplied by such books. Our emphasis falls, rather, on present-day alchemystical experimentation, conducted in accordance with age-old practices. Our aim in these pages is to attempt to demonstrate and to reveal the truth of Alchemy in contemporary language, while still remaining in harmony with ancient rules and rituals, according to the Alchemist's Oath. The practice of Alchemy, not only in earlier times but in our own day as well, should be undertaken only with the greatest solemnity. This can best be illustrated by the following oath from *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* (London, 1652). This oath, in only slightly modified form, is still being used by present day Adepts:

"Will you with me tomorrow be content,  
 Faithfully to receive the blessed Sacrament,  
 Upon this Oath that I shall heere you give,  
 For ne Gold ne Silver as long as you live,  
 Neither for love you beare towards your Kinne,  
 Nor yet to no great Man preferment to wyne:  
 That you disclose the secret that I shall you teach,  
 But only to him which you be sure  
 Hath ever searched after the seacrets of Nature?  
 To him you may reveale the seacrets of the Art,  
 Under the Covering of Philosophie before this world yee depart."

Sooner or later, most students experience a desire to find an Adept in order to become his pupil or disciple. But no matter how sincere such a desire is, it is futile for the student to attempt to locate a teacher versed in the Grand Arcanum. "When the pupil is ready, the Master will appear." This ancient precept still holds true. One may search, one may aspire, one may work and study hard until the wee hours of the morning, and yet it will not be evidence that he or she will ever attain that priceless jewel: The Grand Arcanum. For it takes more than mere study. An honest heart, a clean heart, a true heart, a benevolent and contrite heart accomplishes more than all the book learning can ever do. Yet, strangely enough, learning must accompany the virtues just cited. Without a knowledge and an understanding of natural laws and their corresponding spiritual parallels, no one could ever truly be called an Alchemist or a Sage.

I am not attempting to vindicate Alchemy. It needs no vindication. I am advocating the truth in Alchemy, for it is a most wonderful experience to have come to a realization. To experience! To realize! To have found "the light that shined in the darkness."

All the foregoing may seem so discouraging. Perhaps a heavy doubt may weigh upon the heart of the lover of Alchemystical Research. Whatever the cause or whatever its effects may be, a tremendous

responsibility is connected with it. He who has read about the lives of the Alchemists has found that most often many years had to elapse before their goal was reached. Not everyone was as fortunate as Eirenaeus Philalethes who writes that in his 23rd year that great blessing in the form of the *lapis philosophorum* was attained. Many had to wait another incarnation before they proved themselves worthy and ready to receive it. But, if all doubts are put aside and if a firm Belief has grown into a strong Faith, then that quickening moment that produces knowledge will eventually help one to come to “Understand,” to “Realize” the oneness of the universe, the secret behind Creation and the unfolding of cosmic consciousness.

This brings us to the natural questions: “What is the secret of creation? And what constitutes life force?” These questions must be answered before the would-be Alchemist can accomplish anything in his laboratory.

Since everything that grows comes from a seed, the fruit must be contained in its seed. Mark this well, for here lies the secret of creation. The raising of specimen, as said before, is the raising of vibrations. Herbs, animals, as well as minerals and metals, grow from seed. To understand this secret of nature, which is only partly revealed to mankind generally, constitutes the main theoretical subject in Alchemy. Once this is known, then only the proper understanding is necessary in order to obtain results in the raising or elevating of specimen, which is nothing else but transmutation. If we can help nature in her ultimate goal, that of bringing her products to perfection, then we are in harmony with her laws. Nature does not resent an artificial effort, or a shortcut, to bring about perfection. To illustrate: the seed of a tomato may be put into the ground late in the fall. Snow and ice may cover it during the winter. But no tomato plant will grow during this time, outdoors in freezing temperatures. However, if the same seed is planted inside where sufficient warmth and moisture is provided, and if it is placed in the proper matrix it will grow into a plant and bear fruit. This is not contrary to nature. It is in harmony with the natural laws. For fire (heat), water, air, and earth are all that are necessary to cause a seed to grow and bear its predestined fruit. The life force originates not in fire, earth, air, and water. This life force is a separate essence which fills the universe. This essence, or fifth essence (quintessence), is the truly important object that alchemists seek. It is the fifth of the four: fire, water, air, and earth, and is the most important one for the alchemist to find and then to separate. After such a separation has taken place, the answer to what lies behind the secret of creation will then manifest itself partly in the form of a dense smoke-like vapor that settles, after passing through the condenser tube, into a water-like substance of a yellowish color carrying with itself something oily which gives the tinge to the extracted water. This oily substance, or alchemical Sulphur, is just as essential to alchemical preparations as Salt and Essence. I do not wish to go into this further at this point, as this will be treated with more explicitly later on.

A repetition of certain phrases and sentences may be found throughout this book. This is not arbitrary; they have been purposely inserted in order to emphasize certain important points more strongly. Much that is written here must be reread many a time in order to lift the veil. This only can be accomplished individually by each student. That which follows will be discovered when the practical experimentation takes place in the laboratory.

Now to the alchemist’s laboratory. This usually takes on a sinister coloring as one’s imagination runs wild. Even today, so-called religious people are inclined to discuss Alchemy in rather subdued whispers because, so they claim, it is the devil’s work. Ignorance is bliss to some, and no one has a right to take another out of his or her bliss. We must ignore those that have religious scruples against Alchemy, as we do not intend to convert anybody. The aim laid down here is to help the alchemical aspirant on his laborious road. This road begins in the laboratory. Everything in the laboratory revolves around the fire or its emanation: heat. The rest is composed of a few flasks, a condenser, and some ingenuity. It sounds rather simple and really is so. What about all the other instruments that clutter up an alchemist’s laboratory, as pictures would have us believe? Just as an artist needs only canvas, paint, and brushes to paint a picture, but may add an indefinite number of other related objects to his studio, so may an alchemist add other related equipment as he sees fit. No doubt he is going to experiment and probe deeper into the mysteries to unlock one after another. Once the soul hungers and

thirsts for truth and the unfoldment of nature's laws, there is no end to its search until the ultimate has been reached.

Where should a laboratory be located? How can one practice Alchemy in a crowded city? Such questions will have to be answered individually by each student. A corner in an attic or a place in the basement is sufficient, as long as there is a continuous source of heat available. He who wishes to practice our spagyric work will have to do all the work himself. How fortunate! How else could it be? How else can one appreciate the experience if he does not arrive at the crucial point of knowledge by his own individual efforts? Enough has been said now concerning the hardships and disappointments that undoubtedly will be encountered. If the student, in spite of these difficulties, still wishes to enter the portals of the spagyrist's holy temple, he will find a welcome guide in the following pages. These unfold, in simple language, the process of the lesser circulation.

Those who wait for a complete description, in similar language, of the Grand Arcanum will wait in vain. It cannot be given. It is not permissible. But – and this is of utmost significance – he who can accomplish in his laboratory what the following pages present by way of instruction, can surely accomplish the Grand Arcanum, *if he is ready*. The preparation may take years or even tens of years. No time limit can be set. Some have a natural or inherited tendency, or gift, to delve into the mysteries. Some can never even enter. The “why” for this has no place here. But to those who are ready to travel the royal road of Alchemy, I say, “Patience! Patience! Patience! Think and live cleanly and charitably and dwell always in truth – that which *you* honestly consider and believe to be the truth.” Such a neophyte cannot fail then. Remember, “Seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

The wisdom of the Sages represents a culmination of all that is essential for men to have faith in, knowledge of, and understanding about. He who has attained such a state of illumination is indeed in harmony with the universe and at peace with the world. To reach this goal of enlightenment, the struggle in this mundane shell need not be of a violent nature, as some want us to believe; rather it should be a constant alertness to the possibilities that confront us in our daily lives, to raise our thought world above the drudgery of this everyday life, and eventually to find the peace within us. If one has not undergone the Alchemy of the inner self, or transcendental Alchemy, as it has been termed, he will find it extremely difficult to obtain results in his practical laboratory experimentation. He may produce things he knows nothing about, consequently passing them up as worthless. It is not sufficient only to know; it is understanding that crowns our work. It is here the wisdom of the Sages and Adepts helps to bring about an understanding within the individual concerning that which he knows but does not understand.

