

THE TEXT OF ALCHEMY AND THE SONGE-VERD.

INTRODUCTION.

Le Texte d'Alchimie et le Songe-Verd deserves to be rendered accessible to English-speaking students of the history of science because it is a reflective and well-reasoned exposition of the doctrine of the three principles (Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt) which dominated in one or another of its forms all knowledge of natural science from most primitive times up to the time of Robert Boyle and the rise of modern chemistry. As such treatises go, it is a remarkably clear exposition. Its interest is heightened by the fact that it is devoted entirely to a discussion of the theoretical aspects of the doctrine. Its author describes none of his own experiments, but expounds the doctrine in such manner that its devotees may make use of it for the elucidation of their own. Given the alchemist's description of his experiments, it is not always easy to deduce his doctrine; but, when his doctrine is given, his jargon quickly becomes intelligible.

Psychologists affirm that young children understand the meaning of *Yes* long before they have grown to any understanding of the meaning of *No*. If an object pleases them, they make a movement toward it, articulate a crude sound of affirmation, or in some other way indicate *Yes*. But for a time, if an object fails to arouse a yes-response from them, it meets only with an indifference, with a simple failure to be recognized; and it is only later in their development that it comes to meet with a definite aversion and *No*. Possibly this perception of the difference between *Yes* and *No* is the most important step in the growing acquaintance of the child with the natural subjective and objective world which lies before him for his observation. In the same way the beginnings of human knowledge are rooted in the observation of the contrary qualities

of things. Primitive minds were intrigued by the difference between positive and negative, active and passive, hot and cold, wet and dry, alive and dead, light and dark, etc. The first philosophy seems to have been that which pointed out, for every pair of opposites, the existence of a *third* in which the conflicting two were somehow summarized, reconciled, and restored to equilibrium. And primitive science consisted in the study of analogies, of similarities between pairs of contraries, and of reconciliations.

The study of opposites, by the artifice of assigning numbers to its terms, one for the positive, two for the negative, and three for the higher unity in which these two were embraced, by the observation that the unity designated by three was itself of a distinctly positive or negative character, and by the construction of still higher unities, led, long before Pythagoras, to the "Pythagorean" symbolism of numbers. Four, being the first number of the second set of triads, was the number which applied to the qualities of objects, and there were four elements and four temperaments. Because seven was the first number of the third (and first reconciling) set of triads the Babylonian priesthood found it convenient to distinguish seven principal heavenly bodies and to assign a deity to each—and bequeathed to future time the lore of the seven metals, etc., and determined for the twentieth century that we have seven days in the week. The study of opposites, developed into the symbolism of numbers, determined that the hour should be divided into sixty minutes and decided that ten was the only suitable number for the Commandments. In the brains of modern thinkers, the study of opposites has led to such things as Hegel's thesis, antithesis, and higher synthesis doctrine, to the Doctrine of Interpretation of Royce, and to his Great Community. Indeed, philosophy and science seem each to have had their beginning in observations of opposites and similarities, of conflicts and reconciliations.

The study of opposites led early to the habit of describing abstractly all natural objects in terms of the four qualities—hot, cold, wet, and dry. Any two of the four terms constituting these two pairs of opposites could be applied to the description of things: Fire was hot and dry, Earth was dry and cold, Water was cold and wet, and Air was moist and warm. All things were regarded as compounded of various proportions of these abstract elements (or embodiments of qualities), Fire, Earth, Water, and Air. The elements were not concrete things, actually present in objects, but

were spoken of as present because objects embodied the qualities of each. Anything that was liquid was water, aqua regia, aqua fortis, aqua vitæ, etc. Anything that was gaseous was air. And the four elements were primarily mental implements for the description of objects. By the higher synthesis of the four categories of description, the *quinta essentia* or quintessence was conceived.

Up to very recent times men of science have found it convenient, and common language still finds it convenient, to speak of things as igneous, aeriform, or earthy in their nature. Alcohol or "spirit of wine" is the quintessence of wine, and our extracts, flavors, and perfumes are "essences." The words derived from the doctrine of the four elements are exceedingly convenient for use and indeed have been used abundantly in scientific writings for many centuries. Yet that doctrine is not the simplest and most convenient way of considering the two pairs of opposite primary qualities. Each pair has one term which is positive in its nature, and one opposite to this which is negative. Thus hot and dry are positive, active, aggressive qualities, the qualities of the active principle, Sulphur. Sulphur is the igneous principle, the principle of action, of combustion, of aggression, of form. Cold and wet are negative, passive, indifferent, the qualities of the principle, Mercury, the "humid radicle," the passive principle of corporification. Salt is the higher synthesis of Sulphur and Mercury. All substances therefore are composed of the four elements and of the three principles; but *the elements are elements of description and the principles are principles of constitution.*

When the alchemist wrote that all substances were Salts composed of Sulphur and Mercury he did not mean that all substances were sulphides of mercury. He meant that they were the concrete embodiment of the group of qualities that he had defined as Sulphur and of those that he had defined as Mercury. His Sulphur is not the sulphur of the shops, as the author of the Text of Alchemy points out, nor his Mercury ordinary quicksilver. If he says that lead has more Mercury in it than brimstone, we may believe him if we accept his definitions. And it is only through a sympathetic understanding of their fundamental conceptions that we can estimate fairly the contributions to the progress of science of the alchemists who worked sincerely and thought clearly, but with inadequate intellectual implements. Much of their work serves no useful purpose for us nowadays. Neither does a Roman amphi-

theater serve for an aviation field. Yet the history of science is the history of the development of intellectual implements just as surely as the history of civilization is the history of their use.

Le Texte d'Alchymie et le Songe-Verd is not referred to in Hoefer's *Histoire de la Chimie* nor in the bibliography of alchemy and hermetism in A. E. White's *Lives of the Alchemistical Philosophers*. The only copy which I have seen is the one from which the present translation is made, a small volume published in Paris by Laurent d'Houry in 1695. On the reverse of the title-page the following is printed:

“Nostre Pierre est vegetale, parce qu'elle est le doux esprit croissant du germe de la vigne, joint l'œuvre premiere au corps fixe blanchoyant, ainsi qu'il dit au Songe-Verd; auquel après le Texte d'Alchymie, bien notablement est baillée la pratique de cette Pierre vegetale, à ceux qui sagement sçavent entendre la verité.' Trevisan dans sa Parole délaissée.”

The author of the preface of the work states that he has found the manuscript and has caused the work to be published for his brothers of the Society of the Rose-Cross. He points out that the Songe-Verd is referred to by Trevisan. This sets its date as earlier than 1490, which is the date of the death of Bernard de Trevisan. The Songe-Verd, he says, is ascribed by some to Trevisan and is supposed to have been written in German, others say that it was first written in Italian; for himself the only copy which he has seen was that in French which he has caused to be reprinted without alteration. The authorship of the work is therefore unknown. Yet the fact that it provides a key for the better understanding of alchemical writings is perhaps reason enough for bringing it to the attention of English readers.

