

English Rosicrucianism

Somewhere about the year 1855 this monument was unfortunately removed from the chancel to the vestry under the tower. It is in marble and includes a bust of Robert Fludd, with the right arm and hand resting upon an open book. The inscription in this case is as follows :

Sacred to the Memory

of the Illustrious Physician and Man Robert Fludd, alias De Fluctibus, Doctor of both Faculties, who after some years of travelling beyond seas, undertaken successfully for the improvement of his mind, was at length restored to his Fatherland and was not undeservedly received into the Society of the London College of Physicians. He exchanged life for death peacefully on the 8th day of the month of September A^o Dⁿⁱ MDCXXXV³³, in the 63rd year of his age.

No costly perfumes from this urn ascend ;
In gorgeous tomb thine ashes do not lie ;
Thy mortal part alone to earth we give ;
The records of thy mind can never die :
For he who writes like thee—though dead—
Erects a tomb that lasts for aye.

Thomas Fludd of Gore Court, Otham, in Kent, Esquire, erected this Monument to the happy Memory of his most dear Uncle on the 10th day of the month of August, MDCXXXV³³.¹

It has been reconstructed by Dr. Craven and will be found in the fourth chapter of his work, already cited. We learn from this source that Robert was the fifth of six sons and that two daughters were also born to his parents. Thomas Fludd came of a Shropshire family and was knighted by Queen Elizabeth for his military services.

¹ *Sacrum Memoriae Claris: Doctissq: viri ROBERTI FLUDD, alias de Fluctibus, utriusq: Medicinæ Doctoris, qui post aliquot annorum perigri- nationem quam ad recipiendum ingenii cultum in transmarinos regiones feliciter susceperat, patriae tandem restitutus et in celeberrimi Collegii Medicorum*

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

The entire monument is enclosed by an arch ; there are armorial bearings behind the head of the bust ; and on each side there were originally four books arranged one above the other. Two only remain and are inscribed respectively *Mysterium Cabalisticum* and *Philosophia Sacra*.

A rugged and precipitous footpath brings the traveller—proceeding south-east from the church—once more to a main road and opposite the lodge-gate of Milgate House, in which Robert Fludd was born.¹ The manorial residence itself is in one of the best manners of the country-seat of its period. At the time of my visit—now twenty-five years ago—the lodge was empty and open-windowed ; the bosky, winding drive which led from gate to manor was somewhat wild and weedy ; amidst ferns on the left, with an occasional glimpse of deer, was a cluster of tiny cottages, all untenanted ; and the house itself was empty. For the

*Londinensis Societatem non immerito electus vitam morte placide commutavit
viii die mensis viibris, Ao Dni MDCXXXVII ætatis suæ LXIII.*

*Magnificis hæc non sub odoribus urna vaporat
Crypta tegit cineres nec speciosa tuos
Quod mortale minus tibi te committimus unum
Ingenii vivent hic monumenta tui,
Nam tibi qui similis scribit, moriturque, sepulchrum
Pro tota æternum posteritate facit.*

*Hac monumentum THOMAS FLUDD, Gore Courte, in Otham, Apud Cantianos
Armiger in fœlicissimam charissimi Patruï sui memoriam erexit, die X
mensis Augusti MDCXXXVIII.*

The rendering of the Latin verses given in the text above is that which appears in Archdeacon Craven's DOCTOR ROBERT FLUDD, THE ENGLISH ROSICRUCIAN.

¹ Speaking of its proximity to the church, Archdeacon Craven says : "Not far off stands the more modern house of Milgate" ; i.e., modern in respect of the church. Presumably on this basis Dr. Westcott says that "the site of the house where Robert Fludd was born is now occupied by a more recent building." See TRANSACTIONS of the Metropolitan College, 1907, p. 47. According to Hasted—HISTORY OF KENT, II, 486, 487—Sir Thomas Fludd improved and augmented it. Whether it was ever entirely rebuilt I have not been able to ascertain. It is not as it stands exactly an edifice of the sixteenth century, but when I went over it many years ago, I have a pious hope that it was at least in parts the house in which Fludd was born and not something altogether different erected on the same site.

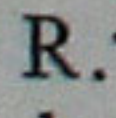
English Rosicrucianism

first time on record, whether for Kentish histories—like that of monumental Hasted—or for still more archaic “Visitations,” the house was explored, as I need not tell, even from roof to basement. As one who goes back through the centuries to a desired place and time, I saw the strange mythological paintings which adorn the fine staircase, trod the echoing floor of the library and admired its beautiful oak panelling, paused a little before the spacious chimney-corner of the great kitchen, passed upstairs to the quaint and not too roomy drawing-room, perchance a retreat for ladies of quality in the reign of James I, and traversed the innumerable bedrooms, in one of which it might be dreamed that Fludd was born. From almost every window there are charming views of a well-kept English lawn and English woodland vistas. The whole impression was delightful, though again there was nothing that could be called especially distinctive, and Milgate House, like Bearsted Church, may be seen in one of its varieties in many a shire and county, provided that manor or church be “four miles from any town.”¹

¹ On September 14, 1907, the Masonic Rosicrucians of the London Metropolitan College determined to visit Bearsted and the tomb of Robert Fludd. The date contained a sacrament, for it was the Festival of the Holy Cross or, more correctly, that of its Exaltation, a double of the first class in the Calendar of the Latin Rite. Presumably it connoted the Rosy Cross in the mind of Masonic Rosicrucians, who do not seem to have been aware that the church—as I have said in the text—was dedicated to the Holy Cross. But it was also a few days after the 270th anniversary of Fludd’s death, and their object was to place “a memorial wreath on his monument.” They termed the excursion a pilgrimage, but it was performed by train. They were aware in their zeal that the excellent Hargrave Jennings had made such a journey previously, or at least dreamed that he did. His lucubration on the subject in *THE ROSICRUCIANS* is quoted in a memorial of the later adventure in the *TRANSACTIONS* of the Metropolitan College for the year in question. The Supreme Magus was moved so much beyond his wont by the occasion and its circumstances that he delivered no less than two Orations, one before the monument beneath the tower and one subsequently at the Ancient Bell Hotel, Maidstone, where the Rosicrucians took their tea. In the earlier discourse Dr. Westcott states that Fludd “may be well called

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

There is full opportunity for the ordinary literate reader to make acquaintance at this day—at least in a preliminary sense—with Robert Fludd of Bearsted, reputed Rosicrucian and memorable occult philosopher. If a student of animal magnetism, one may meet with his name and a summary account concerning him in Joseph Ennemoser's attempt

the first and chief of English Rosicrucians," ignoring the preliminary and vital question whether in the absence of all direct evidence it is legitimate to term him a Rosicrucian at all—except by mental dedication. We can say only that he was the first English expositor and defender of Rosicrucian claims and principles, as they were put forth in Germany. Westcott speaks further of Fludd's "intimate connection with the great German Rosicrucian Magus Michael Maier, whom he greatly admired and respected" and by whom he was led "to enter with the greatest ardour into Rosicrucian studies." To these positives and superlatives I will add merely that the statement is *ludibrium magnum*. There is no evidence of intimate acquaintance between Fludd and Maier; there is so little evidence of admiration and respect that Maier seems mentioned nowhere in Fludd's writings. The story that they met in England is a precarious inference from the fact that Maier came over, by his own testimony, to England and afterwards is said to have published a work of Fludd's in Germany. That Maier was a Rosicrucian Magus there is no scrap of direct evidence to shew: such a denomination appears—as I believe—for the first time in a work of Magister Pianco belonging to the year 1782. Having testified thus in the Church the Supreme Magus proceeded to testify in the hostelry, where he affirmed that Fludd during his foreign travels "became acquainted with the Rosicrucian Fraternity and"—it being desirable apparently to accentuate the previous point—"made a notable friend of the famous Magus and adept Michael Maier." It will be seen that the latter has taken another grade in the occult hierarchy. But Fludd, by his own shewing, returned to England in or about 1604, at which date neither Westcott nor another can bring forward any proof that the Fraternity was in existence, except possibly in the mind of Simon Studion, while as regards Maier he had published nothing and was utterly unknown. Elsewhere and long previously the "Supreme Magus" affirmed that Fludd was initiated abroad. See *ARS QUATUOR CORONATORUM*, Vol. VII, p. 41. The story of his initiation is old—much older than the Metropolitan Chapter and all its lights of learning. Reghellini, in the year 1833, offers the following statements: (1) That the R.:R.:: appeared in England; (2) that Robert Fludd wrote a book in defence of the Rosicrucian Brethren; (3) that he was initiated and had a large number of disciples; (4) that he applied the principles of the Gnostics to physics; and (5) that, as a sequel of his system there followed that great revolution which came about in English science.—*LA MAÇONNERIE*, etc., already cited. But in the last clause Reghellini appears to confuse Fludd with Bacon.

English Rosicrucianism

to explain the whole history of magic by means of the force which Mesmer found or recovered at the close of the eighteenth century.¹ If drawn alternatively to investigate the origins of the Masonic Fraternity, he will have seen certain dubious and somewhat sensational references to Fludd in that fantastic exposition which Thomas de Quincey adapted from the German *Bühle*, under the title of ROSICRUCIANS AND FREEMASONS. But if his interest be rather towards the mysterious and elusive Brotherhood which united the Rose and Cross in a single symbol, he may have met with Fludd's literary and philosophical portrait at much greater length in one of my early studies of this subject,² or with the connection between Fludd and alchemy in my *Lives of Alchemystical Philosophers*³ and elsewhere. Finally, he may have had recourse to the excellent monograph on DOCTOR ROBERT FLUDD by Archdeacon Craven, of whose great care and sympathy it is good to offer this brief word in recognition.

I have mentioned here the most available sources of information in what is practically a chronological order, but those who would still pursue the subject must have recourse to the philosopher's chief writings, which are buried—with one exception—in Latin of the seventeenth century and are mostly books in folio. They perplexed the scholars of their own period and they perplexed rare readers in later generations, till it seemed to be understood that the author might be named indeed but not consulted. Yet a good deal of curious lore has accreted about his memory, and he stands now somewhat as a figure in philosophical romance. Mr. Craven has dealt as he could with Fludd's involved system and has furnished most material help, taking the texts successively. The works treat of life,

¹ See HISTORY OF MAGIC, 2 vols., in Bohn's translation.

² REAL HISTORY OF THE ROSICRUCIANS, 1887, cap. XI.