In Alchemy there is only one way that leads to results. The aspirant must show his worthiness and his sufficient preparation. This preparation extends over many and varied subjects, but most of all does it concern the search for truth. The living, waking, or conscious state must be immersed in the truthfulness that speaks out of every word and action. There must be a love for mankind that knows no passion, a readiness to gladly share one's entrusted material possessions with others, and a willingness to put the needs of mankind above personal desires. All of these virtues one must acquire first. Only then will the wisdom of the Sages and Adepts begin to make sense. Then Nature will become a willing companion to serve us. The world, as we will then realize it, begins to take on form and shape, whereas previously it enshrouded us in a haze which our vision could not penetrate. We will come to know God. Illumination will enlighten our whole life. It will cease to be a mere fight for an existence, for the Divine will have entered our hearts. Peace profound will dwell within and surround us amidst turmoil and strife. This the wisdom of the Sages will help us to attain. But only our own preparation and proper living will let us obtain it. We must do the work ourselves, for no one can do it for us. We will begin to realize that everything is no longer so individualistic as it seemed before. *We* is the term in which we will think. *We*, God and I, humanity and I become entwined. The “I” loses its meaning; it becomes submerged in the Cosmic All. “I” becomes many, as part of many that has its ultimate in one. Individuality, though still existing, becomes “All-individuality.” Hence we begin to realize that the “I” is only a segment of the Divine, an entity in itself but not the true self, that which is All, the Divine.

The wise men, Sages, Adepts or whatever names we may give them, those who have become illuminated, meet on the same plane. They have climbed to the mountain top. Theirs is the mastership over the world below. They can see what happens below and that which will happen because of their far-reaching sight. Those in the valley, twisting and turning and searching behind obstacles are too close to the pattern of events to see it. Sages read Nature as an open book printed in clear type whose sentences they fully understand.

The writings left us by the Sages are typical for the correspondence of their thoughts and explanations. All agree with one another. Only the uninitiated believes he detects inconsistencies and seeming contradictions, due to a lack of understanding. Exemplary in its precision and profundity are the seven points dealing with Rosicrucian concepts as given during an extra curricular lecture to students of The Rose Croix University by the late eminent Sovereign Grand Master of that Order, Thor Kiimaaletho<sup>2</sup>. The following is quoted from his lecture, “The Basic Rosicrucian Concepts”:

1. The Origin of the Universe is Divine. The Universe is a manifestation of, and an emanation from, the One Absolute Cosmic Being. All manifestations of life are centers of consciousness and expressions of the One Life within the framework of its material limitations. There is but One Life in the Universe – the Universal Life. It saturates and fills all forms, shapes, and manifestations of life.

2. The soul is a spark of the divine consciousness in the Universe. As a drop of water is a part of the ocean and all water, so is the soul manifesting in material expression, a part of the One Soul in the Universe. In the human being it develops the personality and the individual expression.

3. The soul-force possesses potentially the powers of the divine principle at work in the universe. The function of life on earth is to afford the opportunity of developing these potentialities in the personality. Since one incarnation on earth cannot possibly be sufficient, the personality must return again and again in order to achieve the maximum development.

4. The moral law is one of the basic laws of the universe. It is likewise called the principle of Karma, the result of cause and effect, or action and reaction. There is nothing vindictive about this principle. It works impersonally like any law of nature. As the fruit is contained in the seed, so the consequences are inherent in the act. This principle guides the destinies of both men and nations. Knowledge of this principle gives man the power to control his own destiny.

5. Life has a purpose. Life is not meaningless. Happiness is a very real thing and is a by-product of knowledge, action, and living.

6. Man has free choice. He has tremendous powers of both good and evil, depending upon his conscious realizations.

7. Since the individual soul is part of the universal soul, man has access to powers he does not know, but which time and knowledge and experience will gradually reveal to him.”

Hermetic philosophers have taught the very same fundamentals even as philosophers of the future will do, for that which constitutes truth will remain truth. It cannot be changed. But the theories of men and their opinions, which are incorrectly given by some as truth, are subject to change. Because one calls himself a philosopher does not necessarily make him such. Only he is a philosopher who has a sincere love for the wisdom that manifests universally and who strives as sincerely to apply it in his daily life. Wisdom is acquired through righteous living. It is understanding applied. The acquisition of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy, as conferred upon graduates in institutions of higher learning, does not make one a philosopher, as much as those in possession of such a degree may believe in their right to such a title.

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<sup>2</sup> Thor Kiimaaletho granted the author permission to quote from “The Basic Rosicrucian Concepts.”

To be acquainted with the history of philosophy, the lives and teachings of those called philosophers, is only a study and knowledge of their universal concepts and what has been derived from them. To be a philosopher, therefore, means to understand and live according to that understanding, knowing well that only by giving unhesitatingly and unselfishly will our belief in mankind be justified. When this has been realized, then only will Alchemy become something real. Transmutation always takes place on a higher plane, and in the physical world laws cannot be adhered to or violated without producing karmic manifestations. Beneficial karma, if it is permissible to use a term, because karma is impartial, is brought about by harmonious applications of natural laws. These natural laws must be adhered to if, according to predestined results, we wish to obtain what nature has decreed.

If the foregoing even in its very condensed form has made any sense at all to the student of Alchemy, it must be apparent then why that alchemical gem, which all alchemists desire to produce, has been called the *Philosopher's Stone*. How often it is that we use words and attach no meaning to them, only because we fail to understand.

## CHAPTER 2

**THE LESSER CIRCULATION**

It is difficult to understand alchemical terminology. The novice without proper mental and spiritual preparation usually interprets spagyric symbols in his or her own way, thereby starting on a laborious road of misconception that only years of painful experience can remedy. It is safe to say, and experience has taught it to be so, that all beginners in Alchemy have their minds set on obtaining the Philosopher's Stone. However justified this goal may be, nevertheless, without proper preparation, it is usually soon abandoned when after a comparatively short time of experimentation no results become manifest. Then Alchemy is condemned, called a fraud, or given similar names and erstwhile serious students, due to lack of proper preparation, disparage the true value of that which they do not understand.

In this chapter of practical alchemistical laboratory experimentation, the beginner will be *patiently instructed* on how to obtain the true alchemical herbal tinctures, extracts, and salts. As the reader will notice, "patiently instructed" has been emphasized. It may be well to commence this instruction by confronting the Neophyte with the prime requisite in alchemistical laboratory practice, namely, PATIENCE. This word should be painted in large letters and then hung above the alchemist's Athanor<sup>3</sup>. It is incomprehensible that anyone can accomplish anything in laboratory alchemy without the utmost patience. Later, personal experience will let the beginner come to a full realization of this important statement. If, therefore, the Neophyte believes himself or herself sufficiently endowed with this virtue, I shall most gladly open the door to my laboratory and guide the earnest student in his mind's eye through the various processes which are necessary to obtain the desired results.

To begin with, the selection of herbs for medicinal purposes must be known to the aspirant. This means a fair understanding of herbs and their uses.

