

THE
HERMETIC AND ALCHEMICAL
WRITINGS

OF
AUREOLUS PHILIPPUS THEOPHRASTUS BOMBAST,
OF HOHENHEIM, CALLED
PARACELUS THE GREAT.

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME FAITHFULLY TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

EDITED WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE, ELUCIDATORY NOTES, A COPIOUS HERMETIC
VOCABULARY, AND INDEX,

By ARTHUR EDWARD WAITE.

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Moreover, this fact applies to metals, that each of them in the fire puts forth some peculiar sign by which it can be recognised. Among these are, sparks, flames, brightness, colours of the fire, smell, taste, etc. For instance, in the reverberation of gold or silver, the genuine sign is a brightness above the vessel or vat. When this appears, it is certain that the lead, and other accessory metals, have disappeared in the fumes, and so the gold and silver are thoroughly purified. Iron, which is completely fused in the furnace, sends forth limpid, clear sparks, which rise to a height. As soon as these appear, unless the iron be at once removed from the fire, it will be burnt up like straw.

In the same way, every earthly body exhibits its own peculiar and distinct signs in the fire, whether it has any Mercury, sulphur, or salt, and of which of these three principles it has most. If it smokes before it bursts into flame it is a sign that it contains more Mercury than sulphur. If, on the other hand, it burns with a flame and blazes forth without any smoke, it is a sign that a good deal of sulphur, and no Mercury, or very little, lies hidden within it. This you see take place with fatty substances, as with fat itself, oil, resin, and the like. But if without any flame nothing goes forth through the fumes, it is a sign that much Mercury and very little sulphur exists therein. This you see take place with herbs, flowers, and the like; and also with other vegetable substances and volatile bodies, such as minerals and metals, as yet in their first essence, and not yet mixed with corporeal sulphur. These send forth only smoke, and no flame.

Minerals and metals which in the fire emit neither fume nor flame—that is, neither smoke nor blaze—shew an equal mixture of Mercury and sulphur, and a fixity and perfection beyond all consistency.

CONCERNING CERTAIN PARTICULAR SIGNS OF NATURAL AND SUPERNATURAL THINGS.

We must now, in due course, speak of some peculiar signs, concerning which nothing up to this time has been handed down. In this treatise it will be very necessary that you who boast your skill in the science of signatures, who also wish to be yourselves called signators, should rightly understand what we say. In this place we are not going to speak theoretically, but practically, and we will put forth our opinion comprised in the fewest possible words for your comprehension.

First of all, know that the signatory art teaches how to give true and genuine names to all things. All of these Adam the Protoplast truly and entirely understood. So it was that after the Creation he gave its own proper name to everything, to animals, trees, roots, stones, minerals, metals, waters, and the like, as well as to other fruits of the earth, of the water, of the air, and of the fire. Whatever names he imposed upon these were ratified and confirmed by God. Now these names were based upon a true and intimate foundation, not on mere opinion, and were derived from a predestinated knowledge, that is to say, the signatorial art. Adam is the first signator.

Indeed, it cannot be denied that genuine names flow forth from the Hebrew language, too, and are bestowed upon each thing according to its nature and condition. The names which are given in the Hebrew tongue indicate by their mere bestowal the virtue, power, and property of the very thing to which they belong. So when we say, "This is a pig, a horse, a cow, a bear, a dog, a fox, a sheep, etc.," the name of a pig indicates a foul and impure animal. A horse indicates a strong and patient animal; a cow, a voracious and insatiable one; a bear, a strong, victorious, and untamed animal; a fox, a crafty and cunning animal; a dog, one faithless in its nature; a sheep, one that is placid and useful, hurting no one. Hence it happens that sometimes a man is called a pig on account of his sordid and piggish life; a horse, on account of his endurance, for which he is remarkable beyond all else; a cow, because he is never tired of eating and drinking, and his stomach knows no moderation; a bear, because he is bigger and stronger than other people; a fox, because he is versatile and cunning, accommodating himself to all, and not easily offending anybody; a dog, because he is not faithful to anything beyond his own mouth, and shews himself unaccommodating and faithless to all; or a sheep, because he hurts nobody but himself, and is of more use to anyone else than to himself.

In the same way many herbs and roots have obtained their names. So the euphrasia or *herba ocularis* is thus called because it cures ailing eyes. The sanguinary herb is thus named because it is better than all others to stop bleeding. The scrofulary (*chelidonium minus*) is so called because it cures the piles better than any other herb. And so with many other herbs, of which I could cite a vast number, all of which were named on account of their virtue and faculty, as I have shewn more at length in my Herbarium.

