

Nicolas Flammell's Summary of Philosophy.

He that desires to know how Metals are transmuted, he must know from what Matter they are, and how they be formed in their Minerals; and lest herein we err, we must see and observe the transmutations as in the Veins of the Earth. Minerals out of the Earth may be changed, if they be before spiritualized, that they may come into their *Sulphur* and *Argent vive* Nature; these are the two Sperms, the one Masculine, the other Feminine complexions, and these are composed of the Elements: the Male *Sulphur*, is nothing but Fire and Air; and true *Sulphur* is as a Fire, but not the Vulgar, which is of no Metallick substance; the Feminine Sperm, called *Argent vive*, is nothing but Earth and Water. These two Sperms, old wise men called *two Dragons*, or *Serpents*, the one is winged, the other not; *Sulphur* not flying the Fire, is without wings; the winged Serpent, is *Argent vive* born up by the Wind, therefore in her certain hour she flies from the Fire, being inconstant in it; but if these two Sperms, separated from themselves, be united again by triumphing Nature in the Book of *Mercury*, which is the Fire Metalline, then united it is called of Philosophers *the flying Dragon*, because the Dragon kindled by his Fire, while he flies, by little and little spreads his Fire and poisonous Vapours into the Air: the same thing does *Mercury*, which placed upon an exterior Fire, being in his place in a Vessel, sets on fire his inside, which is hidden in his profundity; and then may any one see how the external Fire does inflame the natural of *Mercury* and shall see a poisonous Vapour to break out into the Air, which shall be of such a stinking and pernicious poison, which is nothing else but the Head of the Dragon, which speedily went out of *Babylon*. But other Philosophers having compared this *Mercury* with the *flying Lion*, because a Lion devours many Creatures, and recreates himself with his voracity, these things excepted that resist his violent fury; so also does *Mercury*, which has in himself such an operation, that it spoils a Metal of his form, and devours it: *Mercury* too much inflamed, devours and hides Metals in his belly; but which of them soever it be, it's certain it is not consumed in his belly, for in their Nature they are perfect, and more than he indurate: but *Mercury* has in him a substance of perfecting *Sol* and *Lune*, and all imperfect Metals come from *Mercury*, therefore the Ancients called it the *Mother of Metals*; thence it follows, where he is formed to anything, he has in him a double Metallick substance.

And first the substance of the interior, then of the *Sun*, which is not like the other Metals; of these two substances *Mercury* is formed, which in his Body is spiritually nourished: so soon therefore as Nature has formed *Mercury* of the two mentioned Spirits, then it labours to make them perfect and corporeal; but when the Spirits are of growth, and the two Sperms awakened, then they desire to assume their own Bodies: which done, *Mercury* the Mother must dye, which being thus naturally mortified, cannot quicken itself again as before.

Some arrogant Chymists endeavour in obscure words to affirm, that we ought to transmute perfect and imperfect Bodies into running *Mercury*; but a Serpent lies in the Herbs: it's true, that *Mercury* may transmute an imperfect Body, as Lead, or Tin, and may without labour multiply in a quantity, but thereby it loses its own perfection, and may no more for this reason be *Mercury*; but if by Art it might be mortified, that it might no more vivify itself, then it would be changed into anything, as in Cinnabar or Sublimate is done; for when it is by Art coagulated, whether sooner or later it be done, then his two Bodies assume not a fixed Body, neither are like to conserve it, as we may see in the pores of the Earth. But lest anyone should err, there are in the Veins of Lead some fixed grains of *Sol* or *Lune*, in substance or nourishment: the first coagulation of *Mercury*, is the Mine of Lead, and most fit and commodious it is to bring him unto perfection and fixation; for the Mine of Lead is not without a fixed grain of Gold, and which grain Nature did impart: so in itself it may be multiplied, whereby it may come to perfection and plenary virtue, as I have tried and may affirm.

Also so long as it is not separated from his Mine, that is, from his *Mercury*, but well kept, for every Metal that is in his Mine, the same is a *Mercury*, then may it multiply itself, so it may have substance from his *Mercury*; then will it be like some green immature Fruit on a Tree, which the Blossom being past, is made into Fruit, and then the Apple: but if any should crop away the immature Fruit; then his first forming would be corrupted, because man knows not how to give substance or maturity, as internal Nature, while the Fruit yet hangs on the Tree, and may have substance and nourishment from Nature; for so long as maturity is expected, so long the Fruit draws sap or liquor, and that by augmentation and nourishment, till it comes to perfect maturity. So is it with *Sol*, for if by Nature a grain be made, and it is reduced to his *Mercury*, then also by the same it is daily after an incessant manner sustained and reduced into his place, *Mercury* as he is in himself; and then must you expect till he shall obtain some substance from his *Mercury*, as it happens in Fruits of Trees: for as the *Mercury* of both perfect and imperfect Bodies is a Tree, so they can have no more nourishment, otherwise than from their own *Mercury*. If therefore you would gather from *Mercury* Fruit, which is shining *Sol* and *Lune*, if it be that they be not far disjoined, so that it be without long delay, then think not you as Nature did in the beginning, you will again conjoin and multiply, and may without change augment them.