*How to Collect and Prepare Plants*

The different part of plants should be gathered when their peculiar juices are most abundant in them.

*Barks*

The barks of either trunk, branches, or roots should be peeled from young trees in autumn or early spring. After shaving off the outer portion of the bark, cut thinly and place in a good position in the shade to dry.

*Roots*

These should be dug after the leaves are dead in the fall at which time all the strength has gone down into the root. But better still, dig them in early spring before the sap rises.

*Seeds and Flowers*

Only after they are fully ripened and in full bloom should seeds and flowers, respectively, be gathered. Then they should be dried quickly in the shade.

*Medicinal Plants*

These should be taken while in blossom for best results, but can be gathered at any time before the frost comes. Dry quickly in the shade.

*Leaves*

Leaves should be collected while the plant is in flower. Dry quickly.

*Fruits and Berries*


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<sup>3</sup> This word was used by Paracelsus to designate the oven in which the fire was kept burning.

These should be picked when fully ripe. Dry quickly.<sup>4</sup>

One of the best methods for drying herbs is to spread them thinly on clean paper, preferably on the floor, over which a constant stream of fresh air can pass.

Herbs, or all vegetable medicines, should be kept in a dry and dark place. Tin cans are to be preferred to other containers for storing powders. Roots are best kept in covered boxes. Tinctures and extracts should be kept in dark glass bottles to protect them from the action of light.

Let us suppose then that the herb known as Balm, Lemonbalm, or Melissa (*Melisa officinalis*) has been selected. After the selection of the desired herb from which the true alchemical medicinal potencies shall be derived, we shall now consider the principle ways of obtaining an extract. They are as follows:

1. Maceration

The fresh or dried herb is soaked in water and left standing in room temperature.

2. Circulation

The fresh or dried herb is circulated (percolated). This is accomplished by having a condenser over the flask which lets the moisture condense and drip back into the bottom container. It then repeats this process which is also known as reflux.

3. Extraction

The fresh or dried herb is put in a thimble and both are placed in a Soxhlet Extractor for extraction.

Either of the three procedures can be used to obtain an extract. Water, Alcohol or Ether may be used as extraction media (menstrum).

The above three ways are chiefly employed to obtain the extract or the tincture. A tincture derived from a distillation with water does not contain as much of the essential essence of the herb as the macerated herbal extract obtained by immersion in alcohol or ether. To obtain all possible essence, including the oily substance inherent in the herb, the latter method, that by extracting it in an extraction apparatus (Soxhlet or other), is preferable.<sup>5</sup>

After the extraction of the essence, that herb will remain as a dead residue from which the life has been taken in the form of the liquid essence in either one of the above described three methods. These feces, as they are called, or in alchemical language, "Caput Mortum," meaning dead head, are then taken and burned to ashes. This is accomplished by taking the residue and placing it in an earthenware or porcelain dish which is placed over the fire. The contents of the dish are burned to a blackness from which state they will gradually change to the light gray color. After these ashes have become light, they should be placed into a mortar and ground to a fine powder with a pestle.

It is here where the differences between allopathic, homeopathic, and biochemic medicinal procedures become evident. Allopathic therapeutics generally use tinctures or salts (alkaloids), while homeopathic and biochemic therapeutics use salts (minerals triturated). The triangle is a great help in explaining the necessity of a conjunction of both the essence and salt to obtain a true manifestation as occurs only in Alchemy. To illustrate:

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<sup>4</sup> The progressive student will learn later on at what planetary times herbs should be gathered.

<sup>5</sup> This will be dealt with in a later chapter.

If an herb, immersed or steeped in boiling water, produces a tea that helps to remedy bodily disorders, how much more effective must be the manifestations of an extract, or even conjunction of extract and salt, in the human body. It may be well for further demonstration to present here the three principal kingdoms of nature in their proper relationship, i.e., vegetable, animal, and mineral kingdoms. A common error that has been and is still being made is the intermixing of vegetable essence with animal or mineral salts. Since each constitutes a separate sphere or vibratory group, a mixture of these not properly attuned recipients will produce no manifestation. This is important, especially when producing the elixirs derived from the animal or even mineral kingdoms. It is because of a misunderstanding of these vital principles of Alchemy that such a furor has been caused among pseudo-chemists when they have failed to produce any alchemical manifestations, while in their estimation these manifestations should have occurred. It is seemingly impossible to convey fundamental principles to newcomers in Alchemy without the use of analogy. Through concentration, from a commonly harmless substance, a poison can be produced. Therefore, it is also possible to produce from the same substance something which is equally non-poisonous.<sup>6</sup>

If the reader will follow patiently through the labyrinth of seeming contradiction, he will emerge truly triumphant at the end of its winding path; carefully avoiding prejudice and misconception, he will be able to see the light. To be sure, Alchemy is a slow process. It is evolution – the raising of vibrations. It is not a subject that can be mastered by means of the intellectual faculties alone.

The two principles of Essence and Salt have now been presented. However, before taking the next difficult step of joining the Essence to the Salt (and thus producing an alchemical manifestation), a few words dealing with what the Essence and Salt represent should be carefully noted by the reader.

1. The Essence (Quintessence) or active force in the vegetable kingdom is the same in all plant life.
2. The Salt or ashes to which any plant can be reduced differs from one plant to another.

This Essence, or “Mercury” as alchemists call it, is the life-giving energy that is manifest in all matter. The same Mercury exists throughout the animal kingdom, and the same Mercury throughout the mineral kingdom. Yet, and the reader will please note, although the Mercury is of the same origin, it is of a certain vibration in the vegetable kingdom, of a higher vibratory rate in the animal kingdom, and of a still higher rate in the mineral realm. It is for this reason that Mercury from the vegetable kingdom should not be mixed with the salts from either of the other two kingdoms. Each represents a separate unit. The animal eats herbs and contracts and cures ills from the same source. Where the cure fails, only the next higher ones will help. Even here it must be stated that the highest Elixir will not function indefinitely if the mind is not kept in proper condition. Humans, belonging to the animal group, eat both vegetables and meat. Therefore, they can be cured with both, i.e., vegetable essences in their first state, and more adequately with their own animal Salt and Essence (arcanum of blood). However, the most potent form of terrestrial manifestation is produced from the salts and essences from the minerals and metals. In its highest form (and brought to perfection only by man) this is known as the Philosopher’s Stone. Nature in her performance does not produce the elixir of any of the three principalities. Each one, herbal, animal, and mineral elixir, can be produced only by art. Nature does not produce the Philosopher’s Stone in the same sense that it forms the crystals of the earth.

From the foregoing it should have become clear to the reader that there are:

1. Three kingdoms or principalities as follows:
  - a. Vegetable
  - b. Animal
  - c. Mineral

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<sup>6</sup> Wisdom is a flower from which the bee its honey makes and the spider poison each according to its own nature. (Author unknown)

2. Each kingdom has its own Mercury. All three Mercuries are derived from the same original source, but manifest under different vibrations in each realm.
3. The Salt of each vegetable manifestation differs from one plant to another. This also holds true of all Salts from animal and mineral products.
4. Substances (Essence and Salt) should not be intermixed when elixirs or alchemical medications are prepared.
5. Alchemical elixirs are not products of natural formation, but of artificial production.

A further analogical illustration will perhaps clarify one common misconception – why the human being, belonging to the animal kingdom, does not stand above the mineral. The reader will bear in mind that we are dealing with the physical aspects of Alchemy. To explain why human beings are endowed with reasoning powers that are not manifest in vegetables, minerals, and metals would bring us into transcendental Alchemy. Here we are dealing with the physical phenomena.

