

FIVE

OUR SPAGIRIC PREPARATION AND TRADITIONAL TEACHING

Our preparation is produced by following the philosophic process which deals with the 'first part' of the Great Work as described in traditional alchemy.

The phenomenon of corruption has the following effect on the matter: it brings about the separation of mixtures, allowing the life forces to become fixed in the salts formed from incineration. In this way the life forces are made assimilable by the human body, since all the elements involved in the preparation are by nature vegetable.

What name should be given to this preparation?

Ancient texts dealing with this subject speak of *potable gold*, beloved of Paracelsus and his precursors and supposedly endowed with the power of curing all ills and increasing life-span. But however much this potable gold has been spoken of, no experimenter with an interest in alchemy has yet been able to prepare it.

Other authors mention *vegetable gold*, *flowers of gold*, or *quintessence*, again without details as to how one might set about preparing them. When I began my work, I thought I would be concerned with potable gold, but in the

strict sense of the term this opinion had soon to be abandoned, since spectrum analysis showed no trace of gold in my preparation. The experiment, however, is explicit: if, after the phase of incineration, I take some virgin powder and make a coction of it in a bath of dew, there is no manifestation of gold colour, even after many hours of coction. The water, once deposited, adopts a greenish tinge, and is alkaline in nature, with a pH of between 11 and 12. If the experiment is then repeated, but with the addition of a few grammes of powdered gold, when the mixture is put into a bath of dew the liquid takes on a gold colour after a few hours of coction.

It must therefore be admitted that a change takes place between the two experiments, if only a colour change. I have put the matter to various scientists but they can give me no explanation of the phenomenon. Other people, imbued with theosophic or anthroposophic conceptions, have assured me that this was perfectly normal, that the gold was transported straightway from the physical to the etheric plane and indeed that this is the origin of the gold's therapeutic properties. It must be stressed, they say, that certain new illnesses which seem impervious to modern medical treatment in fact have their source in the etheric body. Therefore, it is probable that this gold-based alchemical medicine has positive effects, since the preparation transfers the specific medicine to the etheric level. However, I must say that, satisfying as they are, these thoughts by no means express the certainty that I feel deep within me. I cannot forget what the alchemists, especially Raymond Lully, affirm—that as well as a body, gold has a *soul*. Further, they acknowledge that the soul of gold is its colour and that it is this which contains all the therapeutic properties of the metal. The colour of the gold passes into my liquor, even if chemical analysis and spectrum examination reveal no bodily trace of the metal. It is my vegetabilisation of the gold which extracts the soul from it and makes it assimilable.

I personally think that this preparation really is what spagirists call *vegetable gold* or *vegetabilised gold*. The energy which makes possible on the one hand the action of the dissolving powders on the metallic gold, and on the other the regeneration of the used powder, comes from vegetable matter. By the same token, the preparation may safely be taken, a few drops at a time. It will be assimilated easily for, like the vegetables at its source, it contains nothing toxic.

From my own point of view, the way in which I prepared the peat and the obstination with which I sought to capture the forces of physical and etheric life offer an analogous explanation for the existence of the above properties. When I had completed my preparation, the spiritual Guides who helped me breathed several times in the finely attuned ear of my collaborator. They spoke the word 'exoephiline'. This word, it was stressed, is compounded of *exoe*, meaning kernel or nucleus and *philline*, meaning water. My preparation could therefore be considered as nucleus medicine and as such suitable for the treatment of all illnesses of cells, particularly of the blood.

Beyond this, it does not matter whether it be potable, vegetable or vegetabilised gold or even exoephiline. What does matter is to establish the exact properties which the preparation possesses. To do this, I shall once more turn to astrology and to the laws of analogy.

How the Adept's birth chart determines the way in which the Preparation shall be used

If someone spends twenty years bringing a chosen creation into existence, that creation will undoubtedly possess the characteristics of the creator's astrological chart. To arrive at a true understanding of the spagiric preparation, one must interpret the alchemist's horoscope. Let us return to my birth chart (fig. 1).

Following what has been said earlier about the predominant influence of Saturn, here situated in the centre of the sky between 9 and 10 degrees of Pisces, one is tempted to say that Saturn, in contact with the spiritual at the top of the sky and also in harmony with the female collaborator and spiritual guide, governs the preparation.

From this it would seem at first sight that it would be what the ancients called an *Extract of Saturn* or *Spirit of Saturn*. Notice in passing that this latter is not the same as the common *spirit of salt*—nitric acid—used by chemists for material purposes. Though the Spirit of Saturn attacks pure metals, it does so on a level higher than the physical.

Spirit of Saturn, in sum, is the liquor drawn from the coction, possessing no trace of metallic gold.

In conformity with its nature, the Spirit of Saturn works slowly. Its action is penetrating and activating. The presence of Saturn in Pisces indicates long-term rather than spectacular results.

Uranus is in the eighth house of Saturn and since the former star is master of Aquarius, Saturn receives the necessary external contribution of etheric force to support its work. In addition, Saturn is in trine with the moon and Neptune. These planets, placed in the ascendant, confirm the slow, penetrating nature of the action. Compare the process of establishing the optimum dose through drop by drop addition. The Spirit of Saturn is indeed administered as follows: several drops are taken in half a glass of water, preferably on waking. In this way Saturn operates through the trine between it and the moon. Its action is comparable to that of water which, falling drop by drop on a certain stone, eventually hollows out the latter. The action is slow and continuous and the body never reaches tolerance. Neptune, master of Pisces, in which Saturn is found, is ruled by the moon which, situated in Cancer, is in its favourite position and has at its disposal this same Neptune, which is also in Cancer. Additionally, the sign of Cancer, home of the moon and of Neptune, has Saturn,

which is in Pisces, at its disposal. In the chain of successive combinations, it can be said that the moon has available to it all the elements, and these are particularly effective since the moon, at 14 degrees of Cancer, is in conjunction with the fixed star Sirius, the most important in the sky.

Each drop of the preparation, symbolised by the moon, is therefore highly effective and the fact of adding several specks of gold to the coction defines the transportation taking place in the combination. This is due to the square which the moon makes with the sun in Aries, for the gold is symbolised by the sun. The gold is thus transported or transmuted to a totally different level. The Spirit of Saturn is ennobled on contract with the metallic gold and becomes the gold panacea with which we are concerned.

The square of Saturn on Jupiter 'exiled' in Gemini, confirms in addition that we have here an *illegal medicine*, i.e., one which does not form part of the official corpus, and whose slow action will gain recognition only with time.

There are further analogous observations: Saturn rules time but also old age; the use of drops of the Spirit of Saturn in combination with gold can contribute to the regeneration of tissue worn by time and the prolongation of life. Consistent use of the liquor should therefore considerably extend the life span. It should be made clear that its use is reserved for those who identify with the spirit of Saturn. It is not for those who think that, by following a certain course of treatment, they will be enabled to go on leading a disorganised life. In this instance a medicine extracted from the Spirit of Jupiter is indicated.

In this horoscope, nearly all the planets are to be found in spring signs, between Saturn in Pisces and the moon in Cancer. It is at this time of year, therefore, that the alchemist will go in search of his natural raw materials.

These observations are clear evidence of a link between the alchemist's birth chart and the method he must adopt in making and in using his elixirs.

The Tradition represents the great work as consisting of Three Parts; here we are concerned only with the First

It goes without saying that I put my liquor through lengthy tests at the hands of qualified doctors in order to judge its therapeutic powers. I shall return to this point, but it now seems necessary to me to explain how this preparation was first conceived of and then brought into being. To do this, I must choose between many different modes of expression, always with the aim of being understood by contemporary minds. To use alchemical terminology seems to be just as risky as using modern terms. Instead, I prefer to use analogies concerned with observation of the natural world, notwithstanding my long acquaintance with the language of alchemy. In fact, to make clear my ideas I shall in any case deal briefly with the subject, showing how the hermetic philosophers of the Middle Ages themselves reasoned about these problems and arrived at an understanding of their work.

To make any advances at all in this field, one must forget all one has learnt or thought to have learnt in books and rebuild one's culture by direct experience based simultaneously on understanding of the great book of nature and on personal study of the traditional sciences. In this way, observation goes hand in hand with study. As far as the latter is concerned, one soon comes to understand that adherence to the dicta of the Tradition, much more than attempts at innovations, is called for. The Tradition is based on perfectly valid data which is found at the source both of astrology and the Quabalah. Both of these should be studied. Like the ancients, one must conceive of the universe as a function of the correspondences between macrocosm and microcosm. One should maintain an ardent and unreserved faith in the Divine, meditate, isolate and purify oneself, live an exemplary life and shun the impure contacts and temptations which turn a neo-

phyte away from the truth. This preparation takes years. Truth must be separated from falsehood and superstition avoided. Above all, it is essential to have a thorough understanding of the relationship between the various combinations in nature, whether binary, tertiary or quaternary. Finally, one must know of the correspondences between the planets, nature and man. An example is the link between various planets and various organs of the body.

Paracelsus, father of spagiric medicine, teaches that correspondence exists between the sun and the heart, the moon and the stomach, Mercury and the nervous system, Venus and the glands, Jupiter and the liver and Saturn and the bones. Working on these links, the ancients successfully treated specific organs with medicines composed of metals and other minerals, linked by the intermediary of the planets. This was quite separate from the preparation we are primarily concerned with here. The sun, for instance, corresponds to the heart and to gold.

The metallic counterparts of the other planets are as follows:

The moon and silver; Mercury and mercury; Venus and copper; Mars and iron; Jupiter and tin; Saturn and lead. In the same way, the ancients considered the Earth to be linked to antimony. They produced many preparations from antimony which were designed to eliminate general weakness due to excessive earth influence.

The influences must further be arranged in some sort of hierarchy, so that it may be seen on what level each operates. Thus preparations produced at the seven-fold level operate on a lower plane than elixirs hermetically prepared according to the processes of the Great Alchemical Work. Use of these elixirs in association with the specific medicine for a given organ will endow the medicine with a bonus of energy, allowing it to work more effectively. Doctors versed in these matters often produce associations with felicitous results. The ancient doctrine '*similia similibus curantur*' (like cures like) has, it should be

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Our Spagiric Preparation and Traditional Teaching

that it is no way dangerous and can be prescribed for as long a period of time as desired. In cases of long standing illness, its effects are slow but progressive and its use can be combined happily with that of specific remedies. Having said this, a question arises from the affirmations of Paracelsus. Is our process not susceptible to producing even more subtle liquors by further coction, in a new tube and with the addition of new gold? I have tried this. During the rhythmic movement produced in the new coction, it might be thought that the liquor is becoming further impregnated by the gold and that its effectiveness will reach to even higher levels, acting, for example on the brain and spinal cord. However, the conclusion reached by doctors using our preparation is that tinctures of a highly metallic nature are less valuable than those vegetabilised from the first degree. It would not appear advisable to follow the path of increasing metallisation.

The chief secret of this preparation is in the transmutation which takes place partly by the separating out of the vital forces of the gold and partly by their reintroduction into the vegetable solvent. This renders them assimilable by the human body.

In general, the human body can digest vegetable but not mineral substances. This is the reason for vegetabilising the quintessence of metals, so producing elixirs which meet therapeutic requirements.

According to Paracelsus and a whole body of other ancient authors, there is a hierarchy of power and importance in the range of elixirs prepared by spagirists. However, none of them has left understandable details of his preparations. Rosicrucians, supposed to be the last possessors of this knowledge, have never transmitted any of it to the uninitiated. Study of good alchemical texts, though, does reveal that there are two degrees of universal medicine.

Medicine of the first order is what we have reconstituted. It is drawn from the *blood of the green lion*. The

energy-providing constituents of this medicine come from grass, plants and dew gathered in the fields—from *nature's green table*. It is *vegetabilised gold of the first order*, also called *exoephilline*.

