



Remarks Upon Alchemy and the Alchemists: Indicating a Method of Discovering the True Nature of Hermetic Philosophy (Classic Reprint)

Ethan Allen Hitchcock

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Excerpt from Remarks Upon Alchemy and the Alchemists: Indicating a Method of Discovering the True Nature of Hermetic Philosophy

Alchemy was a "pretended science by which gold and silver were to be made by the-transmutation of the baser metals into these substances, the agent of the transmutation being called the philosopher's stone." Those who professed this Art are supposed to have been either impostors or under a delusion created by impostors and mountebanks. This opinion has found its way into works on Science, and has been stereotyped in biographical dictionaries and in encyclopædias, large and small; and, in general, allusions to Alchemy, in histories, romances, and novels, are of but one character, and imply that the professors of the Art were either deluders or deluded, - were guilty of fraud or the victims of it.

It may be a hopeless task to announce a different persuasion with the expectation of superseding this deeply rooted prejudice; but the author thinks it a duty to declare the opinion he has derived from a careful reading of many alchemical volumes, and in the following remarks he has taken for his thesis the proposition that Man was the subject of Alchemy; and that the object of the Art was the perfection, or at least the improvement, of Man.

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