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FIRST PART.

*Concerning the substance of the Stone of the Philosophers:
Concerning the nature of the Stone, and concerning
its essence.*

“In the beginning, God created the Heaven and the Earth. The Earth did not yet produce anything, and was

not inhabited, for it was environed about with darkness which covered the abysses; and the Spirit of God was borne upon the waters. God said, *Let there be light.*"

Whoever will understand thoroughly these words of Genesis will see that, since the beginning of the world, there has been one substance which can be known only if a light is made to dissipate the darkness which hides it from our eyes.

Man, not being able to make any substance for himself as he pleases (because it appertains only to God to make something out of nothing), can very well make a light for himself which will clarify his understanding for the discovery of the substance which is absolutely necessary to him for the accomplishment of his desires. But it is only through science that he can acquire this light; and it will not be without labor that he will acquire this science.

But, as he ought not to do anything without a purpose and a design, so ought he to seek all means to arrive at this end and to attain his desires. This being certain, the philosopher who directs his intentions toward the Philosophical Stone ought to seek the means to succeed in them. What are these means, if not first the knowledge of the substance—to handle it, and later to govern it and adapt it to his aim? Aristotle teaches us that the wise man must know not merely the things which come from principles but that he needs must have a knowledge of principles as well.

It is necessary, therefore, that those who know that the universal medicine is possible should know also the principles of it. And it is necessary that the philosopher should know the substance of the Philosophical Stone before beginning to undertake the search for it. But this true substance is a treasure so hidden that all the philosophers who have had it in their possession have made a great mystery of it, and, if they have written about it, they

have done so only in terms so obscure that it is well-nigh impossible to understand them. As for me who write without envy, I wish, my child, to make it known to you and to render it altogether sensible to you, provided you are ever so little a philosopher, and provided your intention is direct.

Come near, child of science; come and imbibe from me the treasure of that wisdom which contains the true substance of the Stone of the Sages. Learn, first, that our substance is not to be sought in that universal spirit which is contained in all that has been created. It is impossible for mortals to attain a point so elevated; and many err grossly who imagine that it is possible to reap for themselves a portion of this universal spirit which, containing all things, is not determined by anything in particular.

I have, however, seen persons, apparently of good sense, give themselves over to these imaginations. In times of heavy dew, they exposed to the air a conical glass vessel at the bottom of which there was a dry substance, previously dried and altered; and this was done in such manner, that, after a space of five or six hours, they found in their vessel some drops of water which this substance had attracted to itself. They evaporated this water in the sunlight, and there was left a red or reddish earth which they imagined to be the true incombustible Sulphur of the Philosophers or their male Mercury. But it was nothing else but the freer earthy parts of exhalations cooked up and dried by the heat of the sun, which, being sustained in the air by the vapors which opposed their fall, finally fell when these vapors fell: and this is justified by the fact that it was along with water that this powder was brought into the vessel.

There is no need to go so far to seek our substance. Reflect upon the uses to which it must be turned. These are, you say, to prepare the Philosophical Stone? This

is for purging all the metals, by giving them the color and fixity of gold. Learn, then, if you do not know it already, that *nature's pastime is nature, and nature contains nature, and nature knows how to surmount nature.* These words ought to be imprinted upon your understanding. Be assured (says the true Tourbe) that it is possible to tincture a metal only with a metal itself. But, as man cannot give away a thing which he does not have at his disposal or which has been taken away from him earlier, so a metal, whose color and fixity are intrinsic and which has only as much of these qualities as is needed to make it perfect itself, cannot render another metal perfect. For the perfect would lose somewhat of its degree of perfection by as much as it would augment that of the imperfect metal. This cannot be, since the color and fixity are such essential qualities of gold that it cannot be deprived of them without ceasing to be gold. There is, then, only the single powder of projection which can render the metals perfect, for it is known to possess the penetrating and tincturing virtues altogether superabundantly.

It is understood, then, that no substance except a metallic one can be the medicine of metals, for no nature is ever improved if not in its own nature. By these tokens, my child, never hope to find our substance if you seek it elsewhere than among the minerals. Take nature as your model of an habile worker; see how she makes the separation of substances according to their classes, how she knows how to observe the differences among the species. Open the entrails of the earth, and you will find there a child which is not yet formed. Have patience, if you do not understand me, for the time is not yet ripe for me to explain myself more clearly. See if you can understand any better all the sages who have treated of this substance. One says that it is nothing else but quicksilver exalted by art above ordinary quicksilver, another that the entire work

of philosophers is quicksilver alone, while Hermes teaches you that from our earth all the other elements were created, and Alphidius says that one substance only is needed—but he adds that this substance ought properly to be called water. Calidus teaches you that at the beginning of our work we have only to work on two substances merely; and Arnold of Villanova forbids the doing of anything except the digestion and cooking up of mercurial matter.

What, then, can you make of all these expressions, so different, yet all very true? When you are a little more advanced in the sciences you will understand us easily, for the spirit fortifies itself by labor and becomes penetrating by reading. He needs must have a good spirit (as Aristotle says) who would understand all things by himself. But, even so, it is not impossible to find minds sufficiently active and penetrating to learn science by themselves—and Galen, speaking of the beautiful discoveries that he made in medicine, says, "I have discovered all these things myself, having only my own natural light for a guide, and knowing that I would have fallen into a thousand errors if I had followed the Masters." The power of such an excellent understanding was acquired by reflecting on the meaning of the books that he had read.

For these reasons, read, and reflect upon your studies. If you find no sense in them read the same books again, then read others, as those that you will have read the first will be able to make you understand the last.

As for me, I claim that I explain myself clearly in the following pages of this work of mine. I am able to do so because I have three times prepared and consummated our blessed Stone; and if I had not known our substance ever since the first time as perfectly as I know it at present. I could not treat of it as perfectly as I do now—because one cannot be too wise to write of wisdom. And wisdom gives science.

You, then, who, being a lover of wisdom, wish to become perfectly wise, comport yourself with moderation in searching for the Stone of the Sages. Surely you already have some glimmering of this wisdom to which you aspire for the cognizance of our substance. Our substance is not a conversion of elements, for the elements cannot be truly converted from one into another nor can they change among themselves wholly—even though Aristotle does teach us that, if the heat in the air is superseded by the cold in it, water will be produced, because air is warm and wet, while water is cool and wet, and so, the heat being neutralized, water is formed. But this great philosopher did not teach that this apparent change is a real transmutation of elements, since it is very certain that the material which appears to change from air into water is by no means air but is water volatilized by the heat of the sun.