Medicine of the second order becomes effective much more quickly and spectacularly. This is doubtless because regeneration takes place from ten to a hundred times more quickly. It is this that the ancients called the *Great Elixir, potable gold, the superior medicine*. This is drawn from the *blood of the red lion* and in this case metallic elements come much more into play. I shall mention this again later.

It is further said that the medicine of the first order attacks the first crown of gold while that of the second attacks the second crown. It should be added that this in no way excludes the possibility of a medicine of the third order with its source in the alchemist's powder of projection, attacking the third and last crown of gold. Only very few texts make mention of this; in general there is absolute silence about the matter.

It is probable that people of the great Egyptian civilisation knew of these different orders and applied them to different classes in society. In this way the élites were assured of a longer life, perfect health, and a body which was preserved after death. In the present work, concerned chiefly with medicine of the first order, we will deal with various spagiric preparations which have been used in curing the classic illnesses. Tradition asserts that each one of these, and also each organ of the body, is under the sway of one particular planet. The fact that the metallic and vegetable elements making up the medicines are also ruled by this or that planet shows the process of analogy at work.

One thing should be made clear at this point. The First Matter chosen for our work, work concerned with preparing the initial bases of spagiric medicine, does not correspond exactly with that used by the ancient alchemists in the preparation of the Philosopher's Stone.

This latter, along with the powder of projection, had the property of transmuting base metals into gold. It should be made clear that the 'elements' drawn from nature vary to some little degree. At times, other substances must be added to them. These, too, are impregnated with their quintessences. However these questions do not really concern us here and we are not qualified to discuss them.

There is a connection between our work and the Great Work of Alchemy. Our preparation has an exact correspondence with the 'first part of the philosophy'. All three parts of the philosophy are involved in the completion of the Great Work. In addition, the preparation of the First Matter, the composition of the Philosopher's Peat and the gradual preparation of the Leaven leading to the stage of Initial Perfection are analogous to the processes involved in the Great Work. This is because of the corruption and incineration which takes place at each stage.

Our task is limited by circumstances. Humanity is threatened with total destruction by atomic radiation, whether as the result of war, or through progressive accumulation of dangerous atomic waste. It is our duty to lay the foundations of a medicine which, in further stages of development, will be capable of fighting the action of disintegration of atoms in living cells. There is nothing in the world to encourage greater production of gold than is achieved by current means. A greater or lesser amount of gold could make no contribution to the happiness of mankind, nor could it relieve suffering. We may therefore be excused if we do not seek those incommunicable secrets of the alchemists concerned with obtaining gold.

We are not concerned, either, with producing the Great Medicine in large-scale, industrial quantities. The modern methods of mass production would soon render it useless, by virtue of the extreme fragility of the solvent powders.

Those who set out to discover the First Matter as one might go in search of a reef of gold, then subject it to ultimate outrage in the laboratory, will never find the key

to the Great Work. They hope to find the four elements of nature amongst material elements, in gas, fire, minerals and liquids which are, to a greater or lesser degree, corrosive. In fact the four are never found outside the element earth. Such people will never find the means of capturing the universal fluid which surrounds them, which they breathe yet do not retain. They are even less able to condense this so as to produce the energy source which they require. They will be involved in a purely material laboratory experiment, more or less dangerous, more or less profitable and ultimately entirely without success. These are the people whom the adepts of long ago called *puffers*, doubtless because they were used by them only to operate the bellows found in each alchemical laboratory.

It goes without saying that knowledge of chemical processes is not enough. One must fit in with the traditional teaching. Now that we have achieved the medicine of the first order, we are convinced, on reflection, that it could have been done more quickly and more easily. Such reflection is valueless, though, for all our trials and experiments formed part of the obligatory testing which has to be undergone. In life, and especially in life's essential works, there is no wasted moment. Everything contributes to the spiritual uplift which must accompany the material process. How many have destroyed themselves, or have gone without reaching the goal they had set themselves, because they possessed neither the burning faith nor the purity which allow one to face the time of testing?

Various other references to Alchemy and the Spagiric Art

However far back in time one goes, one finds that men interested in natural sciences have disguised them from the profane by calling them 'Occult Sciences'. Alchemy and astrology seem jointly to have occupied the place of honour in this respect. Do not forget that, without astro-

logy, it would be impossible to discuss alchemy and indeed impossible to use it. It could be said that in the past, astrology bore the same relationship to alchemy as mathematics does to chemistry today. One must go back to the Middle Ages to get a true idea of the importance alchemy once possessed. Princes, Popes and learned men—Bacon, Lully and Arnaud de Villeneuve amongst others—were faithful craftsmen and defenders of the traditional sciences. There is reason to believe that alchemy was both known and practised by wise men in ancient Egypt. Nevertheless, it was by the Arabs that the science was transmitted to the West. The transmission, though, took place at a time when true teaching was being replaced by a kind of decadence. It follows that those texts written at the end of the oral tradition, when transmission of the teaching no longer took account of the moral and spiritual qualities previously demanded of aspirants, contain deformations of the truth. They are written in an attitude of mind far removed from that presiding over the initial real knowledge.

This is why, in the Middle Ages, charlatans swarmed around the respectable, traditionally minded scholars. These imitators claimed to be mages, astrologers and alchemists. They played on the credulity of their fellow men, while their supposed knowledge sowed doubt and confusion in the minds of many. This state of affairs lasted until the birth of modern civilisation produced a very unflattering attitude towards astrology and alchemy, one which was not only negative but tinged with irony and scorn. The discovery of the first laws of modern physics and chemistry then completely blotted out the past and radically modified the entire spirit of research after natural laws, dissociating it entirely from a spiritual concern.

Truth, though, has obviously escaped somehow. In a civilisation which has brought him control over matter, man gives little indication of having captured happiness. He is always looking for something else; this curiosity, or perhaps will-to-power, threatens to drag him to his

destruction. Given this, it should not be surprising if, increasingly, certain unsatisfied individuals are looking afresh at the past and asking questions about their ancestors' way of life and way of thinking. Quite apart from reflex action to escape from a present which is found to be deceptive or unbearable, there is a positive aspect to the new infatuation with the so-called occult sciences. In spite of the confusion which is still rife, what we are witnessing is a rebirth of modes of knowing which antiquity held in the highest esteem. In particular, isolated researchers are brooding over the ancient alchemist's athenors, hoping thereby to recover their lost secrets.

It is obvious that nuclear chemistry, by virtue of the perspectives it opens up on transmutations, rejoins and even surpasses the conceptions of the old alchemists. But do not be mistaken: the intentions of the two are quite different, even diametrically opposed. Nuclear science liberates energy whilst destroying the atomic structure. Alchemy, on the other hand, utilises this energy to make the matter evolve, so that it and the person concerned in the operation both tend towards a greater degree of perfection. It is useless to make pronouncements about this difference. Our present interest in nuclear problems is confined to areas where they impinge on the search for a new medicine and where alchemy itself is involved in that search.

According to Raymond Lully, one of the greatest adepts of the Middle Ages, alchemy is both an art and a science. It entails a profound philosophy, a natural synthesis based on the theory of the evolution of nature. It extends into all spheres of life. The word *alchemy* is derived from the Egyptian word *Keme* meaning 'science of the Black Earth'. The reader will grasp the importance of this if he casts his mind back to the slow and progressive corruption of the First Matter, all of which must reach the stage of absolute blackness. Another breakdown of the word alchemy is as follows: 'Al-Chemy'. 'Al' or 'El' is Arabic for before. Thus alchemy is a science which comes before

chemistry and indeed provides it with a wider frame of reference. When alchemy is concerned solely with medical research, it is often qualified by adepts as *spagiric*. This latter word can be broken down into '*spao*' meaning 'separated from' and '*ageiro*' meaning 'gathered together'. The great spagiric art does consist in separating out the life forces, the vital fluid, the energies of earthly substances both vegetable and mineral, and then in reconstituting them in man. Spagiric alchemy, founded on observation of nature and of man, has roots in the Quabalah, in astrology and in the basic rules of alchemy. This type of medicine enjoyed great attention in the past, but for traces of its meaning we must turn to Paracelsus. In his *Paramirum* lib. 1, Cap. III, he says: 'Disce ergo Alchimian quae alias Spagirie dicitur', meaning that the spagiric art and alchemy are practically synonymous. However, that which is alchemical is not necessarily spagiric, though what is spagiric is necessarily alchemical. The essential process of the spagiric art can be summarised as follows: *solve et coagula*, also expressed in slightly different form: *Fac fixum volatile et volatile fixum*. The whole process is only brought about by lengthy preparations whose secret has been lost until the present day.

F. Jollivet-Castelot, in his book *Spagiric Medicine* (page III of the preface) indicates that to extract the real properties of a body, one must act spagirically. By this he means separating the heavy from the subtle and the pure from the impure: 'To discover and extract the essence of simple substances whose first matter is composed of three things, one has firstly to decompose them, corrupt them and deprive them totally of the form with which nature has clothed them. One then separates the elements, sets them in order and reforms them into a more perfect body.'

It is easy to see that the *volatile* is the essence of life, the non-material energy, while the *fixed* is simply what remains at the end of corruption, which incineration disperses to leave only ash. The volatile is the salt of this ash

and is in its turn fixed so as to become incorporated in the human matter. If the operational process is not exactly followed, the essence, which is extremely fluid, escapes and is lost, leaving the grosser elements which, in medical terms, are toxic. Whilst Paracelsus was one of the greatest spagirists of the sixteenth century, there were also many alchemical doctors. Very soon, though, hermetic medicine vanished into oblivion. Not until the twentieth century was renewed interest shown. The ancient texts dealings with these matters have now mostly been reissued and the number of seekers is increasing all the time. One of the best works is Brother Basil Valentine's *The Twelve Keys of Philosophy*. In it, he discusses at length a subject closely connected with the spagiric art. It is to be found in the fourth key, pertaining to mortification. Here are some quotations from this book which might move the reader to long meditation:

The pure is freed from the impure . . . Corruption of the one and generation of the other . . . All flesh born of the earth shall be destroyed anew and shall be returned to the earth. In as much as previously it was earth, new generation of the salt of the earth is produced by the breadth of celestial life.

So that the subtle may be separated from the dense (a term that often recurs in alchemy) the matter must firstly be brought to the height of its corruption; in the words of some, to the chaos of undifferentiated matter. At this point the most subtle elements which have given life to the matter, i.e. the salts which have allowed it to take on bodily shape, will free themselves from the inert material substances now reduced to ash. To confirm this, Basil Valentine says.

A salt is most effectively extracted by fire if the body in question has previously been brought to putrefaction . . .

the true, natural tartar to be dissolved is hidden in the ash. When this tartar has been dissolved, the mighty lock to the King's apartment may be unfastened.

To conclude this chapter, I would like to mention how the best of the modern authors, in their turn, reveal the nature of the First Matter. What they say can then be compared with my own pronouncements and in this way the reader will form a clearer picture of the subject.

In his important alchemical text, '*Les Deumeures Philosophales*', Fulcanelli gives a very clear explanation of the nature of the Secret Fire and of the First Matter. He develops particularly the relationship of hermetic symbolism and the Sacred Art. In the chapter devoted to the Salamander of Lisieux, he tries to explain the hidden significance of the animal. My attention was aroused especially by his reference to the birth of Jesus at the beginning of the sign of Capricorn: 'Is Jesus, lying on a straw-filled crib in the cave at Bethlehem, not the new Sun, bringing the Light of the World? Is he not God himself in perishable, fleshly form? He who said: "I am the Spirit, I am the Life, I have come to instil things with fire." This spiritual fire, given body and substance, is the Salt, the hidden breath . . .' Let us now return to our analogies: Jesus was indeed born under Capricorn. At this period the earth is enriched by the remains of vegetable matter which it has had time to rot during the autumn. It retains the salts which under Scorpio have been separated from the combustible elements. These latter are then destroyed by the fire of Sagittarius. The salts are now ready to nourish the sown and germinated seed, awaiting only the spring to give life to future vegetation. A little while further on Fulcanelli adds: 'Philalethes, speaking of the Secret Fire, says that it is found in the belly of Aries or Taurus.' We know that under this fire sign, which is in full activity in early spring, things take on a new lease of life and vegetation flourishes.