If, by divine wisdom, man, as highest specimen of the animal realm, has been placed in the middle of the three kingdoms, it has been of necessity, since nothing in nature is based on chance. Man is holding the balance of the three kingdoms and can partake of any one according to his liking, having an alchemical laboratory in his own body to transmute inorganic matter into organic, and organic into spiritual matter.<sup>7</sup> Since these are actualities with which we are confronted, we must deal with them and attempt to understand them. Only laws that are basic and of true cosmic value enter Alchemy. There can be no speculation in Alchemy. Alchemy is based upon facts and, with patience, experimentation, and perseverance, the sincere student will obtain these facts. There is no other way than the one all Alchemists have traveled, and this is the way of experience.

All fundamental principles are the same throughout Alchemy. They apply to all three kingdoms. In mentioning the number three, it can now be stated that this number of manifestation will be found repeatedly in Alchemy. When in the foregoing only two substances, Mercury and Salt, have been mentioned, it was done purposely in order not to confuse the beginner. As there are three principalities or kingdoms, there are also three substances with which an Alchemist is continuously working. Without them nothing can be accomplished in Alchemy. They are Mercury, Salt, and Sulphur. They are represented by the following symbols:

Sulphur –

Salt –

Mercury -

As previously explained, alchemical Mercury is not the same as common quicksilver. Neither is Sulphur common sulphur or brimstone. Nor is Salt common table salt or sodium chloride.

Sulphur, that is, the alchemical Sulphur, is usually found in its oily form adhering to the Mercury. It must be separated by means of distillation. This yellow substance is the Sulphur that common alcohol extraction did not set free sufficiently. (With metallic Sulphur the difference will become even more noticeable.)

In the herbal process, the separation of the Sulphur from the Mercury (Essence) is not as essential as in the mineral work. Therefore, the beginner will not use the three alchemical substances separately, but

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<sup>7</sup> The human body contains some inorganic minerals in minute quantities from which it receives nourishment of a highly vibratory nature.

will use Mercury and Sulphur combined and Salt separately. The first two (forming one liquid in the herbal extraction) are joined to the Salt, and from this combination, the alchemical medicine or elixir is then produced. In this way, from any herb an elixir can be made by art that is more potent than either the tincture, extract, or Salt taken alone, as is commonly prescribed by present-day therapeutics.

The foregoing is an attempt to present a synopsis of the fundamentals in Alchemy, the basic theory underlying all alchemical work. What follows is an example of the practice, in this case, a presentation of the procedure for obtaining alchemical elixirs from herbs. The process used in the herbal work differs only slightly from that employed with animal and mineral substances. One of the differences is the non-separation of the Sulphur from the Mercury in the herbal process.

In the instructions that follow, it is presumed that the spagyric novice already possesses a clear knowledge of what herbs are and what medicinal properties they contain. Only students equipped with this knowledge should proceed to the practical laboratory work described in the following pages.

## CHAPTER 3

**THE HERBAL ELIXIR**

In preparing the herbal elixir, we will use those parts of herbs that contain medicinal value. This may be the leaves, stems, roots, or flowers, depending upon the particular herb being used. This presupposes, of course, some understanding on the part of the students of the healing properties of herbs. Fresh herbs firstly should be dried in a warm place where there is an adequate circulation of air. If fresh, undried herbs are used in our work, it will be found that they contain much water which is of no value to us. When an herb is dried, the essence and sulphur remain in it and can be easily extracted. The water contained in fresh herbs will mix with alcohol and will only serve to increase the bulk. Therefore, the student should observe the following procedure:

1. A sufficient amount of alcohol<sup>8</sup> should be rectified.<sup>9</sup>
2. The herb selected for use should be finely ground in a mortar with a pestle.
3. The ground herb<sup>10</sup> is now to be placed in the thimble of an extraction apparatus. To this apparatus attach a flask half filled with the rectified alcohol. Now the fire should be lit under the flask in order to commence the extraction.

A soxhlet extraction apparatus consists of three parts:

1. Flask
2. Extractor and thimble

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<sup>8</sup> Alcohol is derived from various sources. It is obtained from sugar cane, grain, corn, potatoes, grapes, wood, to name its most common sources. Therefore, all alcohol is not the same. This is especially significant where Alchemy is concerned. When we refer to the grain spirits we speak of that which is the essence of the grain. Thus it should be seen that alcohol is, therefore, the spirit or essence which is freed from the various sources from which we obtain it. Alcohol derived from wood is known as methanol and is poisonous if taken internally. The alcohol, or spirit of wine, obtained from wine is the best and most ripened essence of the vegetable kingdom. It has been claimed to have the highest vibratory rate of any essence in the vegetable kingdom and is, therefore, used as a menstrum to make extractions from herbs.

<sup>9</sup> To rectify alcohol, proceed as follows: Take any pure non-poisonous alcohol (190 proof spirits) and distill at 78 degrees C. Whatever is distilled at a temperature above 78 degrees C. cannot be used. Take all that has been distilled at not above 78 degrees C and place this again in a clean flask. Re-distill at 76 degrees C. The distillate should then be distilled again. This is to be performed seven times from the first distillation. That which remains behind will become darker after each distillation. Finally, at the last distillation the distillate will be a crystal clear alcohol. (Do not use methanol.)

There is another method by which alcohol may be rectified. Distill again non-poisonous 190 proof alcohol at 78 degrees C. To every 1000 ml. of this distilled alcohol add 25 grams of potassium carbonate anhydrous. Let this stand for 48 hours. Shake occasionally. Distill the alcohol once again at 76 degrees C. The distillate will be a rectified alcohol.

The first method above is the old way to rectify. The second method is used today in modern chemistry. Experience will teach which method the individual alchemist will choose.

<sup>10</sup> Our rectified alcohol which is sufficient for herbal extractions must yet undergo another preparation before it is fit for mineral extractions. The rectified spirits of wine of the sages differs from one described here for the herbal extraction.

It should also be mentioned that in preparing the rectified spirits of wine, it is preferable to use a red wine, the older the better. The wine should be a pure unfortified wine. Any wine that contains more than 17% alcohol by volume may be fortified with alcohol derived from sources other than grapes. When such is the case and wine thus altered is distilled, the distillate, therefore, will not be pure spirits of wine. For this reason the spirits of wine should be obtained only from wine containing less than 17% alcohol by volume, or else obtained from grape brandy. This is of great importance in Alchemy.

### 3. Condenser

The flask is at the bottom. The middle section is the extractor, which contains the thimble (a filter paper cylinder in which we have placed the herb to be worked upon). The condenser is the top section, which rests on the extractor. This is illustrated in the drawing on page .

4. After three or four extractions have been made, it will be noticed that there is a definite change of color in the contents of the flask. Should a dark rim form on the flask, it will be necessary to lower the fire, otherwise the Sulphur (oil) will be scorched and lose its efficacy. It is preferable to use a water bath rather than an open flame, as the water bath will prevent the scorching or burning of the delicate oil (Sulphur) contained in the extract (Essence).

5. When the alcohol coming through the syphon tube eventually becomes clear, that is an indication that the extraction has been completed. The thimble should now be removed and its contents placed in an earthenware or porcelain dish. Place a wire screen over the dish and light this residue which will ignite at once, due to its being saturated with alcohol. Care should be taken that there are no other flammable substances close by. This material should be calcined to black ash. Grind this and then calcine again to a light gray.<sup>11</sup>

6. The calcined ashes (Salt) are now placed into the lower flask. A sufficient amount of the extract is poured over this Salt. The flask is reattached to the extraction apparatus and circulation is started. This is to be continued until the Salt has absorbed the Essence and Sulphur. The extract in the lower flask should become lighter. When there is no further change in color, the Salt has absorbed all that is possible. If the extract becomes clear, pour it out of the flask and add more of the Essence until the Salt does not absorb any more.