Then, again, many herbs and roots got their names, not from any one inborn virtue and faculty, but also from their figure, form, and appearance, as the Morsus Diaboli, Pentaphyllum, Cynoglossum, Ophioglossum, Hippuris, Hepatica, Buglosum, Dentaria, Calcatrippa (*consolida regalis*), Perforata, Satyrion or Orchis, Victoralis, Syderica, Petfoliata, Prunella, Heliotrope, and many others which need not be recounted here, but separately in the Herbarium.

The same is true as to the signs of animal matters, because, in like manner, from the blood and its circulation, from the urine and the circulation thereof, all diseases which lie hid in men are recognised. From the liver of a slaughtered animal all its flesh can be judged whether it is fit for food or not. For if the liver be not clear and of a red colour, but livid and yellow, rough and perforated, it is inferred that the animal was sick and that, on this account, its flesh is unwholesome. It is no marvel that the liver indicates this by natural signs. The origin of the blood is in the liver, and hence it flows forth through the veins over the whole body, and is coagulated into flesh. For this reason, from a sickly and ill-affected liver no healthy and fresh blood can be produced, just as from morbid blood no wholesome flesh can be coagulated. But, nevertheless, even without the liver, the flesh, as well as

the blood, can be distinguished. If both are sound, they have their true and natural colour, which is purple and bright, with no extraneous colour, such as yellow or livid. These extraneous colours always indicate sickness and disease.

But, moreover, there are other signs which are worthy of our wonder, when, for example, the Archeus is the signator and signifies on the umbilical cord of the fœtus by means of knots, from which it can be told how many children the mother has had or will have.

The same signator signs the horns of the stag with branches by which its age is known. As many branches as the horns have, so many years old is the stag. Since there is an addition of a new branch to the horn every year, the age of the stag can be set down as twenty or thirty years.

So, too, the signator marks the horns of the cow with circles from which it is known how many calves she has borne. Every circle indicates one calf.

The same signator thrusts out the first teeth of the horse so that for the first seven years its age can be certainly known from its teeth. When the horse is first born it has fourteen teeth, of which it sheds two every year, so in seven years all of them fall out. For this reason a horse more than seven years old can only be judged by one who is very skilled and practised.

The same signator marks the beak and talons of a bird with particular signs, so that every practised fowler can judge its age from these.

The same signator marks the tongues of pigs with blisters, by which their impurity can be known. If the tongue is foul, so is the whole body.

The same signator marks the clouds with different colours, whereby the tempests of the sky can be prognosticated.

So also he signs the circle of the moon with distinct colours, each one of which has its own special interpretation. Redness generally indicates coming wind; greenness or blackness, rain. The two mixed, wind with rain. At sea this is a sign which generally portends tempests and storms. Brightness and clear whiteness are a good sign, especially on the ocean. For the most part they presage quiet and serene weather.

So far we have confined our remarks to natural signs. With regard to supernatural signs this is a matter of special science and experience, as Magical Astronomy and the like.*

Now here it is most necessary to have certain knowledge. Hence proceed many arts, such as geomancy, pyromancy, hydromancy, chaomancy, and

* Whatsoever Nature generates is formed according to the essence of the virtues, which is to be understood as follows: According to the soul, the property, and the nature of any man, the body is constituted. For this proverb is often quoted—the more distorted the more wicked. Adam was originally created in such a manner that he was without inherent vice of body or soul; but when he distinguished between good and evil, Nature then commenced to mark each person according to his constitution. Adam was well pleasing to God before he knew good and evil; but afterwards, God repented having made man. Man was therefore made subject to the rule of Nature, so that Nature treats him even as a flower of the field, which she marks, and so makes recognisable to all. Man also is marked like a flower of the field, so that one person can be discerned from another, after the same way that flowers and all growing things are distinguished each from each. And since there is nothing hidden in man but must be revealed, this must be made known by three different methods—either by the signs of Nature, or the proper mark, or by the judgment of God. Omitting the two latter, I will speak of the first, that is to say, the signs which are exhibited by Nature. It is

