

THE SECRET  
OF THE  
IMMORTAL LIQUOR  
CALLED  
ALKAHEST  
OR  
IGNIS-AQUA.

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By EIRENÆUS PHILALETHES.

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Communicated to his Friend, a Son of Art, and now Philosopher.

By Question and Answer.

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THE SECRET OF THE LIQUOR ALKAHEST.

1. Question.—What is the Alkahest?

Answer.—It is a Catholic and Universal *Menstruum*, and, in a word, may be called (*Ignis-Aqua*) a Fiery Water, an uncompounded and immortal *ens*, which is penetrative, resolving all things into their first Liquid Matter, nor can anything resist its power, for it acteth without any reaction from the patient, nor doth it suffer from anything but its equal, by which it is brought into subjection; but after it hath dissolved all other things, it remaineth entire in its former nature, and is of the same virtue after a thousand operations as at the first.

2. Q.—Of what substance is it?

A.—It is a noble circulated salt, prepared with wonderful art till it answers the

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desires of an ingenious artist; yet it is not any corporal salt made liquid by a bare solution, but is a saline spirit which heat cannot coagulate by evaporation of the moisture, but is of a spiritual uniform substance, volatile with a gentle heat, leaving nothing behind it; yet is not this spirit either acid or alkali, but salt.

3. Q.—Which is its equal?

A.—If you know the one, you may without difficulty know the other; seek therefore, for the Gods have made Arts the reward of industry.

4. Q.—What is the next matter of the Alkahest?

A.—I have told you that it is a salt; the fire surrounded the salt and the water swallowed up the fire, yet overcame it not; so is made the philosopher's fire, of which they speak; the vulgar burn with fire, we with water.

5. Q.—Which is the most noble salt?

A.—If you desire to learn this, descend into yourself, for you carry it about with

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you, as well the salt as its Vulcan, if you are able to discern it.

6. Q.—Which is it, tell me, I pray you?

A.—Man's blood out of the body, or man's urine, for the urine is an excrement separated, for the greatest part, from the blood. Each of these give both a volatile and fixed salt; if you know how to collect and prepare it, you will have a most precious Balsam of Life.

7. Q.—Is the property of human urine more noble than the urine of any beast?

A.—By many degrees, for though it be an excrement only, yet its salt hath not its like in the whole universal nature.

8. Q.—Which be its parts?

A.—A volatile and more fixed; yet according to the variety of ordering it, these may be variously altered.

9. Q.—Are there any things in urine which are different from its inmost specific urinaceous nature?

A.—There are, viz., a watery phlegm, and sea salt which we take in with our

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meat; it remains entire and undigested in the urine, and by separation may be divided from it, which (if there be no sufficient use of it in the meat after a convenient time) ceaseth.

10. Q.—Whence is that phlegm, or insipid watery humidity?

A.—It is chiefly from our several drinks, and yet everything hath its own phlegm.

11. Q.—Explain yourself more clearly.

A.—You must know that the urine, partly by the separative virtue, is conveyed with what we drink to the bladder, and partly consists of a watery Teffas (an excrementitious humour of the blood), whence being separated by the odour of the urinaceous ferment, it penetrates most deeply, the saltness being unchanged, unless that the saltness of the blood and urine be both the same; so that whatsoever is contained in the urine besides salt is unprofitable phlegm.

12. Q.—How doth it appear that there is a plentiful phlegm in urine?

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A.—Thus suppose; first, from the taste; secondly, from the weight; thirdly, from the virtue of it.

13. Q.—Be your own interpreter.

A.—The salt of urine contains all that is properly essential to the urine, the smell whereof is very sharp; the taste differs according as it is differently ordered, so that sometimes it is also salt with an urinaceous saltness.

14. Q.—What have you observed concerning the weight thereof?

A.—I have observed thus much, that three ounces, or a little more, of urine, taken from a healthy man, will moderately outweigh about eighty grains of fountain water, from which also I have seen a liquor distilled which was of equal weight to the said water, whence it is evident that most of the salt was left behind.

15. Q.—What have you observed of its virtue?

A.—The congelation of urine by cold is an argument that phlegm is in it; for the

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salt of urine is not so congealed if a little moistened with a liquid, though it be water.

16. Q.—But this same phlegm though most accurately separated by distillation, retains the nature of urine, as may be perceived both by the smell and taste.

A.—I confess it, though little can be discerned by taste, nor can you perceive more, either by smell or taste, than you may from salt of urine dissolved in pure water.

17. Q.—What doth pyrotechny teach you concerning urine?

A.—It teacheth this, to make the salt of urine volatile.

18. Q.—What is then left?

A.—An earthly, blackish, stinking dreg.

19. Q.—Is the spirit wholly uniform?

A.—So it appeareth to the sight, smell, and taste; and yet it containeth qualities directly contrary to each other.

20. Q.—Which be they?

A.—By one, through its innate virtue,

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the Dulech is coagulated; by the other, it is dissolved.