It is absolutely impossible to believe that cold can be changed to heat and heat to cold. And we must believe that the philosophers have talked about the elements of which the various substances are composed because in that way they could make known the qualities of the substances more clearly. It was in this sense that Hippocrates said, "Although the four elements, and especially Water and Fire, enter in the same amount into the composition of the body of man, the soul is very wise and provided with an excellent memory, but if the amount of Water exceed the amount of Fire, it becomes stupid and doltish."

Hippocrates, in speaking so, did not claim that a man can be made up out of a just proportion of the elements, but his design was to teach us that a man, to be of a praiseworthy disposition, and not to manifest any of the dominant passions which are contrary to wisdom, ought to be of a nature in the composition of which the elements, that is to say, the four qualities of cold, hot, dry, and wet, are equally concurrent.

To return, then, to our substance. It is very certain that it ought not to be sought in the universal spirit. Surely it is there, but art certainly cannot extract it. It is of the same material as the four elements, and, moreover, from them also it cannot be extracted.

Do not, therefore, break your head in making a thousand useless tests, such as sublimations, mortifications, putrefactions, solutions, digestions, calcinations, distillations, and so many others. And do not follow to the letter the passage of Aristotle that "chemists will never be able to change the form of the metals unless they reduce them to their first principle." That passage is very true, but I assure you that you ought never to attempt this reduction of the metals to their first principle, because it cannot be done except by means of the true solvent.

For this solvent is an agent which, being of a metallic nature, opens the bowels of the metal and penetrates it without breaking it up into all of its parts, and, finding our primary substance, it can make it perfect and convert it into pure gold, without acting upon the impure and foreign matters which are present, but rejecting them like useless and superfluous excrement.

It is, then, very evident that the substance of the Philosophers' Stone is of a purely metallic nature and, by this token, it ought not to be sought in subjects so distant as the universal spirit or the elements. And this substance can no more be extracted from any metal, although it is contained in the metal as in a strait and very strong prison.

There is no key except the great solvent which can open the metal and make our substance available; and whoever shall have this solvent shall have the entire matter in his hands without the need of any other substance. So it is that the great Hermes taught when he said that our substance is hidden in golden caskets.

To extract it, then, from a metal it would be necessary

to destroy the metal in all of its most simple and most delicate parts, a thing which is absolutely impossible, for these parts, being determined as matter, cannot assume any other form. There is need therefore to seek the means of having so perfect a knowledge of this substance that it will be possible to find it; and it is this that I will teach, with the help of the Lord, in the second part which follows.

End of the First Part.

SECOND PART.

How the true substance of the Stone can be known: Concerning the manner in which it must be sought, together with the infallible means of finding it ready prepared for use in the great work.

It would not be necessary to be a philosopher to understand our substance if it were really distinct, even though it were placed among all the different substances that nature uses for her different works; for it is so beautiful, so noble, so simple, so rare, and so perfect that if it existed by itself alone it would make itself to be distinguished by the grossest ignoramus. But it is not to be supposed that nature has produced it for us all naked and in the simplicity requisite for use in the great work—for it is absolutely impossible to render this substance visible and palpable if one does not already possess it by means of science. It is useless therefore to seek by experiments to find the science of which one must needs know the theory before being able to use the practice.

Consider nature well (says a great philosopher), see how she forms the metals in the ore. It is in the ore, then, that the metallic substance ought to be sought, since it is only in this place that the metal which nature aims to produce is formed. Seek rather the means of finding it, if you do not know what hides it and in what it is enveloped.

For if this rich substance were so easy to find where it is, some among all the many workers who work continually in the mines would have been able to run across it. And, we never see any of these people (who are rustics and without wisdom) who have had the good fortune to make so beautiful a discovery.

But to have this knowledge, it is not at all necessary to go and penetrate into the earth even to its center. That would be useless. Spend your time in learning how nature works in all that is before the eyes; for it is not without reason that it is said, *Nature makes clever*. In this way, the depths of all things are sounded, and a man makes himself capable of understanding the philosophers.

But if you take the way of the books only, although this path may be very good, it is nevertheless not altogether sure. How many people have spent their entire life in reading all the good philosophers, who have nevertheless lost their time and have not reaped any fruit from it. If art perfects nature, we must also admit that nature serves as a model for art. If you have not examined how plants are produced, will you be able to understand Mary the Prophetess in these words (which are always intelligible)?—"To make the metals, nature uses only heat and dryness which overcome the cold and the moisture of the Mercury," or that other philosopher?, who says that "nature, in the mine, uses only one substance which is pure mercurial substance, and that this substance contains in itself the live and incombustible Sulphur which can accomplish our work alone without the intervention of any other material."

You will not be able to understand anything of these established verities as long as you do not conceive the manner in which nature makes use of heat and dryness to overcome the cold and the moisture. These operations, however, are taking place continually before your eyes, and yet you cannot see them in the vegetables. When you

shall understand what takes place on the earth, then you will be able to ransack it even to the center to seek there the origin and the substance of the metals—for then you will be able to read the philosophers with profit and utility, you will learn in a short time how the substance which is nearest to the metals is itself purely metallic (since it is by it alone that all the metals are formed) and that it is not determined as such by any other substance.

It may have happened that nature who strives always for the advancement of what she has once commenced, being turned aside from her path by some foreign cause, made unformed metals or minerals. For example, if a mine were entirely opened, metals not yet finished would be found there; and because the opening of the mine had interrupted the action of nature, the metals would remain imperfect and would never be fulfilled, and all the metallic seed contained in this mine would lose its force and its virtue in such wise that it would become thankless and sterile.

For without a formal obstacle this clever worker strives always to render her productions perfect. Thus we see that monsters are produced only because some obstacle interrupts the course of nature in her operations; for, without some accident which turns her from her ordinary path, she will always achieve her works and will never fail in that end. If we take nature for our guide (says Cicero) we shall not be misled. Follow her, then, in the conduct of your works, and let your purpose be to imitate her in your designs. Do not go faster than she, and be no slower also to perform. Neglect nothing that she uses, whether as an instrument or as a substance, for this wise artificer uses in her works only what is absolutely necessary for her to succeed in them.

If you wish to add any perfection to her productions (as may easily be done), imitate her and make use, to

arrive at your end, of the same means that she used to make the beginning. Examine then with care whence is formed the metals. I tell you truly that in that consists the entire work of the sages. For, to know the root of the metals, you must scour the entire class of metallic things, from its end to its origin, and from its origin to its perfection, and by this speculation you will learn all the operations that you must make in the great work; you will know the Fire and the origin as well as understand the substance.

When by your study and your labor you are sure of your substance, you will know forthwith the manner of seeking it. That is to say, you will not work in vain on the metals and on the mineral where it is so greatly involved that it can be extracted only with long labor and great trouble—and, even when extracted, this substance will not yet be pure enough to be used in the great work.