³ Published in 1888. See p. 16, s.v. Michael Maier.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

death and resurrection; the macrocosmos, or greater world; the world in little, or the microcosm; Mosaical cosmogony; the universal medicine; above all the claims put forward by the Rosicrucian Brotherhood and the recognition due to these. According to his own description—as we shall see shortly—he was a seeker through all and in all for “the unknown basis of true philosophy and the supreme secret” of healing. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, as it did for some time afterwards, this quest signified a Kabalistical interpretation of the universe and the pursuit of alchemy. The theosophical tradition of Israel—represented by the word Kabalism—was a great intellectual puzzle and wonder of that time, and Fludd was one of its students, so far at least as its literature had passed into the Latin tongue. William Postel had translated *THE BOOK OF FORMATION*.¹ Riccius, Reuchlin and Archangelus de Burgo Nuovo had brought back glad tidings from Hebrew and Aramaic texts.² Portent and comet of a season, Picus de Mirandula had flashed much earlier across the horizon of Europe and passed too soon; but he had left his *THESES CABBALISTICÆ* and the amazing report of Esdras manuscripts, which embodied all mysteries of Israel from the days of the patriarch Abraham.³ Like all those who preceded him, Fludd construed the tradition in the light of Christian revelation. As to the alchemists whom he followed, “their voices were in all men’s ears.” Both subjects belonged to the romantic mind of the period,

¹ Gulielmus Postellus: *Abrahami Patriarchæ LIBER JESIRAH. Parisiis, 1552.*

² There was also Petrus Galatinus: *DE ARCANIS CATHOLICÆ VERITATIS, 1602*, being twelve books in folio of Dialogues between himself and Reuchlin. It is followed by Joannes Reuchlinus: *DE ARTE CABALISTICA, Libri Tres.*

³ The texts which came actually into his hands were those comprised in the *SEPHER HA ZOHAR*. They are described briefly by Jacques Gaffarel in *Codicum Cabbalisticorum Manuscriptorum quibus est usus Joannes Picus Comes Mirandulanus INDEX. Parisiis, 1651.*

English Rosicrucianism

and—so far as England was concerned in the days of James I—it is this romance which has taken name and shape about Fludd. It was not a time of tolerance, as people may know if they read or remember history; but the Reformation meant qualified liberation here and in Germany. The horizon was extending everywhere; the study of different philosophies, of theosophical systems more than these, and above all of Nature, working in her secret laboratories, offered an escape from the narrow measures of reform in official doctrine and practice, without rejecting the reform and without ceasing to be “a true Protestant in the best sense of the Church of England”¹ or of Luther.

It was further a period of great claims in the so-called occult world, and not long after Robert Fludd “was at length returned to his Fatherland,” after those “years of travelling beyond seas” mentioned on his monument at Bearsted, the star of Rosicrucianism rose over the German world. His six years’ tour had included Germany as well as France, Spain and Italy, and one of his biographers suggests that during its course he imbibed that taste for Rosicrucian philosophy by which his after life and all his writings are coloured.² I am perhaps a little surprised that the makers of imaginative history have not found material more to their purpose in this travelling. We have seen that speculation adorned in pontificals of certitude supposes a first meeting with Maier the alchemist abroad, thus beginning an acquaintance which was to be renewed and improved in England at a later date. But what was to prevent Fludd from seeing and even instructing the famous Johannes Valentinus Andreae, then a precocious boy in his ’teens? And if indeed the Order of the Rosy Cross lies hidden as to its origin behind the year 1614, should it not be possible

¹ It is the quaint testimony of Thomas Vaughan concerning himself.

² See Munk’s *ROLL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS*, Vol. I, p. 150.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

for one who carried all its seals of dedication to have come across Simon Studion and even to have inspected NAOMETRIA on the eve of his return to England? The opportunity would appear to have been missed because, according to all use and wont, the occult fiction must be not alone contrary to fact but against all colour of reason and all traceable likelihood.¹

Fludd returned from abroad in or about 1604 to graduate in medicine at Oxford on May 16, 1605² and after several difficulties—owing to his opinions and apparently his personal manners—he was admitted a Fellow of the College of Physicians on September 20, 1609.³ It was not till 1616, being forty-two years old, that he first appeared in print, when he wrote in defence of the early Rosicrucian pamphlets and the claims embodied thereby. He was drawn to them in three ways: (1) By an innate love of the marvellous, accompanied by credulity which was extraordinary even for his period and for the particular bent of his interests; (2) by the fact that the Rosicrucians purported to be an association of masters keeping guard over those very possessions to which Fludd himself aspired—the basis of philosophy and the supreme secret of medicine; and (3) by the fact that he may have been acquainted—we have seen that this is a thorny question—with one of identical dedications, who became himself a German exponent of the Order and whom there is considerable reason for connecting later on with the society at its headquarters, assuming its corporate existence at that period—I mean, the alchemist Michael Maier. The publication to which I have alluded is called *A COMPENDIOUS APOLOGY for the Fraternity of the Rosy Cross, pelted with the Mire of Suspicion and Infamy, but*

¹ Witness occult reveries on the Bacon-Shakespeare question and generally on Rosicrucian history and doctrine.

² Munk, *op. cit.*, p. 150.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-3.

English Rosicrucianism

now cleansed and purged as by the Waters of Truth.¹ Though his name appears on the title, it has been stated that this minute tract was not the work of Fludd, on the authority of what evidence I have never been able to ascertain. The point is not unimportant, for it is not only the first work ever penned in England on the Order of the Rosy Cross, but if correctly attributed, it follows that Robert Fludd preceded Michael Maier in that defence and exposition of the Fraternity which engrossed the zeal of both. It is possible fortunately to determine the question by recourse to a manuscript in the Library of the British Museum. It is a thin quarto volume in the handwriting of the period, exceedingly clear and beautiful, but unfortunately regarded as the copy of a destroyed original, in which case there is no known autograph of Fludd now in existence. It is entitled: A SHORT DECLARATION, *addressed to the Most Serene and Potent Prince and Lord, the Lord JAMES, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, and Defender of the Faith: Wherein is made clear the true purpose of a certain published Work on the part of the Author himself, to wit, ROBERT FLUDD, Esquire and Doctor of Medicine, unto the King's Majesty.*² The published work referred to is called TRACTATUS MEUS APOLOGETICUS.³ The curiosity and probably the suspicion of the royal mind had been excited by the defence of an occult Order on the part of his

¹ APOLOGIA COMPENDIARIA FRATERNITATEM DE ROSEA CRUCE *suspicioni. et infamiae maculis aspersam, veritatis quasi Fluctibus abluens et abstergens: Auctore R. de Fluctibus, M.D., Lond. Leydæ apud Godefridum Bassons 1616.* But see later on respecting TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS, which appeared in 1617.

² DECLARATIO BREVIS, *Serenissimo et Potentissimo Principi ac Domino, Domino JACOBO, Magnæ Britanniae, Franciæ et Hyberniae Regi, Fideique Defensori dedicata, in qua sincera operis cujusdam publicati intentio Majestati ipsius Regiæ luculenter per ipsum auctorem ROBERTUM FLUD, Armigerum et in Medicina Doctorem Regiæ Majestati subditissimum explicatur.*

³ A second and more extended tract of Fludd's, described subsequently. It embodied the first pamphlet, as we shall see.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

Kentish subject. He may have doubted the Rosicrucians because rumours of witchcraft would be abroad already concerning them, while we know that he believed in witchcraft and feared it. By consequence, he would also be doubting Fludd, who followed strange ways in medicine and whose ways may not have been unknown. It would appear that the SHORT DECLARATION was penned in obedience to the royal demand, not perhaps without some trepidation on the part of the "philosopher by fire." Be this as it may, the opportunity was favourable for compliment, and though Fludd's explanation is manly and honest enough, it is sweetened at the beginning by just that measure of adulation which was to be expected under the circumstances. This finished, he proceeds to clear his treatise from any suspicion of heresy or desire to make innovations in religion, explaining that the reformed faith—"as in use amongst us in England"—was infused into him almost with his mother's milk and had been adhered to faithfully ever since. Then next on the question of immorality, he affirms "in the sight of God and of your Majesty" that he had lived always as *virgo immaculata*.¹ With regard to the Rosicrucians, that school of philosophers is acknowledged by the Germans—whether Papists or Lutherans—to have embraced most firmly the religion of Calvin, in support of which statement Fludd cites a letter received by him from a friend at Frankfurt, named Justus Helt, and refers afterwards to the CONFESSION issued by the Fraternity, "wherein it is most openly declared that they belong to the reformed religion." That which attracted Fludd towards the Rosicrucians he admits to be their revela-

¹ We know him otherwise as a high-minded Christian gentleman who—for reasons which do not transpire—never entered into the bonds of wedlock. Was it because in undertaking to defend the Rosicrucians he modelled himself on the rule of the first members, who are described in the FAMA as "all bachelors and of vowed virginity"? Was it because he was incorporated and living under their rule?

English Rosicrucianism

tion¹ of a hitherto unknown basis of true philosophy and of that supreme secret of medicine to which I have referred already. On these points he submits certain propositions for the royal assent, and proceeds to develop various considerations concerning them, after which there are matters connected with the dedication to the King of his forthcoming work on the MACROCOSM; but this is outside our inquiry.² The manuscript ends with citations of commendatory letters received by the author from various foreigners of philosophical or other eminence, including the before-mentioned Justus Helt, Jean Balthasar and others. There is a final commendation of his cause to the justice and wisdom of his king.

While this very curious document, so long unaccountably passed over, establishes the authorship of the TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS and exhibits the alleged religious tenets of original Rosicrucianism to some extent in a new light, there is nothing which predisposes a critical reader to include Robert Fludd in a list of the Society's initiates, for—taken by itself—the reference to a new basis of philosophy on which I have annotated is wholly inadequate as evidence. It may be warrantable to urge that he would have concealed the fact of his membership from the curiosity of a suspicious king, but this argument scarcely concerns our inquiry, which is a quest after information. For its absence there may be good reason, but the information is not there.

¹ The fact of such a basis is affirmed but cannot be said to be revealed by Rosicrucian early literature. If Fludd spoke from within the circle we should understand his statement better.