necromancy, each of which has its own particular stars, and these stars sign in a supernatural manner.* The stars of geomancy sign or impress their marks on the terrestrial bodies of the whole world in many and various ways. They change the earth, produce earthquakes and landslips, make hills and valleys, bring forth many new growths, produce gamahei on nude figures and images having remarkable powers and potencies, which they receive from the seven planets, just as the shield or target receives the pellet or the dart from a slinger. But to know how these signs and images of the gamahei may be distinguished one from the other, and what they signify in magic, requires great experience and knowledge of Nature, nor can it be in any way perfectly dealt with here. But this must be noticed, that every stone or gamaheus possesses only the power and properties of one planet, and so can be endowed only by that one planet. And though, indeed, two or more planets may be conjoined in earthly bodies, as in the higher firmament, nevertheless, one is oppressed by the other. For as one house cannot have two masters, but the one thrusts out the other, so is it here also. One remains master; the other becomes a slave. Or as when one is keeping a house another comes upon him, thrusts him out by force, and makes himself master, arranging all things by his will and pleasure, while the other is reduced to slavery, so also one star expels the other, one planet the other, one ascendant the other, one influence another,

known to all that if a seed be cast into the earth and concealed therein, the latent nature of that seed, at the proper time, manifests it above the earth, and anyone may see clearly what manner of seed has lain in that place. It is the same with the heart (*cor*) and seed of man: out of that seed Nature produces a body so that anyone can see what kind of heart has been there. And, although there be a great difference between herbs or trees and men, yet art in man sufficiently demonstrates and proves these things. We men in this world explore all things which lie hidden in the mountains by means of traces and external signs. For we investigate the properties of all herbs and stones by their signed sign (*signum signatum*). Similarly, nothing can lie hidden in man which is not outwardly marked on him, for, as the physician has his own knowledge, so, also, the astronomer explores from the signed (*ex signato*). So now there are three things by which the nature of man and of everything that grows is revealed: Chiromancy, which concerns the extremities, as, for example, the hands, the feet, the veins, the lines, and the wrinkles; Physiognomy, which regards the constitution of the face and the parts belonging to the head; Proportion, which considers the condition of the whole body. These three should be combined: according to these three every created thing can be recognised: by the physician, that is to say, the remedy; by the astronomer, that is, the man; and by the metallurgist, that is, the metal. Such is the condition of the mother which manifests that which is latent in anything. He who is incapable of understanding these three things can be in no sense a natural philosopher, astronomer, or doctor, or know anything of the arcana and mysteries of Nature. The foundation is in this, that all things have seed, and in seed all things are contained, for Nature first fabricates the form, and afterwards she produces and manifests the essence of the thing. *Explicitio Totius Astronomie.*

* The *Liber Philosophice*, in a treatise *De Arte Præsaga*, regards the varieties of sorilege discussed in this book from a totally different standpoint. The four arts of Geomancy, Hydromancy, Pyromancy, and Necromancy are thus noticed: Spirits which are (normally) unable to communicate visibly with men, have by lying arts invaded their imagination, and have raised up therein Geomancy, Pyromancy, Hydromancy, and Necromancy, arts not invented from the light of Nature or of men, but instilled by spirits, who, by their frauds, after they had despoiled some one or other discoverer suitable for their purposes, then added fitting disciples to these, namely, cultivators and admirers of the said arts. The first discoverers were obsessed by the devil, and sought out through his power and instigation arts of this kind. There are some, indeed, who, hiding the matter, affirm that they have been revealed from God; but they are deceived, for God is not the author and teacher of inquiries into the future by means of such devices. He in no wise created us that we might devote ourselves to the investigation of what is to come, but ordered rather that, directing His attention to His commandments, we should seek out the knowledge of Himself and His manifest will. It is, therefore, a false pretence that these arts proceed from God when they emanate from spirits alone. It is, indeed, true that the spirits extracted them from God, not from the devil. But we on the earth derive them from spirits, not from God. Now, communication with such spirits is forbidden, though they themselves neglect the mandate. It is equally forbidden to the spirits to teach these arts, but here, also, they pay no attention to the command. And this is the reason why they are silent and tell lies when it is least becoming to do so. Thus, in order that man may act disobediently towards God, and plunge into superstitions, they have devised the four above-mentioned methods for inquiring into the future. Geomancy is the art of points, having sixteen signs and figures, which they have arranged according to their property. To these they added translations, creta (*cræta*), form, points, and similar things, and have taught the erection of the whole figure, fixing certain rules by which each figure could be understood, each recognised in its own house, with a sufficient and necessary interpretation,

one impression another, and one element another. As water extinguishes fire, so one planet strikes out the property of the other and brings in its own. And so is it with their signs, which are manifold, and not only characters, as some think, but all those which are found in the entire map of the planets, that is, everything which is cognate with those planets or subject to them.

