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The Alchemical Writings of Edward Kelly

Kelley, Edward London, 1893

Biographical preface

<u>urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-96232</u>

BIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE.

VENTURE to hope," says the subject of this memoir, in his treatise entitled De Lapide Philosophorum, "that my life and character will so become known to posterity that I may be counted among those who have suffered much for the sake of truth." The justification thus modestly desired by Edward Kelly has not been accorded him by the supreme court of judgment to which he appealed. Posterity continues to regard him in much the same light as he was looked at by the men of his immediate period, as a fraudulent notary who was deservedly deprived of his ears; as a sordid impostor, who duped the immeasurable credulity of the learned Doctor Dee, and subsequently involved his victim in transactions which have permanently degraded an otherwise great name; finally, as a pretended transmuter of metals, who was only too leniently treated by the emperor whom he deceived. For example, the astrologer depicted by Hudibras had read

"Dee's prefaces before
The Devil, and Euclid o'er and o'er,
And all th' intrigues 'twixt him and Kelly,
Lexas and th' Emperour would tell ye."

But to Doctor Dee, at least, this is demonstrably unjust. This is the verdict of posterity in so far as it has concerned itself with the subject; it is the verdict of the biographical dictionaries, who have faithfully transcribed from one another, after the easy method which prevails with biographical dictionaries when they deal with magicians and seers, with alchemists and other professors of mystic physics, as, generally, with all the oracles of the borderland; and, in so far as it concerns itself with borderlands, unerudite public opinion has been led by the erudite ignorance of the dictionaries.

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Biographical Preface. Now, in offering for the first time to the me; English reader the three very curious r of treatises which constitute the chief literary remains of Edward Kelly, it is not For necessary, as it would be in fact without by

reason, that the editor should accept an indiscriminate brief for the defence of the alchemist who wrote them. To the collector of curiosities in science and choses inouies in literature, the interest which may attach to them will be unimpaired by the mummeries or crimes of their author. For the student of Hermetic antiquities, it will become evident, and he may already be aware, that the value of the duo tractatus and their com-

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of an adept, but that they comprehend a careful digest or concensus of alchemical philosophers, while the interest which attaches to the man is created by his possession for a period of the

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two tinctures of alchemical philosophy, and not in his ability to compose

them. At the same time, the adventures and imprisonments of Kelly, with

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his transitions from abject poverty to sudden wealth, from a proscribed and law hunted fugitive to a baron or marshal of Bohemia, and then again to disgrace and imprisonment, ending in a death of violence, to say nothing of his visions and transmutations, constitute an astonishing narrative, and make up the broad outlines of a life which would be possible alone in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Moreover, here, as in so many other cases, the student of transcendental history will hardly need to be informed that the "skryer" of Doctor Dee and the discoverer of the so-called "Book of Saint Dunstan" has been accredited with many iniquities of which he does not seem to have been guilty.

If it be permissible to set aside for the moment the mere antiquarian interest in these remains of Edward Kelly, and to exhibit a preferential attention towards that point of view from which the Hermetic student would be disposed to regard them, it will be reason-

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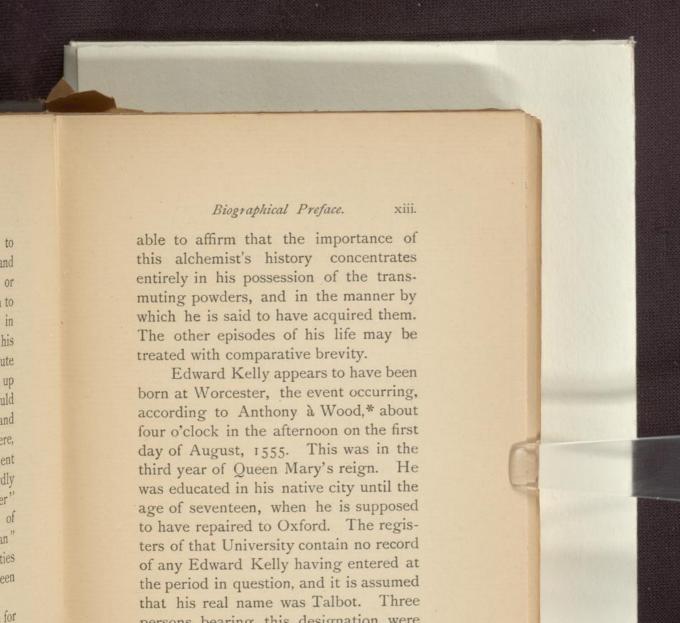
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persons bearing this designation were entered at Gloucester Hall about this time. Possibly the University records have not been adequately searched, and

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^{*} Athenæ Oxoniensis, ed. 1813, pp. 639-643.

Edward Kelly:

xiv.

if not, the evidence for his sojourn at Oxford is of a very slender character.* If, beyond the difficulty that has been mentioned, there are no other reasons for supposing that he changed his name, and none others seem forthcoming, there is, perhaps, more reason to discredit his university career than to accept the theory of the alias. If he were at Oxford, it would be only for a short period, and he is said to have left abruptly. Other narratives state that he was bred as an apothecary, and in this way acquired some skill in chemistry. It was more probably the profession of his father, of which he may have picked up some knowledge in boyhood. After the termination of his scholastic studies, whether at Oxford or elsewhere, he himself seems to have embraced the law, and to have settled in London, or, according to another account, at Lancaster, but possibly in both places. It

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^{*} The amanuensis of Thomas Allen (temp. Wood), of Gloucester Hall, said that Kelly spent some time in that house.

was in the latter certainly that his troubles began. He was a skilful penman, who had been at the pains to acquaint himself with archaic English, and, as a Worcester man, not improbably with Welsh, and by the help of these accomplishments he was accused of producing forged title deeds in the interests of a client. The indictment is very vague, and does not rest upon anything which can be termed evidence. He is said, however, but upon equally uncertain grounds, to have been pilloried at Lancaster, and to have been also deprived of his ears. There is no doubt that he fell into grievous trouble, for to his life's end he was always less or more in fear of English law, and sometimes seems to have preferred a foreign prison to the uncertain reception which was to be anticipated on his return home. But that the penalty which his biographers have meted out to him, whether deserved or not by his misdeeds, was in some way evaded, it seems more reasonable to think. The

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Edward Kelly: xvi. Glas distinguished position which he held subsequently at the Court of the Empehere, ror Rodolph, would have scarcely been possible to a man who had lost his fugiti ears. The credulity of royal personone (ages at the end of the seventeenth prese century may have facilitated many imrecord postures on the part of the alchemists teur. whom they protected, but could scarcely his ac have extended to accepting the philobecau sophical illumination of an adept who had been branded by law. The alternalonely tive story is, then, apparently preferable, it cam and this says that Kelly sought refuge manus in Wales. Here it is exceedingly probcould able that he adopted an assumed name, whatm but whether Talbot became Kelly or ed with whether Kelly merged for a moment and he into Talbot, or some other designation, was in is a mystery of modification in Alchemy 'li is which the past is not likely to give up pert of Son In Wales he would seem to have em-+ L'A braced a nomadic life, staying at Paris, 1861 The. obscure inns, and after a time he must Cated, had have worked his way down into the social lega \$0msi neighbourhood of the historic abbey of seem to be was in We Glastonbury.* What occurred to him here, what was destined, in fact, to be the turning point in the life of this fugitive, has been recited by more than one of his biographers; and if, in the present narrative, it be based on the record of the French scientific litterateur, Louis Figuier, that is not because his account is specially preferable, but because it is nearest at the moment.†

He put up, among other places, at a lonely hostelry in the mountains, and there it came to pass that he was shewn an old manuscript which no one in the village could decipher. Kelly had good, if somewhat mournful reason to be well acquainted with the mysteries of ancient writing, and he saw at a glance not only that it was in the old Welsh language, but

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^{*}It is about 35 miles from Glastonbury to the nearest part of South Wales.

⁺ L'Alchimie et les Alchimistes. Troisième édition Paris, 1860, p. 232, et seq.

[‡] The insinuation is that Edward Kelly, as above indicated, had been concerned in the fraudulent manufacture of ancient legal documents.