² The reference is to *UTRIUSQUE COSMI MAJORIS SCILICET ET MINORIS Metaphysica, Physica atque Technica. In duo volumina secundum Cosmi differentiam divisa*. The first tract of the first volume appeared at Oppenheim in 1617, the dedication in question being preceded by a dedication to God. The second tract was published in 1618. Vol. II began publication in 1619, was continued in 1621, but never completed.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

It will be noted that the *APOLOGIA COMPENDIARIA* appeared at Leyden in 1616, but the *SHORT DECLARATION* refers to a *TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS*, which belongs to the following year and had the same place of publication.¹ I have dealt with them so far as if they constituted a single tract and this is essentially correct, the first having been reprinted in the second as a *Proæmium* thereunto. It was therefore no more than an *avant-courier* or advertisement of the more extended work which followed it. In both there is a memorable epilogue addressed to the Brethren,² wishing them salvation in Jesus Christ, whom they worship sincerely and purely. For the errors which may be found in his treatise the author craves forgiveness, saying that he is but a rude philosopher and an unworthy publisher of their praise. As regards his own personality, he is one of a certain nobility—in respect of his nation, birth, status and earthly name. His bride is the desire of wisdom; his children are those fruits which are thence begotten; his body is accounted as a prison; for him the pleasures of the world are vain and deadly to the mind. He desires to be a glass unto himself, wherein he may contemplate what he is. He describes how in mind and in body he has traversed the chief countries of Europe, dared the depths and tempests of the sea, withstood the toils of mountains, the slippery descents of valleys, rude and savage shores, hostile cities, the pride, ambition, avarice, deceit, faithlessness, ignorance and indolence of men; but he has

¹ *TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS, integritatem SOCIETATIS DE ROSEA CRUCE defendens. In qua probatur contra D. LIBAVII et aliorum ejusdem farinae calumnias, quod admirabilia nobis a FRATERNITATE R.:C.: oblata, sine improba Magiæ impostura aut Diaboli præstigiis et illusionibus præstari possint. Authore R. DE FLUCTIBUS ANGLO, M. D. L. Lugduni Batavorum apud GODEFRIDUM BASSON. Anno Domini 1617.* Dr. Westcott calls the minute *APOLOGIA COMPENDIARIA* a "volume" and says that it was republished in 1617 under the new title—a very misleading reference from a bibliographical point of view. *TRANSACTIONS*, 1907, p. 45.

² The Epilogue of the first work is amplified slightly in the second.

English Rosicrucianism

discovered nowhere anyone who has attained to the height of felicity or has come truly to know himself. Vanity of vanities is to be found everywhere, and all things are as vanity and wretchedness. Finally, he prays and beseeches the Brothers of the Rosy Cross—by their faith and by the ignorance of the age in true and pure philosophy—to be with him and to protect him, to be mindful of him and of their promises.

What those promises were may be determined by a simple reference to the text of the FAMA FRATERNITATIS : (1) That those who communicate their minds by print or otherwise shall hear from the Order, by word of mouth or in writing, and (2) that whosoever has affection thereunto shall benefit “in goods, body and soul.” These assurances are checked in the CONFESSIO by two qualifying affirmations: (1) That “we shall never be manifested unto any man unless God should favour it” and (2) that he “who thinks to be partaker of our riches against the will of God . . . shall sooner lose his life in seeking than attain happiness by finding us.” Alternatively, the promises of which Fludd asks the Order to be mindful may be of a more intimate kind and connote things personal to himself. While this is pure speculation, it may not be without a reason that the Epilogue of APOLOGIA COMPENDIARIA says simply : *Valete nostrique memores estote*, which carries no implication and is little more than a courtesy of diction in drawing an address to its conclusion ; but the enlarged Epilogue to the TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS says : *Valete, Fratres suavissimi, in illo ipso quem syncere colimus. Valete, inquam, iterumque valete, et mihi (per vestrem fidem, perque hujus sæculi in Philosophia vera et pura ignorantiam vos oro atque obtestor) favete, adeste : meique et promissorum vestrorum memores estote*. The extension is significant, and though it is not strengthened by the context as quoted, it seems to me—under all necessary reserves—that it could have been

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

addressed by the novice of a Secret Order to Superiors by whom he had been admitted.¹

The TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS is not otherwise a work which brings any especial conviction, save only on its writer's sincerity.² The story of Christian Rosy Cross is affirmed to be important for its traditional value and very high from the ethical standpoint, but the tract is in particular a defence of the Order as an advocate of general reform—reform in Natural Philosophy, nothing short of revolution in Medicine, and a radical change in all that concerns Alchemy. Now, the quality of championship must be judged in respect of Natural Philosophy by Fludd's militant hostility to experimental methods, his appeal from particulars to universals and his insistence on the secret wisdom which unveils Nature and draws from the Fountain of Life. So also in respect of Medicine, for him it is in a state of widowhood, apart from the Universal Medicine which is like a crown of all art in healing. As regards Alchemy, a different note is sounded when it is affirmed to be enveloped in a maze of processes, buried under a cloud of symbols and lost utterly amidst a great multitude of arbitrary and fictitious terms. Hereof are the impediments of science, which must be taken out of its way. The remedy in respect of Natural Philosophy is by recourse to the ancient philosophers and by decoding their occult meanings, holding fast—for example—to the doctrine of actives and passives and contemplating the wisdom of

¹ So expressed and so guarded, my suggestion is to be distinguished from the speculations expressed in terms of certitude which characterise manufacturers of dream like Dr. Wynn Westcott, who, without a particle of evidence to justify, affirms (1) that Maier visited Fludd in London and (2) that "the result of his visit was, we know, the publication of his"—meaning Fludd's—"APOLOGIA, written in Latin and published in Leyden in 1616." See ARS QUATUOR CORONATORUM, Vol. VIII.

² Mr. Wigston thinks that it gives evidence of a reconstruction or remodelling of the Rosy Cross in England. As a fact, it is evidence only of Fludd's point of view.

English Rosicrucianism

universals with eyes of understanding. The reform in the department of Medicine is in the recognition and attainment of the one and only medicament, being that of Hippocrates, and an accurate understanding of its composition, virtues and operations. In Alchemy the way of advancement is to realise that its true work is a work of Nature only, and that he who would co-operate therewith must use natural matrices in place of artificial furnaces, applying natural things to things which are also natural and "species to their congruents." But the canonical writers on alchemy had borne their testimony to these irrepealable canons of the art through several generations prior to Robert Fludd.

Like Simon Studion and like Paracelsus yet earlier, the TRACTATUS maintains that there are Books of God, both visible and invisible, that Nature herself is written within and without, that the universe around us is full of mystical characters, and that because of these things "day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge." The stars also are a voice in the silence, and astrology carries a great book of portents for those who can read therein. The distinctions of Fludd on the kinds and classes of Magia are unfolded with considerable elaboration, to exonerate the Rosicrucian Order from charges advanced by Libavius and others on the subject of the Black Art. Venific, necromantic, goetic, malefic and so-called theurgic Magic are set apart as so many forms of diabolical commerce; but that which concerns the Order is of another category, inspired by other motives and derived from a celestial source, being that perfect knowledge of natural things, above and below, in heaven and on earth, by which the three Kings of the East were led in the light of a new star, even to the cradle of Him Who—because He is the Sun of Righteousness—is the true Light of the World. After this manner is Robert Fludd led on in fine to treat of the Mysteries of Light and

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

the blessed state of those who have come to understand its virtues as the cause of all energies.

It is in moments like these that the Kentish theosophist becomes worthy of a higher title than the technical designation of a Philosopher by Fire—which was held in the past to characterise the alchemical fraternity at large.¹ He was a philosopher by the Light in Christ: whether at his best or worst, he wrote always therein; and as I believe that he lived under it, so I have no doubt that the light abode within him. With the sole exception of PHILOSOPHIA MOSAICA his chief works have never been put into English, and only in the case of TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS was a second edition attained. It was translated into German in 1782 by Adam Booz at Leipsic,² who appended certain annotations which are curious contributions to the text and reproduce its spirit after the lapse of over one hundred and sixty years. We hear of the art of Palingenesis, said to have been discovered and made known by the naturalist

¹ It is used by Anthony à Wood in his description of Fludd and of other Hermetic *literati* whose biographies are found in ATHENÆ OXONIENSES. When it first began to be current remains an open question but certainly it did not originate with the pupil of Peter Sthael.

² "DEFENCE OF THE GENUINE CHARACTER OF THE SOCIETY OF THE ROSICRUCIANS, by the Englishman ROBERTUS DE FLUCTIBUS, Doctor of the Medical Fraternity of London. Translated from the Latin into German by request, and on account of its great rarity and importance, together with certain annotations, by ADAM BOOZ. Leipsic: published by ADAM FREDERIC BÖHME. 1782." It is probably to Booz in the first instance that Kloss was indebted for the story that John Dee dedicated his edition of Roger Bacon's tract to the Rosicrucian Fraternity. The note of Booz is as follows: "The annotations of John Dee upon the treatise of Roger Bacon entitled THE WONDERS OF ART AND NATURE AND THE NULLITY OF MAGIC are included with the said tract in THEATRUM CHEMICUM, vol. 5, and are prefaced by a dedication to the Rosicrucians which is couched thus: *Clarissimis Restitutionis Universi Phosphoris Illuminatis ROSÆ CRUCIS FRATRIBUS unanimis*. Herein is the Society overwhelmed with powerful and deserved praises. Robert Fludd is mentioned—in a most complimentary manner—in the preface, while the objector Libavius is completely and properly despatched." Like those who repeated this unhappy reference subsequently, the excellent Booz had failed to read his text intelligently.

English Rosicrucianism

Buoss in Aura, though I think that the mythos goes back into a much further past¹; of everlasting books and ever-burning lamps,² like those which were found in the sepulchre of Christian Rosy Cross, according to his legend in the FAMA.

The TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS was followed by a TRAC-

¹ It is explained that by means of a magnetic electrum the rays of the Sun and Moon are drawn out of a viscous water and thus it becomes crystalline. There is nothing added, but in the space of four weeks wonderful starry flowers grow up herein. These flowers can be resolved again into water by a little *aqua de nubibus* and can be passed through blotting-paper. But in the space of another four weeks the flowers will be produced once more, reassuming their former shapes. "When the sun shines they diffuse such a radiance that the eye cannot support it." Adam Booz adds that an experiment of this kind took place on May 28, 1776, before "many noble persons," and it seems to have been recorded in THE HAMBURG CORRESPONDENT, IV, 127, of that year. "Should lovers of these wonderful flowers . . . desire ocular demonstration," he affirms finally, "it will be supplied with full instructions, so that no one can fail therein." It is said that the flowers could be transported from place to place, either in dry or fluid condition.

² It is related that the Count of Carburi at Venice rediscovered incombustible paper, and that the Senate caused a medal to be struck in his honour *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*. The paper was made in the first instance by Marco Antonio Castagne, overseer of some mines in Italy, where he found a great quantity of amianthus stones, out of which he prepared incombustible skins, paper and lamp-wicks. I may explain here that Amianthus, according to Rulandus in his LEXICON ALCHIMIÆ, is practically identical with asbestos and mica. It is described by Dioscorides and Pliny. Booz goes on to point out that "if the famed incombustible oil were discovered once again, everlasting lamps and eternal fire would become ours," adding that they were frequent among the ancients. The artist Castagne, on the basis of his own achievement, is said to have promised a book made of amianthus, "as to binding, paper and thread." He would write in it with letters of gold, "so that the volume would not only be incombustible but would be safe from the effects of water and air, and might truly deserve the title of Book of Eternity or The Everlasting Book." Booz refers to the PHILOSOPHICAL TRANSACTIONS of June 19, 1671, and THEATRUM CHEMICUM, Vol. V, p. 435, but I have not carried the inquiry further. Readers—if any—of Fludd's TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS may remember that he constructed a wooden bull "which lowed and bellowed after the fashion of the living animal." Booz caps this story by his account of an automaton chess-player, which was not only ready to compete with anyone but "there was no recorded example of the figure having lost a game."