The adept is keenly aware of this and fixes his attention on the life forces rising from the roots of the plant. It is these which he must capture to achieve his work. We are not concerned with a purely material process, but with something living, something which unites matter and the spirit behind it.

In a more recent book, Alexander von Bernus' *'Alchemie et Medecine'*, the author provides some curious indications, though on an entirely different level, when he speaks of the *spiritus vini lulliani*, and of the ancient secret preparation concerned with the Spirit of Wine, and of the Alkaest. Von Bernus is very explicit when it comes to discussing the First Matter: 'The road is long which leads to the cave of the fire-spitting Dragon and the lair of the Red Lion.' A little later he adds: 'He who has not been chosen will find that his arrival has not advanced his progress in the least. It is truly impossible to discover it (the First Matter) without illumination which is the gift of God.'

It is for this reason so many authors have stated that the First Matter is neither animal, vegetable nor mineral, even though it is made up of the three kingdoms of nature. The vital fluid, of which the interior fire or spark of life is composed, exists in all three kingdoms. All hermetic philosophers agree that the *Materia Prima* must be prepared in such a way as to become the *Materia Secunda*, so that ultimately it may be in fit state to bring about what is expected of it. Some authors look for it in mineral substances, others in tartar, others again in the earth. The truth is that it is found everywhere and may be collected in abundance. The critical factor is to separate it from the vulgar bodies in which it is retained, so that ultimately it may be fixed in itself.

THE HERMETIC TREASURES OF THE ALCHEMISTS

The Emerald Tablet and the Mutus Liber provide all the essential alchemical knowledge in symbolic form.

It is not my intention to give an alchemy lesson. That lies outside the scope of this book. But I am going to comment on the basic principles contained in the alchemist's double Bible, the books to which he constantly refers, for they contain the essentials of his symbolic knowledge and the true formula of our elixir. I am speaking of the *Emerald Tablet* which contains the knowledge in written form and of the *Mutus Liber*, the 'silent book' which provides it in pictures.

The *Emerald Tablet* whose author is given as Hermes Trismegistus, sums up the whole of alchemy in a few sentences. It is not known exactly who Hermes Trismegistus was. He may be part of history or part of myth. His name may cover a group of three different people. It has also been suggested that one man, perhaps the greatest initiate of past ages, was inhabited by three superior guides. This often occurs in beings who carry out a predetermined role. Whatever the facts, the *Emerald Tablet* offers a resumé of the way in which the philosophic work develops and in so doing reveals the formula for the resulting universal medicine. Each phrase of the *Tablet* is therefore to be read and

meditated on, for it can awaken the whole process of the Great Work in the heart of the Seeker.

Turning to the *Mutus Liber*, we find a collection not of words but of pictures. Each operation of hermetic philosophy is illustrated separately and evocatively. This collection, whose source is difficult to trace, was published by Manget (in *Bibliotheca Chemica* Volume II) then reissued in the collection *Albums Esoteriques* by Paul Derain of Lyon. Alchemists rate it as one of the most precious gems available to them. The plates clearly reveal the nature of the First Matter, the way in which alchemists gathered spring dew and indeed everything which the neophyte requires to reach his goal. In a section devoted to experimental procedures, a succession of laboratory operations leading to completion of the Work is shown. The *Mutus Liber* is without any doubt the work most highly to be recommended to all seeking initiation into alchemy.

I want to express those ideas concerning the spagiric art which the *Emerald Tablet* and the *Mutus Liber* have inspired in me.

This of course, is only one way in which the vast subject matter of these two books may be expressed. My aim is simply to throw a little light on the first stages of the labours of Hermes and also to justify the various operations I have described.

However, before embarking on a commentary, I want to resume the essence of the *Emerald Tablet* for those not familiar with it. There have been many translations. Here is one:*

The text of the 'Emerald Tablet' of Hermes

'True it is, without falsehood, certain and most true.

That which is above is like to that which is below, and

* In the translation of R. Steele and Mrs. D. W. Singer, quoted by E. J. Holmyard in 'Alchemy' (Pelican).

The Hermetic Treasures of the Alchemists

that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.

And as all things were by the contemplation of one, so all things arose from this one thing by a single act of adaption.

The father thereof is the Sun the mother the Moon.

The Wind carried it in its womb, the Earth is the nurse thereof.

It is the father of all works of wonder throughout the whole world.

The power thereof is perfect.

It is to be cast on to Earth, it will separate the element of Earth from that of Fire, the Subtle from the gross.

With great sagacity it does ascend gently from Earth to Heaven.

Again it does descend to Earth and untieth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior.

Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee.

This thing is the strong fortitude of all strength, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.

Thus was this world created.

Hence will there be marvellous adaptations achieved, of which the manner is this.

For this reason, I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I hold three parts of the wisdom of the whole world.

That which I had to say about the operation of Sol is completed.'*

No adept has ever contested the worth of this text, nor of the plates in the *Mutus Liber*. To understand alchemy,

* In his French translation in *Anthologie de la poésie hermetique* Claude d' Yge makes the following points: 'We are told that the Tablet is green, the colour of spring dew, which is therefore called the Emerald of the Philosophers.' And 'The book is written as if the Emerald of the Philosophers, not Hermes, is speaking.'

superior power, the originator of the orders which the angels pass on, is a truly integrated whole. It is this being which grants the privileges of unity to individuals or to a united couple who are specially chosen. One should add that, even in days when alchemists joined together in secret societies, their aid to one another in no way implied the revelation of secrets. Rather it meant that each helped his fellow to climb the rungs of the evolutionary ladder, so that each might personally be called and receive the supreme command and spark of life which he required to carry out his task.

What, though, is the teaching conveyed by the angel with the trumpet? To find the answer, we should examine the second plate of the *Mutus Liber* (see Fig. 5).

The two angels seen in the first plate can be found in the upper half of the second. Here they are presenting the Philosophic Work conceived of in spiritual terms. On the material level, the Work is represented by a glass container into which the First Matter will be put. It will then be heated in another, the alchemist's furnace, examples of which may still be found in old laboratories. Still on the material level, we see that the two angels are replaced by the couple, the seeker and his wife, who are kneeling in prayer. All their attention is fixed on the initial labours they will have to undertake. The visible correspondences between the two angels and the couple and also between the Work and the furnace illustrate the following fragment of the *Emerald Tablet*: 'That which is above is like to that which is below, and that which is below is like to that which is above, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.' They also illustrate this sentence 'All things were by the contemplation of one.' The philosophic Egg presented by the angels shows us that the superior being who is father of the one thing is also the father of the universal Thelema. He is seen at the centre of the Egg, with two figures at his side, surmounted respectively by the sun and moon. '*The father thereof is the sun*'—The sun is seen to shine with all

its power at the top of the spiritual part of this second plate. '*The mother the moon*'—The moon can be seen in the top right-hand corner of the first plate. This essential duality, found throughout alchemy, is also symbolised by the sun and the moon which crown the two small figures contained in the philosophic Egg. The above teaching is essential knowledge for the would-be adept. He must try to transpose it to higher levels. All this is hidden from the two terrestrial observers who are seen kneeling at either side of the athenor containing the Egg. This latter is destined to undergo a multitude of processes. The aim is that the matter contained in it—the Fix—should become volatile and the volatile—i.e. the polarities visible only in the upper part—should become fixed in its turn. All this is necessary for the ultimate transformation.

The gesture of the woman and the attitude of the man seem to indicate the mimicking of something found in the *Emerald Tablet*. There one reads: 'It does ascend gently from Earth to Heaven. Again it does descend to Earth, and untieth in itself the force from things superior and things inferior.' All the secret teaching of the alchemists is freely given by guides, visible or invisible. They help the seeker during the series of operations he carries out, in order effectively to accomplish 'the separation of the element of Earth from that of Fire, the Subtle from the Gross'. This is the point at which the subtle spagiric preparations, which we have discussed at such great length, play a part.

The third plate of the *Mutus Liber* (see Fig. 7) completes the traditional teaching, whose object was to give the would-be adept knowledge of all elements, all forces and all secrets of nature which he required to complete the Work and to affirm his power. The same teaching is conveyed in the *Emerald Tablet*: 'Thus thou wilt possess the glory of the brightness of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far from thee. This thing is the strong fortitude of all strength, for it overcometh every subtle thing and doth penetrate every solid substance.'

Thus will the power of the adept radiate over the world. This is symbolised by the Father enthroned at the top of the third plate, holding in his hand the sceptre of power and knowledge. At his service he has the two necessary opposites, here represented by the sun and the moon. These, as can be seen, are situated either side of a series of concentric circles. The circles themselves contain a representation of the whole of nature, of the First Matter needed for the Work, of radiation from above and of the two signs of the zodiac—Aries and Taurus—which signify the time of year when alchemy students collect the dew.

One thing which should be learned from this highly important, symbolic information is that the student must first undergo a long period of self-preparation. It is no good thinking that a rapid glance at some alchemical text prepares one for action and the search for the First Matter. This latter contains at the outset none of the invisible particles which must sooner or later become fixed in it if the required metamorphosis is to take place. Indeed, one of the aims of the present work is to warn the reader against such an attitude. The majority of authors concerned with alchemy have totally ignored the first three plates of the *Mutus Liber*, jumping straight to the fourth. In this, one sees the seeker and his female companion squeezing out canvasses which have previously been laid in a meadow of green grass, so as gradually to become saturated with dew. This, as we know, rises continually up the blades of grass during the exaltation of springtime. The symbols of spring, Aries and Taurus, appear again in this fourth plate. The irradiation of life energies is represented by the rays which radiate from the top of the picture. These contain the solar and lunar polarities, themselves designated in the upper corners.

The large number of canvasses stretched over the grass shows how important the operation is, and the large amount of dew which is required.

It goes without saying that the subsequent plates of the

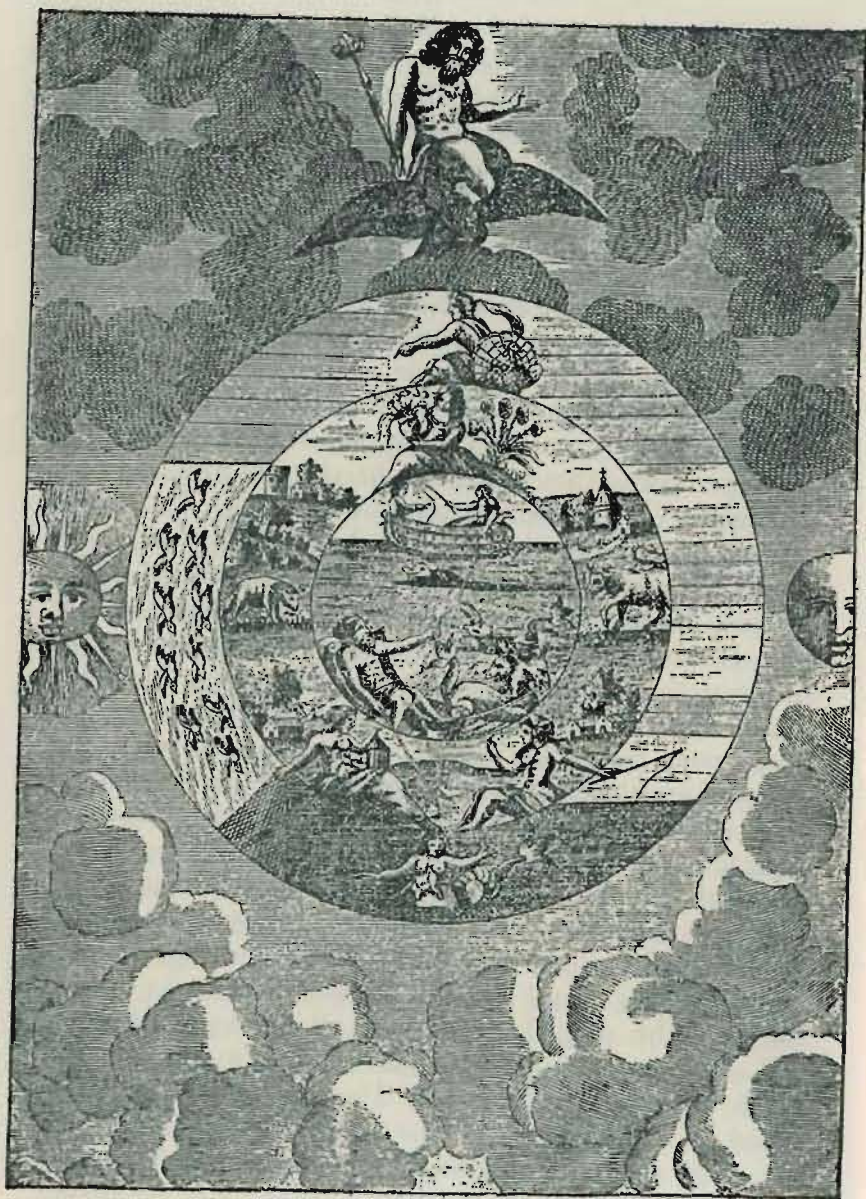


Fig. 7

Mutus Liber, Plate III

Mutus Liber are also extremely important. The seeker should meditate on them at length. They deal in detail with the material aspects of the task I have already considered. Reflection on these details can be found in many texts, each author giving his own interpretation, often embellished with highly complex formulae. The most important thing of all, I repeat, is to grasp the need for serious preparation, which may take months or even years. You will never observe the slightest evolution in your preparations if you yourself do not evolve.