7. Detach the flask and remove its contents. This is now the alchemical elixir in its first state. When warm it becomes an oily substance and will run. When cold it becomes solid again.

8. The potency of this elixir may be increased by calcining it in a calcining dish. This is then returned to the flask of the extraction apparatus, and the circulation is repeated with more of the extracted essence. Each time this is done, the potency will be increased.

The process can be carried a step further by placing the three combined substances in a glass flask which is tightly sealed and subjecting it to moderate heat for digestion. In this way a "stone" in the vegetable kingdom can be produced. (This must not be confused with the Philosopher's Stone.) While it is not absolutely necessary to produce a vegetable stone, it will nevertheless be of great help for further alchemical investigations, especially if one is not familiar with what a sublimate substance looks like. The potency of such a "stone" is far greater than any medicament in the form of an elixir, as described previously. This herbal "stone" will attract the Essence, Sulphur, and Salt of other herbs by immersion only. However, this is not necessary. A potent medication can be prepared by the process already mentioned. Once the first result is achieved and understood, further investigation will continue to reveal more and more of the secrets of Alchemy. These can only be experienced personally and individually by each student.

For those not able to procure an extraction apparatus, another method may be used which is much simpler in regards to the equipment needed. This was originally described in the Alchemical Laboratory Bulletin, 1st Quarter, No. 1, 1960 and is repeated in the material which follows.

This is intended for those who have studied or read about Alchemy and are now preparing themselves to commence work in the laboratory. As this will prove to be a most interesting and enlightening task,

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<sup>11</sup> A prolonged calcination can change the gray to a reddish color which of course is preferable, but this will require a long time.

it should not be undertaken carelessly. First of all, the selection of a proper place for the work to begin is of importance. The space required is not large. A corner in the basement, or in an attic, perhaps even a garage will do, as long as a constant source of heat is available. Cold water should also be close by for the cooling of the condenser tube. A few bottles and flasks and a mortar and pestle are desirable, if not necessary.

A table and chair complete the furnishings. The table or workbench should be so located that the heat and water source are very close by, as the gas flame or electric heat (whichever is used) is constantly needed. For the gas flame, a Bunsen burner, or better still, a Fisher burner is recommended. Erlenmeyer flasks, those with the flat bottoms, is the type best for our purposes. As for stoppers, both the rubber and cork types are needed. A small mixed assortment will last a long time. A support to hold the flask over the flame, and to maintain it in a rigid position when distillation is taking place is also required. It can either be bought or made by the student, as long as it meets the requirements.

Since the most important implement are by now known to the beginner, we shall now continue by preparing the substance with which we are going to work alchemically. Let us choose an herb that is easily available – for example, Melissa (*Melissa officinalis*-Lemonbalm). Since it is an important herb and any supply house can furnish it, we shall use it as an example in our first experiment.

As mentioned previously, it is preferable in the beginning to use the dried herb. At this point we should ascertain if we have actually selected the desired herb. This may seem unnecessary but it is quite important. There is, for instance, a difference between wild and garden sage in our work. The flowers of the wild sage, again, will produce a different medication than the leaves from the same plant. Therefore, the student must always be certain that the herbal substance involved is the desired one.

The next step in the procedure is the grinding of the herb. This may be accomplished by rubbing between the hands or by grinding it in a mortar with a pestle. The more minute the particles the easier the extraction. The ground herb is now placed in a flask, bottle, or container (preferably glass) that can be well closed. Over the ground herb the menstruum is now poured which will produce the extraction. The easiest way is to pour some strong alcohol (NEVER use denatured alcohol or Methanol), or preferably brandy, over the ground herb in the flask or bottle. Then it should be closed tightly and put on top or near the furnace in the winter. If warmth is provided by some other method, the temperature should not exceed that required for the hatching of chicken eggs. One-half to one-third of the container should be left empty above the menstruum, in order that it will have room for expansion, and to relieve some of the pressure that may build up within the container.

After several days, the menstruum will be colored green. The shade of green will depend on the type of Melissa used and the strength and purity of the alcohol. When sufficiently macerated (this process is called maceration), the liquid is to be poured off into a clean glass container. The remaining herbal substance should be placed in a calcining dish and burnt to ashes. The alcohol which has saturated the herb will ignite immediately and burn the remainder of the herb, now called “feces,” to black ashes. As this will cause smoke and a strong odor, care should be taken not to do this in a closed room.

After the burning of the feces, as we shall now call them, they can be incinerated in any fire-resistant dish until they become a light gray. An occasional grinding in the mortar followed by further burning, which we shall now call “calcination,” will gradually bring about a lighter color. When this state has been reached the feces should be removed from the fire and, while still warm, placed into a flask which has been preheated, so that it will not break from the sudden temperature change. Into this flask is poured the essence which had been previously poured off of the macerated herb and put aside. Now the flask must be tightly stoppered so that no alcohol fumes can escape. The flask then is subjected to moderate heat for digestion. Left to digest in this way for an interval of two weeks, the Salt will absorb the Essence necessary for the formation of the required strength. The medication is then ready for use. It is absolutely harmless but of high potency and should be taken in minute amounts. A few grains of the Salt together with a teaspoon of the liquid Essence in a glass of distilled water will produce

exhilarating results. The elixir should never be consumed undiluted. This is the most primitive and simplest form of preparing an herbal substance according to the precepts of Alchemy.

The time during the maceration period can be put to beneficial use in producing a pure menstruum from alcohol or spirits of wine. While there are various kinds of alcohol, only one is of interest to us at the outset of our work. This is the spirit of wine. As wine generally contains less than 20% alcohol by natural fermentation, this alcohol (spirit of wine) must be extracted. Since we are interested only in alcohol extracted from grape wine, we must exclude all other types of wines – apple wine, loganberry wine, etc.

Our next step, then, is to take pure unadulterated grape wine or brandy and pour a sufficient amount into a flask for distillation. The amount depends upon the flask at hand. It should never be filled more than half full. Two holes should then be drilled through a rubber or cork stopper. Through these a thermometer in one and a bent glass tube in the other must fit tightly. The thermometer should not touch the wine, while the bent glass tube reaches barely below the stopper. Now a condenser is needed. This may be purchased from any chemical supply house. The bent glass tube from the flask must be inserted into the stopper closing the condenser opening.

What has been formed now is known as a distillation train. In order to keep the condenser cool with water, it must be connected by means of a rubber tube to a water tap. Most likely an adapter will be needed for this purpose. The water will flow to the condenser jacket and then out at the top opening through another rubber tube and then into a drain. In this way, the vapor that rises from the heated flask will be cooled and will drip out from the bottom end of the condenser into a receptacle.

Once the heat under the flask is started and the wine begins to boil, a vapor will rise and pass through the bent glass tube and then enter the condenser. Here the cooling water around the inner tube will cause it to condense and emerge at the end as a distillate, dripping into a receiver. The heat should be so regulated that the first distillation will not exceed 80 degrees centigrade. A thermometer will indicate whether the heat must be increased or decreased in order to maintain this temperature.

When about 15 drops have been distilled over and the temperature has been regulated so that the thermometer shows the same degree of heat, the receiver may be attached to the condenser end. This is done in order to avoid any unnecessary evaporation of the alcohol or any possible ignition of its fumes. This, however, should be done only after the pressure in the distillation train has become equalized. This will be after some of the liquid has come over. When the temperature begins to rise above 85°C. and all of the alcohol has come over, there will still be some traces of water in the alcohol. When the flame has been extinguished and the vessels are cool enough to handle, the train may then be disconnected.