Seek, then, among the minerals a substance prepared by nature herself to compose the metal. This substance is still crude, and, lacking decoction, it is not congealed; and it is only by a decoction of the true substance that a separation of the world from the unworldly is made, of the pure from the impure, of the perfect from the imperfect. Aristotle teaches us again—that all things which are determined to be perfect and which have remained imperfect because of lack of digestion may be rendered perfect by a continual digestion.

This is very easy to believe. Surely it is of more value to cook and digest a crude substance to bring it to entire maturity than to separate it from a body in which it is engaged for a long coction and which has acquired all of the qualities necessary to give it the base and solid foundation of a metal. Do we not aid nature when we cover plants with manure in which is a vegetable virtue which gives nourishment to trees, advances the fruits, and secures

for them a prompt maturity? We see even that if fruits are picked while still green we can make them ripen by exposing them to the sun or by leaving them in a warm place, but we do not see that the cleverest gardener has yet been able to bring about that a fruit too advanced or too mature should resume its earlier freshness or lose anything of its maturity. This operation would be contrary to nature.

It is for this reason that people will never succeed in bringing about that change: for to antagonize nature is to undertake something that cannot be accomplished. Is there anything which more resembles the war the giants waged against the gods than fighting against nature? asks Cicero. So, my child, observe exactly this wise directress in all that she does. Follow her everywhere from the uppermost airs even to the abysses of the earth. You will learn unheard-of marvels. Yours will be the privilege to claim to be one of the children of wisdom, and to be adopted as a son by the great Hermes. You will be called like him Trismegistus, that is to say, three times mage, or three times great, for you will possess entirely the knowledge of the mineral, of the vegetable, and of the animal. Then it will appertain to you to write and to spread your science, for God does not wish that your light should be hidden under a bushel. It is a greater fault in a wise man not to write and so to fail to share his doctrine with those who can have need of it, than it is for those who, although they are only ignorant persons, write with a passion to pass for wise. You know what punishment befell the lazy Servant for not having made the best of the talents which the Lord had given him.

If, then, you have any true knowledge, you ought to share it and to loan it out that you may receive returns from it to the hundredfold and even to the infinite. Without profanation or irreverence for sacred things, I can apply to our subject these words which are wholly divine

—*Seek, and you shall find, knock, and the gate shall be opened unto you.* The great Hermes said—“Since the knowledge of our Stone is a gift of God, I hold this science only by divine inspiration.” So then, my child, you, who are an investigator of wisdom and who seek truth in the true substance to arrive at the natural and universal philosophy, you ought to find this substance contained in a mineral which you will recognize easily by its weight, for it has the same volume as gold. The truth of nature is a truth which is hidden in the belly of this mineral.

Open the entrails of this mineral with a blade of steel, and make use of a gentle tongue, insinuating, flattering, caressing, moist, and ardent. By this artifice, you will render manifest what is hidden and occult. The father of all, the thelesme of all is here.

I advise you further, my child, in order that you may not wander in so beautiful a path, do not go beyond the limits of the class of metallic things—for nothing improves itself otherwise than in its own nature. But so wishing to avoid a false step, you can still err by seeking a substance too ripe and too advanced, which you will not be able to disengage without a confusion which will alter it and render it unfit for use.

The Sacred Scripture says of Saul that he was a child a year old when he commenced to reign. This was taking the scepter at an early hour and ruling his people at a very tender age. But it is at this age also that the soul accustoms itself readily to the habit of all the virtues. One cannot commence doing well too early. There is an age, which is that of youth, where one is susceptible to all the good impressions that are given him. It is at that time that the spirit is docile and conforms readily to the most beautiful actions which are proposed to it and which serve it for a model.

But when these young and tender years are past, this

docile spirit becomes turbulent and agitated by the various passions which wish to dominate it. It was this which impelled the Prophet-King to make this prayer—"Lord, do not recall me into the midst of the course of my days." And does not the sage teach us this truth? when he says—"I had claim to a good soul from my infancy, and I have since encountered a body blemished and badly tempered." The virtues and forces of a reasonable spirit find their perfections even if the body is infirm and debilitated. These words of Saint Paul can also be applied to tender youth. Jesus Christ has said well to his Disciples—"If you do not become as children, you will not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." In these passages, which are all spiritual, a sense can be found which has a bearing upon our substance, and the reader can find in them a double usefulness.

If you know this deserving and noble substance, you will have only to seek it to find it, and you will find it without fail in the earth and on the earth—but the freshest and newest is always the best. The earth has taken it to nurse. You ought to snatch the child away from the breast of its mother. It is necessary to deprive it of its natural nourishment to give it an artificial one; and, as it is impossible that this child will not have sucked with the milk some of the impurities of temperament of its nurse, you must have care to wash it, clean it, and purge it before accustoming it to a food other than that with which it was nourished formerly—and, although the change of diet ought to purge it, it will be necessary still for you to facilitate the effect of this purgation by additional preparations.

If this child does not suit you, and if you find it of an age already too advanced for it to be made to take another diet than that with which it has been accustomed to be nourished, open the breast of its mother with the blade of

steel, probe about in her entrails, and penetrate even into her womb. You will find our substance there, pure, not yet having taken any color from the evil temperament of its nurse. He who has undertaken our divine work (says Haly) without knowing the hour of its birth will reap only pain and affliction from it. Do not take this seed in its first origin. Remember that Saul was a year old when he commenced to reign. The instrument of art adds nothing new to nature in its origin.

Nature takes care of her works herself to form them, and, when they are so formed, then the air can blow and can work in harmony with this splendid worker, together to bring to perfection the work that she has commenced all alone. So, the philosopher, who shall find our deserving substance in its source and its first origin, will not be able to undertake to use it without corrupting the work of nature instead of giving it the perfection that he desires. But it is not so with the true philosophers who may wish to undertake our work.

It is necessary, then, to take the child which is going to be formed of our substance while it is still at the tender age which will give it the docility necessary to receive the first tincture of a very perfect metal. You will be able to bring it up easily by nourishing it with foods which are of the same nature as those with which it has always been nourished. If these foods are more indigestible than those which nature furnished it, it will be necessary to aid it to digest these foods by augmenting its natural heat with a foreign heat. So it will flourish in such wise that you will know that you have taken a good path and that whatever may arise will not be able to turn you aside from it. I assure you that this child will commence to reign sooner than did Saul; for the more adroitly the artifice is conducted the more nature works for herself—and she finds a greater facility in achieving what she has commenced

because art has flattened the road and has razed all the obstacles that can slow her progress.