In past times, fraternities of alchemists contained many seekers, of whom the majority gave up at the first hurdles or else gave way to stupidity and madness. The young and fervent, imbued with the sacred flame, conformed patiently to a hard routine of observation, spending entire days and nights watching the fire. Whether the flame of the oil lamp or an actual charcoal fire, this demanded constant attention and was the task with which the neophyte was entrusted. In between these duties, teaching from the Masters was freely given, according to the pupil's progress and evolution. Only very much later and only if things worked out that way, was he called on to achieve the Great Work.

Nowadays, electricity and thermostats considerably simplify the material part of the task. It is thus possible to devote oneself at far greater length to the essentials.

Our preparations for the first degree are thus relatively simple and free from problems of laboratory technique.

What is required is to capture the life forces and to use them in the best possible way to bring about the philosophic elevation of the preparations during successive cocctions. In addition, they are used to regenerate the elements, even to increase their volume, so that production may meet demand, for a large quantity of matter is needed for the production of a little liquid.

EXPERIMENTAL AND CLINICAL VERIFICATION

All the evidence points to the conclusion that the liquor of gold—which according to all normal systems of physical and chemical analysis contains no gold—constitutes a new state of matter.

It must be admitted that none of the considerations set out in the foregoing chapters is of a nature to convince the great majority of doctors and chemists. For this reason it is necessary to add an account of the tests to which I submitted the liquor once I found I could produce it regularly.

Laboratory tests immediately showed the complete absence of anything toxic or radioactive. Even more surprising for me, at least to start with, was the negative result of spectrum analysis with regard to the presence of gold. The solvent powder (with which the powdered gold was mixed), revealed a certain number of elements, notably sodium, silicon, iron, aluminium, copper, magnesium and boron. In the liquor alone, sodium, silicon, boron and also potassium were found. On the other hand, normal methods reveal no trace of gold in the so-called liquor of vegetable gold. It must, however, be admitted that *something* of the metallic gold is transferred to the liquor. When

these analyses were being carried out I had about 7 kilogrammes of solvent powder available. This included 700 grammes of powdered gold which had been added gradually. Each time I add gold, I obtain a liquor of definite colour. I have produced between 65 and 70 litres of liquor in all. If on the other hand I continue coctions without adding any gold, I must posit an eventual state of *exhaustion* for the mixture. When coction is repeated several times, the resulting liquors lack any gold colour. This exhaustion does not stem from the first matter but from the gold. If I add powdered gold to an 'exhausted' mixture, the colour returns. How can this be explained, except by admitting that the gold has a 'soul' which defies ordinary analysis? As for the 'body' of the gold, this is lost in the solvent powders and serves no useful purpose.

These results led me to a further experiment. Taking some liquor no. 1, I put it into coction with an additional quantity of gold, thus obtaining colour no. 2. However, when the mixture was left to stand and cool I noticed that a kind of white cotton wool-like substance was forming at the heart of the new liquor. This gradually decanted to form a sort of cream which, when dried, became a white powder. Does this correspond to the material part of the gold, to its body? I am truly obliged to believe that it does.

The most important task, though, was to check the preparation's therapeutic properties. Since I am neither doctor nor chemist, I was confronted with a difficult problem. I knew no doctor qualified to undertake sufficiently prolonged and systematic tests. Then I had the idea of putting myself in the hands of researchers of the anthroposophic movement. I reckoned that I would be likely to find men willing and able to understand my approach. Rudolf Steiner, later master of the movement, had often made reference to a medicine based on gold.

Just at that moment I made a chance encounter (though what we call chance is really only the appearance which destiny's well-regulated path adopts in our ignorant eyes).

I encountered, at any rate, a chemical engineer well known to unorthodox research. His name is H. Spindler and he enabled me to make all the necessary contacts with German firms which have links with the anthroposophical movement . . . The result of this was that my first preparations found their way to West Germany in January 1961. I myself moved near Colmar.

The early tests of the Wala-Heilmittel

It was on January 11th, 1961 that I sent the first batch of liquors to Dr. Rudolf Hauschka, Director of the Wala-Heilmittel Laboratory at Eckwalden near Göppigen. This batch consisted of liquors of the First Order numbered 1 to 7. He immediately entrusted them to his ablest doctors. On March 10th, 1961 he confirmed the positive results of the initial tests and asked me to send further preparations so that he could pass them on to the doctors in an attempt to arrive at a definitive assessment. A second series of preparations was accordingly sent on March 21st, 1961 and a third at the end of May. This contained liquor number 10. Following the continuing series of positive results obtained by the Wala doctors, I had my first meeting with them at their headquarters. We discussed the tactics to be adopted when developing the new medicine. In reply to a question from me, Dr. Hauschka said that the most spectacular result so far achieved with my medicine concerned a woman doctor from Stuttgart whom he had been called to see. He had found her on her death bed, suffering from a heart complaint. Having just received new samples from me, he gave her part of one which she used immediately. She has since recovered and drives herself around in her own car to see her patients. I have seen Dr. Hauschka many times since then and at one stage moved to Munster when there was talk of building a new laboratory there to prepare certain Wala specialities and

to produce my preparation. For reasons quite unconnected with medicine, the project has not come to fruition. At the same time there was also a possibility of my going to the country laboratories at Eckwalden to produce my liquor there. But nothing has come of that and my dealings with Dr. Hauschka have not advanced any further. I am, however, still on excellent terms with him and consider his moral integrity without blemish. In an exchange of letters at the beginning of 1963 he was still writing in the following terms:

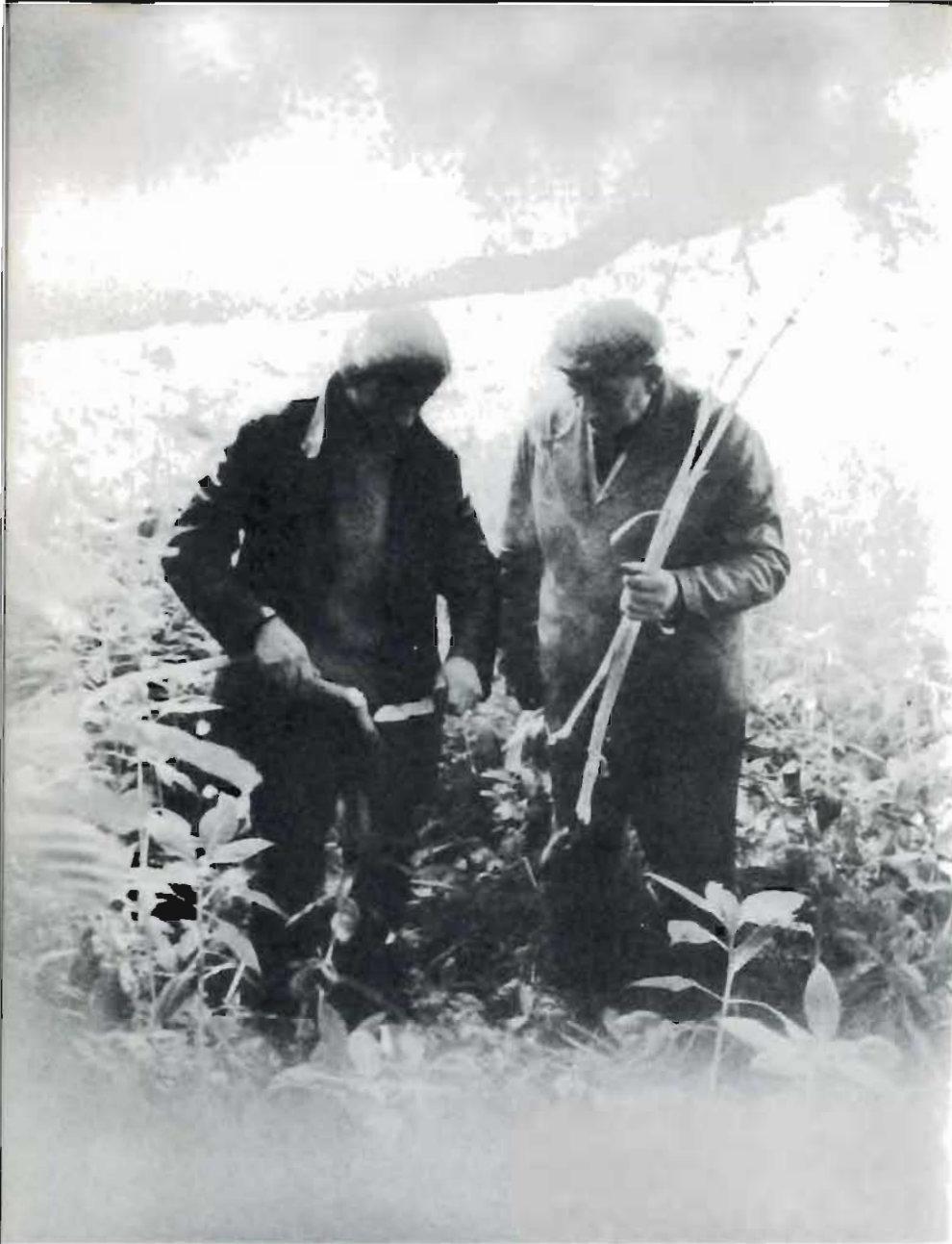
I want first to thank you personally for your attitude to those concerned with your gold preparation. We, as part of that concern, are glad that you yourself are having the patience which such an undertaking demands. We are free and willing to work with you and are the first to recognise that you are the complete master of your solvent powder.