[§] Outside M. Figuier's imagination there does not seem to be any reason for supposing that the manuscript was in Welsh.

Edward Kelly: xviii. that it treated of the transmutation of metals. He made inquiries as to the to be history of this bibliographical rarity, and learned that its discovery was due to play one of those outbursts of religious fanaticism which were common enough in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The sepulrecep chre of a departed bishop interred in a neighbouring church had been violated, strang the zeal of the Protestant being not untrove. mixed with the desire of obtaining hidden apoth treasures. However, the sacrilegious ing o act was only rewarded by the alchemihave cal manuscript which the despoilers Period could not read, and by two small ivory had h caskets, containing respectively a red tinctur and a white powder, which in their eyes the M were equally useless. The receptacle to be ; of the red powder was shattered in their the w fury, and much of its contents were lost. one gr What remained of it, together with the cepted second casket and the accompanying document, they readily disposed of to the innkeeper, who seems to have had a hand in the discreditable transaction, in exchange for a flagon of wine. locuments

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manuscript was retained as a curiosity to be exhibited to strangers frequenting the hostelry; the intact casket was a plaything for the innkeeper's children; the remnant of the red powder seems to have remained by chance in its shattered receptacle; and it came to pass, in due time, that Kelly, in his capacity as a stranger, examined the entire treasuretrove. If Kelly had begun life as an apothecary, he had doubtless a smattering of chemistry, * and there would have been few educated persons at that period who, in connection with Alchemy, had heard nothing of the red and white tinctures which were the instruments of the Magnum Opus. He knew enough to be anxious to possess them, and for the whole archaic collection he offered one guinea to the innkeeper, who accepted these terms.

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^{*} Figuier observes that he was devoid of the most elementary conception of chemistry or of transmutatory philosophy, but then Figuier was a Frenchman and drew largely upon those interior resources which economise documentary research.

Edward Kelly:

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Such is the narrative of the discovery, stripped of a few elaborations, which are due to Gallic insight. Now, Nash,* who is responsible for the story of the pillory, assigns no date for the supposed mutilation of Edward Kelly, but it may be regarded as having taken place, if at all, about 1580. If the mutilation in question be rejected, the same date will serve us as the commencement of the Welsh wanderings. After he had secured the Hermetic treasures his occupations for a time are uncertain; when he reappears it is in company with Dr. John Dee. Figuier, still elaborating upon the outlines of unfanciful and ineffective biographers, recounts how, being unable to make use of his treasures, through his alleged ignorance of chemistry, he had recourse to his old friend Dee, wrote to him on the subject, received a favourable reply, and forthwith betook himself to London. Whether he wrote or not, there he was

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^{*} History and Antiquities of Worcester, 2 vols., London, 1781, etc., Fol.

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evidently established in the autumn of 1582. It is difficult to decide whether this was a first acquaintance. Lenglet du Fresnoy, who was fairly careful in the collection of his data, states that Kelly was really a notary of London, and that Dee was his old neighbour and friend.* They are supposed to have set to work together, and in the month of December, 1579, it is said, in the

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^{*} There is a very large mass of material in existence for the life of Dr. Dee, and it has been so imperfectly investigated that the biography of this singular man is still practically unwritten. So far as it has been possible to examine it for the purposes of this notice, it does not seem to afford much assistance on this debatable point. The Autobiographical Tracts of Dr. John Dee, Warden of the College of Manchester, edited by Mr. James Crossley, were printed for the Chetham Society in 1851, but they do not contain a single reference to Edward Kelly, nor to any experiments in Alchemy. In repudiating the magical practices which were ascribed to him, he refers to certain "false information given in by one George Ferrys and Prideaux, that I endeavoured by enchantments to destroy Queene Mary," for which he was imprisoned at Hampton Court, "even in the weeke next before the same Whitsuntide that her Majesty (i.e., Queen Elizabeth, before her accession) was there prisoner also." There is also a tract occasioned by the accusation that he was "a conjuror, a caller of devils, a great doer therein, and so (as some would say) the arche conjuror of this whole kingdom." Concerning which, he says that it is "a damnable

xxii. Edward Kelly: laboratory of a goldsmith, they accomthirty plished a transmutation of metals which easy to proved the richness of Kelly's tincture diaries to be one upon two hundred and of the seventy-two thousand two hundred and elapsed. thirty; but, it is added, "they lost to doub much gold in experiments before they ments y knew the extent of its power." If this bona fi date can be accepted, Kelly was then serious] twenty-four years old, and his comsubseque panion was his senior by something like regarde it is, furt slander, utterly untrue, in the whole, and in every worde and part thereof: as (before the King of Kings) will appere randa, r at the dreadfull day." But, as Halliwell justly remarks, not desi the "Compendious Rehearsall" was "written for an especial purpose, for the perusal of royal commissioners, and he has, Was not of course, carefully avoided every allusion which could be of Kelly construed in an unfavourable light. In the other, however had form (i.e., in the 'Private Diary'), he tells us of his dreams, talks of mysterious noises in his chamber, evil spirits, and panion's alludes to various secrets of occult philosophy in the spirit of seems al a true believer." The "Private Diary of Dr. John Dee, and the Catalogue of his Library of Manuscripts," was munication edited by James Orchard Halliwell, F.R.S., for the Camtude an den Society, in 1842. The name of Talbot is mentioned, s.v., March 9th, 1582, and recurs once or twice further on, * After but there seems no reason for identifying it with that of "Private Di Edward Kelly, whose initials are not found till November 22nd, 1582, when there is the following brief note:-presently rela "E. K. went to London, and so the next day conveied by their sojourn +" May road toward Blakley, and within ten days to return." me, God be

xxiii.

thirty years. But the dates are not easy to reconcile at this period, and the diaries of Dr. Dee make no mention of the subject till several years have elapsed.* There is naturally no reason to doubt that they soon made experiments with the powders, and as the bona fides of Dr. Dee cannot be seriously challenged through any of the subsequent transactions, he must have regarded the results as satisfactory; it is, further, evident from his own memoranda, made for his personal use, and not designed for publication, that he was not only convinced of the actuality of Kelly's transmutations, but that he had formed a high estimate of his companion's proficiency in Alchemy, and seems always to have received his communications on this subject with gratitude and reverence.† But it would

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^{*}After September 21st, 1583, there is a gap in the "Private Diary," which is resumed in July, 1586, and presently relates a transmutation performed by Kelly during their sojourn abroad.

^{+&}quot; May 10, 1588. E. K. did open the great secret to me, God be thanked." Again: "Aug. 24, 1580. Vidi

xxiv. Edward Kelly: appear also that, both in Eng

appear also that, both in England during the period in question, and afterwards abroad, Dr. Dee was far more profoundly and lastingly interested in the mysteries of visions in the crystal than in the accomplishment of the metallic magnum opus. His references to Alchemy are few and far between, but his communications with angels and planetary spirits, and indifferently with all sorts and conditions of invisible intelligences, were recorded in writing by himself with the most scrupulous and exhaustive fidelity. They were subsequently deciphered, arranged, and published in a large folio volume; and constitute to this day not only the most prolific source of information as to the relations between himself and Kelly, but, in spite of all modern marvels, remain the most curious account extant in the English language of alleged intercourse with the world of spirits. And,

divinam aquam demonstratione magnifici aomini et amici mei incomparabilis, D. Ed. Kellei ante meridiem tertia hora." Once more: "Dec. 14. Mr. Edward Kelly gave me the water, earth, and all."