It is for this reason that nature, not being able alone to accomplish the great work, does not fail to work at it conjointly with art and to pass the limits which are prescribed for her—because she finds no difficulty which forces her to stop at her ordinary boundary, the limits of which have now been extended.

Let us give thanks to God the All-powerful without the help of whom it is impossible to bring about these marvels.

End of the Second Part.

THIRD PART.

That the Substance declared in my second Part is the only one needed for the great work.

My child, I am not the only one who has declared the true substance to you. All the philosophers have written of it as well as I have, but in obscure and more shadowy terms. The reason you do not understand their writing is that they have not wished to observe in their books an order which would serve as a means of making them understood: certain ones have begun their treatises with the end of the subject, others with the middle, others with the projection, others with the multiplication, and one other has treated of the middle and of the end of the work and has expressly omitted its beginning. They have all affected a confusion—from which, however, it is not impossible to extract the whole truth; but before developing this chaos it behoves you to read only a few books (provided they are good ones). It is necessary to read them and re-read them without being disheartened, for if you do not understand them the first time you will understand them the tenth.

I swear to you on the faith of a philosopher that you will find by this means what you desire. Although this

way may appear tiresome to you, it is by so much the shorter, the surer, and the more comfortable—for all the experiments and all the practice, without a true knowledge and without a perfect theory, will not make you wise in our art. All possible sophistications will not instruct you in the least. Work according to the intentions of nature, follow the road that she has traced for you, and imitate her in all things. Nature makes clever.

Go, lazy man (says the Sage), take a lesson from the ant; look at his work and become wise at his example. Without having been taught or informed by any master, see how, during the summer, he lays aside his provision for the winter.

Go, likewise, examine in the mine and make the anatomy of the metal. Consider from what substance it is produced and of what it is formed. There is no seed more suitable to hasten the growth of the tree of wisdom and to sprout the fruit of the philosophers. The artist who intends to cultivate this plant ought then to be a good gardener. For this substance ought properly not to be called seed, but rather, root, a root which ought to be cultivated and much worked over to make it bear fruit. Do not therefore go in search of any other substance but this mineral root which is the true form of the metals.

In the vegetable kingdom, each herb, each plant, and each fruit produces its seed, which, being placed in the earth which is suited to it as its proper matrix, alters, ferments, and opens by a very gentle digestion produced by the external heat which, by the movement and influence of the celestial bodies, warming all bodies and causing in them an internal movement, excites in them this natural heat which consumes the food which is introduced by this exterior movement and makes them produce a germ which has the virtue of sprouting, growing, and multiplying.

Here is the true cause of the growth, maturity, and

advancement of plants; here is that which is the vegetable soul, that substance of which nature makes use in her ordinary productions. By this means you will be able to understand the sperms, the seeds, the roots, and the substances of all things, which sperms and seeds are produced each according to its kind, and each in its turn, being contained in a fecund womb which is suited to it, reproduces its kind—a thing which comes about as a perpetual revolution and reproduction.

It is so that the masculine sperm, encountering in the female a sperm of its nature, joins with it: they become incorporated and unite themselves inseparably, although they have different qualities, the one being warm and wet and the other cold and dry, the one being the agent and the other the patient, the womb which contains them being an earth of their nature. But who does not know that nature fertilizes nature, and that this seed, being retained in a place which pleases it, is augmented by a sanguine humor which is borne to it, to maintain it, by a gentle and penetrating heat, and which, serving it for a food, makes it enlarge and flourish.

For this humor, being digested by the internal heat of the womb and by that which it contains in itself, is changed to an intermediary substance which joins to the seed all the other sanguine humors that it gains and of which it makes use to enlarge and to augment an embryo which comes entirely from the substance of the mother—the masculine sperm serving only to maintain internally the heat which by a coction makes this humor of its own nature, separating and rejecting the heterogeneous humors which remain longer to serve as a warm bath in which the womb keeps and finds the heat that it needs for the formation of the animal that it contains. It is so that all animals are formed, each having in itself a seed which it produces of itself. Instinct and reason give it the means of placing it in a

suitable place where it can germinate for the conservation of the kind from which it is produced.

You see, then, by this reasoning that it would be in vain for an artist to undertake to work on the seed of a vegetable to make an animal, and that he would succeed still less who would use the seed of an animal to form a metal out of it. Each class has its common substance which is proper to it, and which cannot serve the purposes of any other class. Each species has its particular substance which gives it a different form. It is impossible then to change from one class to another—and from an animal a metal cannot be made.

But I do not believe that it is absolutely impossible to convert one species into another; because a seed, being altered by certain accidents, as by some impurity contracted in the womb, can very well degenerate from the species from which it was produced and can become changed into another less perfect, and in the same way, from the less to the greater, by some accident which might dignify the seed. If this has sometimes happened, as is very certain, then the thing is not impossible—but it is very extraordinary.

Windy persons please themselves by making alterations, compositions, and mixtures which they call transmutations. They congeal (they say) quicksilver either by amalgamating it with minerals or marcasites by coction, or with metals by fumigation, or by the juice of certain plants by digestion. But let them alone; they will not abuse those who have read our books. It is not from common quicksilver that they have struck this substance which can become only as quick and as slippery as it was before they worked on it. This is not a true congelation. These are all sophistications which are amusing to fools and ignoramuses.

The true children of science set themselves all only

toward the great work. Here is the end of their desires and the accomplishment of their hopes. Do not amuse yourself therefore with these bagatelles, my child: it is losing time to extract the Mercury of the metals, such as that of lead, of tin, etc. That of antimony by which I set great value will be of no service to you. I tell you this in good faith, for, before having acquired a perfect knowledge of the mineral substance, I worked like the others on all of the substances, although always contrary to my wishes, for I was associated with people who wished to follow only their own sentiment and who listened merely to mine—for which, evil has overtaken them. I saw clearly that they were in error and that they did not work on the true substance—for it is not enough to take care not to work on an altogether foreign substance, it is necessary to think of finding the nearest one.

A gardener for example can very well make a pear-tree produce apples and plums, but he will never be able with all his industry to bring about that a walnut-tree should produce pumpkins, that a vine should bear cherries, and that a fig-tree should produce mulberries. Aristotle assures us that the substance of the metals is quicksilver congealed and cooked up by a manner of coction. Still it is not saying anything to say so—for this quicksilver is not that which is sold in the shops, although, for wise men, it is as common as water.

It is this which has caused a great man to say that the philosopher recognizes our Stone even in a dung-heap, and that the ignorant person is not able either to believe or to understand that it is present in gold. The Stone perfects itself of itself, and it achieves itself in the only metallic substance. These words are very true; moreover they are taken from the *Code of Truth*. Other philosophers assure us that, in all the work, there is need only of Mercury and of fire, for the beginning, for the middle,

and for the end. All these passages appear very clear. However, I, who understand them as he does who wrote them—since I have held in my hands three times this substance so rare and yet so common, and since I have achieved this blessed Stone three times—I warn you not to let yourself be seduced by the apparent sense of these beautiful words. The truth is contained in them, but not in a manner to be found by following these words to the letter.