Experiments carried out by Weleda A.G. of Stuttgart

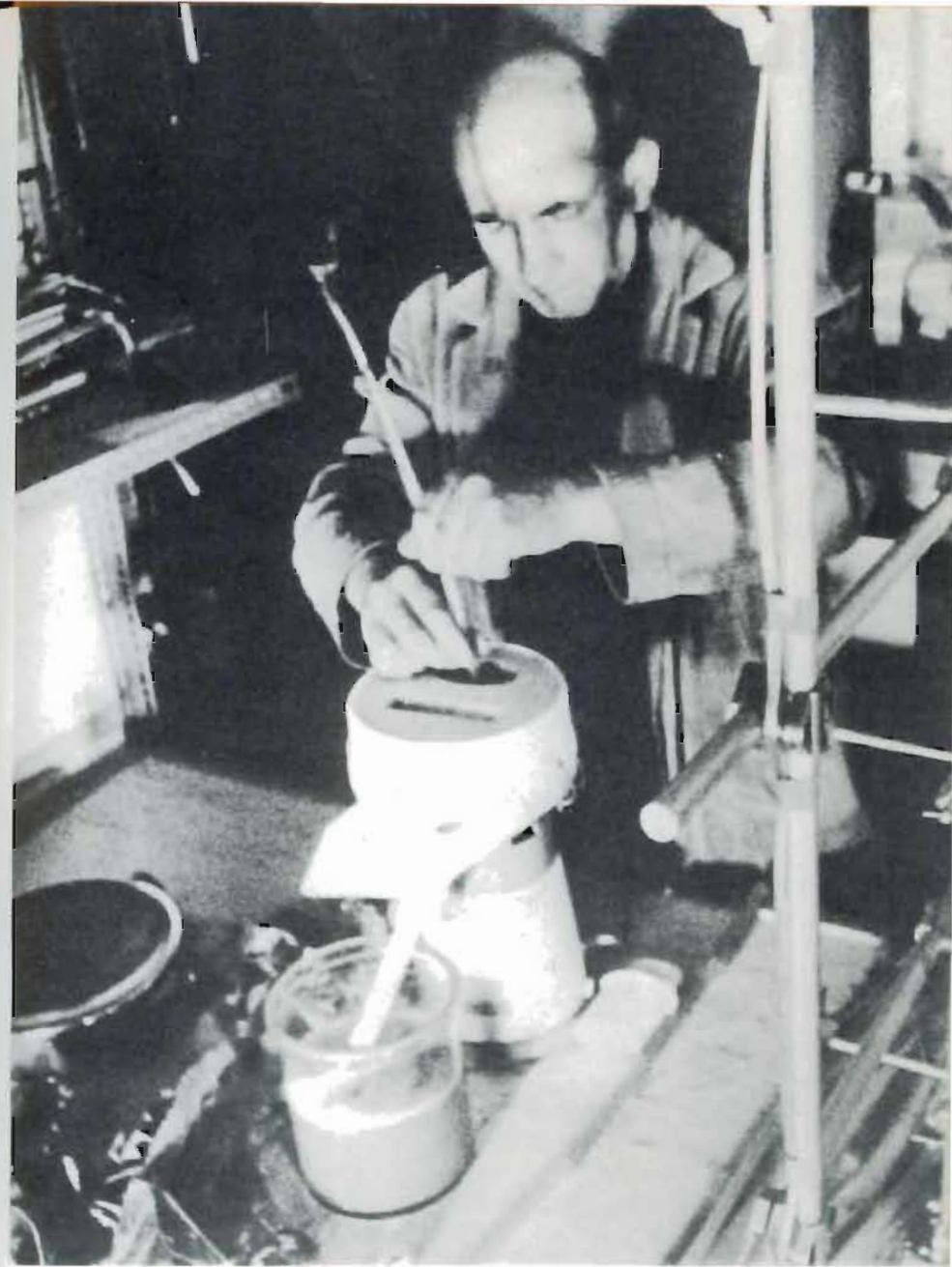
Mr. H. Spindler, a friend of Dr. Hauschka's, seeing that I had little inclination to go to Eckwalden, introduced me to a second laboratory. This, too, was imbued with anthroposophical ideas. It was the Weleda A.G. of Stuttgart, which had a French branch at St. Louis, near the Swiss frontier. I was introduced to this concern for the first time in 1962 and received another warm welcome. Naturally the tests had to be started all over again. Once more, we did not have to wait long for positive results. My previous experiences had led me to be more frank, so as to gain the confidence of my highly competent and painstaking researchers more quickly. At this time I decided to take out a patent to guarantee the future of my process. The nature of my relations with Weleda are illustrated by a letter

In search of the second order.

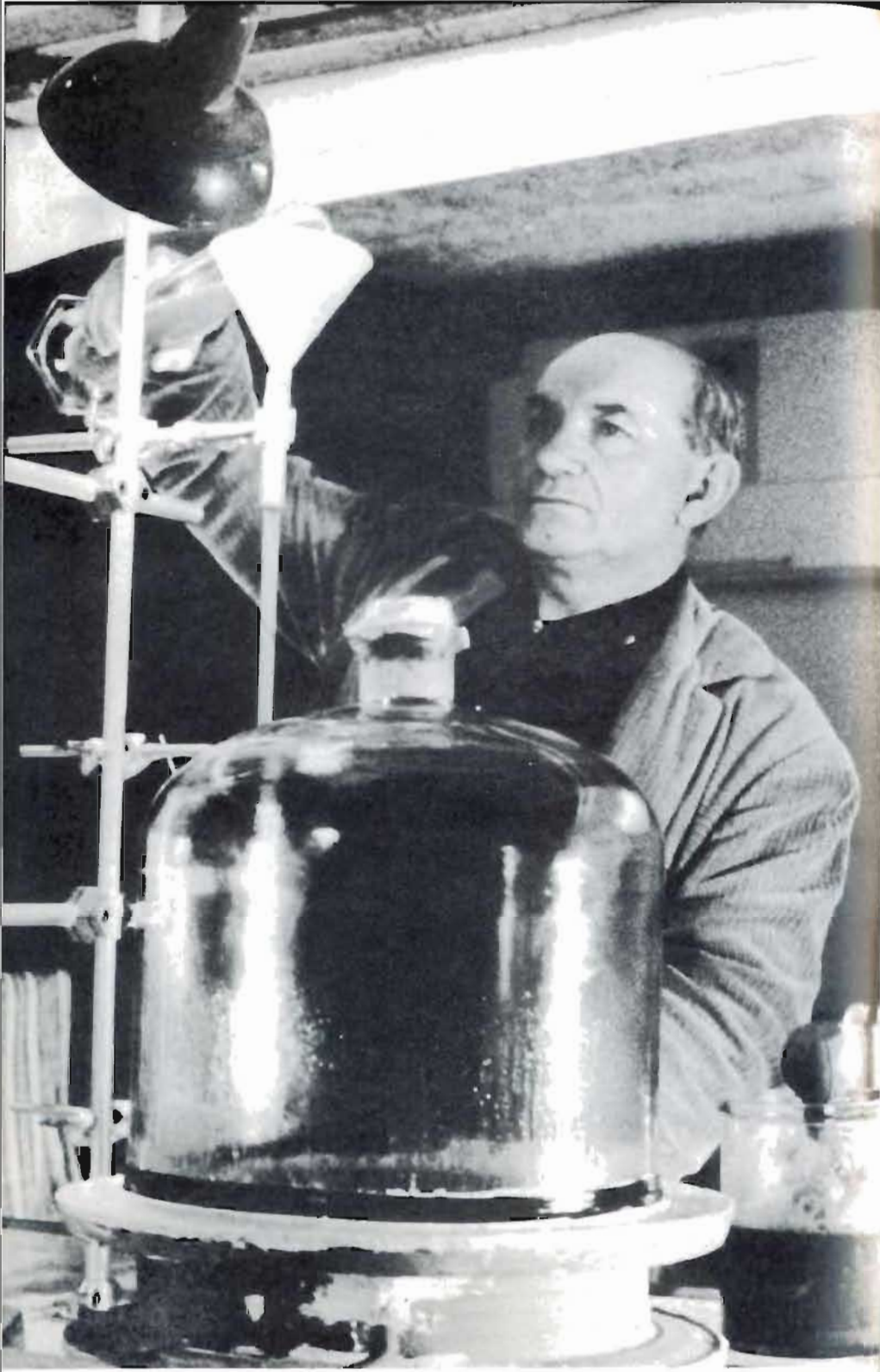




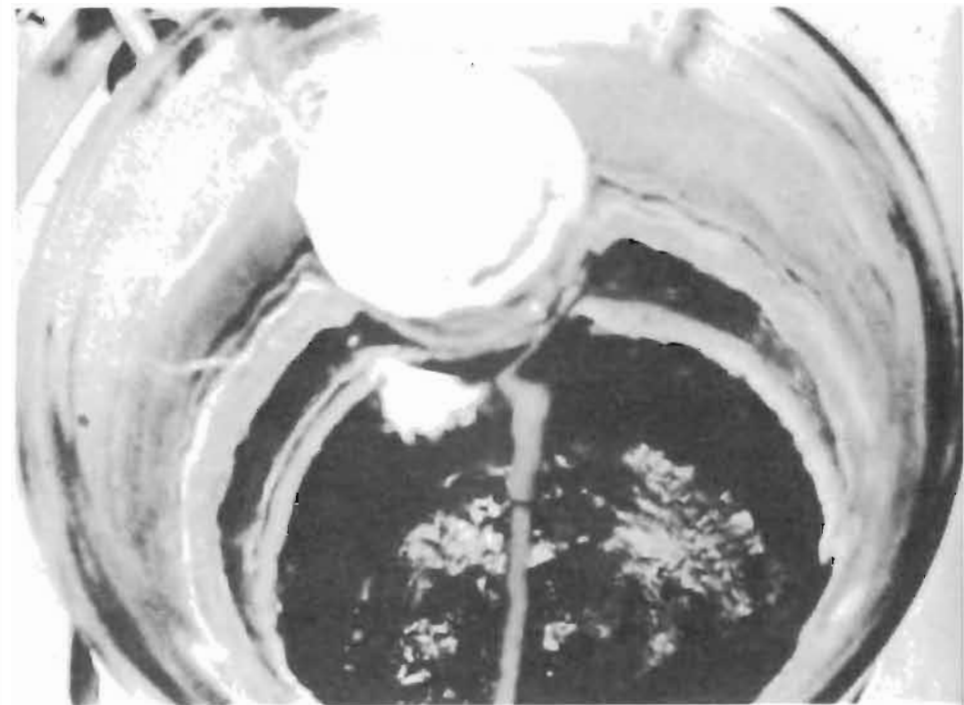
Gathering the plants (*above and preceding page*). To reach the Second Order one no longer uses the plants, but their sap. One has to take plants with thick stems, so that a sufficient quantity of sap may be extracted.



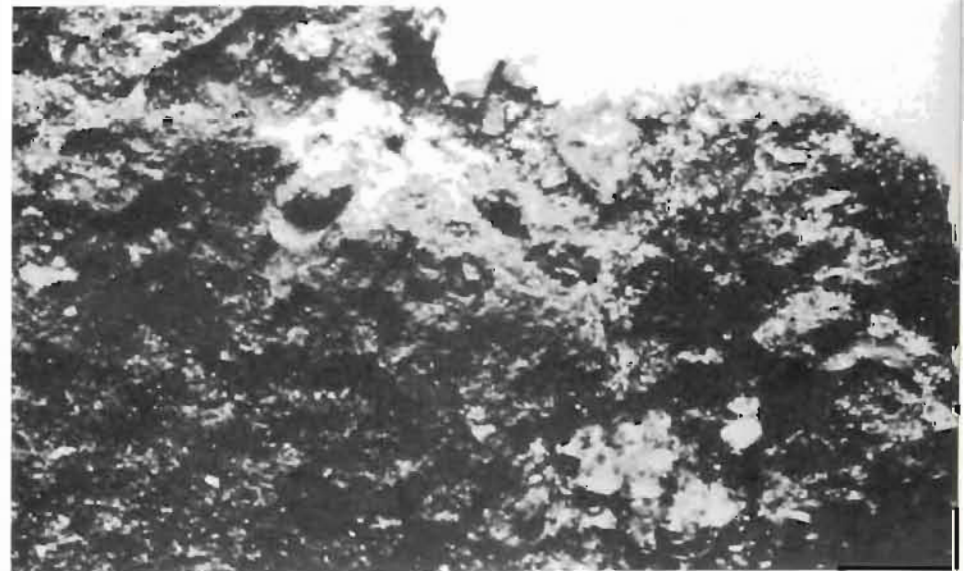
Retrieving the sap. The sap is obtained by putting the plants through a centrifugal extractor.