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whatever has been advanced to the contrary by sensational biographers like Louis Figuier, elaborating with a view to effect, it was not in the main as an alchemist, but as a seer in the crystal that Edward Kelly posed before the doctor of Mortlake. It was also in that capacity that he chiefly influenced his companion. It is immaterial for the purposes of this notice, which, as already intimated, is not devised as an apology for its subject, to determine whether the visions of Edward Kelly were genuine or not. In the present state of psychological knowledge, imperfect as it still is, it is, on the one hand, too late to deny that a state of lucidity can be frequently induced by the mediation of crystals and similar transparent substances; while it is evident, on the other hand, from the history of the subject, that beyond the bare fact and such possibilities as may be reasonably attached to it, nothing of real moment has resulted from any such experiments. Edward Kelly may have lost his ears

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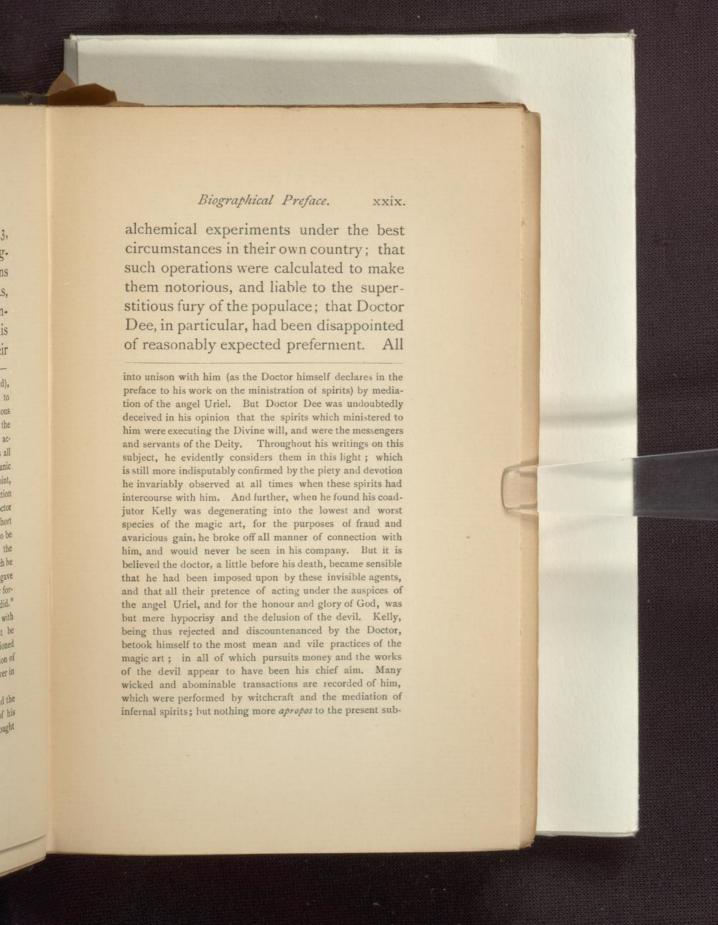
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xxviii. Edward Kelly: On the 21st of September, 1583, alchemic Edward Kelly and his patron left Engcircums land for the continent. Various reasons such ope have been assigned for this removal, as, them no for example, that Kelly went in constitious f tinual fear of his liberty and even his Dee, in p life; that they could not carry on their of reason the body but the evocation of the spirit of the deceased), into unison w and to answer to such questions that he then proposed to preface to his him." An original letter to Wood signed "Anonymous tion of the an Philomusus," and preserved among the Tanner MSS. in the Bodleian Library, says that Weever's authority was an acdeceived in hi complice of Kelly at the time of this transaction. As all him were exec and servants of species of magic were then vulgarly regarded as of Satanic origin, it is obvious, of course, that, from this standpoint, subject, he e Kelly had commerce with evil spirits. In this connection is still more in there is one interesting citation from the "Diary of Doctor he invariably Dee." "April 13, 1584, circa, 3 horam. After a short intercourse wir jutor Kelly v request made by me to Christ for wisdom and verity to be ministered by Nalvage (i.e., one of the spirits of the species of the crystal), he appeared and spake much to E. K., which he avaricions gain expressed not to me, but at length confessed that he gave him, and won him brotherly counsel to leave dealing as an idolater or forbelieved the do nicator against God, by asking counsel of such as he did." that he had h Thereupon "E.K. confessed that he had been dealing with and that all th the devil." In whatever sense this admission must be the angel Uri understood, the kind of calumnies which it has occasioned but mere hype may be understood by a passage in "Sibley's Illustration of being thus rej the Occult Sciences," the work of a profound believer in betook bimself astrology and magic. magic art; in "Edward Kelly was also a famous magician, and the of the devil a companion and the associate of Dr. Dee, in most of his wicked and all magical explorations and exploits: having been brought which were per infernal spirits;

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xxx. Edward Kelly:

of these causes may have contributed to make their departure desirable, and they may not have been actuated by any of them. As to Dee, he enjoyed a considerable share of Court favour, that of royalty included, and there is no reason to suppose that his journey was in search of preferment, or that he contemplated

ject, than what is mentioned by Weaver in his 'Funeral Monuments.' He there records that Kelly, the Magician, with one Paul Waring, who acted as companion and associate in all his conjurations, went together to the church-yard of Walton Ledale, in the country of Lancaster, where they had information of a person being interred, who was supposed to have hidden or buried a considerable sum of money, and to have died without disclosing to any person where it was deposited. They entered the church-yard at exactly twelve o'clock at night; and having had the grave pointed out to them the preceding day, they exorcised the spirit of the deceased by magical spells and incantations, till it appeared before them, and not only satisfied their wicked desires and iniquities, but delivered several strange predictions concerning persons in that neighbourhood, which were literally and exactly fulfilled. It was vulgarly reported of Kelly, that he outlived the time of his compact with the devil, and was seized at midnight by some infernal spirits, who carried him off in the sight of his own wife and children, at the instant he was meditating a mischievous scheme against the minister of his parish, with whom he was greatly at enmity."-This account is simply a tissue of falsehoods, not only as regards the relations of Dee and Kelly, but the place and manner of the alchemist's death. Moreover, Kelly does not appear to have had any issue.

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a protracted absence, for he left his library behind him in his cottage at Mortlake His wife and his children accompanied him, as well as the family of Kelly, who also appears to have been married, though at what period is unknown. This considerable party was completed by Lord Albert Alasko, a Polish noble, who had sought and obtained the familiar acquaintance of Doctor Dee during a residence of a considerable duration in England.*

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^{*} In the "Private Diary," under date of May 1st, there is the following entry: -Albertus Laski, Polonus, Palatinus Scradensis, venit Londinem. Compare MS. Donce 363, fol. 125. "The year of our Lord God, 1583, the last day of April, the Duke or Prince of Vascos, in Polonia, came to London, and was lodged at Winchester House." It was at half-past seven in the evening of May 13th, that Dee made his acquaintance. He became a frequent and even continual visitor. The "Autobiographical Tracts" published by the Chetham Society contain the following reference:-"Her Majesty (An. 1583, Julii ultimo) being informed by the right honourable Earle of Leicester, that whereas the same day in the morning he had told me that his honour and the Lord Laski would dine with me within two daies after, I confessed sincerely unto him, that I was not able to prepare them a convenient dinner, unless I should presently sell some of my plate or some of my pewter for it, etc."

xxxii. Edward Kelly:

mical experiments of the two Hermetic confederates does not appear from the evidence, though it may be reasonably assumed. But, like Dee himself, he was profoundly impressed by the spiritual revelations in the crystal, and the records exhibit him as a regular and active participator in the clairvoyant séances. The entire journey would seem to have been undertaken at the instance of Lord Albert Alasko, who had invited them to visit him at his castle in the neighbourhood of Cracovia. Hostile biographers like Figuier have therefore represented him as the dupe of the two colleagues, whom they plundered without mercy, with whom they outstayed their welcome, and were at last shaken off, not without great difficulty, when their victim could tolerate them no longer, and when he was practically ruined by their rapacity. For all this there is not a particle of evidence. It is certain that they did not reach Cracovia till March 13th, 1584. They had scarcely arrived in the north of

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Germany before Doctor Dee had intelligence of the destruction of his library at Mortlake, by the fury of a fanatical mob, who took advantage of the wizard's absence to revenge themselves on his effects. The sequestration of his rents and his property seems to have followed quickly on this act of vandalism. During this period, as already seen, there is a gap in the "Private Diary," and it is only imperfectly supplied by the "True and Faithful Relation," which is devoted to the visions in the crystal. There is no record of the circumstances under which they parted from the Polish noble, but the date of their departure from Cracovia is fixed by the "Faithful Relation" as the first day of August, 1584, new style. There is evidence to shew that, in common with Doctor Dee, he had experienced much from the unreasoning violence of Edward Kelly's temper; but there is no evidence that they parted unpleasantly. The visions and revelations in the crystal continued abroad as

