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A New Light Of Alchymy

**Sędziwój, Michał
Paracelsus**

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The fifth book

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OF THE
NATURE
OF
THINGS.

The fifth Book.

Of the Death or Ruin of all Things.

What
Death is.

THe Death of all natural Things is nothing but an alteration and destruction of their Powers and Vertues, a predominancy of that which is evil, and an overcoming of what is good, an abolishing of the former Nature, and generation of a new and another Nature. For you must know that there are many things that, whilst they are alive, have in them several vertues, but when they are dead retain little or nothing of their vertue, but become unfavory, and unprofitable. So on the contrary many things, whilst they live, are bad, but after they are dead, and corrupted, manifest a manifold power and vertue,

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virtue, and are very useful. We could bring many examples to confirm this, but that doth not belong to our purpose. But that I may not seem to write according to mine own opinion only, but out of my experience, it will be necessary that I produce one example, with which I shall silence those Sophisters, who say, that we can receive nothing from dead things, neither must we seek or expect to find any thing in them. The reason is, because they do esteem nothing of the preparations of the Alchymists, by which many such like great Secrets are found out. For look upon Mercury, crude Sulphur, and crude Antimony, as they are taken out of their Mines, *i. e.* whilst they are living, and see what little vertue there is in them, how slowly they put forth their vertues, yea they do more hurt than good, and are rather Poison than a Medicine. But if through the industry of a skillful Alchymist, they be corrupted in their first substance, and wisely prepared (*viz.* if Mercury be coagulated, precipitated, sublimed, dissolved, and turned into an Oyl; if Sulphur be sublimed, calcined, reverberated, and turned into an Oyl; also if Antimony be sublimed, calcined and reverberated, and turned into Oyl) you shall see how useful they are, how much strength and vertue they have, and how quickly they put forth, and shew their efficacy, which no man is able to speak enough in the commendation of, or to describe. For many are the Vertues, yea more than will ever be found out by any man. Wherefore let every faithful Alchymist and Physician spend their whole lives in searching into these three: For they will abundantly re-

The preparation of Mercury, Sulphur and Antimony.

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But to come to particulars, and to write particularly of the death and destruction of every natural thing, and what the Death of every thing is, and after what manner every thing is destroyed; you must know there fore in the first place, that the Death of Man is without doubt nothing else, but an end of his daily work, the taking away of the Air, the decaying of the natural Balsom, the extinguishing of the natural Light; and the great separation of the three Substances, viz. the Body, Soul and Spirit, and their return from whence they came. For because a natural Man is of the Earth, the Earth also is his Mother, into which he must return, and there must lose his natural earthly Flesh, and so be regenerated at the last day in a new celestial and purified Flesh, as Christ said to *Nicodemus* when he came to him by night. For thus must these words be understood of Regeneration.

What the Death of Man is.

What the destruction of Metals is.

Calcination of Metals is manifold.

What Calcination with Salt is.

The death and destruction of Metals is the disjoining of their Bodies, and sulphureous fatness, which may be done several ways, as by calcination, reverberation, dissolution, cementation, and sublimation.

But the Calcination of Metals is not of one sort: for one is made with Salt, another with Sulphur, another with *Aqua fortis*, and another with common sublimate, and another with Quick-silver.

Calcination with Salt is that the Metal be made into very thin Plates, and strowed with Salt, and cemented.

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Calcination with Sulphur is, that the Metal be made into thin Plates, and strowed with Sulphur, and reverberated. Calcination with Sulphur.

Calcination with *Aqua fortis*, is that the Metal be made very small, and dissolved in *Aqua fortis*, and precipitated in it. Calcination with Aqua fortis.

Calcination with sublimed Mercury is this, that the Metal be made into thin Plates, and that the Mercury be put into an earthen vessel narrow towards the top, and wide at the bottom: and then let it be set into a gentle fire made with coals, which must be blowed a little until the Mercury begin to fume, and a white cloud go forth of the mouth of the vessel, then let the Plate of the Metal be put into the top of the vessel, and so the sublimed Mercury will penetrate the Metal, and make it as brittle as a stone of coal. Calcination with Sublimate.

Calcination with Quick-silver is, that the Metal be made very small, and thin, and be amalgamated with Quick-silver, and afterward the Quick-silver be strained through Leather, and the Metal remain in the Leather like Chalk, or Sand. Calcination with Quick-silver.