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

TATUS THEOLOGO-PHILOSOPHICUS, concerning Life, Death and Resurrection, which was dedicated in the sub-title to those who are called Brethren of the Rosy Cross.¹ There is a story—originating with Böhle—that when Michael Maier left England he carried the manuscript of this work to Germany and saw it through the press in that country; but I have failed to find anything in support of the statement. It is a strange, enchanting book, perhaps with regard especially to its speculations concerning Paradise and how—as we learn otherwise from the ZOHAR—there is a Paradise here below but a Paradise also above: *unus erat ille terrestris, seu supra terram descriptus; alter supercælestis et quasi intra novam Jerusalem situs, quæ totaliter spiritualis est.*² But I am concerned with the TRACTATUS only in so far as it can be gleaned for occasional references to the Order. It is divided into three books, corresponding to its three subjects. Towards the end of the first there is a consideration of the admirable knowledge enjoyed by Moses and Elias, and it is said to be a true key of wisdom. Out of this arises the question whether it has been taken utterly away from mankind, having regard to the fact that—according to the BOOK OF WISDOM—the spirit of God fills the whole earth and God has sent down His wisdom from the holy heavens, that it may dwell with man and with him also may work. The answer is that the delight of the Spirit of God is with the sons of men, that even unto this day it has remained with elect persons who are pure of heart, that the Sons of God have

¹ TRACTATUS THEOLOGO-PHILOSOPHICUS, in Libros tres distributus, quorum de Vita, Morte, Resurrectione. Cui inseruntur nonnulla Sapientiæ veteris, Adami infortunio superstitis, fragmenta: ex profundiori Sacrarum Literarum sensu et lumine, atque ex limpidiori et liquidiori saniorum Philosophorum fonte hausta atque collecta, FRATRIBUS A CRUCE ROSEA dictis, dedicata, a RUDOLFO OCREB BRITANNO. Oppenheim, 1617. There has been no question as to the authorship of this tract, and the adopted name decodes by transposition into Roberto Fludo.

² *Op. cit.*, Lib. I, cap. 9.

English Rosicrucianism

been always in the world, that to such has been given the Tree of Life and to such the Hidden Manna. But the powers of men like these are unknown at this day and unknown are their Holy Houses. They abound in heavenly riches but are poor in the sight of the world. They are not doctors in theology, nor is the Pope himself one of them, though he appears to possess the seat of Jesus Christ. The real and efficacious gifts of the Spirit are prophecy, miracles, tongues, healing: those who come forward to proclaim hidden truths must manifest these powers, must be able to drive out demons and in their own lives must observe the Divine precepts, doing nothing contrary to the word of God.

Who were the representatives of this elect school in the days of Robert Fludd? They were the Brethren of the Rosy Cross, whom he proceeds to address at length: (1) As a result of close investigation, he has been led to the conclusion that they are illuminated truly by the Spirit and that to them are unfolded those things which the sacred texts have foreshewn mystically as preceding the end of the world. (2) They have been endowed with spiritual virtue and the higher Divine Grace. (3) If their deeds correspond to their words—and he can doubt no longer that they do—that which they prophesy on their own part must be accepted in faith, more especially as it is in perfect harmony with the sacred source of truth. (4) By an attentive study of their writings he has found that they act under the impulsion of the Holy Spirit. (5) They have knowledge of the true mystery and of that key which leads to the joy of Paradise. (6) They have therefore the freedom of Paradise, even as Elias of old. (7) To them it is no cause of pride that they are able to make gold, but they rejoice when the heavens open and at the sight of their names written in the Book of Life.¹

¹ Compare FAMA FRATERNITATIS.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

(8) Transferring the appeal to those whose minds are obscured by a cloud of ignorance, Robert Fludd invites mankind at large to agree with him that the Brethren of the Rosy Cross are guided by the Spirit of God, that their asylum—the House of the Holy Spirit—is situated at the world's end, and is there encompassed by clouds, or that it is on the apex of a high mountain and that those who dwell therein breathe in the sweet and rarefied air of the Psyche, or the life of true wisdom.

In the book concerning resurrection the Brethren are said to abide in a light which is greater than that of the rising sun. Their celestial treasure is contrasted with the metallic gold which is sought after by errant and false alchemists. The sun in the roof of the tomb of Christian Rosy Cross is said to have been an emblem of Christ, the Sun of Justice, and there is another reference to His advent. It will be seen that thus early in Fludd's defence of the Order, and thus early in its manifest history, the process of its spiritualisation had begun in the hands of the Kentish mystic; but it was to be carried yet further. Already in his prevision concerning the New Jerusalem, descending four-square out of heaven, it would seem that the Rosicrucians were warders of the gates and keepers of the sacred precincts, if they were not also the priests and rulers therein, under Him Who is the light thereof and the Tree of Life in its midst.

Supposing the Rosicrucian manifestoes to have emanated from a corporate society or that they led—as perhaps intended—to such a foundation soon after they were issued, the TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS lends some colour to a supposition that Fludd was acquainted with the Order “as to their persons,” to cite the quaint expression made use of by Thomas Vaughan in a similar but reverse connection.¹

¹ THE FAME AND CONFESSION OF THE FRATERNITY OF R.:C.: . . . *With a Preface annexed thereto.* . . . By EUGENIUS PHILALETHES. 1652. Preface, c. 3 (obverse). See also A. E. WAITE: *The Works of Thomas Vaughan*, 1919, p. 365.

English Rosicrucianism

But again it is entirely a matter of inference, and amidst its quaint and melancholy panegyric upon the majesty of the science of the past there is no light of detail shed upon the original documents or upon the association which it defends. The fact may seem explicable on its surface by regarding Robert Fludd as a novice *in absentia*, far away from the seat of authority, and we shall see that at a later period he adopts another tone. But one of the amazing things connected with the whole debate is the existence of so considerable a literature dealing, or professing to deal, with a single subject, which neither friends nor enemies have succeeded in elucidating. From one point of view the subsequent writings of Fludd—which are of some importance as a presentation of the Secret Tradition in Christian Times, coloured in its passage through the alembic of a singular mind—might be called a development at large of Rosicrucian philosophy. Putting aside some few things which are purely polemical, like a negligible answer to Foster on the question of the Weapon Salve, they might have been issued from first to last with the *imprimatur* of the Rosy Cross, as they contain no line or word which is not in complete consonance with the claims made by the Order and with the teaching thereto ascribed by all its German literature. I am concerned, however, only with the works of Fludd in so far as they cast direct additional light on the doctrine of the Rosy Cross. For a most careful and satisfactory account of those vast treatises which are concerned with the Macrocosm and Microcosm, with *MEDICINA CATHOLICA*, Mosaical Philosophy and Anatomy the reader may be referred with full confidence to Archdeacon Craven's study of Fludd and his philosophy.¹

It was not until 1629 that Robert Fludd was called again to the defence of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, and then

¹ *Op. cit.*, *passim*.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

it was owing to charges brought against himself and his system by Marin Mersenne in a certain commentary on Genesis.¹ Fludd answered under his own name in *SOPHIÆ CUM MORIA CERTAMEN*,² but this was a defence of himself and his principles. Book I deals with the Kentish philosopher's views on the science and philosophy of the Macrocosm, the harmony of the world, etc. So far from being new, it is affirmed that the wisdom of past ages is embodied therein, and the charge of atheism preferred ridiculously against him is exposed in its true light. The second book maintains in opposition to Mersenne that there is a soul of the world. In the third Fludd puts up a powerful defence against the charge of evil magic, which would not have been advanced had Mersenne known the subjects with which he was seeking to deal. In the fourth and last book Fludd vindicates his particular construction of Kabalistic tradition, not—however—that Mersenne can be looked upon as a serious assailant who regarded the tradition as wrested. These four books may be called, I think, an *apologia* at large for the philosophical life of its author. The *Fratres R.:C.:* are mentioned on the crowded title-page but not in the text. It was, however, a year of peculiar activity in the literary concerns of Fludd, and the publication with which I am dealing included also a tract called *SUMMUM BONUM*, issued under the name of Joachim Fritz.³ There would not be the least doubt in

¹ *QUESTIONES CELEBERRIMÆ IN GENESIM, cum accurata textus explicatione, in quo volumine Athei et Deisti impugnantur.* Paris, 1622. Archdeacon Craven says that Mersenne was a literary friend of Descartes and "a man of universal learning."

² *SOPHIÆ CUM MORIA CERTAMEN, in quo Lapis Lydius a Falso Structore, FR. MARINO MERSENNO, Monacho Reprobatus, celeberrima Voluminis sui Babylonici (in Genesim) figmenta accurate examinat. Authore ROBERTO FLUDD, alias DE FLUCTIBUS, etc.* Frankfurt, 1629.

³ *SUMMUM BONUM, Quod est Verum Subjectum Veræ Magiæ, Cabalæ, Alchymiæ, FRATRUM ROSEÆ CRUCIS verorum, in dictarum Scientiarum laudem, et insignis calumniatoris FRATRIS MARINI MERSENNI dedecus publicatum, Per JOACHIMUM FRIZIUM.* Anno 1629.