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xxxiv. Edward Kelly:

at home with the utmost regularity and persistence, doing credit as before either to the marvellous clairvoyance of the seer, or to the variety of his imaginative resources, but destined ere long to be stained with one foul record. It is certain, on the other hand, that during this period the alchemical experiments which have been assumed to be the object of their journey do not appear to have been prosecuted. It is even affirmed that, in spite the Donum Dei, the two families were sometimes in great poverty. But at length they repaired to Prague, reaching that city seven days after their departure from Cracovia. There all men talked of Alchemy, numbers practised it, half the world credited the marvels concerning it, and supposed processes were more numerous than even the adepts themselves. Inevitably, the possessor of the Bishop's powder, obtained at the digging in Wales, must have been calculated to shine in this city of hierophants, and Edward Kelly came

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among them like that artist Elias foretold years previously by Paracelsus, and still expected by his disciples. Within a very short time all Prague was in transport, for the adept Kelly was transmuting everywhere, as, for example, at the house of Thaddæus de Hazek, the imperial physician, and even initiating disciples like Nicholas Barnaud and the Marshal of Rosenberg in the process, if not in the secret. Many authorities, including the great name of Gassendus, have been cited in support of these prodigal transmutations, but some who have been quoted either utter an uncertain note or are altogether silent. * However this may be, the whole party became exceedingly and suddenly affluent, great in their extravagance, and magnificent in their retinues. They were invited to

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^{*} The only discoverable testimony of Gassendus is contained in *De Rebus Terrenis Inanimis*, Lib. III., c. VI., *Luzauni Batavorum*, fol. 1658, vol. 2, p. 143. "Deinde manifesta sunt genera varia imposturarum, quibus versutiores fumivenduli illudere solent non modo simplicioribus, sed nonullis etiam ex iis, qui se putant oculatories (he has already spoken of the credulity of believers, more especially with regard to the forgeries of alchemical literature), dum

xxxviii. Edward Keliv:

returned to Prague and took counsel with Dr. Dee. To that city he was consequently permitted to go back, but his house was guarded, and as fresh experiments in the composition of a transmuting powder were abortive as ever, the alchemist, seized with rage, made a futile attempt to escape, which ended in the murder of one of his guards.

A second imprisonment, this time in the castle of Zerner, followed his violence. Doctor Dee returned alone to England, but at a date which conflicts with many alleged incidents in the life of his seer. The two confederates seem to have parted amicably, and they corresponded after their separation.* At the instance of the philosopher of Mortlake, Queen Elizabeth claimed the alchemist as her subject, but the

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^{*}There seems little doubt that Dr. Dee held the memory of Kelly in something like affection. Long after his return to England, under date March 18, 1595, there is this entry in one of his diaries: "Mr. Francis Garland came this morning to visit me, and had much talk with me of Sir Edward Kelly."

xxxix.

Emperor excused himself from releasing him on the ground of the homicide. The second imprisonment of Kelly, according to accepted dates, lasted till the year 1597, when he attempted to escape by a rope, but, falling from a considerable height, sustained such injuries as resulted in his death at the age of forty-two.* His treatise on the "Stone of the Philosophers" was the product of his enforced leisure, but it did not appease his captor. The other tracts contained in the present volume may have been earlier compositions. As previous to his acquaintance with Kelly Dr. Dee had no transactions in Alchemy, so, after his return to England till his own death in the year 1608, he eschewed experiments which had involved his clairvoyant in misery, and

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^{*&}quot;John Weever says that Queen Elizabeth sent, very secretly, Captain Peter Gwinne, with some others, to persuade Kelly to return to his native country. It is then said that attempting to escape from a wall of his own house at Prague, he fell, etc. . . . His house is said to bear his name to this day, and was once an old sanctuary."—Athenæ Oranjensis.

was content to be Warden of Manchester, to be persecuted by the Fellows of the College, and to suffer other indignities with the patience of an enlightened philosopher.

II.

THE BOOK OF ST. DUNSTAN.

The student of alchemical literature will naturally be curious to know whether the mysterious manuscript of Glastonbury has been pretended to have survived. Tradition has ascribed to it the name which heads this section, and there is the following evidence, which must be taken with all faults, to account for it. The abbey of Glastonbury was founded by Saint Dunstan, but he does not appear to have been buried there, despite the supposed translation of his relics from Canterbury. must be inferred from the tradition that the remains of the disinterred bishop were those of the saint himself. Saint Dunstan was supposed to

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have been an alchemist, and has been regarded as the patron of the goldsmiths; but an anonymous compiler in manuscript of the seventeenth century affirms that he "had no other elixir or Philosopher's Stone than the gold and silver which, by the benefit of fishing, was obtained, whereby the kingdom's plate and bullion was procured. For the advancement of the fishing trade, he did advise that three fish days be kept in every week, which caused also more abstinence, and hence the proverb that St. Dunstan took the devil by the nose by his pincers." The "Book of St. Dunstan" is mentioned occasionally in the diaries of Dr. Dee, in connection with the "powder found at the digging in England," and in such a way as to make it a reasonable inference that this name was borne by the Glastonbury manuscript. A work of the same title is the subject of continual reference by the son of the philosopher of Mortlake, Arthur Dee, especially in his Fasciculus Chemicus. The British Museum contains

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xlii. Edward Kelly: a Latin copy in manuscript of another treatise by the same author, under the title of Arca Arcanorum, which is followed by the Tractatus Maximi Domini Dunstani, Episcopi Cantuariensis, veri philosophi, de Lapide Philosophico. Several extant manuscripts, both in Latin and English, widely at variance in their dates and in the nature of their contents, are, however, attributed to St. Dunstan. The first impression printed at Cassel in 1649. A few ignorant critics have gone so far as to regard Kelly's own treatise as the genuine Glastonbury manuscript. Others, discountenancing the connection with the saint, have been inclined to consider two metrical treatises, which are included by Elias Ashmole in the Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, as constituting the original work, though not, of course, in the original form or language. There may be little evidence