Now besides these mortifications of Metals, and destructions of their lives, know also that there are yet more. For rust is the death of all Iron, and Steel, and all Vitriol, burnt Brass is mortified Copper: all precipitated, sublimed, calcined Cinnabar is mortified Mercury, all Ceruse and Minium of Lead is mortified Lead; all Lazure is mortified Silver: also all Gold from which its Tincture, Quintessence, Rozzen, Crocus, Vitriol, or Sulphur is extracted, is dead, because it hath no more the form of Gold, but is a Divers other sorts of mortification of metals.

A twofold
Preparation
of Crocus
Martis.

white Metal like fixed Silver.

But let us proceed to shew how Metals may be yet further mortified. First therefore of Iron, know that that is mortified, and reduced into Crocus this way. Make Steel into very thin Plates: Make these Plates red hor, and quench them in the best Wine-Vineger, do this so often till the Vineger hath contracted a considerable redness, then distil off the Vineger, till there be nothing but a dry Powder remaining. This is a most excellent Crocus Martis.

There is also another way of making Crocus Martis, which doth partly exceed the former, and is made with far less costs and pains, and it is this.

Strow upon the Plates of Steel, Sulphur, and Tartar, being both in a like quantity; then reverberate them, and this will produce a most excellent Crocus, which must be taken off from the Plates.

Also you must know, that every Plate of Iron, or Steel, if it be melted with *Aqua fortis*; will also make a fair Crocus; so also it is made with Oyl of Vitriol, Spirit of Salt, Allum-water, the water of Salt Armoniack, and of Salt Nitre; as also with sublimared Mercury, all which may sic Iron, and bring it into a Crocus; but none of these latter ways is to be compared to the two former, for they are only used in Alchymy, and not at all in Physick, wherefore in this, use only the two former, and let alone the rest.

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The mortification of Copper, viz. that it may be reduced into Vitriol, Verdegrease, may be done many ways, and there are rarer processes in it, yet one far better than another, and one more profitable than another. Wherefore it is most convenient here to set down the best, and most profitable, and to be silent in the rest. The best therefore, the most easie, and exactest way of reducing Copper into Vitriol is this.

The mortification of Copper.

The Vitriol of Copper is made two ways.

Let Plates of Copper be dipt in Spirit of Salt, or Salt-Peter, and let them be hanged in the Air until they begin to be green, which indeed will quickly be, wash off this greenness with clear Fountain-water, dry the Plates with some cloth, and wet them again with the Spirit of Salt, and Salt Nitre, and do again as before, so long until the Water be apparently green, or much Vitriol swim on the top: then pour away the Water, or evaporate it, and thou hast a most excellent Vitriol for Medicine. In Alchymy there is not a fairer, more excellent, and better Vitriol than what is made by *Aqua fortis*, or *Aqua Regis*, or Spirit of Salt Armoniack. And the process is this.

Let Plates of Copper be melted with one of the aforesaid Waters, and as soon as the greenness is extracted, and the Plates dried, let the greenness be taken off with the foot of a Hare, or some other way as you please, as Ceruse is taken off from Plates of Lead: let them be again wetted as before, until the Plates be wholly consumed, thereby is made a most glorious Vitriol, that thou canst not choose but wonder at it.

How water
of Salt-peter
and Salt ar-
moniack is
made.

The Water of Salt-Peter is made thus. Purifie and powder it; afterwards dissolve it of it self in a Bladder, put in boiling water So thou shalt have the Water of Salt-Peter.

Verdegrease
may be
made two
ways.

The Water of Salt Armoniack is made thus: Calcine Salt Armoniack, and dissolve it in a Cellar upon a Marble, and this is Water of Salt Armoniack.

But to make Verdegrease out of Copper, there are divers ways which it is not needful here to recite. We shall describe only two, but with a double preparation, viz. The one for Physick, the other for Alchymy. The process therefore of Verdegrease to be used in Physick is this.

How Verde-
grease to be
used in Phy-
sick is to be
prepared.

Take Plates of Copper, which wet over with the following matter. Take Honey and Vineger, of each a like quantity, of Salt as much as will serve to make them up into a thick Past. Mix them well together, then put them into a Reverberatory, or Potters furnace, so long as the Potter is burning his Pots, and thou shalt see the matter that sticks to the Plates to be very black, but let not that trouble thee. For if thou settest those Plates in the Air, all the black matter will in a few days become green, and become a most excellent Verdegrease, which may be called the Balsom of Copper, and is commended by all Physicians. But nevertheless do not thou wonder that this Verdegrease becomes green in the Air, and that the Air can change the black colour into so fair a green.