English Rosicrucianism

my mind that this also was the work of Robert Fludd, were it not for his own testimony. Everything about it recalls the man and his methods, including the elaborate tables, the setting forth of Mersenne's criticisms and of the replies thereto. Moreover, the style, spirit and views are those of the English Rosicrucian. But on p. 20 of *CLAVIS PHILOSOPHIÆ ET ALCHYMIÆ FLUDDANÆ*, referring to *SUMMUM BONUM*, Fludd remarks as follows: *Licet hoc non meum, sed amici mei intimi opus esse alibi asseverarim*, adding, however, the following qualification: *tamen ad omnes Lanovii Theologo-militis, gladio malevolentiae me petentis, objectiones (quippe mere frivolas) respondebo*, the explanation being that Lanovius had attacked Fludd in attacking *SUMMUM BONUM*. I have only to add that there is and can be no appeal from the testimony of the Kentish philosopher.¹

It will be seen that *SUMMUM BONUM* was a further reply to Mersenne and as regards three-fourths of the contents it covers much the same ground as the *CERTAMEN*. Book I treats of Magic; Book II is a study of Kabbalism, regarded as a Mystery of God and Nature transmitted in secret; Book III deals with the *essentia* of true Alchemy, understood as a spiritual science and distinguished therefore

¹ Archdeacon Craven, who is unacquainted with this testimony, registers a taking but not convincing point when he cites from *SUMMUM BONUM* an affirmation on the part of the author that he "had already defended" the Rosicrucian Brethren in a tract. It seems obviously a reference to the *TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS*, but it does not warrant us in saying with Craven that "whoever was author of the *TRACTATUS APOLOGETICUS* was also author of the *SUMMUM BONUM*." Joachim Fritz was not Robert Fludd, but he may have written one of the other apologies which came out by the score or the hundred before 1629. It is to be noted, in conclusion as to this question, that on p. 26 of the *CLAVIS* Fludd makes his printer responsible for placing *SUMMUM BONUM* at the end of the *CERTAMEN* against his own mandate to the contrary. He desired it to appear separately and in octavo, not in folio. The printer excused himself, maintaining that if both tracts, seeing that they belonged to one and the same subject, were included in one volume, it would be more useful and convenient.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

from "vain tinctures" and sophistic operations. There is finally Book IV, "wherein the cause of the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross . . . is strenuously and powerfully defended."¹ The memorable points in connection with this exoneration are: (1) The entire Rosicrucian claim is transferred to the spiritual plane, shining in the light of an exalted Christian Theosophy: it has become a Hidden Church of the Elect, in striking analogy with the Sanctuary of Karl Eckartshausen, the Interior Church of Lupukhin and the Mystic Temple of the Philadelphian Society. (2) The author of *SUMMUM BONUM* bears his testimony with the plenary certitude of one speaking from within: it is expressed with fervent devotion; and that it should be the work of an enthusiast about a House of the Holy Spirit of which he knows only by report appears incredible. But finally (3) as to their persons, names, places or anything concrete concerning them and their doings—in a word the external evidences—the apologia tells us nothing respecting the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross. Once more, there may be good reasons, because it was a secret society and must be concealed even in manifestation, but the information is not there and *SUMMUM BONUM* leaves the historical position of the Order precisely where it was previously. Mersenne and many hundreds before him had asked "Where is the dwelling of the Brethren?" understood as an incorporated Society which had offered initiation at large to suitable persons in an official publication called *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*.² To answer that it is

¹ *In quo causa FRATRUM ROSEÆ CRUCIS (quos etiam petit malevolus iste per calumniam et malitiam) strenue et viriliter defenditur.*

² The position is that after the manner of their mystical founder they had taken credit for a bountiful readiness to impart all their secrets to the learned, that "the number and respect of our Fraternity" may be increased thereby, an offer which is bequeathed in the *FAMA* for those who are concerned to ponder. In this connection I may mention that Fludd is quoted as follows by Alexander Wilder: "There is scarcely one who thinks about us who does not believe that our Society has no existence, because, as he truly

English Rosicrucianism

in a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, transfers the question to a very high region indeed but can satisfy no one under all the circumstances. With the Holy Assemblies, Interior Churches and Hidden Temples which have not issued *pourparlers* the case is different: they have been heard of under other warrants—to be taken or left—and they have promised nothing.

On this understanding and under such reserve, the intimations of SUMMUM BONUM are exceedingly curious as the defence of an Order which less than twenty years previously had claimed incorporation in space and time, a local habitation and the palladium of a hallowed tomb, somewhere in the German Fatherland. The heads of the Fritz consideration are as follows: (1) The counsel at large of the Order and its object—expressed briefly—are embodied in the pregnant sentence: *Ascendamus ad montem rationabilem et ædificamus Domum Sapientiæ*, thus defining the Brotherhood as a Company of Spiritual Builders. (2) The corner-stone of this Building is Christ, while those who are integrated in the House are the Living Stones thereof. (3) The qualification required of aspirants is promulgated in a Rosicrucian Epistle attached to SUMMUM BONUM: *Transmutemini, transmutemini de lapidibus mortuis in lapides vivos philosophicos*. (4) I shall shew in a later chapter that the *mons rationabilis*, the Secret Mountain has entered into Rosicrucian allegorical literature independently of Robert Fludd and has been called a philosophical Horeb. (5) That which is built thereon, according to SUMMUM BONUM, is a Spiritual Palace, a House founded on the rock, the Holy Place of a Holy Priesthood. (6) The declares, he never met any of us. And he concludes that there is no such Brotherhood because, in his vanity, we seek not him to be our fellow." I do not happen to have met with this passage in Fludd's writings, nor has Archdeacon Craven apparently, so I quote it under all reserves. From what I know of Dr. Wilder's methods, it is probably drawn at second hand, and in any case no reference is given. See THE THEOSOPHIST, I, p. 110.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

place and its priesthood are filled with all heavenly riches, though the Brotherhood are poor and unknown in the eyes of the world.¹ (7) The dwellers in the House are those who are instructed, like Solomon, in true and Divine Magia, the true Kabbalah and Chemia. (8) There have been a few always in the world who have gone in through the gate of this Temple, to be numbered among the Sons of God, who have shed their light upon humanity and illuminated the cloud of darkness which covers earthly things. (9) Temple, Palace or Cœnobium, the House of the Holy Spirit and House of the Rosy Cross—as may be collected from the words of the Brotherhood—is that of which the sacred pages speak. (10) It is the House of God, while the Stone of Foundation is that which was cut out without hands, which broke the feet of “the statue of false worship” and became a great mountain, filling the whole earth. (11) The House itself is no work of human construction, as foolish alchemists and sophistic Magi dream: it was built of old in wisdom. (12) It is the mystical Citadel of Bethlehem²—a House of Bread and Warfare, of Living Bread, even as that Manna which came down from Heaven. (13) *Escam dedit timentibus se*, and by such Food of Angels it is possible for every man to live without mortal bread.

Two things remain to be noted: (1) at the end of *SUMMUM BONUM* its concealed author anticipates the question whether he is himself a Brother of the Rosy Cross. The answer is skilful, implying a decisive affirmative while on the surface pretending to leave the question open. Such a grace from God has he least of all deserved: “it is not of

¹ Compare *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*: (1) “That there might be also a Society in Europe which should have gold, silver and precious stones, sufficient to bestow upon kings for their lawful use and purpose”; (2) “We do promise more gold than both the Indies bring to the King of Spain.”

² The name Bethlehem is supposed to have signified House of Bread or alternatively House of War. Fludd connects it with Bethel, the attributed meaning of which is House of God.

English Rosicrucianism

him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."¹ Yet, if it have pleased God to have so ordained, this shall be enough.² (2) The Rosicrucian letter appended to SUMMUM BONUM was addressed, it is said, by the Brotherhood to a certain German, Dr. Fludd obtaining a copy from a Polish friend of Dantzic.³ In Archdeacon Craven's opinion it conveys "a poor idea of the teaching or erudition of the Brotherhood." If, however, it can be regarded as a genuine official document, it is exceedingly important as indicating the spiritual dedications of the Order at the period to which it belongs. It is, of course, unsupported by anything which can be regarded as legal evidence and must therefore stand at its value according to the impression which it may convey to the literary sense of the reader. It is undated and there is hence no means of knowing how far it anteceded the year of publication, namely, 1629. The content may be scheduled in summary form as follows:

(1) The unknown person to whom it is addressed has completed the first year of his nativity, meaning his birth into the Order, and he is wished a felicitous "entrance into and exit" from life—an allusion to the life of initiation and the kind of departure which will be reached when he is raised to Heaven. (2) He is counselled to make progress in true knowledge, on the understanding that God is both the circumference and the centre. (3) It is small cause for wonder that an ungrateful world persecutes the professors

¹ Romans ix, 16.

² *Anne tu ex ROSEÆ CRUCIS FRATERCULIS unus? Ad ultimam interrogationem dico, me minime tantam unquam a Deo meruisse gratam, agnoscentem cum Apostolo, non est istud donum volentis aut currentis sed Dei miserentis: si Deo placuisset voluisse sat erit.* The VULGATE reading of the text is: *Igitur non volentis, neque currentis, sed miserentis est Dei.*

³ One is disposed to speculate whether the Polish friend may be the concealed author of SUMMUM BONUM, whether he was the recipient of the letter—perhaps several years previously—and was therefore a neophyte of the Order in one of its developments or variants.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

of true arts, or indeed the truth itself. (4) For the sake, however, of their neophyte, the Order proposes to deal with three recurring questions among those who are without, being firstly its existence as a Brotherhood, secondly the activities with which it is concerned and thirdly the limits of its powers. I am afraid that no subtlety of interlinear reading can extract any answer to these questions from the text of the perfervid oration,¹ but the Fellowship of the Order is with the Father and Jesus, for which reason the Brethren address their recipient, so that he may rejoice "because God is light and in Him there is no darkness whatever." (5) Those who would come to them must have a gift of discernment in this light, for in any other it is impossible to behold the Brethren, unless they will it.² (6) An answer is not vouchsafed to all because there are many of deceitful mind.³ (7) Those who are alienated from God are contrary to the Brethren and it would be folly to permit their entrance. (8) Be they changed therefore from dead stones into living philosophical stones.⁴ (9) Let them follow the counsel of the apostle and have the same mind within them as there is in Christ Jesus. (10) The office of the Order is to lead back lost sheep to the true sheepfold. (11) Its Immovable Palace is the centre

¹ An old English version of the EPISTLE printed *in extenso* was in my REAL HISTORY OF THE ROSICRUCIANS: it must be admitted that the confused expression and continual deviation from the proposed subjects justify the opinion of Archdeacon Craven.

² This is quoted—without reference to the source—in the ANIMA MAGICA ABSCONDITA of Eugenius Philalethes. See my WORKS OF THOMAS VAUGHAN, 1919, p. 107. See also p. 364, where it is quoted again in the Introduction to the FAMA and CONFESSIO.

³ It seems to me that this remark indicates that the EPISTLE was written somewhat early in the Rosicrucian debate. Disappointed applicants for admission had wearied of the subject long before 1629, and new applications had ceased.

⁴ This aphorism is found also in the Rosicrucian document published by Eugenius Philalethes in LUMEN DE LUMINE. WORKS OF THOMAS VAUGHAN, pp. 259 *et seq.*

English Rosicrucianism

of all things, but it is concealed by many names. (12) It is the gate and school of Philosophical Love, wherein everlasting charity is taught. (13) It is that resplendent but invisible Castle which is built upon the Mountain of the Lord, "out of the root whereof there flows forth a fountain of living water and a river of love." (14) It is lawful to know Heaven by Heaven, not by earth, but the virtues of earth are known by those of Heaven. (15) Virtue is the supreme truth, and it will confirm those daily more and more who follow it with all their might in words and works. (16) The writer affirms in conclusion that the said Lady Virtue has commanded him to make these communications at this time to the recipient, but he shall be taught more largely hereafter, if he will keep surely that which has been committed to his trust.