For if Metals be separated from their Mine, then they (like the Fruit of Trees too soon gathered) never come to their perfection; as Nature and Experience makes it appear, that if a Pear or Apple be once plucked from the Tree, it would then be a great folly, if any should again fasten it to the Tree, and thence expect maturity; for Experience witnesses, the more it is handled, the more it withers. And so it is with Metals, for if any would take Vulgar *Sol* and *Lune*, and endeavour to reduce them into *Mercury*, he would altogether play the Fool, for no subtle Art is there to be found, whereby he might not deceive him; although many Waters and Cements, or infinite things of that kind he should use, he would daily err, and that would happen to him,

that does them who would tie unripe Fruits to their Trees. Although some Philosophers have said well and truly, if *Sol* and *Lune* by a right *Mercury* be rightly conjoined, that then they will make all imperfect Metals perfect; yet in this most men have failed, who having these three, Vegetables, Animals and Minerals, which in one thing are conjoined; for they regard not, that Philosophers speak not of Vulgar *Sol*, *Lune*, and *Mercury*, which are all dead, and receive no more substance from Nature, but remain in their own Essence, and can help none other into perfection: they are Fruits plucked off from their Trees before their time, and are therefore of no account, they having nothing more than what they want. Therefore seek the Fruit in the Tree that leads you straight unto them, whose Fruit is daily made greater with increase, so long as the Tree holds it forth; and this work seen, is great joy; by this means any may transplant this Tree, without gathering his Fruit, and then transport him into moister, better, and more fruitful places, which in one day may give more nourishment to the Fruit, than it received otherwise in an hundred years.

In this therefore it is understood, that *Mercury* the much commended Tree must be taken, who has in his power indissolvably *Sol* and *Lune*, and then transplant him into another Soil nearer the Sun, that thence he may gain amicable utility, in which thing Dew does abundantly suffice; for where he was placed before, he was so weakened by wind and cold, that little Fruit was expected from him, where he long stood and brought forth no Fruit at all.

For indeed the Philosophers have a Garden, where the Sun as well morning as evening remains with a most sweet Dew without ceasing, with which it is sprinkled and moistened; whose Earth bringeth forth Trees and Fruits, which from thence are planted; who also receive descent and nourishment from the pleasant Meads. And this is done daily, and there they be both corroborated and quickened, and do not fade; and this more in one year, than in a thousand where the cold infects them.

Take them therefore, and night and day cherish them in a Stillatory upon the Fire; but not with a Wood Fire, or Coal Fire, but in a clear transparent Fire, not unlike the Sun, which is never hotter than is requisite, but should be always alike; for a Vapour is the Dew and the Seed of Metals, which ought not to be altered.

We see Fruits if they be too hot with no Dew, they abide on the boughs without perfection, but if heat and moderate moisture sustain them on their Trees, then they prove elegant and fruitful: for heat and moisture are the Elements of all Earthly things, Animals, Vegetables and Minerals.

Therefore Coal Fires and Wood Fires help not Metals; those are violent Fires, that nourish not as the heat of the Sun does, which also conserves all corporal things, because it is natural which they follow.

But a Philosopher does not what Nature does, for Nature has created all Vegetables, Animals and Minerals in their own degree, where Nature reigns: I will not say that men, after the same sort, by Art make Natural things; when Nature has finished these things, then by Humane Art they are made more perfect. After this sort

old Philosophers, for our information, laboured with *Lune*, and *Mercury* her true Mother, of which they made the *Mercury of the Philosophers*, which in his operation is much more strong than Natural *Mercury*; for this is serviceable only to the simple, perfect, imperfect, cold and hot Metals; but the Philosophers Stone is useful to the more than perfect and imperfect Metals. Also that the Sun may perfect and refresh them, without diminution, addition or immutation, as they were created of Nature, so he leaves them; neither does he neglect anything. I will not now say the Philosophers conjoin the Tree, for the better perfecting of their *Mercury*, as some unskilful of things and unlearned Chymists do, who take common *Sol* and *Lune* and *Mercury*, and so ill-favourably handle them, till they pass away into Smoke: and they endeavour to make the Philosophers *Mercury*; but they never attained to that; that is, the first Matter of the Stone, and the first *Minera* of the Stone. If they will come thither, and find any good, then to the Hill of the seven, where there is no Plain, they would betake themselves, and from the highest they have need to look downwards to the sixth, which they shall see afar off.

In the height of this Mountain, they shall find a Royal Herb triumphing, which some have called Mineral, some Vegetable and Saturnal; but let the Bones be left, and let a pure clean Broth be taken from, and thus the better part of your work is done. And this is the right and subtle *Mercury of the Philosophers*, and is to be taken of you, and first the white work he will make, and after the red: if you have well understood me, both of them are nothing else, as they call them, but the Practick, which is so light and so simple, that a Woman sitting by her Distaff may perfect it; as if she would in Winter put her Eggs under a Hen and not wash them, because Eggs are put under a Hen to sit upon without washing them, and no more labour is required about them, than that they should be every day turned, that the Chickens may be the better and sooner hatched; to the which enough and more than enough is said. But that I may follow the example, first wash not the *Mercury*, but take it and with its like (which is Fire) place him in the Ashes, which is Straw, and in one Glass, which is the Nest, without any other thing, in a convenient Alembic, which is the House, and then thence will come forth a Chicken, which with his Blood shall free you from all Diseases, and with his Flesh shall nourish you, and with his Feathers shall cloth you, and keep you warm from cold.

Therefore have I written unto you this present Treatise, that you may search with the greater desire, and walk in the right way; and I have comprehended this small Work in a Summary, that you might the better comprehend the sayings of the Philosophers, which I persuade myself you will better understand hereafter.

FINIS.