The Blood of the Green Lion. Adding sap with the intention of enriching the matter. This sap has previously been decanted, so that only its energetic value, called by alchemists 'The Blood of the Green Lion', is used. The Blood of the Green Lion will enrich the matter.



The enriched matter, seen in the apparatus.



The same matter, now hardened. This is called alchemists' 'Marcassite'. When it has reached perfection, Marcassite liberates the Philosopher's Mercury.



The distilled sap is kept in glass jars. The sap becomes 'Virginal Milk' which Armand Barbault used in continuing to enrich the first matter when, because of the season, sap could not be collected.



The 'Virginal Milk'. One is instructed of the birth of the Philosopher's Mercury by the presence in glass jars containing 'Virginal Milk' of germs of life and also by the appearance of different colours. At the time this picture was taken Armand Barbault had obtained only three colours: orange, yellow and white. The aim is to obtain the seven colours of the rainbow, called the Seven Colours of the Work.

Experimental and Clinical Verification

which my wife and I received in July 1962 from Mr. Walter Cloos, head of research there.

Stuttgart, July 12th, 1962

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Barbault,

I want very sincerely to thank both of you for the confidence you have shown in entrusting me with the manuscript '*Preparation of the Philosopher's Peat*'. Knowing that you have both worked to bring this important task to fruition, that the knowledge and experience are shared, I am addressing my personal thanks to both of you. You may rest assured that I realise the importance of the secret you have shared with me and the need to maintain that secrecy. I have for many years been studying the question of Humus in liaison with Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophical movement. Much of what I have been searching for over the last fourteen years now finds an answer and my thoughts are turned in new directions. I hope that we shall be able to work profitably together in the future. With my best wishes,
Yours, W. Cloos.

The reports which the Weleda doctors submitted were not passed on to me. I simply remember the names of two of the doctors: Frobenius and Treichler. Dr. Frobenius of Wiesneck took several drops of my liquor each morning and registered all the usual phenomena mentioned by previous researchers: marked reduction in tiredness, increase in initiative, improved urination etc. Dr. Treichler favoured injections consisting of approximately one drop of vegetabilised gold diluted in a saline solution. He obtained similar results. Nevertheless, as I say, the exact posologies were not revealed to me. Here is the text of a letter which I received from Weleda at this time.

Dear Mr. Barbault,

We would like to bring to your notice that the initial

tests undertaken by our medical department with your products have yielded very positive results. We would therefore welcome any possibility of your producing your elements in slightly larger quantities in the future. We hope that you will find the surroundings you need and sufficient space well away from centres of population, so that you may be in close communion with nature for your delicate task. We consider that these conditions are necessary, given the high quality of your products. We do not think that this standard could be achieved elsewhere.

Here in Germany there is an interested group of 800 to 1,000 doctors to whom we can, in time, make your products known.

We wish you complete success in your efforts and remain, with friendly greetings,

Weleda S. A. Stuttgart

But in spite of this, the cost of raw materials needed to widen the scope of the enterprise, particularly powdered gold, meant that no agreement was reached to realise these hopes born of long experiment.

After this I decided to restrict myself to dealings with individual doctors who showed interest in my research. I was further encouraged to take this step by a growing realisation that my liquor of gold was not a specific remedy but a universal additive, able to stimulate the effects of ordinary medicine to a remarkable degree by acting on the entire vital field. My medicine does not, therefore, seek to operate on the same wave-length as official medicine.

I would add that another reason why I stopped working with commercial laboratories was the unwillingness of the latter to reveal the outcome of their experiments to me. In addition, they tended to keep me in ignorance of the dosages they used.

Here are some examples of treatment undertaken by individual doctors.

*Our Preparation saves two people
critically ill with Uraemia*

Dr. M. W . . . of Colmar managed to save two patients critically ill with Uraemia by adding drops of preparations nos. 5 and 6 to the medicines which he had previously administered without effect. Radical change was observed after a few hours and the two patients, both of whom had been considered hopeless cases, easily survived their crises. As Dr. M. W . . . pointed out when he reported on the case in the presence of Drs. Itchner and Cloos of Weleda, the drops were not given as a wonder drug supplanting all other medicines, but as a supplement and catalyst to certain specific remedies. Dr. M. W . . . followed this with a resumé of his general theories on the subject, making in particular the point that the preparation seemed to him an effective remedy for those suffering from kidney blockages. He referred specifically to printing workers made ill by excesses of lead and to pilots who flew through the sound barrier. All this took place in 1962, when Weleda was beginning its own experiments.

A woman paralysed by Multiple Sclerosis is cured in a year

On the advice of her medical friends at Weleda and at Wala, Dr. Ruth Jensen-Hillringhaus of Fribourg-en-Brigau asked to be allowed to carry out further tests. At the time she ran a magnificent clinic and herself gave treatment by injections supplemented by the specific remedy required by each illness. She did not hesitate to tell us the posologies and the manner in which she treated her patients. This collaboration lasted from 1962 to 1964. At the end of a year she presented to us a patient completely cured of multiple sclerosis and who had come to

Munster especially to thank us. In her own observation of the dosages required, she came to the conclusion that thin people react more favourably than fat people. The effect is more rapid. Our collaboration with her came to an end when she decided that she wanted to set up a laboratory to produce the substances at her clinic. It was difficult for me to part with my Peat to anyone unprepared for the task of regenerating it. Solvent powders can be regenerated for as long as is necessary but if they are not manipulated in a particular way they soon run the risk of being destroyed. At that time I was not prepared to yield all my manufacturing secrets.

From the beginning of 1963 other doctors became interested in my preparation. This gave me the chance to understand more exactly how to go about things and the precise dosages to administer. I also received confirmation that the preparation alone is not always sufficient and must sometimes be combined with other medicines which the doctor will prescribe. I learned that the best moment to take the drops is at sunrise, though certain people with heart disease may take them both morning and night and others again four times a day.

The Homeopathic opinion: complementary associations

One of my friends, E.Z., who is a competent homeopath and also versed in acupuncture, came to spend a few days at Colmar. For some time he had thought that my preparation could find its best application in homeopathy.

I had already been asked for specimens by homeopathic doctors but there had never been any follow-up. I had begun to wonder why. My friend Z., after having prepared many separate dilutions and experimented with them in drops and injections, ascertained that the dilutions produced absolutely no results. The answer is that the preparation of my liquors is analogous to homeopathic preparation,

due to the rhythmic movement which causes the product to attain its etheric level. So, in diluting my liquor too much, my friend had in fact been denaturing it. If this point is understood, the association of the product with homeopathic remedies is ideal. These latter slightly enfeeble the cell, which must then make an effort if they are to achieve their effect. Our preparation is the perfect nourishment for the cell, which thus maintains its equilibrium.

A spectacular attempt to cure a case of Syphilis

This attempt took place under the aegis of a provincial doctor whose attitude tended towards scepticism. The patient had been afflicted to the highest degree for a number of years. The reactions to the Nelson test and the other Wasserman tests were entirely positive. The patient suffered from troubles of the aorta which seemed incurable. All treatment had been discontinued and the patient prepared for any eventuality. After several weeks of treatment with the entire range of preparations (1 to 10), the renewed Wasserman tests proved negative and the painful awakenings previously experienced had disappeared. These tests should be repeated, for according to the tradition, Potable Gold has the reputation of curing this kind of illness in particular.

Are we dealing with Nuclear Medicine?

All the evidence leads us to believe that the action of the vegetabilised gold takes place at the level of the etheric forces, that is to say at a higher level than that reached by normal medicine. Certain observations allow one to add that its action is found chiefly at the level of the nucleus of the living cell. This would offer an explanation for:

- a. The rapid regeneration of cells—clinically observed; the nucleus has an essential organising role in the cellular metabolism.
- b. The need to combine the liquor with normal medicines and also the need for correct food. These provide the necessary material support for the reorganisation of the protoplasm.
- c. The anti-viral properties of the preparation. Viruses attack the normal metabolism of the nucleus precisely at the level of the acids which play such an important part in maintaining the equilibrium of the cell and so of the entire organism.

Perhaps further tests will enable one to establish what preventative and curative properties the medicine possesses in relation to the imbalances which radioactivity and atomic radiation cause. These disturbances also take place at the level of the DNA chains of the nuclei. This would constitute a vast and uniquely important area for this medicine to work in, quite apart from the areas in which it is already accepted as effective by those who use it. These consist of illnesses of vascular origin, troubles of the liver and kidneys, arteriosclerosis, impure blood and hardening of the veins and arteries.

By analogy, the customary way of proceeding in traditional or Paracelsian medicine, one can postulate the effect which various liquors more refined than no. 1 will have. As I have already indicated, liquor of the second order is obtained by boiling liquor of the first order in coction with new gold. One continues in this way to reach liquor no. 7 and then no. 10. In theory, the first three liquors act principally on the heart, the blood vessels and the humours; liquors 4 and 5 act on the spinal cord and on states of mind; liquors 6 and 7 act on the brain, the head and the spirit; finally, liquor no. 10 is 'balancing'.

Such preparations, however, are lengthy and expensive. The few experiments we have carried out have, it is true,

yielded encouraging results. They need, though, to be repeated more systematically, especially those concerned with diseases of the spinal cord and with nervous diseases in general.

*Further qualitative analysis using
Professor Theodor Schwenk's method*

Professor Theodor Schwenk is another member of the anthroposophical movement. He has recently published a fascinating study called *Forms produced by water in motion** which deals with a method of discovering the quality of water. The main idea involved in this process had previously been expounded by the same author in a work called *Visible Chaos*. The internal surfaces which are formed in moving water are, in effect, sensory organs, the points at which the water receives etheric and cosmic forces.

Having once accepted this theory, it will become clear that polluted water, whose pollution makes it unable to form the necessary internal surfaces, will be unable to receive these forces. It will have become dead water.

At this point Professor Schwenk devised a method of photographing these internal surfaces. To achieve this, he put a drop of the water he wished to study into a 'control' of pure water to which had been added a small amount of glycerine. A system of mirrors adapted to the purpose allows him to photograph the forms produced by the falling droplet at various stages of development. The experiment shows that the richness and beauty of these forms are in direct relation to the quality of water of which the drop is composed. Generally speaking, polluted water—and also the sterile water which is normally supplied for

* Theodor Schwenk: *Bewegungsformen des Wassers* (Verlag Freies Geistleben, Stuttgart).

urban domestic consumption—produces only poor, half-formed images, whereas water which is biologically whole produces a harmonious pattern of multi-petalled flowers. I submitted the elixir to this test. I took two photographs and then a third with which to compare them. Preparation A produced a considerably less rich image than preparation B. This is explained by the fact that in the first case the final coction had been carried out without the addition of new gold, whereas in the second, new gold had been added.

This method is extremely sensitive and, as it stands, can be used to check the intensity of cosmic forces in the elixir. In addition, though, Professor Schenk asserts that the intensity varies according to the aspect of the heavens and particularly during eclipse. This is yet more justification for the need to carry out the work with full awareness of and respect for the rhythms of nature. As I have already said, the energies in my preparation with which we are concerned are at their height at dawn.

One might usefully refer to Professor Schwenk's book and there see the difference in the richness and beauty of the images between living and dead water.

It goes without saying that many other tests and experiments could be invented. What is wanted above all is for a team of doctors, with no preconceived ideas, to carry out a whole series of experiments with liquors of the different levels, as has already been done with preparation no. 1.

EIGHT

OTHER METALLIC TINCTURES OF THE FIRST DEGREE

In addition to vegetabilised gold, the alchemist can, within the framework of first-degree medicine, prepare tinctures of such metals as silver, antimony, copper and tin.