21. Q.—What further?

A.—In the coagulation of urine, its spirit of wine is discovered.

22. Q.—Is there such a spirit in urine?

A.—There is indeed, truly residing in every urine, even of the most healthful man, most of which may be prepared by Art.

23. Q.—Of what efficacy is this spirit?

A.—Of such as is to be lamented, and indeed may move our pity to mankind.

24. Q.—Why so?

A.—From hence the Dulech, its most fierce enemy, hath its original.

25. Q.—Will you give an example of this thing?

A.—I will. Take urine, and dissolve in it a convenient quantity of saltpetre. Let it stand a month; afterwards distil it, and there will come over a spirit which burns upon the tongue like a coal of fire. Pour this spirit on again, and cohobate it four

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or five times, abstracting every time not above half; so the spirit becometh most piercing, yet not in the least sharp; the heat which goeth out in the first distillation of the liquor, afterwards grows sensibly mild, and at length almost (if not altogether) vanisheth, and the second spirit may be perceived mild, both by the smell and taste, which in the former was most sharp.

26. Q.—What have you observed concerning the former spirit?

A.—If it be a little shaken, oily streaks appear sliding here and there, just as spirit of wine distils down the head of the alembic in streaks like veins.

27. Q.—What kind of putrefaction should the urine undergo that such a spirit may be got from it?

A.—In a heat scarce to be perceived by sense, in a vessel lightly closed, or covered rather; it may also be sometimes hotter, sometimes cooler, so that neither the heat nor cold exceed a due mean.

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28. Q.—How may this winy spirit become most perspicuous?

A.—By such a putrefaction as causeth a ferment, and exciteth ebullition, which will not happen in a long time if the urine be kept in a wooden vessel, and in a place which is not hot, but yet keeps out the cold, as, suppose, behind a furnace in winter, where let it be kept till of itself a ferment arise in the urine and stirs up bubbles, for then you may draw from it a burning water which is somewhat winy.

29. Q.—Is there any other spirit of urine?

A.—There is; for urine, putrefied with a gentle heat, during the space of a fortnight or thereabouts, sends forth a coagulating spirit, which will coagulate well rectified *Aqua Vitæ*.

30. Q.—How is that spirit to be prepared which forms the Dulech of itself with a clear watery stalagma; and also that which dissolves the same?

A.—Urine putrefied for a month and a-half

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in a heat most like the heat of horse-dung will give you, in a fit vessel, each stillatitious stalagma according to your desire.

31. Q.—Doth every spirit coagulate the spirit of wine?

A.—By no means; this second spirit is observed to want that virtue.

32. Q.—What doth urine, thus ordered, contain besides the aforesaid spirits?

A.—Its more fixed urinaceous salt, and, by accident, foreign marine salt.

33. Q.—Can this more fixed salt be brought over the alembic, with a gentle heat, in form of a liquor?

A.—It may, but art and ingenuity are required.

34. Q.—Where is the phlegm?

A.—In the salt; for in the preparation of putrefaction, the salt, being putrefied in the phlegm, ascends together with it.

35. Q.—Can it be separated?

A.—It may, but not by every artist.

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36. Q.—What will this spirit do when it is brought to this?

A.—Try, and you will wonder at what you shall see in the solution of bodies.

37. Q.—Is not this the Alkahest?

A.—This liquor cannot consist without partaking of the virtues of man's blood; and in urine the footsteps thereof are observable.

38. Q.—In urine, therefore, and blood the Alkahest lies hid?

A.—Nature gives us both blood and urine; and from the nature of these pyrotechny gives us a salt which art circulates into the circulated salt of Paracelsus.

Q.—You speak short.

39. A.—I will add this; the salt of blood ought so to be transmuted by the urinaceous ferment that it may lose its last life, preserve its middle life, and retain its saltness.

40. Q.—To what purpose is this?

A.—To manifest the excellency which is in man's blood above all other blood

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whatever, which is to be communicated to the urine (after an excrementitious liquor is separated from it), whence this urine excels all others in a wonderful virtue.

41. Q.—Why do you add urine?

A.—You must know that to transmute things a corruptive ferment is required, in which respect all other salts give place to the strong urinous salt.

42. Q.—Cannot the phlegm be collected apart from the salt?

A.—It may, if the urine be not first putrefied.

43. Q.—How great a part of the water is to be reckoned phlegm?

A.—Nine parts of ten, or thereabouts, distilled from fresh urine are to be rejected, the tenth part (as much as can be extracted in form of liquor) is to be kept; from that dried urine which remains in the bottom by a gentle fire (which will not cause sublimation), let the salt be extracted with water, so that there be as much water as half that urine whence this feces was

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dried; whatsoever is imbibed by the water, let it be poured off by decanting; let it be strained, or purged, per deliquium; then filter it through a glass. Let fresh water be poured on, and reiterate this work till the salt become pure, then join this vastly stinking salt with your last spirit and cohobate it.

PRAISED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.—AMEN.