I find that Avicenna wrote more clearly of it when he said that our substance involves the gall, the excrement, and the putridity of the sun and the moon. Weigh these words well, for in them is contained not only the true substance but even the entire rule for the work. Solomon says that he who parades the treasures of wisdom before the eyes of a fool is speaking to a man stupefied by a profound sleep. By this token then, that man, who shall not understand either my words, which are very easy to understand and very true, or those of all the philosophers which I have mentioned in this work of mine, by this token I say, that man does not despair—for a time will come when the shadows which envelop his understanding will be dissipated by the continual and assiduous reading of the true philosophers.

It is true, then, without any lie, very certain, and very veritable, that the substance with which one ought to undertake to bring about the transmutation of the metals is a substance of pure metallic essence, and that it will be impossible to succeed in perfecting the great work by means of any other substance but this. By so much you ought to be persuaded that this quintessence of the metals can be found only at the source of the metals, where the mineral spirit is—pure, acting on the wet and the dry by a heat which actuates it without cessation and maintains in it a circular movement in all the parts of the dry and the wet. And it is this heat which makes the water dry up, com-

municating a part of its humidity to an arid and altered earth. It is also by means of this heat that this earth is dampened, not merely on the outside, but is even penetrated and aroused inwardly by a nourishing moisture which manures it, makes it fertile, and gives it the virtue of producing, germinating, and multiplying.

It is so that the vegetable spirit is formed. It is by this substance that it is maintained and lives; it is this that gives it the soul. But this effective spirit, subtle and rare, cannot be extracted in its purity nor in its simplicity; we cannot see it or handle it; it is not invested with bodily form. But it is of those forms so little material, that, far from resisting the activity of this spirit, it rather excites its movement and its action in serving it for a subject to be reduced to the species from which they have been produced. So this spirit, finding itself in the bowels of the earth, surrounded by confused qualities of moisture and dryness, and being retained in a space from which it cannot escape because metallic bodies which are heavy, hard, and opaque surround it on all sides, it is constrained to reflect upon itself, and, in its revolutions and circular reflections, it detaches and carries with it certain parts of a subtle earth to which it communicates its movement by penetrating it with its heat.

It is this earth to which the philosophers have given the name of incombustible Sulphur, and if you examine its nature well you will find that it cannot by any means be submitted to the action of fire—for it is itself only dryness and warmth which are the proper qualities of that element. But as this Sulphur, containing the spirit which has given it its quality, augments its movement, it makes it violent and rapid, and carries along with itself a cruder substance which was that with which it became charged when it had not yet acquired so much force. This substance is a moisture which is transparent and subtle at first, and then

later, in passing through the veins of metallic earth, becomes contaminated with certain excrements which make it thick and viscous. But this latter water, or rather, oil which, being composed of an earth and of a water less pure than the first, joining with them and retarding the movement of the spirit which penetrates them forms a thick, slow, and heavy substance which contains in itself all the properties necessary to receive a metallic form and which can be pushed and exalted to a supreme degree.

This is the Mercury of the philosophers that none of them have ever wished to declare openly. This is the substance that nature has given us all ready to cook and digest, to putrify, and to ferment, to get it into a condition to germinate, to thrive, to grow, and to multiply. It is nothing in the world but this substance. By this token, my child, you ought not to seek anything else but it.

This is our double Mercury, this substance white on the outside and red on the inside. It is of this that the philosophers have intended to speak when they have said that it is necessary to whiten the red and to redden the white, for the beginning and end of the work consists only in that. It is in this Mercury that the true Sulphur of the philosophers is contained, which aids the artist to perfection it and without which a man would lose his time, his pains, and his work. Our Sulphur is not vulgar (say the philosophers), but it is fixed and does not volatilize. It is of a mercurial nature and of no other.

Therefore, my child, you see very well that I have declared all to you when I have made you understand in what manner our Sulphur is contained in the belly of the Mercury, and that it is correct to call it internal Sulphur or hidden Spirit, which is no other thing than heat and dryness acting on the cold and the moisture, acting on the patient, the pure mercurial substance of which the Sulphur is the soul, since it is it which vivifies and sustains the

Mercury which would be, without our Sulphur, only a dead, unfruitful, and sterile earth. There is, then, good reason to say that Sulphur and Mercury are the proper and true substances of the metals. But we do not say that the Sulphur and the Mercury are the true substances of the metals, because it is very certain that this Sulphur cannot be without Mercury and that our Mercury cannot be without this Sulphur which is intimately united and incorporated with it, as the soul is with the body.

These two names of Mercury and of Sulphur are only names for one single substance which we know under the name of Quicksilver, or Mercury. This is the only name which can suit it perfectly since all of the philosophers are in agreement about it. It is fitting that the sages should impose names upon things since they know the qualities, the virtues, and the properties of them, the name being (as Plato says) the instrument with which the substances of things are designated and discerned. Then, to give convenient names to things, it is necessary to know them perfectly; and no one has this perfect knowledge if the true philosopher doesn't.

Conceive, then, at present that our true substance is not only of the essence of Mercury but that it is also strictly mercurial matter, and that there can be no other name which fits it but the name of Mercury. And by that, you see that the philosophers were right in saying that their Mercury is not the common mercury, that it cannot be found upon the earth, that it is everywhere and in all things, that, however, it does not manifest itself. All the different expressions have now no further need of explanation; they are not contradictory in any respect to all that you have just learned. Therefore make manifest what is hidden and make occult that which is manifest. I tell you, in that alone consists the work of the sages. Our gum curdles our milk, and our milk dissolves our gum, and they grow

in the Stone of Paradise, which Stone is of two contrary natures, that is to say, of the natures of Fire and of Water.

All that I have written above ought to have opened your understanding for the intelligence of the philosophers—for I have explained to you altogether well and have given you to understand what our Sulphur is, that the philosophers have also called Gum, Oil, Sun, Fixity, Red-Stone, Curd, Safran, Poppy, Red-Brass, Tincture, Dry, Fire, Spirit, Agent, Soul, Blood, Burned-Brass, Red-Man, and Quick-Earth. I have also given you a clear and concise explanation of that which the philosophers name Water, Milk, White-Wrapper, White-Manna, White-Urine, Cold, Moisture which does not dampen, Body, Womb, Moon, White-Woman, Changing-Habit, volatile, patient, Virginal-Milk, Lead, Glass, White-Flower, Flower of salt, Fleece, Veil, Venom, Alum, Vitriol, Air, Wind, Rainbow, Naked Woman, and so many other names, which are only for the purpose of making us conceive the qualities, properties, and the two natures of male and of female contained in our substance, which is nothing else but animated Quicksilver. It is this viscous moisture mixed with its earthy part, our Mercury, and the true foundation of all our science.