To make myself more easily understood, let me add an example. To the planet Sol there belong the crown, the sceptre, the throne, all the royal power and majesty, all the domination, all the riches, treasures, ornaments, and paraphernalia of this world.

To the planet Luna are subject all agriculture, navigation, travelling, and travellers, and everything concerned with matters of this kind.

To the planet Mars are subject munitions (as they call them), all breast-plates, cuirasses, spears, and all arms, with everything relating to war.

To the planet Mercury are subjected all literary men, all mechanical instruments, and every requirement of art.

To the planet Jupiter are subject all judgments and laws, the whole Levitical order, all ministers of the church, the decorations of temples, ornaments, and whatever else belongs to this class.

To the planet Venus are subject all things relating to music, musical instruments, amatory exercises, loves, debaucheries, etc.

The method is as follows : They guide the hand and mark the points until a judgment is made concerning the proposed matter. But the spirits know exactly how many points are required to make a figure which will explain the matter. If their direction be right, the figure also is correct and valid. For example, suppose I ask who is standing at the door, and what kind of tunic does he wear? Take the seven colours, to each of which attribute a geomantic sign, and consult that figure. Then whatever sign falls indicates the colour. Now, if I knew what colour it were, but you did not know, I might so direct your hand, forming certain points in one line that, by obliterating or wiping off, there would remain the colour red, and supposing the tunic itself was red, then you would reply rightly : It is a red tunic. But I knew that before; and directed your hand to those points. The spirits do likewise with all the figures; and, since they know all things, it is easy for them to describe the figures and to guide your hand. Every rhombus is described by guiding the hand. In this manner Geomancy is constituted. Moreover, many superstitions are added thereto by men to augment it, as, for example, that it should be performed when the sky is clear and serene, or in the quiet and silence of night. Also, that you should not operate for your own purposes. Again, that you should say such and such a prayer at the beginning, and commence under good auspices, etc. All these are human superstitions : for, not knowing the foundation on which the art depends, they increase it, but it is as much an art as a superstition. Geomantia, as it was called at first, is so constituted that the ascendant is twofold—natural and of spirits. For the natural has its art, namely, Astronomy. The spirit has its Pyromancy. Accordingly, if a nativity be constituted out of the stars it is astronomically erected. If it be made according to spirits it is Pyromancy. But Pyromancy consists in the spirit being connected with the ascendant, and it leads the infant for example, into whoredom, thefts, lies. And as the art comes forward and succeeds, the spirits suggest to astronomers that if a conjunction of this or that star takes place, say, this or that event will take place, not because Nature herself will accomplish such things, but I myself will see to it, and, being everywhere, will bring about such and such effects; but as no one can trace my actions, they will be imputed to the stars or the elements. Hence it comes to pass that people pay more attention to the stars than to God. This is an astute feat of the devil. It is the spirits who cause the astronomical and other predictions to be fulfilled that the credit of the art may be sustained, so that men may be involved in errors and loss, while, intent on vain fantasies, they forget the true God. Their devices are favoured by their dupes, for in the case of twenty prophecies, if only one be fulfilled, they will never cease from inquiring until the other nineteen lies have been fulfilled also. Meanwhile, they are so deluded by the spirits themselves that they cannot arrive at the true *fundamentum*. For it is the property of spirits to lie. We have finished, then, with the foundation so far as they are concerned. Now one thing is wanting, now another; now the fault lies with the house, now with the exaltation, etc. In this discipline men have laboured for many thousands of years, nor have yet discovered the truth, which, indeed, is impossible to find, as the whole foundation is on falsehood. We now see for what reason astronomy is called Pyromancy when the operation proceeds pyromantically. The same spirits make their way into the third element, that is, water. For Geomancy has been named from the earth, as if it arose from the nature of the earth. Nor without reason, for the earth also has its own heaven or stars; but the spirits who are pyromantically recognised have devised them. Similarly, in the element of water there is a star wherein the pyromantic spirits dwell who have instituted Pyromancy, chiefly in the times of the Greeks, who, being easily led into all manner of delusions, promptly subjected themselves to the spirits. Pyromancy is an art consisting of signs and figures harmonising with the universal figure of the heaven. The process is as follows : Take a basin full of water, which set down, and notice the direction of the wavy movements as the water quiets down. Notice, also, the tremor, the rest,

To the planet Saturn are subjected all those who work in and under the earth, as metallurgists, miners, sextons, well-diggers, with all the tools used by them.