There is no doubt in my mind that this document was going about at the period as a missive which had emanated from the inner circle of the Rosy Cross. When we come to examine the testimony which was borne to the subject by Thomas Vaughan at a later period in England we shall meet with several analogies, and it would appear therefore that the construction placed by Joachim Fritz on the ends and objects of the Fraternity was not exclusive to himself, though it was illuminated by Fludd's genius. The ordered contentions of *SUMMUM BONUM*—which he must have inspired, though he did not write—compare very favourably with the hectic and confused Epistle, but the issue and intention are one in both cases.

It has been said with considerable force by Böhle—and Archdeacon Craven who has followed the debate at first hand adopts the same view—that Mersenne was no match for Fludd and one who was much more able came to the rescue in the person of Petrus Gassendus.¹ Fludd was

¹ He was a French astronomer and philosophical writer, born on Jan. 22, 1592, and he died at Paris, Oct. 24, 1655. His first published volume

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

embroiled also with Franciscus Lanovius,¹ as he had been previously with Kepler. In 1633 Fludd published his last words on the general subjects at issue in *CLAVIS PHILOSOPHIÆ ET ALCHYMIÆ FLUDDANÆ*,² already quoted; but we are concerned with his answer only in so far as it connects with the problem of the Rosy Cross. Except when he speaks for himself—as it were, from his own platform—and then only on his personal understanding of Mystical and Divine alchemy—it is the dull record of an arid scholastic quarrel, about which we need note only that Fludd, with his vast learning, rather disdained Mersenne, while Fludd and Gassendus really respected each other.³ Lanovius seems to have been of no particular consequence on either side of the debate. It appears that the Brethren of the Rosy Cross had been called libertines by this writer, and having

was certain *EXERCITATIONES PARADOXICÆ ADVERSUS ARISTOTELÆOS*. It appeared at Grenoble in 1624. The work in reply to Fludd was published at Paris in 1630 under the title: *EPISTOLICA EXERCITATIO, in qua præcipua principia philosophiæ ROBERTI FLUDDI deteguntur, et ad recentes illius libros adversus PATREM MARINUM MERSENUM scriptos respondetur.*

¹ I have failed to trace Lanovius. He is not to be identified with François de la Noue, called Bras-le-Fer and also *un moraliste militaire du seizième siècle*. He is included among the great captains of France. Among his books is a *DEFENSIO VERITATIS adversus assertiones Catholicæ Fidei repugnantes*. 1594.

² *CLAVIS PHILOSOPHIÆ ET ALCHYMIÆ FLUDDANÆ, sive ROBERTI FLUDDI Armigeri et Medicinæ Doctoris ad Epistolice PETRI GASSENDI Theologi Exercitationem Responsum. . . . Francoforti, Anno 1633.* A thin folio set closely in small type and an unfavourable specimen of the Fludd mode of book-production.

³ Archdeacon Craven tells us, however, that Mersenne was also a man of learning, as we have seen in a previous note. His methods in criticism are characteristic of debate at the period. Isaac Disraeli reminds us in *AMENITIES OF LITERATURE* of Mersenne expressing astonishment that King James I should allow such a man as Fludd to live. The latter thereupon obtained an interview with his sovereign, to clear himself of "the Friar's scandalous report"—i.e. that Fludd, among other things, was an atheist. He found the King, as he says in his own words, "royally learned and gracious." Finally, "I found him my Kingly patron all the days of his life." Where this account is located in Fludd's writings does not appear. I have failed to find it in *SOPHIÆ CUM MORIA CERTAMEN*.

English Rosicrucianism

affirmed that on the contrary they were true seekers of Divine Mysteries, Fludd volunteers the following explanation, which is at once remarkable for its period and significant, in view of the anti-papal mouthings in CONFESSIO FRATERNITATIS R.:C.:.¹ He establishes *ex cathedra* that seekers of this kind are to be found in all religions—Papal, Lutheran, Calvinistic and so forward. As such, they adhere to the external Rites and Ceremonies which characterise their particular form of faith, not that they regard truth as concealed within outward observances, for truth is divine. They are so many forms and offices which express the principles of the sects, each after its own manner, and they are diligently observed and respected by every Brother of the Rosy Cross in accordance with the religious school to which he belongs. They are of the laws and politics of this or the other Church, and he regulates his life in their path, lest he be a source of scandal to his neighbours. So passes out of sight for ever the FAMA's boasted dedication to the "forms and ceremonies of the first and renewed church," its limitation of the sacraments to two, and its knowledge of Jesus Christ according to the self-styled orthodoxy of Lutheran reform. So passes CONFESSIO FRATERNITATIS, its execrations of the Roman impostor, its expected fall of the triple crown. The outward forms have become types of convention, while as to their variations, each follows the rule of his own conscience, and the elect are everywhere.

This is like a new star in Serpentarius or Cygnus; but Fludd goes further still and puts on record his personal conviction that all persons whatsoever may and shall be accounted as true Brethren of the Rosy Cross if they are

¹ I observe that according to Kieswetter CLAVIS PHILOSOPHIÆ FLUDDANÆ states (p. 50) that the prosperity of the Rosicrucian Order was short lived and hints also that it was transformed into Freemasonry. There is no such statement, neither is there such indication.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

(1) rooted firmly in the Christian faith, (2) confirmed in the knowledge of themselves and (3) consciously built up on that corner-stone which is Christ Spiritual. The head of all is Christ, of whose mystical body there are many members. The point has become of such importance that he returns thereon and repeats it with a slight variation of form: "I affirm that every *Theologus* of the Church Mystical is a real Brother of the Rosy Cross, wheresoever he may be and under what obedience soever of the Churches politic." Finally, he informs us that those who used to be called Brethren of the Rosy Cross are now termed the Wise—men of wisdom here on earth, conditioned either in the search or attainment of Divine Wisdom.

We may compare these affirmations and findings with that commentary on the Laws of the Fraternity which was published by Michael Maier in 1618.¹ As we shall see, he testifies to the fact of an incorporated Order in unmistakable terms: for him it was a College of German Philosophers of R.:C:.. It was not apart from things spiritual, but it was of the occult rather than of any mystical movement. In the hands of Fludd it has been spiritualised out of all likeness to its own earlier records, while in *CLAVIS PHILOSOPHIÆ* it has evaporated to all intents and purposes, unless indeed we elect to conclude that under his headship, or that of others who were men of his mind and spirit, the corporate body had transformed into a secret House of spiritual election, the tradition, knowledge and practice of which were concerned only with the life that is hidden with Christ in God. We shall see

¹ Maier had been dead for many years when Fludd published the *CLAVIS*. We should understand many things better if we could suppose that the Order had fallen into the hands of the English theosophist in succession to the German alchemist. But neither positive nor negative evidence is available in this direction.

English Rosicrucianism

whether there are later memorials which offer any indications along these lines. Meanwhile, in the symbolism of the Latin Church we have heard of the Church Militant, the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant; but of a Church Mystical—within that obedience or without—I think that we hear for the first time from Robert Fludd. I speak tentatively, as the reason of things requires, for in the presence of the vast literature of theology, it is impossible to speak certainly: if I am right, the use of such a term in the particular set of connections is exceedingly significant. It would not be without importance, had it been used previously.

As he spiritualised the Rosy Cross—or bore witness alternatively to the transfiguration which it may have undergone otherwise—so Fludd spiritualised alchemy. Even in the early days of *TRACTATUS THEOLOGO-PHILOSOPHICUS* the “divine balsam” of Paracelsus and his followers had become celestial grace, but in *CLAVIS PHILOSOPHIÆ* the work in creation of Christ the Word—*per quem omnia facta sunt*—is called “Divine Alchemy,” and it is more than a figure of speech. The work of the human alchemist—all that which is characterised broadly as belonging to the *Magnum Opus*—is in analogy with the operation of the Holy Spirit, of the Word and the Wisdom of God. The Philosopher’s Stone is most truly theosophical in its virtues, or at least “theo-philosophic.” It is the power of God breathed forth and the influx of His Glory. The fixed gold of the alchemists abides in the soul of man, which is not only purified and exalted by the Christ-Stone but is raised into eternal life. The Rosicrucians are therefore concerned with no gold of the *profanum vulgus*, no common silver or fire. The alchemical sublimation signifies progression in virtue and ascent in the contemplation of God which follows therefrom: it brings the soul of man into the likeness of angels. Finally, in his catholic

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

manner Fludd says that the Rosicrucian's subject of chemistry, their Stone, their Regimen, being concerned with the Corner Stone, or—as I read him—the attained state of the Christhood, in no wise differs from that of all holy and truly wise men.

Now if this were the testimony of one speaking alone and awaking no echo anywhere in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, it would still be difficult to suppose that Robert Fludd, revolving in his scriptorium at Bearsted, or by Mason's Hall in Coleman Street, London City, the claims of a Brotherhood of which he knew at first hand nothing, should have reached such a grade of certitude, not alone concerning their pursuits and dedications but also concerning a new spirit which had passed over them, transforming both name and nature. But he does not stand utterly alone, as we shall see when we pass to the consideration of the Rosy Cross in its connection with Maier, from 1621 onward to 1624. He is certainly more highly inspired than are any other voices, and he is at once the most responsible and ascertainable of all the witnesses. We shall see further that in and around the epoch of the French Revolution there was an activity of the Rosy Cross in Germany and Russia which at least appears to connect it with the spiritual side of things. Of that for which, in some at least of the circles, it stands at the present day we shall learn also, of *pars hæreditatis suæ et calicis sui*, and that if it were mindful of personalities in things past or present, the Imperator *in temporibus omnibus* might well be Robert Fludd. But the Head is Christ. My inference is therefore that the Kentish occult philosopher is more likely, in the general reason of things, to have borne his witness on the basis of what he knew at first hand than to have talked through long years in a dream-state about the glories of the Rosy Cross and the high attainments of those who carried its symbol in their hearts and perhaps wore it on their breasts. Beyond

English Rosicrucianism

this tentative view the question cannot be carried. It is an interesting fact that Fludd was abroad during what may be called the Rosicrucian formative period, or from 1598 to 1604, when Simon Studion was preparing an *avant-courier* of all the symbolism in his vast treatise NAOMETRIA. Were I a spokesman of Masonic Rosicrucian Societies, I should proclaim in all their Colleges—as I have intimated—that Fludd was acquainted with Studion and was by him brought within the circle of adeptship. As it is, I remember only that his natural and acquired dedications were after the manner born of those to which the Order itself confessed; but he had no part in Second Advent zealotries, and he had no cause against the Pope. If there be any call to say so, I am quite certain that he did not found the Order of the Rosy Cross, but he may have belonged to something at work under that name, perhaps in 1617, and perhaps later. The last point is speculative, but its consideration in the light of other possibilities will be resumed at a later stage.