The Balsom
of Copper.

Air changes
the Colours
of things
burnt.

For here thou must know that daily experience in Alchymy doth shew, that any dead Earth, or *Caput Mortuum*, as soon as it comes out of the Fire

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into the Air, doth quickly get another colour, and leaves its own colour which it got in the fire. For the changes of those colours are various. For as the matter is, so are the colours that are made, although for the most part they flow from the blackness of the dead earth. For you that are skilful in Alchymy see that the dead earth of *Aqua fortis* comes black from the Fire, and by how many more ingredients there be in it, by so much the more variously do the colours shew themselves in the Air: sometimes they seem red, as *Vitriol* makes them: sometimes yellow, white, green, blew: sometimes mixt, as in the Rainbow or Peacocks tail. All those colours shew themselves after the death, and by the death of the matter. For in the death of all natural things here are seen other colours, which are changed from the first colour into other colours, every one according to its nature and property.

Now we will speak of that *Verdegrease* which is to be used in Alchymy. The preparation and process of that is this.

The preparation of *Verdegrease* to be used in Alchymy.

Make very thin Plates of Copper, strow upon them Salt, Sulphur, and Tartar ground and mixed together, of each a like quantity in a great calcining pot. Then reverberate them Twenty four hours with a strong Fire, but so that the Plates of Copper do not melt, then take them out, and break the pot, and set the Plates with the matter that sticks to them into the Air for a few days, and the matter upon the Plates will be turned into a fair *Verdegrease*, which in all sharp Corroding Waters, Waters of Exaltation, and in Cements, and in colouring of Gold, doth tinge

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How *As Ustum*, or *Crocus* of Copper is to be made.

Now to turn Copper into *As Ustum*, which is called the *Crocus* of Copper, the process is this.

Let Copper be made into thin Plates, and be smeared over with Salt made into a Paste with the best Vineger, then let it be put into a great Crucible, and set in a Wind Furnace, and be burnt in a strong Fire for a quarter of an hour; but so that the Plates melt not: let these Plates being red hot be quenched in Vineger, in which Salt Armoniack is dissolved, always half an Ounce in a Pint of Vineger: let the Plates be made red hot again, and quenched in Vineger as before, always scraping, or knocking off the scales which stick to the Plates after quenching, into the Vineger. Do this so long, until the Plates of Copper be in good part consumed by this means: then distil off the Vineger, or let it vapour away in an open Vessel, and be coagulated into a most hard Stone. So thou hast the best *Crocus* of Copper, the use whereof is in Alchymy. Many make *Crocus* of Copper by extracting of it with the Spirit of Wine, or Vineger, as they do *Crocus Martis*: But I commend this way far above it.

The sublimation of Quick-silver

Now the mortification of Quick-silver that it may be sublimed, is made with Vitriol, and Salt, with which it is mixed, and then sublimed, so it becomes as hard as Crystal, and as white as Snow: but to bring it to a Precipitate, the process is this:

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Let it first be calcined with the best *Aqua fortis*, then distil off the *Aqua fortis*, and do this about five times, until the Precipitate become to be of a fair red colour: Dulcifie this Precipitate as much as thou canst: And lastly pour upon it the best rectified Spirit of Wine you can get, distil it off from it eight or nine times, or so often until it be red hot in the fire, and do not fly: then thou hast a Diaphoretical precipitated Mercury.

Moreover, you must take notice of a great secret concerning precipitated Mercury, viz. if after it is coloured, it be dulcified with Water of Salt of Tartar, pouring it upon it, and distilling of it off so often, until the Water riseth no more sharp from the Precipitate, but be manifestly sweet; then thou hast a Precipitate as sweet as Sugar, or Honey, which in all Wounds, Ulcers, and Venereal Disease is so excellent a Secret, that no Physician need desire a better.

How to
make a
sweet Preci-
pitate.
And the use
of it.

Besides it is a great comfort to despairing Alchymists. For it doth augment Gold, and hath ingress into Gold, and with it Gold remains stable and good. Although there is much pains and sweat required to this Precipitate, yet it will sufficiently recompense thee for thy pains and costs; and will yield thee more Gain, than can be got by any Art or Trade whatsoever: Thou maist well therefore rejoice in this, and give God and me thanks for it.