It is in this great number of terms that the wise men have taken pleasure in writing their sentiment relative to our science. All these names ought to convince you of the truth of our science for all of them have only one meaning and all of them have for their purpose only to expose the hermaphroditic Mercury to us. It is feminine if it is considered as separated from the Sulphur which it contains within it and of which it is the substance; but it is masculine if it is considered according to its Sulphur with which it is united so intimately that it cannot be separated from it; and it can be said of their marriage that they are both of them in the same skin.

It has, therefore, this double force which gives it the active virtues and the passive, and enables it to perfect itself of itself. God has preferred our true Sulphur (says Solomon) to all the things which are under the heavens. In our Mercury (says a great philosopher) there is a live and incombustible Sulphur which accomplishes our work alone without any other substance but its proper self. If this substance is so powerful, why (you will ask me) does it not perfection itself of itself with nature, seeing that it is in its proper matrix and that it finds food there of its own substance and a heat suitable to aid the virtue that it has of being pushed to the highest degree of perfection, which degree is the Philosophers' Stone?

I am charmed to instruct you (my child) since you do not raise this objection. It is a mark that you are a true lover of the sciences, that you are curious to penetrate and to sound the secrets of nature, and that you wish to go farther than the knowledge which the reading that you have done up to the present has given you. But learn that it is only by degrees, by long labor and much patience, that one can arrive at the summit of wisdom. That man who loosens the bridle to his desires is no longer the master of them in the consequence.

Tertullian teaches us that the accomplishment of a desire brings with it inseparably the beginning of another. So they come in crowds when no bounds are prescribed for them, they blind the understanding and make themselves entirely masters of the reason. They become disordered, and no one ought any longer to hope for any good issue from them. And David teaches us that a desire of this nature can have only a bad end. However, I am willing to satisfy the question which you have put to me, a question which seems to me to be not altogether beside the point.

The sovereign Ruler of Heaven and Earth, by the omnipotence through which all things were created, has given virtues, qualities, and powers to all things here below as has pleased his infinite wisdom and as he has found good—and it does not appertain to us to penetrate the secrets of divine Providence which are beyond the scope and conception of all human understanding. He has therefore prescribed bounds, rules, and limits to all created beings, and to nature even; and it is not in their power to pass beyond them.

So the power of nature in the mineral world has been limited in such manner that she can push the seed of the metals only as far as the accomplishment of gold, and no farther; the Lord having withheld the rest as a recompense for the just who shall employ themselves in cultivating the sciences and in achieving the Tree of Wisdom whose fruits are the great Elixir, our blessed Stone, and the universal Medicine.

Now (my child) that your curiosity has been satisfied on what you desired to know, do not embarrass your spirit in the sciences which are out of your scope. I have set you in a good road; follow it always, and do not take it into your head to take lanes and by-ways, believing to shorten your work and to arrive sooner at the end of your desires. You would make a great mistake to do so—for it is only the great road which leads to the great work. The beginning is a little rude, rugged, and difficult to take, but the farther one goes, the more it smoothes out and the more beautiful discoveries he makes. As you follow this road cast your eye to the right and to the left—you will see only beauties and marvels; and, if you look back, you will see that the country where you are is a thousand times more agreeable than that through which you have passed. But if you cast your eyes far ahead into a country very distant from that where you are, take care not to lose your

sight by forcing it to see things to which it cannot pay adequate attention. Continue always to advance along your road, and in due time your curiosity will be satisfied.

But, if you take some other route, thinking by its means to arrive at the place where you propose to go, I assure you that you will be misled, and that, the farther you advance in these by-ways, the farther you will be from the great and veritable road, in such sort that you will find yourself altogether bewildered and will not be able to find any more the true road that you had taken at first.

I believe that I have explained myself amply enough with reference to our substance. I have fortified my reasoning with the authority of the best philosophers to make it understood that the substance on which one ought to work to accomplish the great work is nothing other than animated Mercury: That nothing else in the world but this single and unique substance can serve as medicine for the metals when it is set in operation by a wise artist who, following the intention of nature in the regulation of this substance, shall lead it without any difficulty to the requisite perfection. It is that (my dear child) that I desire with all my heart that you shall be able to accomplish. You will have in this world a foretaste of the felicity with which God will recompense, after this life, those who shall have accomplished suitably his divine Law by adoring him in spirit and in truth, and by loving their neighbor as themselves—all of the Christian and moral virtues being contained in these two articles.

End of the Third Part.

FOURTH PART OR THE SONGE-VERD.

Credible and true, because it contains truth.

In this dream all appears sublime. The apparent sense is not unsuited to that which it hides from us. The truth

shines there with such brilliancy that there is no trouble in discovering it behind the veil which, it is claimed, serves to disguise it from us.

I was buried in a very profound sleep when it seemed to me that I saw a statue, about fifteen feet high or thereabouts, representing a venerable old man, beautiful, and perfectly well proportioned in all parts of his body. He had abundant wavy hair of silver; his eyes were of fine turquoises in the center of which carbuncles were inlaid whose radiance was so brilliant that I was not able to sustain the light of them. His lips were of gold, his teeth of Oriental pearls, and all the rest of his body was made up of a very brilliant ruby. With his left foot he touched a terrestrial globe which seemed to sustain him. Having his right arm raised and extended, he seemed to support, with the end of his finger, a celestial globe above his head. And in his left hand he held a key made of a large, rough diamond.

This man approached me and said—"I am the Genius of the Sages; do not be afraid to follow me." Then, seizing my hair with the hand in which he held the key, he lifted me up and carried me through the three regions of the Air, of the Fire, and of the Planetary Heavens. He carried me still farther, well beyond that place, and then, after I had been enveloped in a whirlwind, he disappeared—and I found myself on an isle floating on a sea of blood. Surprised at being in so remote a country, I went for a walk on the beach; and, considering this sea with great attention, I perceived that the blood of which it was composed was quick and warm. I remarked even that a very gentle wind which agitated it without cessation maintained its warmth and excited in this sea a bubbling which caused throughout the isle an almost imperceptible movement.