I have not dwelt upon the external life of Fludd, which is of no importance to my subject; but as it may be desirable to fix periods, let it be added that he was born in 1574, while we have seen already that he died in 1637. He graduated in arts at St. John's College, Oxford, and in medicine at Christ Church, on his return from abroad. His history thereafter is practically that of his books, but he has been called "eminent in his medical capacity." In so far as he was an occult philosopher and an occult practitioner in medicine he seems second to none in his follies; but on the religious side of his nature, his personal sanctity is reflected into his works and it is correct to call him a notable Christian theosophist. It is this side of him which comes into prominence in his later controversies on the subject of Rosicrucian claims. If he was ever connected with

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

the Brotherhood as a member, either he found it holy or sought to hallow it.

I should add that in *THE FREEMASON* for January 22, 1910, an anonymous contributor furnished a mendacious account of Fludd in connection with a quarterly meeting of the SOCIETAS ROSICRUCIANA IN ANGLIA. At this assembly there was exhibited the photograph of an alleged Rosicrucian Cross and Chain said to have been worn by him as head of the Order in England. The statements concerning it were (1) that the originals were in the possession of a gentleman in Hampshire who was a descendant of Sir Kenelm Digby of the seventeenth century; (2) that this Digby was Rosicrucian Chief in succession to Fludd; (3) that the articles had been handed down from generation to generation; and (4) that they had been identified by experts as being the work of Southern Germany at the Fludd period. The part of fact in this story is separable easily from the invented part; we can accept the gentleman of Hampshire who possesses a Digby heirloom which is indubitably a Rose Cross, and the photograph of which was lent or given to the Soc. :.Ros. :.. Had it been accompanied by those particulars of its history which appear in the anonymous account it is obvious that the writer would have mentioned a matter of such importance. In its absence he had recourse to old fictions which speak of Fludd and Digby as heads of the Rosicrucian Order in England, as they speak of Thomas Vaughan in the same connection. The historical and evidential value is much less than that which attaches to Isaac Disraeli's "mysterious announcement" made in 1626, being an offer from an ambassador or envoy of a "President¹ of the Society of the Rosy Cross,"

¹ It is to be noted that according to Burton, whose *ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY* first appeared in 1621, the founder of the Rosy Cross was alive when that work was being prepared for press. But it is obvious that Burton knew of the Order and its claims only by hearsay.

English Rosicrucianism

offering three millions sterling to enrich the royal coffers, if only King Charles I would follow his advice.¹

¹ The story is extant in certain letters of the period, and according to these it appears (1) that a mysterious stranger had been resident for two years in London; (2) that he was, or claimed to be, the President of the Rosy Cross; (3) that he proposed, with the King's "allowance," to send his anointed messenger, being a "young child," otherwise "a youth," on the Sunday following November 20, 1626, presumably to ascertain whether His Majesty would accept and follow his advice; that in this case the promised millions would be paid in the coming month of May; that the proffered counsel would enable the King "to suppress the Pope," to "advance his own religion," to bring "the Catholic King on his knees" and to convert the Turks and Jews. The ambassador failed, however, to appear at Whitehall on the day appointed. See CURIOSITIES OF LITERATURE, *s.v.* *Secret History of Charles I.*

CHAPTER XI

A GREAT GERMAN ALCHEMIST

IN or about the year 1568 and at Rendsberg in Holstein, there was born Michael Maier, who became body-physician to the Emperor Rudolph II and was ennobled by him.¹ He became in this manner Count Michael Maier. A doctor of philosophy as well as of medicine, he was also an alchemist, and by his contributions to the literature of Hermetic Art he stands not only head and shoulders above his occult contemporaries in Germany, but in comparison with him there is no writer of any consequence on the subject—assuredly not Libavius. I am speaking, however, within narrow limits, for Maier's literary activities, which began in 1614, were closed by his death at Magdebourg in 1622. Another great name contemporary with his own was that of the Hermetic mystic who wrote *AMPHITHEATRUM SAPIENTIÆ ÆTERNÆ*, but Heinrich Khunrath—as we have seen—died in 1601, long before any tract appeared from the pen of Maier, his Hermetic co-heir. There was also Jacob Böhme, but he is not to be included among alchemists, though he adapted some of their terminology to his purely theosophical purpose.

Maier was a Lutheran of his period and by his hostility to the Church and Court of Rome he would have been

¹ I am concerned only with three points in the life of Maier, (1) his visit to England, (2) his literary output and (3) his connection with the Rosicrucian Brotherhood. I refer on other matters to the extended and excellent monograph of Doctor J. B. Craven: *COUNT MICHAEL MAIER: Doctor of Philosophy and of Medicine, Alchemist, Rosicrucian, Mystic.* 1910.

A Great German Alchemist

recommended to the high consideration of those who produced the CONFESSIO FRATERNITATIS R.:C.:. He appears like Fludd to have been a man of personal devotion, and in the preface to a work published after his death he is described by a friend (1) as a regular attendant at the House of God ; (2) as a Christian in life and conversation ; and (3) as one who practised on his own part the charity recommended by Christ in the parable of the Good Samaritan. I mention these facts at the beginning of my analytical account of his writings, from the standpoint of their Rosicrucian connections, to establish the position of their author. As a follower of Martin Luther, he accepted that reformer's doctrine of consubstantiation, which places the Christian Mystery of the Eucharist in a very different light from the commemorative observance of common English protestantism. One of his publications, with which we shall be concerned shortly on account of its Rosicrucian references, is entitled SYMBOLA AUREÆ MENSÆ and has been termed a symposium, presumably because of the word Table in the title ; but it is a treatise in twelve books, each of which is devoted to one of the most famous alchemists, e.g., Raymund Lully, Arnold of Villanova and so forth. Their particular presentation of the Art is set forth in the first place, followed by a counter-thesis and finally by a rejoinder and summary, as a judgment on the side of the alchemist. I am concerned, however, with a single case only : the eleventh book is devoted to Melchior Cibinensis, described as a Hungarian Adept, but he is unknown otherwise in the golden chain of Hermes, and it occurs to me that, by possibility, he has been invented by Maier for the purpose which I am about to unfold. He is described as one who has graduated in "the Hidden Mysteries of the Hidden Science" and also in some form of Christian priesthood, but whether official or secret does not emerge from the story. A copperplate in the text depicts

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

him celebrating Mass in elaborate sacerdotal vestments. In the person of this exponent of the debate, Maier represents the Mass as a work of the hidden science and the sanctuary of its Mysteries, which are those of the Philosopher's Stone. It is said also (1) that in the Sacrament of the Altar are concealed the most profound secrets of spiritual Alchemy; (2) that the perfection of the Great Work is the birth of the Philosopher's Stone in the Sacred Nativity; (3) that its sublimation is the Divine Life and Passion; (4) that the black state represents the death on Calvary; and (5) that the perfection of the red state corresponds to the resurrection of Easter and the Divine Life thereafter. It is added that "these earthly things are a picture of those which are heavenly" and finally that *Lapis itaque ut homo.*

There is no question that these citations from a work at an early stage of his literary life are very important for the mystical dedications of Michael Maier, though the scope of their meaning may be exaggerated. It must not be taken to signify that German alchemy at its highest—either generally or in many particular cases—was a Mystery of Divine attainment reached through the Eucharistic sacrament, but rather that through this channel of grace a transmuting tincture was communicated to the soul which was in rigorous analogy, *mutatis mutandis*, with the physical tincture which transmuted base metals; and otherwise that the states and stages of the material alchemical work were in correspondence with the redemptive work of Christ. But having established this on the evidential basis of the wording in *SYMBOLA AUREÆ MENSÆ* it follows notwithstanding that Maier regarded the Eucharist from the standpoint of a true sacramentalist and was eminently one who might have passed over from a quixotic concern in physics to the transcendental science of Spiritual Alchemy, for which "the sacred forms of the Mass" are either its representa-

A Great German Alchemist

tive, veridic symbols or Spiritual Alchemy is the science of a super-valid Eucharist. There is no doubt in my own mind that these purposely contrasted alternatives are differentiated aspects of one Great Mystery, which has also other aspects in the natural and sacramental worlds.

The first publication of Maier is referable or at least referred by bibliographers to the year 1614, there being no date on the title-page, and is called *ARCANA ARCANISSIMA*, a discourse in six books, which are occupied in placing on Egyptian and Greek mythology the same kind of alchemical construction as was performed long afterwards and on a much larger scale by the French Hermetist, Abbé Pernety. It would be interesting, though here impossible, to compare the two schemes of interpretation, the second of which owed almost certainly nothing whatever to the former. It remains to point out that *ARCANA ARCANISSIMA* was published in the same year as *FAMA FRATERNITATIS*, probably prior thereto, and that no rumours of the Rosy Cross appear in its discussions. It seems quite certain that Michael Maier was not *ab origine symboli* connected with the Order and was in any case not one of the hypothetical theosophists who put forth its first manifesto to learn the judgment of Europe thereupon. We shall see in due course that his entrance into the debate is posterior to the chief official publications—if I may venture so to term them—and is sufficiently late to present a silent but eloquent commentary on certain reveries which suppose that he visited England as if carrying a commission to spread knowledge concerning the Rosy Cross and its claims.¹

For the fact of this visit there is very full evidence, both positive and presumptive, in the writings of Maier.

¹ Mr. Wigston is one who offends in this manner, but it is owing to mental confusion among a mass of undigested material and not to the familiar disposition to sacrifice fact on the altar of hypothesis.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

The period at which it occurred and the length of his sojourn must remain open questions. As a matter of mere speculation, I incline to think that it was in 1614, but subsequent to the appearance of *ARCANA ARCANISSIMA*¹ and he had returned to the Continent when *DE CIRCULO PHYSICO QUADRATO* was published in 1616, being the second work proceeding from his pen. The latter was followed by *LUSUS SERIUS*, which belongs to the year 1617. So far as evidence is concerned, Maier was not preoccupied with the honour, dignity or interests of the Order when he came over to England, though there is no question that he travelled as an alchemist. It is generally reported that he undertook many journeys—doubtless, for the most part, over the wide field of his fatherland²—for the purpose of conferring with persons of the same dedication, to extend his own and general knowledge of Hermetic Art, and perhaps to acquire tracts, like those of Norton and Cremer. The English visit had unquestionably the same object in view. Now, it is out of this pilgrim-motive that there has arisen the hypothesis of his acquaintance with Robert Fludd. I have no wish to cast ridicule on the notion and no intention to reject it. There is a colourable presumption in its favour; but from the days of Böhle, with whom it seems to have originated, to

¹ This is on the assumption that bibliographers are right in referring the tract to 1614, and it is subject to whatever may follow from the fact that it is dedicated to Sir William Paddy—1554–1634—who was four times President of the College of Physicians, London. This dedication suggests, though it does not presuppose, personal acquaintance. Paddy was of eminence in his own country and was probably of repute in Germany, though he seems to have written nothing, except some verses on the death of Queen Elizabeth and the accession of James I.