in support of this hypothesis, but it does

not exceed possibility; if rejected, the verses in question may be safely re-

garded as additional literary remains of

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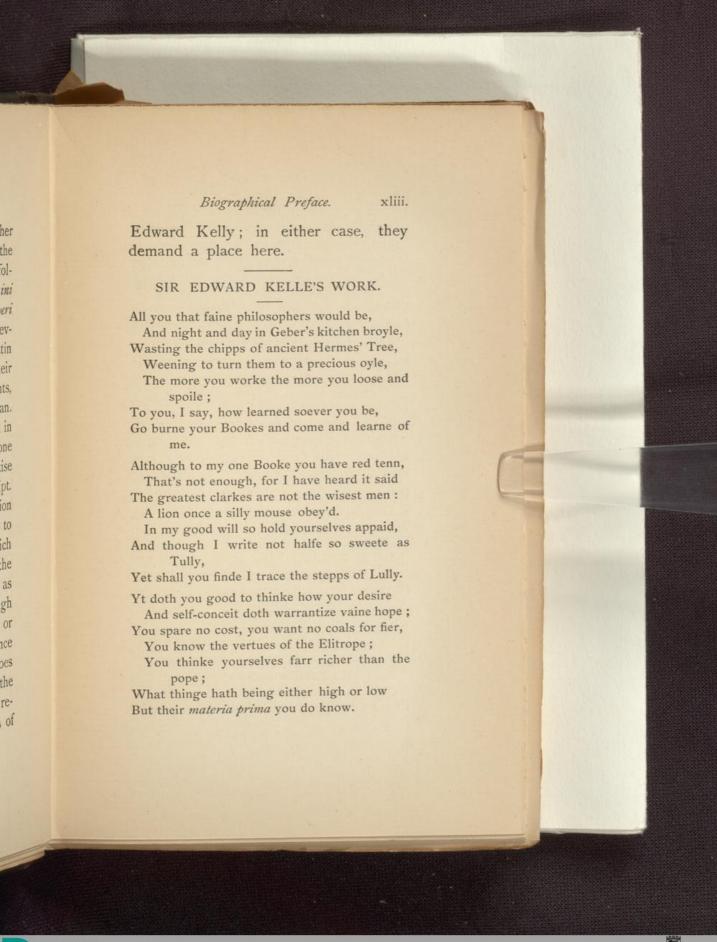
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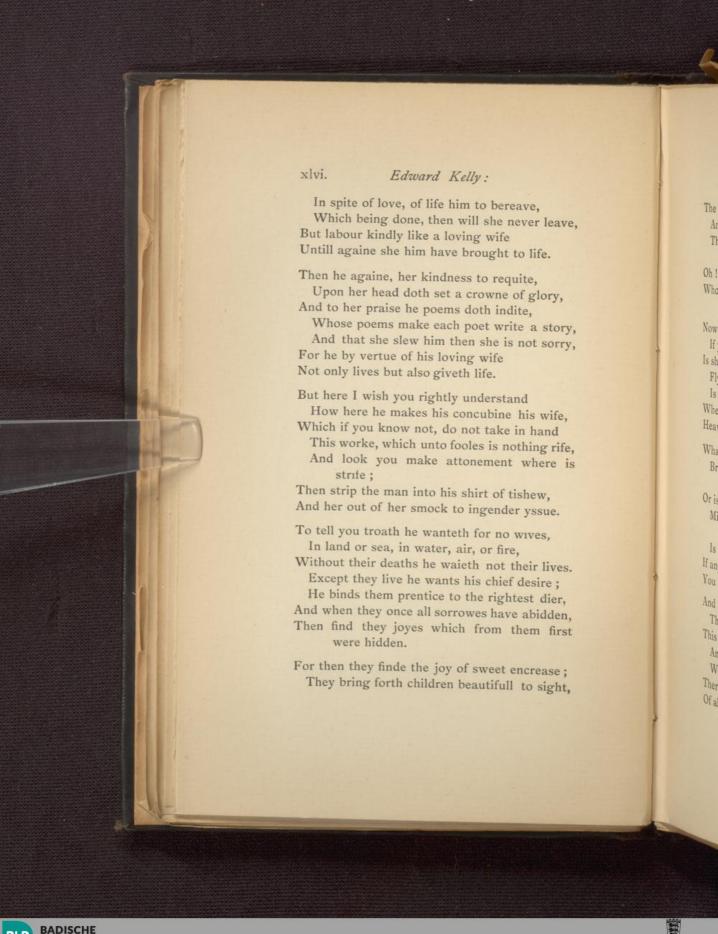
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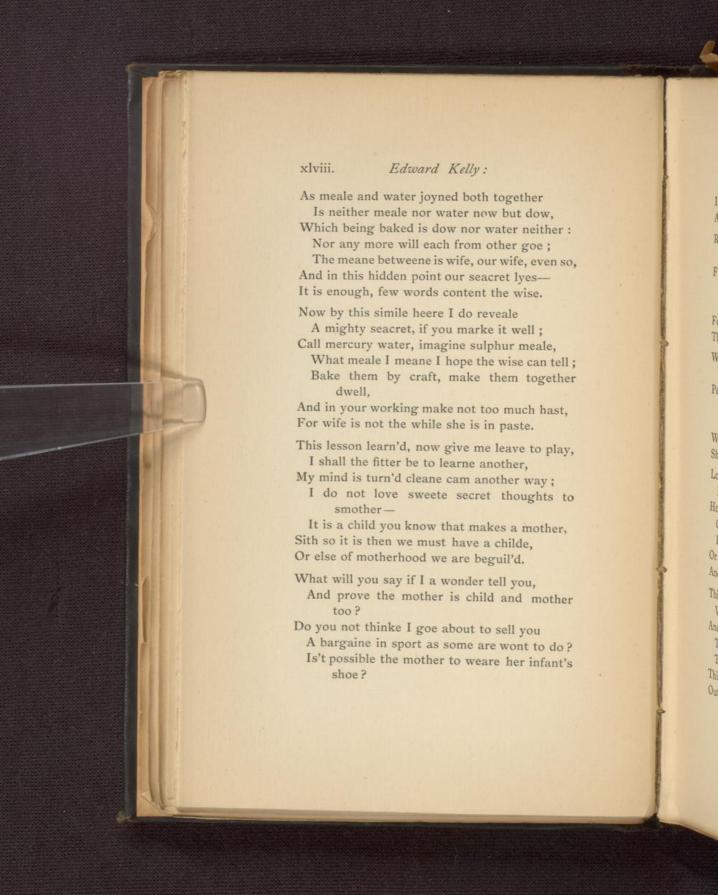
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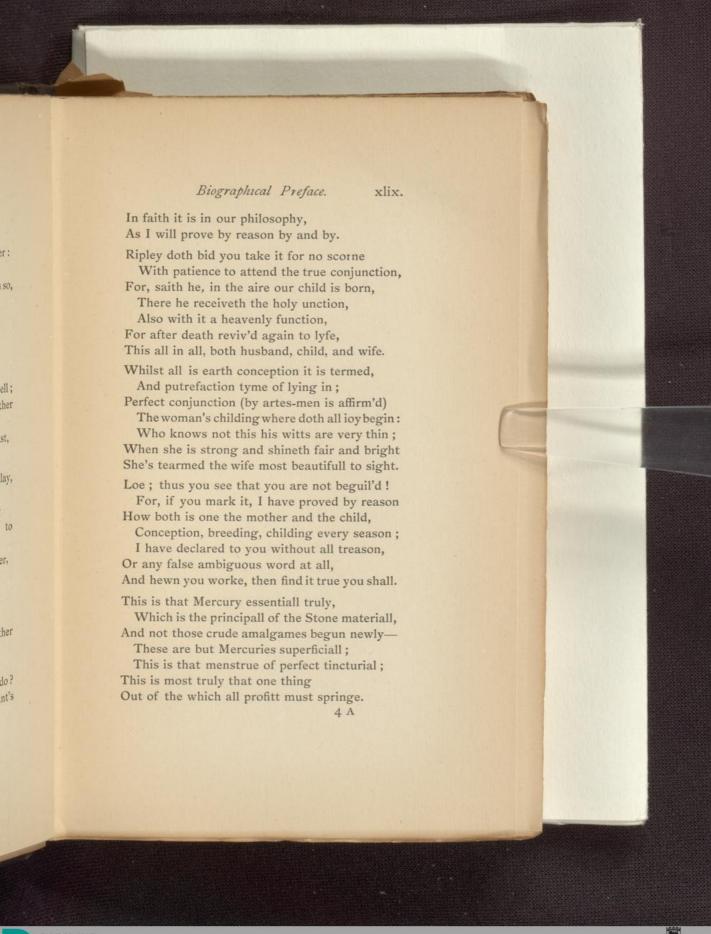
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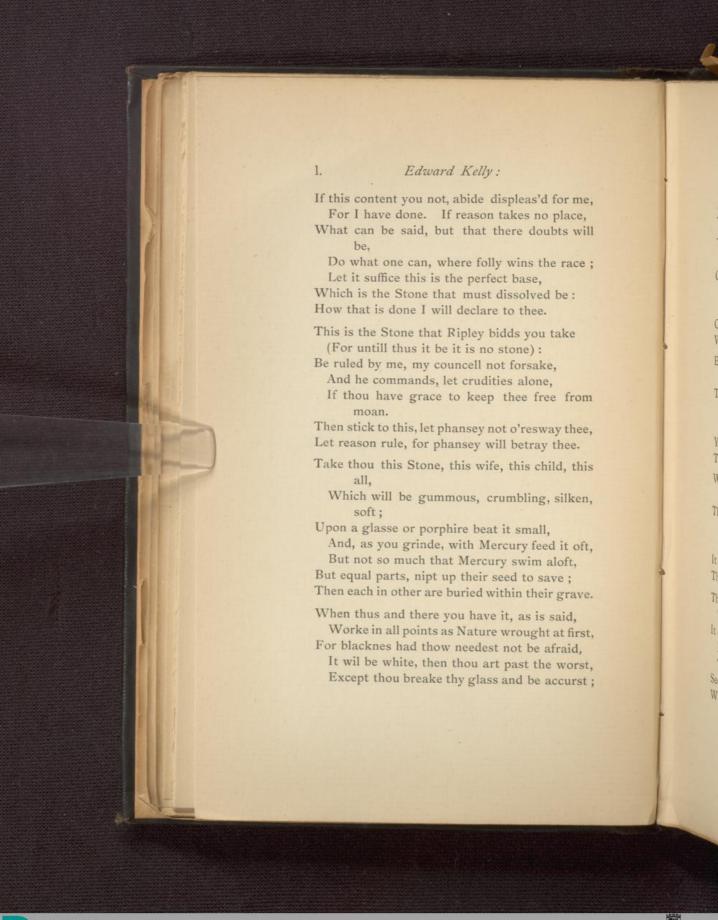