The residue of the wine may now be discarded as it is of no further use to us at present. However, the distillate is saved. But as this distilled spirit of wine is not pure as yet, it must undergo several further distillations in order to become absolute alcohol. At this point we should be certain that the quantity of distillate we have to work with exceeds 100 ml. Each redistillation is accomplished in the same way as the first distillation. As each distillation is completed, the distillate is poured back into a dry distillation flask. During these subsequent distillations, the temperature must be approximately 78°C. At the end of each distillation there will always remain a small amount of cloudy residue which must be discarded as it contains water. Only during the last distillation (approximately seven distillations are sufficient) should the temperature be 76°C. As this final menstruum contains no more traces of water, it reaches the spiritual essence of an herb in a shorter time and more effectively than before it was completely rectified.

Another method to purify spirits of wine is by using potassium carbonate anhydrous. However, in the beginning we do not use this process.

The purified spirits of wine enable us to achieve superior results for herbal extraction. Therefore, we shall always use it in our herbal work.

In a German book it reads as follows in a condensed version.<sup>12</sup>

Fifty pounds of a fresh, flowering plant including root, stem, leaves and seeds are cleaned from dying leaves and other impurities and then washed. After cutting the plant into small pieces, water is poured over it and then slowly distilled. Any oil that shows is separated from the water and the water thus obtained without the oil, which is by now kept separate, is poured back over the plant to which has been added one to two spoons of yeast. All of this is placed in a wooden container and slightly covered so it can ferment. One has to watch that when the fermentation has ceased that it is stirred well, placed in a distillation flask and distilled until nothing more distils over. A steam distillation is best. What remains in the flask is calcined, leached out with water, filtered and the filtrate slowly evaporated. The residue is saved. The former distillate is reduced by further distillation until two parts of distillate come to one part of the leached out salt. Both are distilled once more and the oil separated from the first distillation is now added.

Dried, not poisonous plants should be finely pulverized and with six parts water digested for 3 – 4 days in a warm place. Then the entire process mentioned before is repeated.

The well-known M.D. and Ph.D. Zimpel says in his “Taschenrezeptierbuch fuer Spagyriker” (Pocket prescriptionbook for Spagyrist) in part: After collecting wildgrowing flowering medicinal herbs or their respective medicinal parts and cutting them into small pieces, a special yeast is added and everything is subjected to fermentation. This fermentation yields the peculiarities of the plant and frees the ethereal oils. After fermentation the newly formed alcohol is carefully distilled. The residue dried and calcined and the calcined salt leached out with the distillate. The liquor thus obtained is filtered – which contains the soluble minerals of the medicinal plant including its essence and volatile oil. The longer it is left undisturbed before using, the better – like wine when left to “ripen” in the bottle is supposedly to increase its efficacy.

As can be seen from the two examples cited there is little difference except Dr. Zimpel leaches his salts right way with its first distillate.

Such minor differences here and there will be found all over in alchemical literature. It is up to the practitioner to find his own way which only experience will teach.

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<sup>12</sup> From: Grossman: Die Pflanze im Zauberglauben und in der spagyrischen (okkulten) Heilkunst. Verlag Karl Sigismund, Berlin, 1922.

## CHAPTER 4

## MEDICINAL USES

In all our investigations of nature we must observe what quantities or doses of the body is requisite for a given effect; and must guard ourselves from estimating it at too much or too little.

- Francis Bacon

Ailments differs as do the individuals who suffer from them. Hardly any bodily disorder can be standardized and, therefore, we must be very careful in prescribing the exact doses of either tincture, extract, salt, or the combined medication. Since we are chiefly concerned here with alchemical elixirs (the combination of Essence, Sulphur and Salt), it is well to mention again that a more potent medication is obtained each time we repeat the process of calcination and coagulation, after the first state has been attained.

Distilled water and spirits of wine are the two common mediums used for the dissolving of the herbal elixir. If the elixir has been properly prepared, it will dissolve without trouble in either liquid. It should never be taken full strength in such large amounts as a teaspoonful, etc. Due to the condensed potency and accelerated vibratory rate of the herbal elixir, it must be taken greatly diluted. A few grains may be dissolved in a glassful of water or pure unadulterated red wine. Two or three tablespoonfuls taken at hourly intervals will usually produce the desired results, provided the ailment has been properly diagnosed and the patient's condition is known. If this cannot be done personally, the experience of a physician should be called upon. His diagnosis and prescribed medication should be carefully ascertained. If his prescription contains an herbal substance as the main ingredient, this is to be used. In other words, from this herb an alchemical preparation is to be produced. However, great care must be taken that the basic medication is not a poisonous one. A sedative, for instance, acts as an opiate and not as a curative agent. If a patient requests his physician to recommend an herbal medication, the true physician will certainly comply, if the case warrants it. Likewise, no true physician will deny his patient information leading to a cure, if this is known to him, of course.

We are dealing chiefly with herbs in this book; therefore, only prescriptions containing herbs as basic ingredients have been referred to. Medications of a mineral or metallic nature have not been mentioned in detail. It should have become obvious to the reader that alchemical preparations must be individually prepared, as they are not obtainable in drug or apothecary stores. Such alchemical herbal preparations are taken until relief from the ailment is noticed, which the herb in question is supposed to help cure. If for any reason the herbal elixir does not cure the ailment, or at least bring relief from pain, then it is evident that a state of disorder prevails in which herbal preparations do not have sufficiently strong enough vibrations to eliminate the disorder and restore a harmonious balance. In such a case, it would be necessary to use the next highest medicine, but which is to found outside the herbal realm.

It is unreasonable to expect an herbal elixir to bring about an immediate result in every case. The manifestation of any cure will depend upon the length of time the ailment has been present and the state of its progress in the disruption of organic functions. Very important, also, is the state of mind of the patient. While an herbal elixir is not a cure-all, it is definitely of greater curative potency than the tincture and salts taken separately. Through Alchemy that which has been violated is restored, and nature is helped to reach the state of perfection which is the predestined goal for all its manifestations. A sick body is not a normal or perfect state. However, to force a cure is just as contrary to nature as contracting an illness. Alchemy provides a perfect medium through which that state of perfection or harmonious balance can be gained again. Nature requires a certain period of time for the production of her specimen. This is also true of the alchemist in his laboratory, but here the time intervals are relatively shorter. Therefore, the time required to *cure an ailment and not just to bring about a temporary relief from pain* depends upon the seriousness of the individual conditions. A recent illness which has been contracted over a short period of time will yield more quickly to our alchemical preparations than one which has developed into a chronic state. However, fresh air, normal physical

exercise, proper food, adequate clothing, as well as satisfactory sanitary and working conditions are equally essential for curative purposes.

Beginning spagyric practitioners inevitably wonder why it is necessary to deal with herbal Alchemy when it is well known to all that medications prepared from herbs are less potent than those prepared from minerals and metals. However, it is essential that alchemists-to-be understand that nature's laws are unfolded only gradually. That which has been learned in working with the herbal process can be applied later to the work with metals. But the higher arcanum should not be attempted until the herbal process has been mastered. There is much that must be learned which only personal experience in the laboratory and the wisdom of the Sage and Adepts can help to unfold. Eventually, time alone will tell.