Pyromancy puts forth its signs by the stars of fire; in common fire by sparks, flames, crackling, and so forth; in mines by coruscations; in the firmament by stars, comets, thunder and lightning, nostoch, and the like; among spectres by salamanders, ethnic, and other similar spirits which appear in the form of fire.

Hydromancy gives its signs by the stars of water, by waves, inundations, droughts, discolorations, lorindi, new floods, washing away of territory. In magic and necromancy by nymphs, visions, and supernatural monsters in the waters and the sea.

Chaomancy exhibits its signs by the stars of the air and the wind, by discoloration, the loss and destruction of all tender and subtle things, to which the wind is opposed, by shaking off and stripping flowers, leaves, fronds, stalks. If the stars of chaomancy are excited the *Necromicæ* fall down from the upper air, and frequently voices and answers are heard. Trees are plucked up from the earth by their roots, and houses are thrown down. Lemurs, Penates, Undines, and Sylvans are seen. So also Tereniobin, Tronosia, and Manna fall upon the trees.

Necromancy puts forth its signs by the stars of death, which we also call Evestra, marking the body of the sick and those about to die with red, livid, and purple spots, which are certain signs of death on the third day from their appearance. They also sign the hands and fingers of men with clay-coloured spots, which are sure signs of something, good or bad, about

and the bubbles. These four give four figures, and the figures give twelve. Near the figures, rules and such things are found. Now, the spirit moves the bubbles, originates the shaking, the rest, the calm, according to the necessity of the sign, so that there may result a figure which indicates what is desired. Those, therefore, who have well-disposed spirits, to whom few things are forbidden, make good sorcerers in the art. On the other hand, a bad sorcerer has a mute and mendacious spirit. Among spirits one may be more mute and lying than another. When, therefore, one sorcerer is said to be more certain than another, it does not follow that he has greater skill, for he may possess a more reliable spirit. Now, the spirits delight by means of vexing and deluding men to cause them to hate one another, and this, indeed, is their first object. Were the foundation of this art more closely investigated by men, it would be seen that it was a hoax of the spirits. Yet, even if men arrived at perfection in this art, what solid advantage would it confer on them but a futile prediction and a pretext for wasting time. Suppose I desire to marry, and consult an omen as to the result, even if I get an answer I shall be uncertain of its truth; it is just as likely to speak falsely as truly. But if the prediction be fulfilled, it may be by the devil's arrangement. In any case, how will it help me? If I escape this evil, it will take shape in another way. Consequently, no faith can be placed in these arts. In addition to the methods which have been already mentioned there is Necromancy, which is the art of the air. And although others define differently what is meant by *Necro*, this is genuine—that it is the art of shades, for shades only are in the air, and these things are known by the shades. . . . Some people, at night, see figures in the air, as in heaven sometimes figures appear which have a certain signification. This is Necromancy. Men appear walking in the air, the clash of arms is heard, etc. Wondrous shades are likewise occasionally visible in water. The cause of all these things is, that the spirits display what they wish according to their own pleasure. A part of their deception is to make men fancy that the spirits must be propitiated by prayers, or compelled by force and conjuration to produce prodigies. Now, all these things are sheer superstition. It is also thought that men can compel spirits, through God, to do this or that; but it is highly displeasing to God that we should be occupied with such triflings, and the spirits are rejoicing meanwhile that, in opposition to God, we have become their accomplices. The prayers, conjurations, fasts, and other ceremonies are nothing but a cloak to superstition. The pronunciation of various words is committed to memory, but these are not the real names of the spirits, and they are altogether unimportant. For although each spirit has his own peculiar name, yet they salute one another by different names at different times, and so make game of men. Now, concerning the nature of shades, whatever is seen in a figure or image is to be considered such. He who is favoured by spirits sees many things, but otherwise, little or nothing. Did God permit it, these beings would be always in our midst, enticing us to desert God, and devote our mind to them. But if we carefully regard what they have performed during a given year we shall see that it has been mere trifling, devoid of use and profit, destructive to body and soul, health and property, praise and honour, in a word, disgraceful allurements, frauds, and devices, sprung from the root of lies itself.

immediately to happen. When the stars of necromancy are moved, then the dead give forth miracles and signs, the deceased bleed, dead things are seen, voices are heard from graves, tumults and tremblings arise in the charnel-house, and the dead appear in the form and dress of the living, are seen in visions, mirrors, beryls, stones, and waters under different appearances. Evestrum and Tarames give signs by knocking, striking, pounding, falling, throwing, and so on, where only a disturbance or sound is heard, but nothing seen. All these are sure signs of death, presaging it for him in whose dress the spectres appear, or for some one in the place where they are heard.