² This is the statement of Craven, but no authority is given. Mr. F. Armitage in his *SHORT HISTORY OF FREEMASONRY* expands the story, saying that “having become initiated by some adepts,” Maier travelled over all Germany, looking for other members and collecting the laws and customs of the Order “from their confidential instruction.” This is rubbish.

A Great German Alchemist

the last maker of worthless Rosicrucian myth, and the last compiler who follows antecedent statements blindly, it has been expressed in terms of certitude, as if there were records on the subject or even an extant correspondence between the two notabilities. Maier did meet with like-minded people in London, as at the period there is the best reason to expect that he would, and he makes mention of a few. But there is no mention of Robert Fludd. It is true that the latter was then unknown to fame and had published nothing. That this might account for the omission is of course colourable, but the suggestion is also a presumption against the alleged meeting, for Maier was naturally in search of fellow-chemists who were in evidence as such, and there is not the least reason to suppose that he had ever heard of the Kentish mystic. The meeting therefore, if indeed it ever took place, could have come about only by accident. On the other hand, so far as Fludd is concerned, we have found that not once in the course of his writings did he quote or mention his supposed German familiar.

We have seen that Michael Maier returned to his native land in 1616, and that one year later there appeared his *LUSUS SERIUS*,¹ which was not dedicated—as might have been expected—to the Rosicrucian apologist Robert Fludd, but to the Englishman Dr. Francis Anthony among other people, being one who is in comparison unknown.² It was not—as might have been expected

¹ *LUSUS SERIUS, quo Hermes, sive Mercurius, Rex mundanorum omnium, sub homine existentium, post longam disceptationem in Concilio octovirali habitam, homine rationali arbitro, judicatus et constitutus est.* Francofurtum, apud LUC. JENNIS, 1617. The dedication is dated at Frankfurt, *ipso ex Anglia reditu, Pragæ abiturienti, anno 1616, Mense Septembri.*

² Francis Anthony was a Spagyric doctor of the period, with immeasurable faith in the medicinal virtues of *Aurum Potabile*, on which he has left a tract delineating his “way and method.” He had no other medical qualifications and was continually embroiled in consequence with the College of Physicians, who procured his imprisonment on one occasion at least.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

also—a Rosicrucian treatise, but a typical German work of its period belonging to the lighter kind of Hermetic motive. He must have found the Rosicrucian controversy literally raging round him, but no allusion to the Brotherhood occurs in its pages. LUSUS SERIUS contributes therefore nothing to our subject and yet a word about it is desirable in this place, to indicate the particular aspect of alchemy which had been occupying the mind of Maier—presumably in England—at such a moment in the Hermetic history of Western Europe, and in view of the important place which he was destined to fill for all too brief a period in the story of the Rosy Cross. Those who are acquainted with alchemical literature will know that there was a child's work, boy's work or woman's work from the standpoint of the adepts, signifying something that was *ex hypothesi* far more easy than those more ordinary practices which connect with the idea of transmutation. The *ludus puerorum* and its analogues may not have proved simpler to follow by the unaided student than were other courses in the thorny path of Hermes, but they stand at their value in alchemical bibliography and can be checked by those who choose.¹ I mention them because it may seem on the surface of its title that LUSUS SERIUS belongs to this class; but as a matter of fact it has nothing to do with transmutation on any side of the practice. It is a

¹ An old song provides the quotation which might appear as an appropriate text for every authoritative discourse on alchemy:

Let us be open as the day,
Each mask does to the other say,
That he may deeper hide himself.

The Hermetic Masks reproached one another and taunted even one another with their envy towards zealous seekers, but they practised it without exception, in the so-called *Opus Mulierum*, which may be compared with *Ludus Puerorum*, as in tracts on the Sealed Palace. A tract entitled LUDUS PUERORUM will be found in ARTIS AURIFERÆ QUAM CHEMIAM VOCANT VOLUMEN DUO, I, 5.

A Great German Alchemist

chronicle concerning a fantastic Parliament of Beasts and other creatures who lay before man—in the position of an appointed arbiter—their respective claims to pre-eminence over all sublunary things. Ruminating animals are represented by Calf and Sheep; the Goose answers for birds; the Oyster typifies the denizens of the sea; the Bee does duty for winged insects; and the Silk-worm for creeping things: it will be observed that one and all are of conspicuous utility to man. Flax for the same reason represents vegetable things and in fine there is Mercury—as a veil presumably of the First Matter of metals. The Judge is to choose a King from among them, and he sums up after hearing their pleadings. The claims of each are recognised, but Mercury is found to be the miraculous splendour and light of all the world. It receives therefore the Royal Crown as monarch of visible things under the command of man. It is difficult to see that a *jeu d'esprit* of this kind has any title to existence,¹ but it found appeal in two quarters, being reprinted at Oppenheim in 1619 and translated into English.²

¹ The representations submitted by the various creatures are almost exclusively concerned with their various ministries to mankind. There is a long discourse on the part of Mercury, and though the crown is adjudged to him he points out very honestly that it is gold which has the prerogative over all other precious things, that nothing is so durable, nothing so strong in fire, or of greater value and beauty. As regards Mercury itself, (1) it is an antidote against the plague; (2) in combination with gold or “any other body” which is neither corrosive nor noxious, it is the best natural purgative; (3) it is valuable as a semi-metal, and (4) when mixed with certain salts it becomes a poison. There is not a word upon the Mercury of the Philosophers, and although Francis Anthony is described as a “jocund” friend I question whether the medicinal recipes included in the discourse could have proved useful in his practice.

² LUSUS SERIUS: or *Serious Passe-Time*. *A Philosophical Discourse concerning the Superiority of Creatures under Man*. Written by Michael Maierus, M.D., London (*sic*). Printed for Humphrey Moseley at the Prince's Arms in St. Paul's Churchyard and Thomas Heath in Covent Garden, near the Piazza, 1654. The translator signed himself J. de la Salle, i.e. John Hall.

The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross

The year 1617 was exceedingly prolific in respect of published works under the name of Michael Maier or at least written by him. Their chronology is of course untraceable, but in addition to *LUSUS SERIUS* there were *SYMBOLA AUREÆ MENSÆ*,¹—already cited—*JOCUS SEVERUS*² and *EXAMEN FUCORUM PSEUDO-CHEMICORUM DETECTORUM*,³ besides one contribution devoted exclusively to the elucidation of the Rosy Cross. It is called *SILENTIUM POST CLAMORES*⁴ and is further described in its title as (1) an answer to the calumnies and affronts poured out by turbulent persons who desire to be received into the Fraternity of the R.:C.: but have failed in obtaining an answer; (2) a substantial demonstration why the said Fraternity have hesitated to reveal themselves and receive such people into their Society. The preface refers to an opinion entertained by many that the Order

¹ Maier is distinguished from his peers in German alchemy by an extraordinary obscurity of style and by a passion for extensive titles, of which this work offers an exaggerated instance.

² *JOCUS SEVERUS, hoc est Tribunale æquum, quo noctua Regina Avium, Phœnice arbitro . . . pronuntiatur.* Francofurtum, 1617. It will be seen from the title that this tract is concerned with a Parliament of Birds, with the Phœnix as President and Judge. There is a debate after the manner of *LUSUS SERIUS*, in which the Owl, Goose, Raven, Crane, Crow, Nightingale, Swallow, Jackdaw, Sparrow-Hawk, Heron and Cuckoo take part. On account of its traditional wisdom the Owl is made queen and is duly crowned. In what way this jest deserves the title of *severus* I do not pretend to say, or in what way it would appeal to all lovers of chemistry in Germany; but it is inscribed to these and more especially to that Order hereunto lying concealed which the admirable *FAMA ET CONFESSIO* have declared. This dedication was written on the return journey from England to Bohemia. Archdeacon Craven—following Böhle—suggests in an excellent bibliographical note that the work itself was written in England.

³ *EXAMEN FUCORUM PSEUDO-CHYMICORUM DETECTORUM et in gratiam veritatis amantium succincte refutatorum; authore MICHÆLE MAIERO, etc.* Francofurtum, 1617.

⁴ *SILENTIUM POST CLAMORES, seu Tractatus Apologeticus quo causæ Revelationum FRATRUM ROSEÆ CRUCIS et silentii eorum demonstrantur.* Francofurtum, 1617. Lenglet du Fresnoy, in his valuable Bibliography of Alchemy, calls it *très curieux et recherchés des Amateurs.*

A Great German Alchemist

has disseminated innumerable delusive writings almost simultaneously in different parts of Europe¹—much after the manner that swift-footed Thales of old was supposed in the space of three days to have erected Tablets of the Laws in one hundred cities of Crete. They have been stigmatised also as pilferers, after the mode of Autolycus, and as begetters of a monstrous brood.² Maier regards such judgment as not only rash but wicked and affirms—as if with the authority of personal knowledge—that the Fraternity does in no wise act in opposition to truth or morality. The testimony of ancient philosophy and of natural law is in agreement with their programme, after which declaration there follows the curious suggestion that in such a case ocular demonstration is to be preferred before mere rumour. It has no relation with the antecedent context, nor with that which comes after. According to this, anyone who denies the testimony which Rosicrucians offer concerning themselves must—to be consistent—deny everything, like the Pyrrhonists and New Academics.³ “In my opinion,” says Maier, “those who published the FAMA and CONFESSIO have done their duty and are therefore not to be blamed by rash critics—about whom, however, they concern themselves very little, but refer them to their Master.⁴ They prefer to

¹ An allusion to the statement in the FAMA that this manifesto and its sequel were “sent forth in five languages”—on which see text and annotation, p. 137.

² It will be remembered that these are the very words used by Andreae in his autobiography when alluding to NUPTIÆ CHYMICÆ.

³ The alchemist’s notion of evidence is precisely like that of Emily’s maid in THE MYSTERIES OF UDOLPHO, when having shewn the cannon on the battlements by which the ghost appeared as so much ocular demonstration concerning the apparition she failed to understand why her mistress remained sceptical.

⁴ Recommending the sceptics to the devil, not to the Hidden Master of the Rosy Cross.