It is traditional teaching that first-degree tinctures can be made of metals other than gold. Each one of these metals, or their tinctures, corresponds to a planet in the solar system and equally to an organ of the human body. In this way, each of the tinctures can act as a specific remedy for the appropriate organ.

The three basic Tinctures are those of Gold, Silver and Antimony

There is correspondence between the sun and gold. The sun governs life, radiating heat and energy; it acts directly on the brain, the heart, the quality of the blood and the cells in general. Tinctures of gold are therefore beneficial to these organs. They can be extremely precious in combating old age, in revitalising cells and in maintaining the equilibrium of the metabolism.

There is correspondence between the moon and silver.

The moon governs one's vitality, ensures correct functioning of bodily organs and humours, regulates the circulation and holds particular sway over the stomach, digestion and the correct operation of the kidneys. Silver tinctures are therefore to be recommended for illnesses resulting from unsatisfactory distribution of vital forces and generally from poor circulation. Such tinctures also have a positive effect on the cerebellum and in illnesses specific to women at puberty and at the menopause.

There is correspondence between the earth and antimony. The earth is connected with the individual's physical make-up and with imperfections in it resulting from a lack of equilibrium among the elements which a man absorbs. Tincture of antimony has an equilibrating effect which allows the organism to eliminate its impurities and so recover the physical form which corresponds to its temperament. Its action is manifold but takes place at a low level. It may be found useful in combating excesses of material living.

There are also other metallic tinctures, each connected to certain stars and certain organs. Mercury corresponds to Mercury and to the nervous system, copper to Venus and to the glandular system, iron to Mars and to the gall-bladder, tin to Jupiter and the liver, lead to Saturn, the spleen and the skeleton.

All these correspondences are noted by Paracelsus and many other ancient authors. Controlled experiments should be carried out with all these tinctures, so that profit may be drawn from positive results.

Special difficulties attending the preparation of Tinctures of Metals other than Gold

The general principles involved in preparing the various other metallic tinctures remain the same as for tincture of gold. Nevertheless, one should be aware that it is much

more difficult to open the other metals—in particular antimony. The quantities of metal required are much greater. One must allow about 15 per cent by weight of the first matter in metal. In the case of gold, only 10 per cent need be allowed.

I think it would be useful to enter into some detail in order to give an idea of the more complex methods used to overcome the specific difficulties of these other metals.

If you wanted to work on 300 grammes of pure regenerated ash, you would take 45 grammes of powdered metal. This you would add to a good half litre of liquor which is pure and contains all its salts and put the whole for several hours in a water-bath in a firmly sealed vessel, so that precipitation might take place. You would then separate the liquor from the metal and add the former to the 300 grammes of ash. You would feed the mixture with plants, sap and dew to bring about a further corruption, putting aside the precipitate for future use.

Then, when you had again produced perfectly black peat and had alternately dried and moistened it several times over, so that combustible matter might be 'burnt' before incineration, you would add the precipitate which you had kept. You should continue mixing the two together until you are satisfied that the necessary interior work has taken place. One should never jibe at beginning the same experiment over and over again when concerned with the spagiric art, for the elements are seldom opened as easily as one might wish. Success is achieved through patience, attention to detail and faith in what one is doing. Finally, when you considered that you yourself were ready, you would incinerate your peat and so arrive at the new ash, ready sensitised with the nature of the chosen metal.

The next stage would, as usual, be to carry out coctions. So that the process of 'opening the metal' might continue during the successive operations, you should not forget to add some new powdered metal to each coction. You should

add a smaller quantity of powder to these successive coctions so that the new metal might open at the right time. You should be aware that it is quite possible for the phenomena to take place behind schedule, if the various operations have not been correctly carried out. Trial and error is the only method. You should be particularly aware how the dimensions of the tubes and the quality of the glass used, as well as the temperatures achieved in the oven used for coction, all affect the matter.

Generally speaking, the new tinctures will be slightly different in colour from the tincture of gold and will be tinged with the shades attributed to their corresponding planets. It is known that yellow corresponds to gold, white to silver, blue to Venus, red to Mars and violet to Jupiter. You cannot really say that the liquors reflect the colour of their corresponding planet, for if one looks at Mars, Venus or Jupiter with the naked eye one can make no distinctions of colour. However, a more detailed examination does indeed show us that Venus is tinged with blue and Mars with red. The tinctures of tin which I have most recently produced reveal a very slight touch of violet.

In practice, one should have a quantity of ashes specially impregnated with the same metal *over a period of years* to get a proper idea of what happens. I am not in that position, for I only have a very small quantity of finely prepared ash and even this is not 'pure' since it contains some gold and has reflected a gold colour for many years.

The new ash which reached its first perfection in 1960 was 'adulterated' in this way by the metallic gold which later enabled me to produce the Medicine of the First Order. Over the years I continued to use this same powder, multiplying both its quality and its quantity, always adding new gold at each successive coction.

In fact, as a result of long discussions with the laboratory scientists who followed my work, I now realise that I added much more gold than was necessary. Latterly, I

have gradually stopped adding gold and have continued to extract tinctures possessed of a beautiful gold colour.

Most recently, at a given moment, the gold colour no longer appeared. I reckoned that the gold had stopped yielding its colour and therefore its 'soul' and its 'medicine' and that my powders had achieved a certain 'purity'.

I took advantage of this to separate my powders and sort out the pure liquors, from which I was able to extract the salts. Certain of these powders were subsequently purified again, others had silver, tin or antimony added to them. Thus by trial and error I arrive at the stage which I have explained to you in this chapter.

In point of fact, as I indicated at the end of chapter 4, even those powders which I thought to be 'worn out' as far as the presence of gold was concerned, proved not to be. When I carried out a further corruption, incineration and coction, the gold colour reappeared in the liquors. As a result of this I had to carry things a stage further, adding powdered silver. In doing so, I ran great risks that my powders would calcinate or even that the tubes would explode. At length, however, whilst remaining within reasonable limits, the silver in its turn opened and the beautiful silver colour appeared. This work took two years. The gold, truly exhausted this time, finally disappeared. In fact its action cannot in any way alter the quality of the liquors obtained from the other metals. The story of the tinctures of tin and copper is similar.

How do these special difficulties attached to metals other than gold, arise? Gold is a noble metal and when its quintessence is separated from the material envelope, its liquor becomes perfect almost straightway. I maintain this in spite of the fact that many authors say that the liquor must be left to mature before it is used. With a good filter, covered in a certain thickness of ash, one soon obtains a clear liquor which is stable right from the start.

The same does not apply to the lower metals—apart from silver which also clarifies fairly quickly. Many

precautions must be taken. To speak for a moment in the language of the alchemists, in fact all metals are constituted of the same single substance and only differ one from the other in the degree to which they have reached a perfect state of that matter. Gold has reached that perfection. Other metals may usefully be compared to fruit which becomes detached from its tree before the sun has ripened it and so is unfit for consumption. Fruit such as this retains too much acidity. Similar difficulties apply if one wishes to *open* an impure metal and remove the quintessence. Hence the need to produce a precipitate which will facilitate opening. Even when an impure metal has been opened, it may still retain impurities which may reappear later and which must then be got rid of before the preparation can be used. The following method includes all the precautions which it is advisable to take: once the metal has separated from the precipitate, it is put into a toughened, fairly long tube, along with some new, pure liquor which is rich in salt. The whole is then submitted to extensive coction and superheated to produce a form of metallic lime. This is put in its turn into some peat which is undergoing regeneration. Now the metal, being more fully opened than before, will rid itself of its impurities as the corruption takes place. The incineration will complete the reduction and elimination of these impurities. Once the coction is finished, the liquor is carefully filtered and inspected for some time to see that it does not become bubbly or flocculent, for this would again mean that it was unfit to be used.

Only in my third year of experiment with these tinctures of other metals was I able to produce satisfactory liquors of silver. Antimony proved to be even more difficult and indeed nearly led to disaster when an explosion almost caused the loss of my sight. This particular danger notwithstanding, antimony is one of the most important tinctures to perfect, since its applications are general and varied. They even include the treatment of foot-and-

mouth disease in cattle. This disease, which wreaks considerable havoc, is of course an earth disease.

Perfecting the Liquors and the many therapeutic uses to which they may then be put

If there are fears that these liquors will be more difficult to use, they may be completely 'metalised', without changing the proportions of metal which I indicated above, by being left to soak in the preparation of plants and flowers which are, of course, chosen for their correspondences. The mixture is then exposed to the sun, though in a closed vessel, for about forty days and again submitted to coction and filtration. The tinctures are endowed with new qualities by the plants, thus increasing their therapeutic range. It is further known that the quality of the etheric force varies according to whether uprooted plants or simply flowers are used. The three levels mentioned by ancient authors are the ether of life, the ether of heat and the ether of light. These may well correspond to the different states of an illness found under the same planetary configuration. A red colour, which is seen in the flowers, confirms this change of state.

In the spagiric art one must coagulate, then separate and so on for as long as is necessary to allow the matter which is more fluid and so more capable of being etherised, to separate from the baser matter. This is why it is recommended that the operation of boiling, then allowing to cool, be carried out 40 times. The waters used in these boilings will previously have been treated with plants having correspondence with the illness one wants to treat. The many applications are totally risk-free, for the liquors finally obtained are in no way toxic. The method of application may be varied to suit requirements—drops, injections, creams and lotions can all be used. The responsibility, however, rests with the doctor who is carrying out

the experimental treatment. I would add that the doctors of old also consulted the sick person's horoscope. Then, according to the configurations of his birth chart and of his chart at the time when the illness began, they sought the planet in correspondence with the illness. They were then able to select with greater certainty the correct tincture.

Can you imagine a present-day collaboration between the doctor and the astrologer? Can you see temperature graph and horoscope hanging side by side at the foot of a patient's hospital bed? To some this would appear a revolutionary, to others a retrograde step. In fact, such a step would make great sense. The doctor would obtain from the astrologer all useful information on the planet which was 'in charge' at the various levels of the illness. He would then issue his orders to a spagirc laboratory and so increase the efficiency of the remedies normally in use.

A complete traditional pharmacological system might in this way be brought back into use. Many old customs would suddenly make sense again. Think, for example, of doctors who used to tell patients with liver troubles to eat their soups from a tin spoon.

In the following table will be found a complete list of the correspondences which exist between stars, metals and organs of the human body. As Hippocrates, in *The Nature of Men*, wrote: 'the remedy acts principally on the humour most analogous to its nature; subsequently it attacks and purges the others. The doctor's task is to vary and carefully to manipulate the remedies he uses.

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENTS BETWEEN THE PLANETS,
THE METALS AND THE ORGANS OF THE HUMAN BODY

<i>Planet</i>	<i>Metal</i>	<i>Organs and Therapeutic Action</i>
The Sun	Gold	The Sun, as master of the solar system, governs the whole of life. Gold can thus act on all forms of illness. It is chiefly associated with the blood and circulation, rejuvenation of cells and with the brain.
The Moon	Silver	As a reflection of solar influence, the Moon and Silver also act on the distribution of blood and on the cerebellum. In addition, they influence the digestion (stomach, kidneys and bladder), the humours and the woman's menstrual cycle.
Earth	Antimony	The action here is on the eliminations and self-purifications of the body. The body is rid of toxin and accumulated impurities in preparation for the work of nobler metals. The ancients used tinctures of antimony in this way before undertaking treatment of a higher order.
Mercury	Mercury	Not to be confused with 'the mercury of the philosophers' which is sought in second degree alchemy. General treatment of the nervous system.
Venus	Copper	Treatment of disorders associated with glandular malfunctioning. Infectious diseases transmitted by skin contact.
Mars	Iron	Gall-bladder, organic lesions and disease characterised by inflammation.
Saturn	Lead	The spleen, the skeleton, wasting diseases.

NINE

INTRODUCTION TO PREPARATIONS OF THE SECOND ORDER

The way of the second order is even more mysterious. The alchemist may embark on it once he possesses First Matter which has reached the first degree of perfection.