Charmed with admiration at the sight of such extra-

ordinary things, I was reflecting on so many marvels when I perceived a large number of persons at my side. At first I imagined only that they intended to maltreat me, and I slid under a clump of jasmines to hide myself. But the odor of the flowers made me fall asleep, and they found me and seized me. The largest of the band, who seemed to me to command the others, asked me with a fierce air what had made me so reckless as to come from the low countries into this very high empire. I recounted to him the manner in which I had been transported, and immediately he changed his tone, his air, and his manner, and he said to me—"Be welcome, thou, who hast been conducted here by our very-high and very-powerful Genius." Then he saluted me, and all the others followed his example, in the fashion of their country, which is to lie down flat upon the back, then to turn over onto the belly, and to get up. I returned their salute—but according to the fashion of my country. He promised to present me to the Hagacestaur, who is their emperor. He asked me to excuse him because he had no carriage to carry me to the City, which was a good league distant from the place where we were. Along the road he entertained me only with an account of the power and of the grandeurs of their Hagacestaur, who he said possessed seven kingdoms and had chosen that one which was in the midst of the six other as his ordinary place of residence.

As he saw that I was having difficulty in walking upon the lilies, roses, jasmines, carnations, tuberoses, and upon the prodigious quantity of the most beautiful and most curious flowers which grew even in the roads, he asked me smilingly if I was afraid of doing any harm to these plants. I answered that I knew very well that they had no sensitive soul, but that, as they were very rare in my country, I had a repugnance about trampling them under my feet.

Seeing in the entire country only flowers and fruits, I asked him where their grain was sowed. He answered me that it was not sowed, but that it grew wild in large quantities in the sterile lands, that the Hagacestaur had the large part of it thrown down into the low countries to give us pleasure, and that the animals ate what was left. As for them, they made their bread of the most beautiful flowers, which they ground up with dew and cooked in the sun. As I saw everywhere such a prodigious quantity of very beautiful fruits, I was curious to pick some pears and to taste of them, but he wished to prevent me saying that it was only the animals who ate them. I found them, however, of an admirable taste. He presented me with peaches, melons and figs—and fruits of so good a taste were never seen in Provence, in all of Italy, or in Greece. He swore to me by the Hagacestaur that these fruits came to be of their own accord and that they were not cultivated, assuring me that the people ate nothing else but their bread.

I asked him how they were able to preserve these flowers and fruits during the winter. He told me that they had no knowledge of winters, that their years had only three seasons, namely, spring, summer, and that of these two seasons a third was formed, namely, autumn which shut up in the body of the fruits the spirit of spring and the soul of summer, and that it was in this season that the grape and the pomegranate were gathered, which were the best fruits of the country.

He appeared greatly astonished when I told him that we were accustomed to eat beef, mutton, game, fish, and other animals. He said that we ought to have a very gross understanding since we used such material foods. It did not tire me in the least to listen to such beautiful and such curious things, and I listened to them with great attention and was diverted from considering the aspect of the City from which we were now no farther distant than a hundred

paces. I had no sooner raised my eyes to look at it than I saw nothing whatever, and I became blind—at which my conductor began to laugh and his companions likewise.

The vexation of seeing that these gentlemen were amused at my accident caused me more pain than my misfortune itself. Seeing then plainly that their manners did not please me, that one who had always taken care to entertain me consoled me, telling me to have a little patience and I would see clearly in a moment. Then he went and sought an herb with which he rubbed my eyes, and forthwith I saw the light and the radiance of the superb City all of whose houses were made of very pure crystal—that the sun shone continually, for in this isle there was never night. They did not wish to allow me to enter any of these houses, but they were willing enough that I should see what was going on on the other side of the walls, which were transparent. I examined the first house. They were all built according to the same model. I remarked that their accommodations consisted only of a single story, made up of three apartments, each apartment having many chambers and spacious closets.

In the first apartment there was seen a hall ornamented with a damask tapestry decorated with gold lace and bordered with a crape of the same material. The color of the base of this fabric was changing red and green, enhanced with fine silver, and the whole was covered with a white gloss. Further along there were several closets containing jewels of different colors; and further there was discovered a chamber fitted out entirely in a beautiful black velvet which was decorated with many bands of very black and very lustrous satin, the whole being raised upon a jet structure whose blackness was brilliant and very radiant.

In the second apartment there was seen a chamber draped with white, wavy watered-silk enriched and relieved with very fine Oriental mother-of-pearl. There were

also many closets embellished with furniture of many colors, as blue satin, violet damask, citron-colored watered-silk, and flesh-colored taffetas.

In the third apartment there was a room adorned with very brilliant upholstery, of purple on a background of gold, more beautiful and richer without comparison than all the other fabrics I had just seen.

I asked where the master and mistress of the lodging were, and I was told that they were hidden in the back of this room, and that they would pass, in due time, into another which was separated from this one only by certain communicating closets, and that the furnishings of these closets were of all the different colors, some being of a cloth of the color of isabelle, others of a lemon-colored watered-silk, and others of a brocade of very pure and very fine gold.

I could not see the fourth apartment because it was necessarily out of the way; but I was told that it consisted only of a single room the furnishings of which were only a tissue of the purest sunbeams concentrated in this purple fabric at which I had just been looking.

After I had seen all these curiosities, I was informed how marriages were made among the inhabitants of the isle. The Hagacestaur, having a very perfect knowledge of the humors and of the temperament of all his subjects from the greatest to the least, assembled the nearest relatives, and put a pure and neat young girl with a good, healthy, and vigorous old man. Then he purged and purified the girl, he washed and cleaned the old man, who offered his hand to the girl, and the girl took the hand of the old man. Then they were led into one of these lodgings and the door was sealed with the same materials as those of which the lodging was built. And they were obliged to remain so locked up together for nine months entire, during which time they made the beautiful furnishings that had been shown to

me. At the end of this term they came out, both of them united in one body and having only one soul. They are then no longer but one, whose power is very great upon the earth—and the Hagacestaur uses this power to convert all of the evil ones who are in his seven kingdoms.

I was promised that I should be taken into the palace of the Hagacestaur, to be shown the apartments in it, and one hall among others where there are four statues as ancient as the world—and that which is placed in the midst of them is the powerful Seganissegedé, who had brought me to the isle. The three others which form a triangle about him are three women, to wit, Ellugaté, Linemalore, and Trip-sarecopsem. I was promised also that I would be shown their temple, where there is a figure of their Divinity which they call Elesel Vassergusine. But the cocks beginning to sing, the shepherds leading their troops to the fields, and the laborers yoking their teams, made so great a noise that they awakened me, and my dream was dissipated entirely.

All that I had seen up to then was nothing in comparison with that which it was promised I would be shown. In order to console myself, however, I have only to reflect on that celestial empire where the All-powerful appears seated on his throne environed with glory and accompanied by angels, archangels, cherubims, seraphims, thrones, and dominions. It is there that we shall see what the eye has never seen, that we shall hear what the ear has never heard—since it is in this place that we shall taste an eternal felicity that God himself has promised to all those who strive to make themselves worthy of it, having all been created to participate in this glory. Let us then make all our efforts to merit it. *Praised be God.*

End of the Songe-Verd.