

THE
ALCHEMICAL TESTAMENT

OF

JOHN GYBBYS OF EXETER,

TEMP. ELIZABETH,

NOW FIRST EDITED FROM MS. ASHMOLE 1423, AT OXFORD.

BY

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T. RICHARDS, 37, GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S-INN-FIELDS.



ASHMOLE MS., 1423.

f. 19 (pt. 6.)

JOHANNES GYBBYS off Exitur in the cownté off Devynshyre, beyng in perylle off deth off a greet suellyng and pestlauns soer in hys throet, so that wellné he was past spech, and with greet payne mayd his confession, thinkyng no nother bott in grete feer abydyng the greet mercy off God, and the houre off deth, havyng no knowlych nor hope how to auoyd the bond of so greet peryll. Wherefore with all his myght and powere, strenyng and strechyng hym and sayng, Oon speciale thinge and a greet secrete I have, and or I departe owt off this present lyeff, I shall shew you ffor that cause the (*sic*) ye and all your kynred, and also the contreth where ye were borne, and ye wyll, shall have a cause to pray for my sowle and for the good deyde ye may do be my informacyon. Wherefore sytt ye downe, and wryte in the name off God, and begynne, and as I say to you wryte the varye true and certan conclusyon, ffor I have provyd itt, and many tymys have do itt and prattysyd the same, as I shall shew you now the plane and true way. Take a pownde weght or moer of Saturne, and put itt in a cruceable off erth, and molt itt in the same, and, when itt is molt, looke thou be sure * off a bowle with sand to sett * (*in marg.*) thy cruceable in to coyle, and in the colyng take a pease off woyd or els thou most set thi cruceable in a hoole in the grownd and ther w^t moyst surest. lyke a stavys end and putt in the mydds off thy metell so molt to kepe oppyn an hole in the mydds of the metell, and leyff a

good thyknesse in the bothome off thi metell, and thou must hold the pease of wood styll in the metell to itt be stondyng, and sum-delle hard. Then look thou have mercure redy, true and good ; see he be strenyd and claryfyed well through a pease of ledder whyte, without any holes for he wyll goo, thou mayst wryng hym through with thy honds ; this do, then putt hym to the metell as hote and shortly and as fast as itt is posseble, and cover itt then with a glasse meyt for the cruceable lyek to a uryvall, and lute itt that no aer go out, and iff thou see ony thing ascend and wold flee, bee sure of hym, that is the principall thing, and itt is callytt, *spiritus fugiens*. Take hym and save him in ony wyes, that is the thing that maks all perffyte to owre purposse. Then fyrst thou mayst prove hym and thou wyllt take hym, and as sone as thou thinks the metell is cold, brake up the lute, and save the glasse, and handyll itt faer, and kepe well that that thou fyends in the glasse, and close itt be theselse. That done, take thi cruceable, and depart the Saturne and the Mercure, and look that thi Mercure be pure and clene frome Saturne, and then put the spyrytt to his awne body so mortyfyed, and when he is cold, and iff the body resave the spyritt againe, itt is perffyte, iff he wyll not prove hym againe. When the body is so cold, put hym into a clene cruceable, and molt hym, and when he is soluble and sunwhat lyquyt, nott to hote nor to cold, put the fugytyve spyrytt to his body thus mortyfyed, and he wyll resave hym againe. Then thou hast provydyd and laboryd well to procede forth to thi purposse and to cum to the vary knolych now thou mayst surely procede to make thy medycine off the same mortyfyed body as itt shall appere hereafter. Fyrst provyde for a pott well anelyd off erth, or a glasse mete for the same

sumwhat with a byg mowth, so that a stone of good quantyté may go in to the same pott or glasse. Then provyde for a stone whych is clepyd or cald, *Lapis Adamantis*, or in Englysh a shyp-man stone or a lood stone that thei sael by. Iff thou wyll prove this stone wheder he have his full vertu and stregth or no, here mayst learne.

Questio difficilis est quo modo adamas attrahat ferrum, &c.

Hæc Johannes de sancto Amando in libro me. [dicinalium ?] ubi loquitur de venenis quomodo unum venenum attrahat reliquum. Explicit.

SECUNDUM MESNAY.