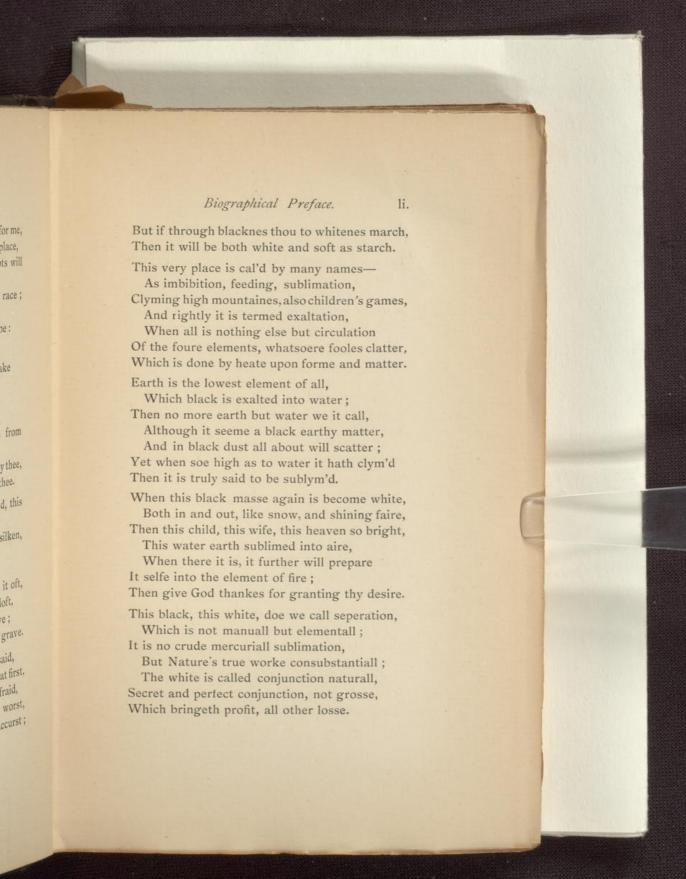


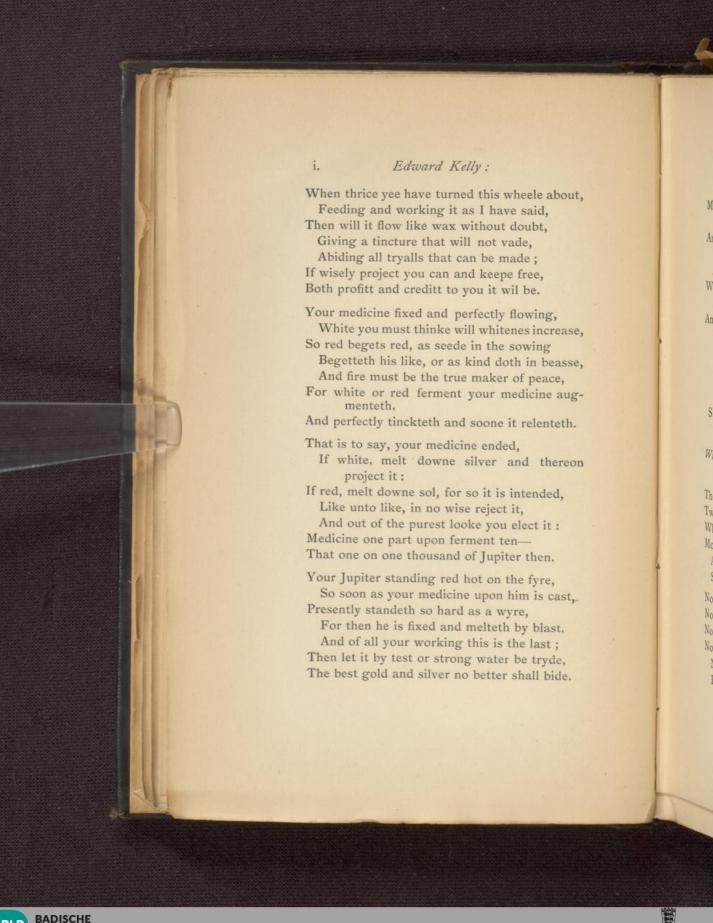
Biographical Preface. xlvii. The which are able prisners to release, And to the darkest bodyes give true light, ave, Their heavenly tincture is of such great might; Oh! he that can but light on such a treasure, Who would not think his joyes were out of measure? Now by this question I shall quickly know ory, If you can tell which is his wife indeederry, Is she quick footed, fair faced, yea or no? Flying or fixed, as you in bookes do reade? Is she to be fed or else doth she feed? Wherein doth she joy, where's her habitation? Heavenly or earthly, or of a strange nation? What is she, poore? or is she of any wealth? Bravely of her attyre, or meane in her 18 apparrell? Or is she sick? or is she in perfect health? Mild of her nature? or is she given to quarreil s Is she a glutton? or loves she the barrell? If any one of these you name her for to be, You know not his wife, nor ever did her see. ies. And that will I prove to you by good reason, That truly noe one of all these is she; er, This is a question to you that is geason; len, And yet some parte of them all she must be: irst Why then, some parte is not all you may see. Therefore the true wife which I doe mean Of all these contraries is the meane betweene. se;











Biographical Preface.

liii.

Mercury crude in a crucible heated
Presently hardeneth like silver anealed,
And in the high throwne of Luna is seated.
Silver or gold as medicine hath sealed,
And thus our greate secret I have reveled,
Which divers have seene, and myself have
wrought
And dearly I prize it, yet give it for nought.

FINIS .-- E.K.

SIR ED. KELLEY CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.

Written to his especiall good freind, G. S. Gent.

The heavenly cope hath in him nature's fower— Two hidden, but the rest to sight appeare: Wherein the spermes of all the bodies lower Most secrett are, yett spring forth once a yeare; And as the earth with water, authors are, So of his parte is drines end of care.

No flood soe great as that which floweth still,
Nothing more fixt than earth digested thrise,
No winde so fresh as when it serveth will,
No profitt more, then keepe in, and be wise;
No better happ, then drie up aire to dust,
For then thou maist leave of, and sleepe thy
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liv. Edward Kelly: Yett will I warne thee, least thou chaunce to Sublyme thine earth with stinkeing water erst; Then in a place where Phœbus onely tayle Is seene att midday, see thou mingle best; For nothing shineth that doth want his light, Nor doubleth beames unless it first be bright. Lett no man lead unless he know the way That wise men teach, or Adrop leadeth in, Whereof the first is large and easiest pray, The other hard and meane but to begin; For surely these and no one more is found Wherein Appollo will his harp-strings sound. Example learne of God that plaste the skyes, Reflecting virtues from and t'every poynt, In which the mover wherein all things lyes Doth hold the vertues all in every joynt, And therefore essence fift may well be said, Conteining all and yett himselfe a maid Remember also how the Gods began, And by discent who was to each the syre; Then learne their lives and kingdomes if you Their manners eke, with all their whole attire, Which if thou do, and know to what effect, The learned Sopheis will thee not reject. If this my doctrine bend not with thy brayne, Then say I nothing though I said too much; Of truth 'tis good will moved me, not gaine, BADISCHE

To these very curious specimens of metrical Alchemy it will perhaps be of interest to add one of the shorter tracts which have been attributed to Saint Dunstan. The selection of the following experiments has been governed only by considerations of brevity.

lv.