Although the process for obtaining alchemical herbal elixirs, as presented here, appears to be extremely simple, much experience is still necessary before the first correct results greet the beginning alchemist's eyes. Even then, the very small amount of the alchemical preparation which is finally produced may seem so insignificant to the beginner that he may then be filled with doubts and wonder if all the work and trouble was really worthwhile. It is only after the first manifestation reveals itself, after the first cure becomes obvious beyond a doubt that an inner conviction begins to grow that there is more to be found in the realm of Alchemy than meets the eye at first glance.

Before administering any alchemical medication to animals or sick individuals, a test should be performed to determine if the medicine has been properly prepared. This is done by placing a small amount of the prepared herbal substance on a thin sheet of heater copper. If the medication melts like wax and does not give off any smoke, and then solidifies when cold again, it is an indication that the medication has been prepared correctly and that it is ready for use. The correct dosage differs in almost every case, but if administered in small does there cannot be harm in any case. The strength of the alchemical medication would also be a factor in determining the proper dosage to administer. Alchemical herbal medications are essence and salt in their purest form, as all irrelevant and extraneous matter has been removed during the process of calcination. That which is essential cannot be destroyed by fire, but is only purified and brought to its preordained state. Properly prepared herbal medications in correct doses, because of their raised vibrations, help to right bodily disorders. This vital life force plus its purified salt, or mineral substance, are the curative agents.

That the alchemical system works differently and more effectively than others is illustrated by the following incident. The writer knows from personal experience of the case of a baby suffering from severe colic. Constant medical attention from an allopathic physical and surgeon brought no relief. However, after administering an alchemical preparation made from the flowers of camomile, the child was cured within a few hours and remained so with no recurrence of the ailment. Critics may object by answering that if proper care had been given to the child from the time the disturbance first began to appear, the original medical attention would also have helped. In this case, though, it must be pointed out that all the medical advice was very painstakingly followed in every detail, and the herbal preparation was accepted only as a last resort in order that the mother and the child might have some sleep after several frantic, sleepless nights. This case is mentioned here only to demonstrate the harmless nature of these preparations to the human body, even to infants, when properly administered. It is highly recommended that the medical profession, also make it its study to discover the truth about Alchemy.

If one has had insufficient schooling or is not endowed with a profound desire to study the human anatomy and its related physical functionings, he would hardly find it worthwhile to experiment in herbal Alchemy, let alone to attempt to cure when his knowledge is insufficient because of the long study and tedious work by which this knowledge can only be acquired.

May Bacon's statement close this chapter as it began it: "In all our investigations of nature we must observe what quantity or dose of the body is requisite for a given effect; and must guard ourselves from estimating it at too much or too little."

## CHAPTER 5

**HERBS AND STARS**

How are herbs related to the stars? Can such a thing be true? Scientists will shake their heads in disgust. “Nonsense. Superstition. Quack”, they will answer. And why not? How could scientists accept the possibility of something when at the same time they did not consider it worthy of their efforts to investigate the subject? Or perhaps they might deem it beneath their dignity to “dabble with silly superstitions.” The writer may seem rash in his judgement concerning the attitude science has shown toward this branch of research, but experience has revealed that there is a connection between herbs and the heavenly bodies that adorn the firmament. Science must disprove this, if it can. Observation has also revealed that certain countries are influenced by particular planets, as astrology has long declared. Again, certain plants are found only in certain places. As soon as these plants are transplanted into soil foreign to their nature, they lose all or some of their curative virtues.

In plant and mineral life, organic and inorganic minerals exist as separate groups. In this plant and mineral life, all growth gives evidence of an unseen but measurable change in proportion to its structure. What causes this growth? Inorganic minerals are taken up into plant life and changed into organic minerals. What brings this change about? Radium is able to cause a decay of tissues. Is it radium as substance unseen but measurable emanation from a mysterious force from within? Science asks us to believe that the structure of the radium atom is like a cosmos in miniature. A solar system in Microcosmos. A layman who is unable to verify scientific theories must either believe or not believe them. That one has accepted as natural law what science has propounded should not make it any more difficult to believe that the Macrocosmos has the same influence both on the surface as well as below the surface (tissue) of the earth. Is this so unreasonable? Does not the old hermetic axiom, “As above so below, as below so above,” again have its counterpart here?

Perhaps science someday will take the time to investigate in these uncharted areas and experiment on a far broader base than has been the case so far. While it is true that some scientists have accomplished remarkable results working in these areas, they have been few and have been shunned by their colleagues. They attempted to venture into the unknown, the ridiculed spheres, and have been termed mystics, heretics, and stray sheep from the herd. All this they were but had they not left the beaten path and ventured to explore in other directions, their labor never would have produced results of alchemical importance.

The following is a condensed tabulation<sup>13</sup> of herbs listed according to the planetary influence which affects each of them, as claimed by ancient tradition. In order that this list be of benefit, each student must discover individually how true these planetary attributions are for these various herbs. It would seem that even a deeper study is necessary in order to discover the underlying causes of the different ways in which the medicinal virtues operate. Many, however, who have given some thought to this subject will find a significant clue.

**SUN**

angelica	lovage
ashtree	marigold
bay tree	pimpernel
burnet	rosemary
butterbur	rue
camomile	saffron
celandine	St. John's wort
small centaury	St. Peter's wort
eyebright	sundew
juniper	tormentil

<sup>13</sup> See appendix for further details.

turnsole  
heart-trefoil

**MOON**

adder's tongue  
arrach  
brankursine  
colewort  
water caltrop  
chickweed  
clary  
cleavers  
coralwort  
water cress  
cucumber  
duckmeat  
fleur de lys (or water flag)  
fluellein  
cuckoo-flower

**MERCURY**

bitter-sweet  
calamint  
wild carrot  
caraway  
dill  
elecampane  
fern  
fennel  
germander  
hazelnut  
horehound  
houndstongue  
lavender  
lily of the valley  
liquorice  
wall rue (or white maiden-hair)

**VENUS**

alkanet  
alehoof or ground ivy  
artichoke  
black or common alder tree  
wild arrach  
archangel bean  
bishop's weed  
bramble  
blites  
bugle  
burdock  
cherry tree  
earth chestnuts  
chickpease  
columbine  
coltsfoot

vine viper's bugloss  
walnut tree

lettuce  
water-lily  
white lily  
loosestrife  
moonwort  
mouse-ear  
orpine  
pellitory of Spain  
rattle-grass  
saxifrage  
stonecrop  
pearl-trefoil  
wallflower  
willow tree

golden maiden-hair  
marjoram  
mulberry tree  
nailwort  
oats  
parsley  
parsnip  
pellitory of the wall  
sauce-alone (garlic cress)  
savory  
scabius  
smallage  
southernwood  
honeysuckle  
valerian

cudweed  
cowslip  
crab's claw  
crosswort  
daisy  
devil's bit  
eringo  
featherfew  
dropwort  
figwort  
foxglove  
golden rod  
gromel  
gooseberry  
goundsel  
herb-robert

true-love  
 kidneywort  
 ladies' mantle  
 marshmallow  
 french mercury  
 dog mercury  
 mint  
 moneywort  
 motherwort  
 mugwort  
 nep or catmint  
 orchis  
 parsley piert  
 parsnip  
 pennyroyal  
 pear tree  
 periwinkle  
 plantain  
 plum tree  
 poppy

**MARS**

all-heal  
 prunella vulgaris  
 barberry  
 basil  
 briony  
 benedictus  
 cardines  
 crowfoot  
 dovesfoot  
 flax-weed  
 burze bush  
 garlic  
 gentian  
 hawthorn