In lapidibus preciosis generaliter requiritur matenæ puritas virtus et preciositas, &c.—

— reperitur in Affrica. Trahere autem in se argentum l. Es. dicitur, etc.

Take this stone that hath vertu, and putt itt in to thi pott of glas, and also put thi mercury as it is sayd befor mortyfied in to the same pott to the stone, all hole, both the stone and the mercuré, and stoppe the pott hard ; than take and lute thi pott that no aer go forth, for then thou leys all thi labor. This done, prepare thy fyer temperatly in a chymnay, and ther thou must have emmers and ashis lay in ij. placis within the chymnay nott far in sunder ; fyrst make fyer in oon place above the ashis to thei be hote, and leve summe off the emmers to kepe heet, and ther sett thy pott, and the colys thou takyst from thes lay them above the oder ashis and kepe fyer above them to thou suppose the

oder ashis begynne to wax cold, then remeve thi pott from the emmers to the oder place, the colys fyrst remevyd to wher that pott stode. And thus thou must remeve fro place to place both thi colys and thi pott, as oft as thi heet begynnys to bate, and so to contynue with gret dylygens both nyght and day the space off xl. days. Then thi mercuré shall dyssolvdyd into lyek water as it weer clere cristall water, and iff wyll do the cost to make a furnasse to kepe this heett as itt is befor sayd, contynnually with less labor, thow mayst make it mete for thi pot or glasse. Then after this tyme past befor sayd, sett thi pott of glasse in hott emers, and cover itt all over with hote emers, and then make a good fyer above the emers contynnually burnyng the space off xxiiij. houres with a greyt fyer. Then anone after bayt thi fyer, and take uppe the pott or glasse and thou shalt fyend the mercuré in a full blakke colour ; then take itt out off the pott, for it is medsyn perfytely mayd, and thou mayst make off itt powder ; kepe it in a glasse to thou wylt make powder off itt, for it is perfyte medycine. Then and thou wylt procede, thou mayst immediately. Thus thou shalt proporecyon thi medicine ; oon unce off this medicine is suffycyant to oon c. unce off mercuré note mortyfyed. Then take a cruceable and as mych quikke mercuré as thou wyllt after this proporecyon befor wrytyn, and into thi cruceable, and sett itt in a metly hote fyer uncoverd to it be sumdele warme, and as sone as it is onything hoot, put to thi medicine as it is befor sayd after the proporecyon to the marcure nott ξ it mortified, and it shall sone overcum the mercuré, and bryng him to a body fyx and stable; ξ it take heed this medicine wyll mak that cruceable to tremble and quake or he be ouercum; wherfor thou must stable and hold hym fast lesse he fall or breke,

and when he is overcum he wyll wax hard ; then lett hym stand
styll vppon the fyer and make to hym a good fyer above and
rownd about thi cruceable to he be dyssolvyd and molt, then he
is pure and clene, fyx and stable, thou mayst cast itt into an
ingold, as thou wold do other metall, and make off hym what
thou wylt. · Deo Gracias !

Opus inceptum det Christus finem beatum.

THE END.

NOTES.

PAGE 3, line 1.—In Mr. W. H. Black's Catalogue of the Ashmolean Manuscripts (beyond comparison the most excellent account of any collection yet published), this piece is described as the "Testament nuncupatory of John Gybbys," col. 1153. It would seem from a partially obliterated note in another part of the volume, that the MS. belonged to Dr. Dee, in the year 1563, a memorandum important in so far as it fixes a limit on one side as to the date of the transcript, which may be assigned to a period of about that part of the sixteenth century, probably to the very commencement of the reign of Elizabeth.

PAGE 4, line 2.—*To itt be*, that is, until it be. Line 4, *ledder*, leather. Line 11, *ony wyes*, any wise.

PAGE 5, line 6.—*Mayst, sic* in MS. Perhaps *thou* is omitted; the MS. is very carelessly transcribed in several places.

PAGE 5, line 22.—*Emmers*, embers. This provincial form is curious, as showing that the MS. was in all probability written in the West of England. Jennings gives the same form as still in use in his Somersetshire Glossary, 1825, p. 36.

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PAGE 5, line 8.—*Me* in MS., here conjectured *medicinalium*.