Most would-be alchemists who read and, like me, are strongly impressed by Cyliani's famous book '*Hermes dévoilé*',* do not realise that his starting point is the point which I have now reached—i.e. matter which has already achieved its first degree of perfection. They think that they may immediately embark on the making of mercury and sulphur, themselves only a stage towards the final operation, the conjunction by which the red matter is obtained. This all too common error condemns the enterprise from the outset.

It is now two years since I started working on preparations of the second order, again following instructions which I had received. The first thing to do is to set aside First Matter which has gained its initial crown yet has remained pure—i.e. to which no gold has been added for first order preparations. The process of enriching this pure matter then follows.

* Editions Traditionnelles, Paris.

Introduction to Preparations of the Second Order

Before proceeding further, it is necessary to construct more sophisticated apparatus than has previously been required. The crown-shaped joint between the tank containing the First Matter (the mould) and the glass bell where condensation takes place, must be in glazed earthenware, to obviate the possibility of metal interfering in the process.

Work should start when the stars are in a state of 'exaltation', which is to say soon after the new moon in Aries (the sun is in 'exaltation' in Aries and the moon in Taurus). This, to our eyes, is the astrological moment when nature herself stirs into new life, life which becomes increasingly intense from now until summer.

The modus operandi for the first order was continually to add green plants and dew, with alternate moistening and drying, until the stage of blackness was reached—then limitless incineration and regeneration. This time, on the contrary, the natural method is to add only *Blood of the Green Lion*, that is to say decanted dew prepared in a particular way.

The operation will doubtless be very long by this method and I know that some alchemists seek to proceed more quickly by making use of minerals, as advised in certain texts. I have not been permitted to do this. I prepare the Blood of the Green Lion with the utmost precaution, not only in picking the plants in the hour before dawn but also in pounding them up immediately after I have picked them. For this purpose I use a juice-extractor. In this way I obtain, within an hour, a litre to a litre and a half of sap. I leave this to decant *in complete darkness*, using a tall vessel akin to the stem which contained the sap, until the vegetable solids are deposited. This leaves me with a reddish liquor which I draw off with a pipette and place in the vessel containing the matter to be nourished. This decanted sap is the true *Blood of the Green Lion*. The words *Blood of the Lion* evoke the presence of a particularly concentrated force, which was doubtless the intention

of the ancients who first used these symbolic words. If I waited until midday to perform this task the vital forces would certainly have been dissipated and the red water obtained at this time would be valueless. In the same way one would not expect a child fed exclusively on sterile food to thrive.

I wonder, incidentally, whether the alchemical symbolism in which the *Red Lion* devours the *Green Lion* does not correspond quite simply to the ripening of fruit between spring (the *Green Lion* of Aries) and summer (the *Red Lion* of Leo), that is to say between the first and second fire signs. By analogy it could also refer to the daily passage of the sun as it climbs from the horizon to its zenith.

Each spring morning, then, I add this sap-liquor to the mixture which I then heat to a temperature not exceeding 50°–55°C. I carefully collect the residue from the evaporation, for this will be used later. The product of this distillation, whose weight and volume are slightly less than those of the liquid initially added, is called the *Virginal Milk*. In taste and smell it is like raspberry. At this stage everything hinges on perceiving the exact moment when the mercury makes its appearance in the still. This mercury is called the *Child*. When this point is reached, the external source of heat is stopped and the internal fire of the mercury is regulated by nourishing it in its turn with the *Virginal Milk*, once the mercury is separated from the *Mother*.

It is also said that medicine of the first order comes from the Blood of the *Green Lion*, that of the second from the Blood of the *Red Lion*. This statement corresponds to the two stages of nature which I have just indicated. So, in springtime one can obtain richer liquors by steeping the flowers in the first medicine, as detailed in the preceding chapter. The resulting mixtures are then exposed to the sun during its passage in Leo, in the heart of summer. One discovers that at its time of greatest heat, the passage of

the sun effectively colours the exposed liquor *red*. This liquor can be used in subsequent stages of the second degree preparation. The foregoing is only an analogy but I am sure that its significance may be grasped in practice.

This is the stage which I have currently reached, so for the time being I can say no more. The *Virginal Milk* is a colourless liquid which must be kept in a cool, sheltered place. In it is gradually formed a cotton wool-like substance; in this I can see simply a germ. This water is alive and passes through a whole series of colour changes whose significance I do not yet understand.

Last year, during the three spring months, I was able to proceed in the manner I have described, though I encountered several problems with my heating system. An accident here means a delay of a year for the part affected, for one has to wait for the following spring. This year, 1969, the sap has not been sufficiently rich nor plentiful, because the two eclipses of Aries and the conjunction of the new moon with Saturn coincided with frost damage to the plants on which we were relying. It is therefore not certain that I will arrive this year at the second degree of perfection of the matter. Nevertheless, I discovered with surprise that the part of the matter which was recovered did indeed appear as a black mass, yet one covered with tiny crystals. These formed star-like points, both on the surface and throughout the mass. Tradition leads me to believe that this is the mercury ready to rise from its bed.

From the end of spring 1968 till the beginning of last spring, the matter, resoaked, repulverised and put back into a still with a better heating system, has been constantly nourished. It has been nourished not with sap, of which we did not have any at that time of year, but with *Virginal Milk* which was obtained in 1968. From the beginning of spring this year I have again been adding sap. The presence of these stars in the matter treated in 1968 doubtless signifies the imminent appearance of the true mercury of the philosophers. According to the tradition, the second

degree of perfection of matter is characterised by what is called the *Star of the Magi*.

To pursue for a moment the symbolic aspect of the subject, why are the *Labours of Hercules* so called? This, you will remember, is the name given to the preliminary tasks of the first degree: nourishing the matter with sap and 'burning' it for a period of several months with dew. The answer is that it is a question of making the best possible use of the rising forces of dew and sap, capturing these forces and through them overcoming the attraction of the earth and, literally, raising up the earth. These daily tasks must be performed before the sun rises too high in the sky. Gardeners grasp something of this when they tend their flowers. The alchemist, too, must both feel it and know it. He must care for his matter as the gardener cares for his flowers or the mother her child.

The question of the external fire must obviously be solved in harmony with that of the internal fire. Otherwise one runs the risk of calcination of the matter. A piece of apparatus must be built which allows proper surveillance and which contains no metal parts—this because of the fragility of the *Virginal Milk*. Raymond Lully writes: 'Nature has appointed a time for conception, a time for pregnancy and a time for birth. So must the alchemist await the time of birth. When the stone is born, he must *nourish it like a child* until it is able to *sustain the heat of a great fire*.'

It is very difficult for me at the present state of my research to give precise figures either for the quantities or the time needed to complete the operation. Everything depends on the quality obtained, as much in the choice of dew to be extracted—linked with the weather—as in the refinements which the adept introduces as he himself progresses. It is said that *the wings must be raised seven times over*, clearly indicating that there is no way out. Further, it should be remembered that we are here concerned only with the first stage of the second order, that moment at

which the Child must be born and the mercury made to rise out of the waters which enclose it. The ensuing stage is quite separate, for, once the child is born and has been separated from its mother, it must be helped to grow. To this end it is placed in another piece of apparatus which enables it to live in Air, which is to say on gases produced from liquors specially prepared for that purpose. For us, this stage is not yet reached and we cannot speak of it without risk of error.

For the alchemist, it is never enough to follow the instructions he finds in books, however authoritative the books may be. Nature herself is variable and inconsistent and must be observed continually, so that the ravages of unsuitable weather or ill-disposed elements may be corrected. Choosing the right time of day is vital for the yielding of quintessence which is assimilable and which does not poison the best-regulated operation in some way. Metals, like humans, become ill. Saint Thomas wrote as follows to Père Reynald: 'Do not place overmuch trust in the pronouncements of philosophers, whether ancient or modern; the whole art of a good alchemist rests in the intelligence of nature and in the proper carrying-out of experiments.' Thus when the weather is stormy, or has a depressing effect and also during certain phases of the moon, the Blood of the Green Lion will not separate from the green matter. This indicates that the liquor is lacking in energy and, if put in the container, is liable to give rise to unwanted effects. Sap can be compared to blood. We know that cardio-vascular attacks are more common at some periods than at others.

What is more, in reading the philosophers, it is assumed that one has practical knowledge which can only be acquired after a long period of experiment and after overcoming many hurdles. The penalty for lack of knowledge is lack of understanding. You will find phrases like this: '*When the water is transformed into earth*', and again '*until its waters are exhausted*'. The meaning of such

expressions will not be grasped by reading further and yet more complicated texts, nor even by meditation. It will come as a result of work carried out both in nature and in the laboratory. My own method, when doubtful or lacking information over the next stage of an operation, is to wait until the planets are in a favourable configuration for me personally and then to reflect on the question. Further, I always construct an astrological chart of the essential stages of the operation, so that I may see whether the process is evolving in harmony with those planetary cycles which presided over the birth of the Work. As my horoscope clearly shows, Saturn is my guiding influence, condemning me to reach each stage of the operation by the longest and hardest route. On the other hand, Saturn's support is constant and deep-seated. Because of it I have been able to grasp many details which would have been lost in more rapid revelation, and have drawn knowledge and understanding of technique from the mass of symbolism which have proved vital in practice.

For example, I have already shown that when one adds the rich quintessence of the Blood of the Green Lion—which incidentally quickly becomes separated out at the top of the vessel from the impure elements—the quantity of etheric forces yielded up to the distillation is slightly less than the quantity introduced. I came to understand that this disparity was vital, that the germ had appropriated this force to aid its own growth. If you re-use the liquor which is recovered as Virginal Milk, the same results obtain: when passed through the apparatus, it will again yield something of itself. This is what the old alchemists meant when they talked of the water changing into earth and of the waters becoming exhausted. By this means one knows that the germ is alive and is being nourished and that the waters, too, are living, and will remain so until the quantities at the start and at the end of this stage of the operation are found to be the same. When that happens the waters will be dead, having yielded

all their energy. In this way the written word and experience mutually enhance understanding; no real or lasting truth can be reached in any other way.

Influenced at the start of my labours by what I had read in ancient texts, I imagined that the First Matter extracted from the ground had to be nourished like a child and so I used to soak my plants at great length in dew before extracting the juice. I then fed my earth exclusively on this, believing that it could only stand liquid nourishment at this early stage—like a child which at the start is fed only on milk. Today I know that the Child referred to is the germ which is imprisoned in the matter of the *second degree* and whose task is to give birth to the mercury.

Of course I now know that one may proceed more quickly than I have done. One can speed the work up, for instance, by extracting black earth from the hollows of certain trees. One may also use minerals. I do not seek to devalue this alternative method, I say only that it was not my way and that I can claim no knowledge of it. Because it is quicker, it is more finely balanced and one can more easily go astray, particularly if one seeks to simplify alchemy by introducing elements of *chemistry*.

All chemists I have met and who have been interested in alchemy have in the end honestly convinced themselves that the symbolic terminology may be reconciled with the body of knowledge which they command: to take an example, they decide that sulphuric acid is the 'blood of the dragon'. In fact there is in alchemy something known as a 'sulphureous precipitate' but this is something quite different. To obtain it, one needs virginal liquors, to which one adds sulphur (which must be specially chosen). In a water bath, this forms a very useful liquor which may in fact be the 'blood of the dragon' but which is certainly not sulphuric acid, for one may put a drop of it on the tip of the tongue without experiencing any burning effect.

Naturally enough the contacts that I have made and the relations I have entered into with certain firms have

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given a fair number of researchers the 'corruption of peat' bug. Believing that the knowledge may be readily given and received, they jump the gun or proceed on a grand scale, sometimes with material gain in view. Instead of taking one or two kilos of earth, they start with 40 or 50, blissfully unaware of the considerable quantity of plants and dew which I had to gather and treat in twelve years' work on a mere kilo and 800 grammes of original matter. Here, as in every operation, the sense of proportion is vital and experience alone has the last word.

May 1969