Now

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How Quick-silver may be coagulated.

How Quick-silver may be turned to Cinnabar.

There are two kinds of Ceruse. The preparation of them.

Now that Quick-silver may be coagulated, I said that that must be done in sharp *Agua fortis*, which must be drawn off by Distillation, and then the Precipitate is made. But that Quick-silver may be brought into a Cinnabar; you must mortifie and melt it with Salt, and yellow Sulphur, and bring it into a white powder, then put it in a Gourd, and put upon it Aludel, or Head, and sublime it in the greatest flux you can as the manner is, so the Cinnabar will ascend into the Aludel, and stick as hard as the stone *Hematites*.

The mortification of Lead to bring it to a Ceruse is twofold, the one for Medicine, the other for Alchymy. The preparation of Ceruse for Medicine is this.

Hang Plates of Lead in a glazed Pot over strong Wine-Vineger, the Pot being well stoped that the Spirits do not exhale: Put this Pot into warm Ashes, or in the Winter into a Furnace, then always after ten or fourteen daies, thou shalt find very good Ceruse sticking to the Plates, which strike off with the Foot of a Hare: then put the Plates over the Vineger again, until thou hast enough Ceruse.

Now the other Preparation of Ceruse for Alchymy is like the former, only that in the Vineger must be dissolved a good quantity of the best and fairest Salt Armoniack, for by this meanes thou shalt purchase a most fair and beautiful Ceruse, for the purging of Tin and Lead, and the whitening of Copper.

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But if we would make Minium of Lead, we must first calcine it with Salt into Calx, and then burn it in a Glazed Vessel, always stirring it with an Iron Rod, until it be red. This is the best and chiefest Minium, and it is to be used as well in Physick as Alchymy: but the other, which Mercers sell in their Shops, is nothing worth. It is made onely of the Ashes, which remain of the Lead in the melting of it, which also Potters use to glaze their Vessels, and such Minium is used for Painting, but not for Physick, or Alchymy.

Now that Lead may be brought into Yellowness, the Preparation of it is not unlike to the Preparation of Minium. For Lead must here be calcined with Salt, and brought to a Calx, and afterwards be stirred with an Iron rod in a broad Bason, such as Tryers of Minerals use, in a gentle Fire of Coals, diligently taking heed, that there be not too much heat, nor a neglect in stirring, for else it will flow, and become a yellow Glafs. And so thou hast a fair, yellow *Crocus* of Lead.

The mortification of Silver, that of it may be made the Azure colour, or something like to it, is thus:

Take some Plates of Silver, and mix them with Quick-silver, and hang them in a glazed Pot over the best Vineger, in which Gilt-heads have been first boiled, and afterwards Salt Armoniack, and Calcined Tarrar have been dissolved; in all the rest do as hath been said of Ceruse, then always after four-

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The prepara-
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The Crocus
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How the A-
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reen days thou shalt have a most excellent and fair Azure Colour sticking to the Plates of Silver, which must be wiped off with a Hares Foot.

The mortification of Gold.

The mortification of Gold that it may be brought into its Arcana, as into a Tincture, Quintessence, Refine, Crocus, Vitriol, and Sulphur, and many other excellent Arcana, which preparations indeed are many. But because for the most part we have sufficiently treated of such Arcana in other Books, as the Extraction of the Tincture of Gold, the Quintessence of Gold, the Mercury of Gold, the Oil of Gold, Potable Gold, the Refine of Gold, the Crocus of Gold, and in the Archidoxis, and elsewhere, we conceive it needless here to repeat them. But what Arcana were there omitted, we shall here set down; as the Vitriol of Gold, Sulphur of Gold, which indeed are not the least, and ought very much to cheer up every Physician.

But to extract Vitriol out of Gold, the process is this,

How the Sulphur and the Vitriol of Gold are made.

