

The Work of Dickinson

A 17th century allegorical alchemical poem by Edmund Dickinson, transcribed from MS Ferguson 91 in Glasgow University Library.

The worck of Dickinson.

When Phoebus with his rayes bright
Through the Raine takes his flight
His heate is then soe nourishinge
To the Earth and every other thinge
That sapp and roote doth then revive
By Phoebus heate attractive
Drawing by branches of the vine
Water mingled with Earth fine
Containeinge also fier and Ayre
Which liquor on Earth hath noe peere
CHAOS veterum some doe it call
Confused in it the Elements all
Wherefore draw thou a water bright
Contayneng in it the fiers might
And in the residence thou shalt finde
An Earth black as man of Inde
Which into Luna looke thou throwe
Till it be whiter then the snowe
That Earth put in a glasse faire
And put thereto of his water cleere
But close the mouth well of the Glasse
That the Spirit doe not out passe
A dayes space then lett them stand
To be buried in could sand
Then doe it in a bath of lent heate
That faint water it maye out sweate
So weake water thou shalt up still
But fier beneath with Earth will dwell
When all the fainte water is drew
And fier left in the Earth belowe
Then of this water put on more
And do as earst thou didst before
But often times thou must doe this
To gett much store of fier I wisse
So when thy fier is multiplied
Which still belowe in Earth will bide
Then hast thou gott a burning fire
That draw forth at thy owne desier
For Earth with his attractive might
Keepes downe with him the fire bright
First hide the fire the Earth within
And afterward looke thou them twinne
Thus Raymund ment when he did say
Absconde ignem in intimis terrae
Then set thy glass in dry fire
Till the white fumes doe appeare

Receive the same cloudes bright
Which tourne the water greate of might
This water if thou doest not knowe
Some thinge thereof I will the shewe
Of which Philosophers meane
From bowels of the Earth updrawe
By Phoebus might as earst was shewne
Mercury vegetable it is without doubt
That causeth Cropp and roote to sproute
Ignis humidus forsooth it is
The comfort of our life I wis
Mercury vegetable that men of clatter
That reduceth Gold to his first matter
This is the key that all must done
To open the bodies of Sonne and Moone
Also the menstrue vegetative
The metalline body that doth revive
The menstrue resolutive is the thinge
Which the menstruum resolved forth doth bringe
Then rectifie this water of might
And doe in it obryson bright
Which thou that tourne to his first matter
As doth Ice in warme water
And so together thou must convert
That never asunder they shall depart
Then circulate them so thou shall
To heale in man diseases all
For then thou has Electrum right
The first essence of the Sonne bright
This is the Philosophers Sulphur vive
Theire Tinctur, lead, their Gold of life
Likewise Luna thou maist reduce
To serve the to an other use
If thou hast grace then mayst thou finde
A water of an other kinde
Which faster to the metall doth cleave
Ingendred in the Earth beneath
Reduce him rightly into water
Which of metalls is first matter
Whose partes so divide thou shall
Into Earth and water minerall
That after they may conjoynd be
To cure in metalls leprosy
And for the order of true workenge
In figures is satt downe every thinge
To make white stone and the redd
Elixir vitae to putt away dread
To shew the order I meane truly
For workes in Bookes disordred bee
And keepe this secret I the praye
As thou wilt answer it at doomes day
And keepe it out of wicked hands
Which in no feare of God stands
And keepe it well in safety
To guide thy bretheren eke and thee
The key of all is heere in briefe

Which erst by none was ere so reife
And looke that aye thou live aright
And serve the Lord in Truth and Spight
And dooe good deedes unto the poore
So shalt thou live for ever more.