**JUPITER**

agrimony  
 alexander  
 wild parsley  
 asparagus  
 balm  
 white beet  
 bilberry  
 borage  
 chervil  
 chestnut tree  
 cinque foil  
 costmary  
 dandelion  
 dock  
 dog's grass

purslane  
 primrose  
 privet  
 queen of the meadows  
 ragwort  
 rye  
 woodsage  
 sanicle  
 self-heal  
 soapwort  
 sorrel  
 sow-thistle  
 spignel  
 strawberry  
 tansey  
 teasel  
 vervain  
 wheat  
 yarrow

hedge-hyssop  
 hop  
 madder  
 master-wort  
 nettle  
 onion  
 pepperwort  
 ground pine  
 horse radish  
 rhubarb  
 savine  
 star thistle  
 tobacco  
 wormwood

endive  
 fig tree  
 clove-gilliflowers  
 hart's tongue  
 hyssop  
 house-leek  
 livewort  
 lungwort  
 maple tree  
 melilot  
 oak tree  
 roses  
 sage samphire  
 scurvy-grass  
 lady's thistle

**SATURN**

amaranthus	holly
barley	ivy
corn	knapweed
red beet	knotgrass
beech tree	medlar tree
bifoil	mosses
bird's-foot	mullein
blue bottle	nightshade
buck's horn plantain	polypody of the oak
comfrey	poplar tree
sciatica-cress	quince tree
darnel	service tree
dodder	shepherd's purse
elm tree	spleen-wort
water-fern	tamarisk tree
fleawort	melancholy thistle
flux weed	black thorn
fumitory	thorough wax
gladwin	tutsan
goutwort	woad
heart's ease	Solomon's seal
hawkweed	Saracen's consound
hemlock	willow herb
henbane	winter green
black hellebore	yew tree
horsetail	

In concluding this condensed table of herbs and corresponding planetary influences, it will be interesting to add a few further observations. These can be corroborated by those who wish to do so and who may then arrive at their own personal conclusions.

Is there anyone capable of answering why the chickweed flowers are open and upright from nine in the morning until noon? However, if it rains they remain closed and after the rain they become pendent. The "Four-O-Clock" opens its flower at about four in the afternoon. The dandelion (a true sundial) opens at seven in the morning and closes at five in the afternoon. The pimpernel (the poor man's weatherglass) closes its tiny flowers long before it rains or night draws near. The purple sandworth flower expands only when the sun shines. If the trefoil contracts its leaves, thunder and heavy rains can be expected. Many similar examples could be cited. What causes such variance in behavior? All have their roots in the ground and draw their nourishment from the soil and the air. Yet their behavior is remarkably different. Is it so unreasonable to assume that they, as well as tiny atoms, are governed according to similar laws?

There is no point in going further into this matter here as sufficient material can be found in the following pages to help in the assimilation of the spiritual essence for further transmutation. However, a subject related to the planetary influences on plants and herbs does deserve attention. This involves the planetary influences on the various parts of the human body. The zodiac is represented as ruler of the body whose parts are distributed throughout the twelve houses. These, in turn, are ruled by certain planets. A connecting link, therefore, can easily be determined with a minimum of ingenuity by the spagyric student.

The following tabulation, according to Paracelsus, of organs of the body and the respective planets that rule them will be of assistance for further analysis:

The Sun rules the heart.

The Moon rules the brain.  
 Venus rules the veins.  
 Saturn rules the spleen.  
 Mercury rules the liver.<sup>14</sup>  
 Jupiter rules the lungs (chest).  
 Mars rules the gall.

Since the writings of this great sage, Paracelsus, are of such importance, it is almost essential that students of alchemical literature give his works very careful study.

Paracelsus is in agreement with previous teachers in regard to the fact that the stars influence all growing things. These growing things, then, correspond exactly to the number of influences and stars. But as some trees produce pears and other trees apples, so some stars yield rain, other snow, hail, etc. Thus, in this fashion what falls from heaven is generated.

Paracelsus speaks of the hot and cold nature of ailments and also of remedies falling under these two classifications.<sup>15</sup> In such cases the homeopathic principle of “*similia similibus curantur*” – like cures like – can be employed. This principle perhaps can best be illustrated a frozen egg and placing it in cold water. The frost will be drawn out by the cold and the egg will be wholesome again. Since like repels like in physical phenomena, the homeopathic approach of curing, say, arsenic poisoning, is to use the same substance, namely, arsenic. Thus, if a physiological dose of arsenic will bring about arsenic poisoning, the homeopathic practitioner will use this same substance, arsenic, in a most minute or highly triturated form to effect a cure. Here the high trituration causes the arsenic particles to become so small that they can no longer be perceived. Because of the high trituration, the vibratory rate is greatly increased and achieves high potency in expelling the physiological dose of arsenic. Therefore, in homeopathy the identical substance is used to repel an illness which substance in a physiological dose caused the illness in the first place. Perhaps the phrase, “curative dose,” is inadequate, but it is being used to convey the process. However, in using highly triturated homeopathic agents, one cannot really speak of a dose since the curative substance is so inconceivable small – 1:1000,000,000 and even smaller.<sup>16</sup>

Homeopathy is nearer to Alchemy than other therapies, but is still far from producing alchemical actions, inasmuch as it does not set free the quintessence which is so essential as a *healing agent*. Since Homeopathy, as taught by Hahnemann, is only a segment of Paracelsian therapeutics and is comparatively little used, what can one expect as to the acceptance of Herbal Alchemy?

Alchemically a cure is obtained by using the opposing forces of negative against positive. An ailment presents the negative aspect while curative agents represent positive forces. Manifestations occur where these opposite forces meet. The object of alchemical remedies is to supplement the lacking or deficient positive forces in the human body which represents the negative part in contradistinction to the positive vital life force (which in Sanskrit is called “prana”).<sup>17</sup> This vital life force, prana, or

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<sup>14</sup> Culpeper states that Jupiter rules the liver and Mercury the lungs.

<sup>15</sup> Black pepper (*piper niger*), mustard (*sinapis*), nutmeg (*nux moshata*) for example, are medicaments of a hot nature. Those herbs of the mentha (mint) family are medicaments of a cold nature.

<sup>16</sup> Prof. Liebig in his chemical letters said: “The smaller the particles of a prescribed medicine the less physical resistance they met in their diffusion in the tissue.”

<sup>17</sup> Dr. Schuessler’s system of biochemistry prescribes the 12 tissue remedies to build up the missing minerals in the blood. Homeopathy differs from biochemistry, the first curing like with like and biochemistry replenishing or building up lacking minerals in the blood. Both homeopathy and biochemistry have a closer relationship with alchemical therapeutics than the administering of physiological doses according to the allopathic system. However, even allopathic physicians are attenuating their doses now in what is known as serum therapy. This is only an indication of a further step by modern medicine to approach nearer to the only perfect natural system of healing which is to be found in Alchemy.

quintessence can only be separated through Alchemy. It is this difference, the separation of the quintessence, that sets Alchemy on a higher level above all other systems of therapeutics.

If it is true, as has been claimed, that the heavenly bodies radiate an unseen power that has been observed to manifest differently among the various specimens of the herbal kingdom, only an investigation by sincere and unprejudiced students is needed to substantiate these observations.

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If any of Dr. Schuessler's tissue remedies, such as calcium, silica, potassium, etc. were to be separated into its three essentials (according to alchemical practice), namely, sulphur, salt, and mercury, and then coagulated again, it is not difficult to imagine the potential remedies that could be obtained in this fashion. Such remedies would truly replenish and build up the body due to the raised vibrations of these remedies. This holds true also of any of the homeopathic preparations, which is to say their basic substance before trituration with lactose (milk sugar) or spirits of wine. However, neither system frees the quintessence, the most important matter in alchemical preparations.