SAINT DUNSTAN OF THE STONE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

I.

Take of the best red transparent ore of gold as much as you can have, and drive its spirit from it through a retort; this is the Azoth

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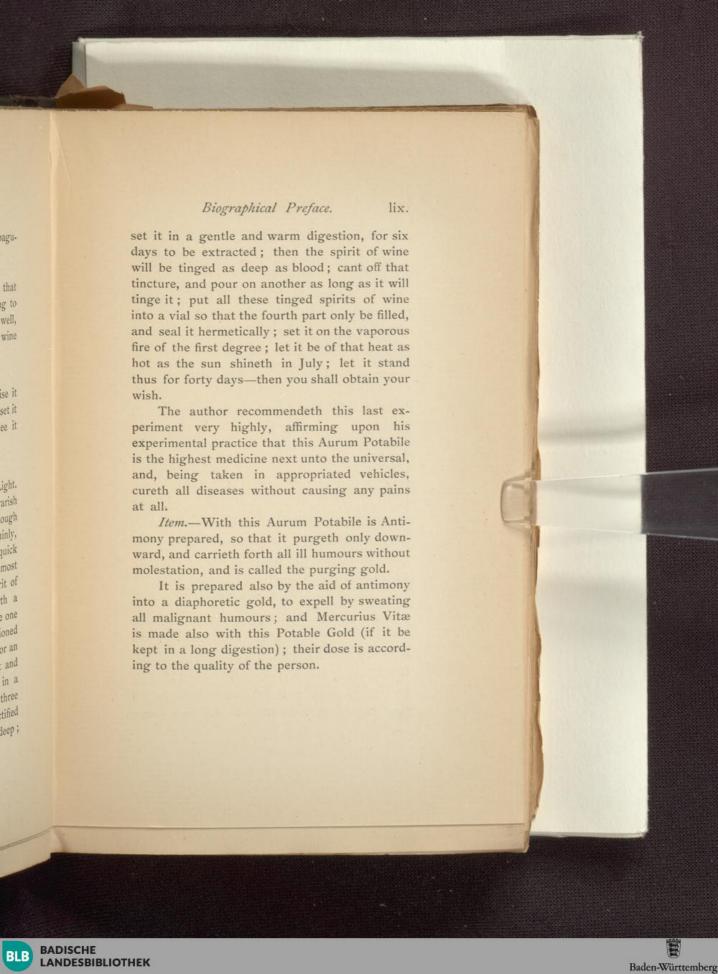
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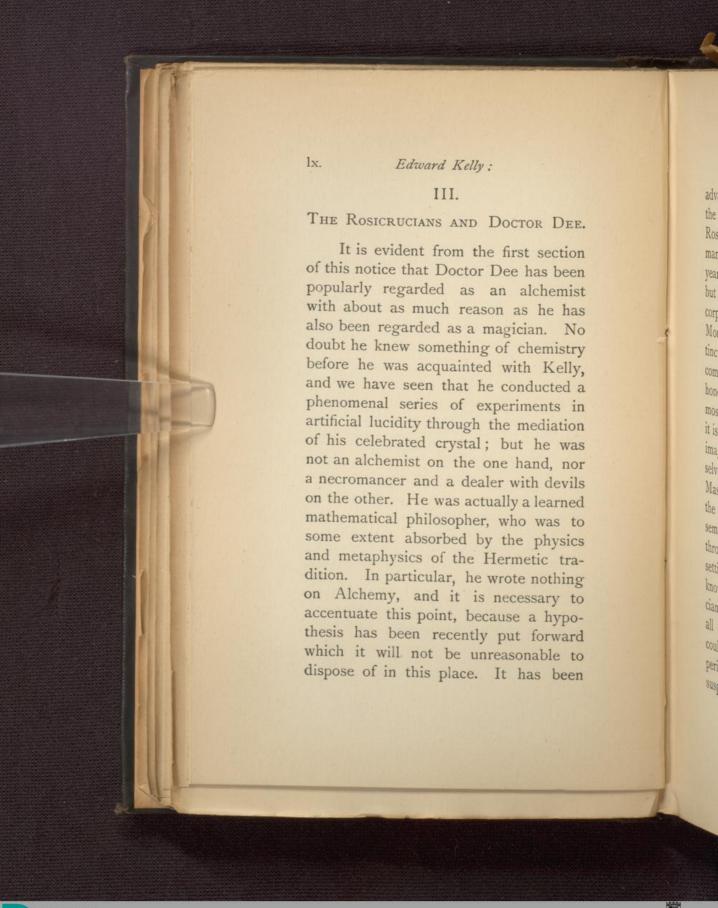
much; gaine,

lvi. Edward Kelly: and the Acetum of the Philosophers, from its proper minera, which openeth radically Sol that is prepared. II. Take the minera of Venus or Saturn, and drive their spirits in a retort; each of these dissolveth gold radically, after its purification. ma Take pulverised ore of Saturn, or vulgar Saturn calcined; extract its salt with Acetum or its antinæ (? anima); purify it in the best manner, that it may be transparent as crystal, and sweet as honey, and be fluid in heat like wax, and brittle when cold. This is the tree which is cut off, of unwholesome fruits, on which must be inoculated the twigs of Sol. IV. Take of that earth which lieth waste in the field, found everywhere in moorish grounds, into which the astrals ejaculate their operations, being adorned with all manner of sha colours, appearing like a rainbow; extract from it its purest and subtilest. This is the universal menstruum for all; and is all in all. V. Take of the ore of Sol and Mercury a like quantity; grind each very well; pour on it the spirit of Mercury, that it stand over three fingers deep. Dissolve and digest it in a gentle warmth.

Biographical Preface. lvii rom its Take of the best vitriol, or of the vitriol of ly Sol Venus; drive their spirits in a retort, white and red. With this red spirit, being rectified and sweetened, you may ferment and imbibe the rn, and subtle gold calx, and with the white spirit you f these may dissolve it after it hath been purified. ation. VII. Take quick Mercury; purify and dissolve vulgar it so long in alcolisated spirit of wine, till its Acetum impurity be separated from it, and become into he best its extreme, transparent, easy, fluid essence, crystal, like unto the white gluten of the eagle, and at like capable to receive the blood of the Red Lion. he tree VIII. its, on Extract the salt of the crude and white ol. calcined tartar; purify and clarify it often, till it be as bright as the tear of the eye, and in the can be brought no higher; therewith you may ounds, sharpen its own spirit of wine, which dissolveth opera-Sol and Lune. ner of IX. extract Take of the rank poisonous matter or is the stone, called kerg swaden, exuviæ, or husk of in all. the metals; drive its spirit very circumspectly; receive it so that it may turn unto water; it reduceth all metals to a potableness. y a like n it the X. r three Take of the air or heavenly dew, being well t in a purified, ten parts, and of subtle gold calx one