Concerning these signs much more could be set down than has so far been said. But since these bring with them bad, hurtful, and dangerous phantasies, imaginations, and superstitions, which may be the cause not only of misfortune, but even of death, we pass them over in silence. We are forbidden to reveal them, since they belong only to the ancient school and to the Divine power. So now we bring this our book to an end.*

HERE END THE NINE BOOKS CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THINGS.

* In certain editions the following dedication is prefixed to the Nine Books containing the *Nature of Things*.—Theophrastus Paracelsus gives greeting to the honourable and prudent gentleman, John Winckelstein of Friburg, his intimate friend and dearest brother:—It is right, O intimate friend and dearest brother, that I should satisfy your friendly and assiduous prayers and petitions which you have addressed to me in your several letters, and since, in your latest letters of all, you have earnestly and courteously requested that I should at length come to you, if it were consistent with my convenience, it is not meet for me to conceal from you, that this course is, by reason of various hindrances, impossible. But with regard to the second request you have made to me, that I should furnish you with an excellent and clear instruction concerning certain matters, I neither can nor will refuse you, but am compelled to gratify you therein; for I am well acquainted with your disposition; moreover, I know that you hear and behold with delight anything that is fresh or marvellous in this art. I know, also, that you have devoted a great portion of your life to the arts, which have formed the chief element of your curriculum. Since, therefore, you have displayed, not only benevolence, but fraternal fidelity towards me, I am rightly powerless to forget either your fidelity or your benefits, but am indeed of necessity grateful, and, in case I should not see you in person again, I must leave a brotherly farewell to you and yours, as a memorial of myself. For herein I shall not only answer and clearly explain those points concerning which you have consulted me and asked me in brotherly fashion, but will dedicate to you a special treatise on those points, which treatise I shall name *Concerning the Nature of Things*, and shall divide it into nine books. This work satisfies all your requests, and, indeed, more than you have requested of me, although you will greatly wonder at its matter, and will doubt whether things are just as I have described them. But do not so act, nor think that they are mere theories and speculations, whereas they are of practice and proceed from experience. And, in spite of the fact that I have not personally verified them all, notwithstanding, I both possess, have proved, and know these things by experience from and by means of other persons, as also from the light of Nature. But if in certain places you do not rightly understand what I say, and in one or more processes require of me a further explication, write to me secretly, and I will put the matter more clearly before you, and give you a sufficient instruction and understanding, although I do not believe that there will be any need for this, but that you will easily comprehend without it, since I know how richly you have been endowed by God with the arts and with good sense. Moreover, you know myself and my feelings, wherefore you will easily and quickly take my meaning. But, above all, I hope and am confident that you will look upon the present work, and will fittingly regard it as a treasure, will by no means publish it, but exclusively keep it in great secrecy for you and for yours, exactly as a vast hidden treasure, noble gem, and precious thing, which is not to be cast before swine, that is, before sophists, contemners of natural blessings, arts, and secrets, which persons are not worthy to read, much less to have, know, and understand them. And, although this book be very small, containing few and scanty words, yet it is full of many great mysteries, for herein I shall not write from speculation and theory, but practically from the light of Nature and experience itself, nor will I burden you and render it tedious by much speech. Wherefore, dearest friend and most intimate brother, since I have addressed this book out of love to you alone, and to no one else, I request you to keep the book as a precious and secret thing, and not to part with it until your dying day. After death, in similar fashion, command your children and heirs to preserve it also in secrecy. Furthermore, it is my special request that it should remain only in your family, and at no time become so public as to fall into the hands of sophists and mockers, who despise all things which do not agree with them, and cover them with calumny; who also are pleased only with that which is their own, as is the case with all fools; who are pleased only with their own trumpets, but not with that of another; and do hate all wisdom, regarding that as of small account and even as folly, which is greater than theirs, that is to say, what is in their own head, because it does them no good, nor do they know the use of it. One workman cannot use the tools of another, and so in the same way a fool can use no better instrument than his own key, nor is any sound sweeter to his ear than the tinkling of his own bells. Wherefore, dearest friend, be faithfully admonished, as I have entreated you; do that which I expect of you, so shall you do well and rightly. Farewell, under the care of God.—Given at *Villacus*, in the year 1537.