Take of pure Gold two or three pound, which beat into thin Plates, and hanging them over Boys Urine, mixed with the Stones of Grapes, in a large Gourd Glass, well closed, which bury in a hot heap of Stones of Grapes, as they come from the press; when it hath stood fourteen days, or three weeks, then open it, and thou shalt find a most subtil Colour, which is the Vitriol of Gold sticking to the Plates of Gold, which take off with the Foot of a Hare, as thou hast heard concerning other

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other Metals; as of the Plates of Iron, Crocus Martis, of the Plates of Copper, the Vitriol of Copper and Verdegrease, of the Plates of Lead, Ceruse, of the Plates of Silver the Azure Colour, &c. comprehended under one process, but not with one manner of preparation. When thou hast enough of the Vitriol of Gold, boil it well in Rain-water distilled, always stirring it with a Spadle, then the Sulphur of the Gold is driven up to the superficies of the Water, as Fat, which take off with a Spoon: Thus also do with more Vitriol. Now after all the Sulphur is taken off, evaporate that Rain-water til it be all dry, and there will remain the Vitriol of Gold in the bottom, which thou mayst easily dissolve of it self upon a Marble in a moist place. In these two Arcana's viz. the Vitriol of Gold, and the Sulphur of Gold, lieth the Diaphoretical Vertue. I shall not here set down their Vertues; for in the Book of Metallick Diseases, and also in other Books we have set them down at large.

The Mortification of Sulphur, that the combustible and stinking Fatness may be taken away, and it brought into a fixed substance, is thus:

Take common yellow Sulphur finely powdered, and draw from it by Distillation *Aqua fortis*, that is very sharp, and this do three times, then the Sulphur which is in the bottom of a black colour dulcifie with distilled Water, until the Water come from it sweet, and it retaineth no more the stink of Sulphur. Then

The mortification and fixation of sulphur.

Then reverberate this Sulphur in a close Reverberatory as you do Antimony, then it will first be white, then yellow, and lastly as red as Cinnabar. And when it is so, then thou mayst rejoyce: For it is the beginning of thy Riches: This reverberated Sulphur tingeth Silver most deeply into most excellent Gold; and the Body of Man into most perfect health. This reverberated and fixed Sulphur is of more vertue than it is lawful to speak.

The mortification of Salts.

The mortification of all Salts; and whatsoever is salts, is the taking away and distilling off the Aquisity, and Oiliness, and of the Spirit of them. For if these be taken away, they are afterwards called the dead Earth, or *Caput Mortuum*.

The mortification of Gems.

The mortification of Gems, and Corals, is to calcine, sublime, and dissolve them into a Liquor, as Crystal.

The mortification of Pearls is to calcine them, and dissolve them in sharp Vineger into the form of Milk.

The mortification of the Load-stone.

The mortification of the Load-stone is to anoint it with the Oyl of Mercury, or to put it into Quick-silver, for afterward it will not draw Iron at all to it.

The mortification of flints and stones.

The mortification of Flints, and Stones, is to calcine them.

The mortification of Marcasites.

The mortification of Marcasites, Chachyma's, Take, Cobalus, Zinri, Granuti, Zunicter, Unismut, and of Antimony is their Sublimation, *i. e.* that they be sublimed with Salt and Vitriol, then their life, which is a Metallick Spirit, together with the Spirit of Salt; ascends.

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ascends. And let whatsoever remains in the bottom of the Sublimatory be washed, that the Salt may be dissolved from it, and then thou hast a dead Earth, in which there is no Vertue.

The mortification of Arsenicks, Auripigment, Operment, Realgar, &c. is, that they flow with Salt Nitre, and be turned into an Oyl or Liquor upon a Marble, and be fixed.

The mortification of Realgar.

The mortification of Excrements, is the coagulation of Air.

The mortification of excrements.

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The mortification of Aromatical things is the taking away of their good smell.

The mortification of Aromatical things.
Of sweet things.

The mortification of sweet things, is to sublime and distil them with corrosive things.

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The mortification of Ambers, Resines, Turpentine, Gum, and such like, is to turn them into Oil and Vernish.

Of Resines?

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The mortification of Herbs, Roots, and such like, is to distil off from them their Oil and Water, and press out their Liquor with a Press, and also to make their Alcali.

Of Herbs and Roots

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The mortification of Wood, is to turn it into Coals, and Ashes.

Of Wood.

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The mortification of Bones, is their Calcination.

Of Bones?

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The mortification of Flesh and Blood, is the taking away of the Spirit of Salt.

Of Flesh?

The mortification of Water is by Fire, for all heat dries up and consumes Water.

Of Water?

The mortification of Fire is by Water, for all Water quencth Fire, and takes from it its power and force.

Of Fire?

So now you are sufficiently instructed in few words how Death lies hid in all Natural things, and how they may be mortified, and be brought into another form and nature, and what Vertues flow from them. Whatsoever should have been said further, we put in the following Book, of the Resurrection of Natural things.

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