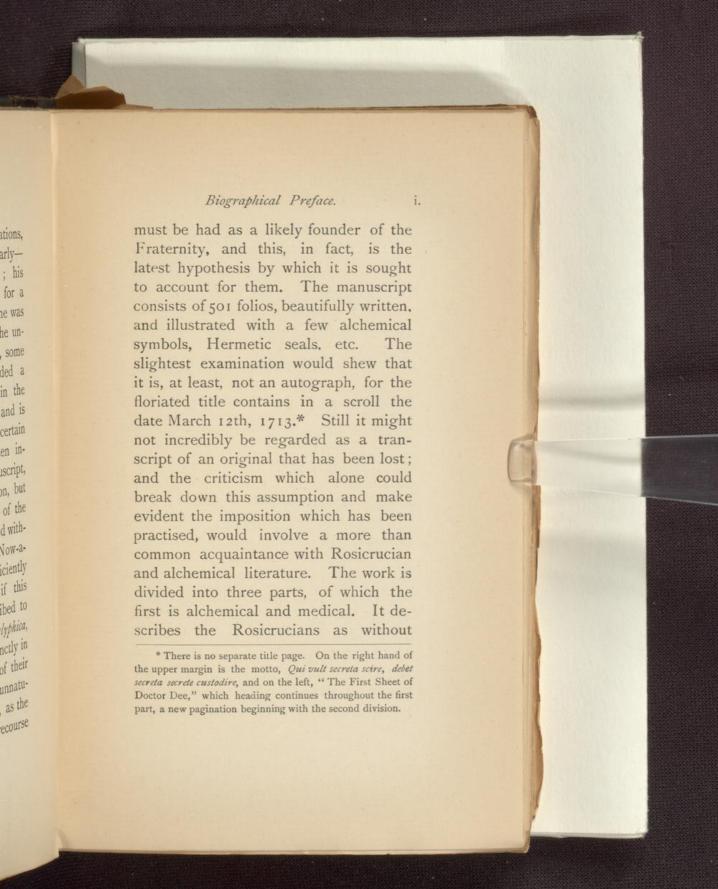
lviii. Edward Kelly: part; set it in digestion, dissolve, and coagulate it. XI. will Take the urine of a wholesome man, that drank merely wine; make of it, according to art, the salt of microcosm; purify it very well, which doth so much acuate the spirit of wine and that it dissolveth Sol in a moment. fire (XII. Take of the best ore of gold; pulverise it very well; seal it with Hermes his seal; set it Wish so long into the vaporous fire till you see it spring up into a white and red rose. expe is th This last experiment he calleth the Light. Take, in the name of the Lord, of Hungarish gold, which hath been cast thrice through at a antimony and hath been laminated most thinly, as much of it as you will, and make with quick mon Mercury an amalgam; then calcine it most subtily, with flowers of sulphur and spirit of mole wine burnt, so often till there remaineth a subtle gold calx of a purple colour. Take one part of it, and two parts of the above mentioned red matter; grind it very well together for an hour on a warmed marble; then cement and IS III calcine well by degrees for three hours in a circle fire. This work must be iterated three ing t times; then pour on it of the best rectified spirit, that it stand over it three fingers deep; **BADISCHE** LANDESBIBLIOTHEK Baden-Württemberg



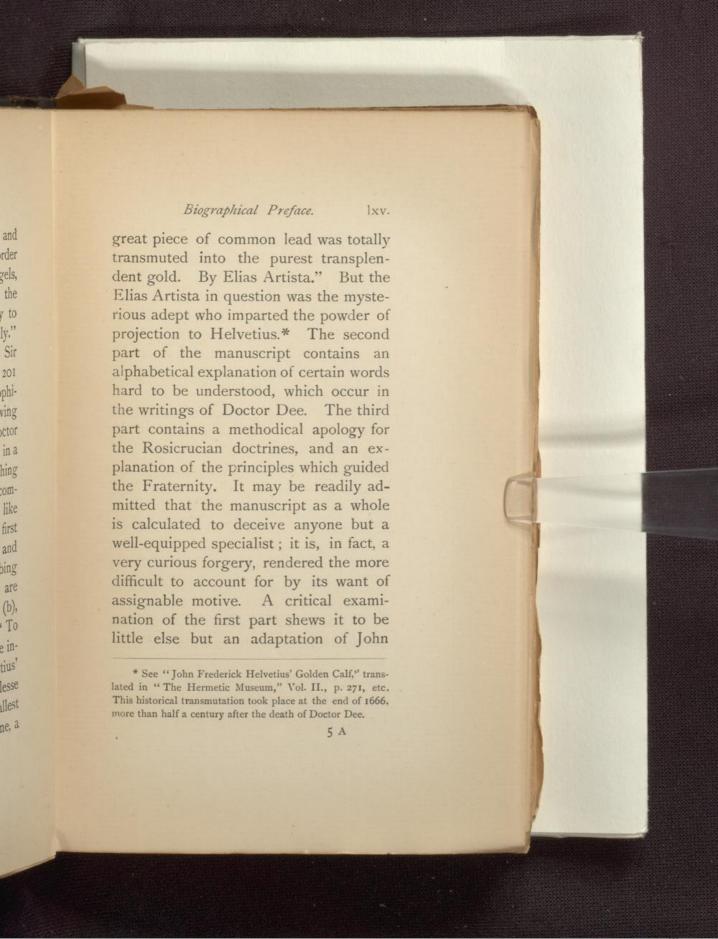


Biographical Preface. advanced that Doctor Dee was in reality the founder and head of the mysterious DEE. Rosicrucian Fraternity, which publicly manifested its existence some twenty ection years after the death of Edward Kelly, been but claimed to have been previously inemist corporated. Could the philosopher of e has Mortlake establish his claim to this dis-. No tinction, it is reasonably clear that his mistry companion must divide with him the Kelly, honours of having originated one of the cted a most curious historical mysteries. Now, nts in it is well known that, setting aside the liation imaginative persons who persuade theme was selves that the Rosicrucians, like the d, nor Masonic Brotherhood, can be traced to devils the period of the Flood, and have disearned seminated the wild and unaccountable vas to through all ages and in all countries hysics setting these aside, it is tolerably well c traknown that investigators of the Rosicruothing cian mystery have cast about them on ary to all sides for some one on whom they could father it. Few mystics of the hypoorward period have consequently escaped their ble to suspicion. Till recently Dr. Deebeen

lxii. Edward Kelly: whether from unsavoury associations. or because he was a little too early has enjoyed complete immunity; his turn, however, has arrived, and for a moment it certainly seemed that he was the responsible party. Among the unpublished writings of Doctor Dee, some of his biographers have included a manuscript which is preserved in the library of the British Museum, and is devoted to the elucidation of certain Rosicrucian arcana. It has been included on the faith of the manuscript, which claims to be his composition, but the biographers knew nothing of the Rosicrucian problem, and it passed without examination or challenge. Now-a-Pro days, however, people are sufficiently instructed to be aware that if this manuscript must really be ascribed to the author of Monas Hieroglyphica, then the Rosicrucians were distinctly in evidence years before the issue of their manifestoes, and they have not unnaturally concluded that it is to Dee, as the first exponent of their doctrines, recourse



lxiv. Edward Kelly: doubt the wisest of "nations," and grea affirms that their contemplative order tran has "presented to the world angels, dent spirits, planets, and mettals, with the times in astronomy and geomancy to prepare and unite them telesmatically." proje It quotes Sendivogius and Ripley, Sir part Christopher Heydon, etc. On page 201 there is a "Process upon the Philosophical work of Vitriol," with the following the v marginal note:-"This process Doctor part Dee had from Doctor R. set down in a the letter, Oct. 19, 1605." There is nothing in the text to indicate that it is communicated matter. It is written, like the rest of the work, mainly in the first person, but lapsing into plurals and IS Ca imperatives. The references ascribing the entire treatise to Doctor Dee are wholly marginal until folio 352 (b), where the following occurs: - "To assig conclude these secrets, I shall here insert Doctor John Frederick Helvetius' Letter to Doctor Dee. How in lesse than a quarter of an hour by ye smallest proportion of the Philosopher's Stone, a more th



lxvi. Edward Kelly: Heydon's "Elharvareuna, or Rosicrucian Medicines of Metals," which consists of a dialogue supposed to take place between Eugenius Philalethes (i.e., Thomas Vaughan) and Eugenius Theodidactus (1.e., Heydon himself). It was first printed in 1665. The second part is not definitely traceable to any published work, but there are a variety of alchemical lexicons, of which it is probably an abridgment; it is, in any case, quite certain that the words which it undertakes to explain are not found in the extant writings of Doctor Dee. The third part of the manuscript is an adapted translation of Michael Maier's Themis Aurea, which appeared in 1618. Outside the now exploded claim of this extraordinary imposture, there is no reason for connecting the philosopher of Mortlake either remotely or approximately with the Rosicrucians. At the same time, it is reasonably within the limits of this biographical notice to shortly test the evidence which offers in the question, because if Dee could be

