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*Book of Quinte Essence Sloane MS 73 has 1 rating and 0 reviews: Published December 1st by Early English Text Society, 40 pages, Hardcover.*

Some may object to the fact that I have made my translation of this work prosaic and "un-spiritual", especially given the spiritual and metaphorical bent of modern interpretations of alchemy. I am simply translating this work as it was written. If it hid spectral metaphors in its practical language, they are not my provenance to ferret out. His prose is often stilted. He adores breathlessly stringing along sentence after sentence with "and". Where these and other problems become completely intolerable, I have stepped in. The original manuscript uses the word "man" in many contexts, I have tried to render the individual meanings by substituting "humanity", "people", or "mortal" where appropriate. This is not from a misguided liberal revisionism but for a more accurate rendering of the apparent intentions of the author each time "man" was used. Those section headings that are enclosed in square brackets are my own addition. Section headings not so enclosed are a part of the original. Those times when I had to deviate more than I would like from the original, I have enclosed in square brackets. I have also appended a few footnotes. I do this so the wisdom and science of this book should not perish but be preserved to the end of the world and be kept [safe] by all holy men from all wicked people and tyrants, because of the great perils that might occur [should the wicked get this knowledge]. For within this brief treatise, with the grace of God, I will speak more of practice than of theory 1, although both are necessary. How old, virtuous 2 men with feeble bodies might be restored and regain the strength of their youth in the same manner as in all bodies and be made perfectly whole, except [from injury had] by lightning-stroke or violent injuries or the hardships of too much fasting. Also excepting dangerous falls, too much abstinence 3, or other unfortunate accidents to the body. Furthermore, the term set by God may not be escaped. As Job said in Latin: The philosophers call the purest substance of many corruptible 5 things made from the elements the "quintessence". That is to say, mortal heaven, extracted by human craft. The quintessence is superior. That is to say, mortal heaven is incorruptible in regards to the four qualities of the human body 6, and so it is naturally proven that our quintessence, that is, mortal heaven, is incorruptible in itself. So it is not hot and dry in fire, nor cold and wet in water, nor hot and moist in air, nor cold and dry in earth. On the contrary, our quintessence is as incorruptible as heaven. But understand that our quintessence is not as incorruptible as is the heaven of our Lord God, but it is incorruptible in regards to compounds made of the four elements. Also, it has three names from the philosophers 7. That is to say: Burning water, the soul in the spirit of wine, and water of life, but if you wish to conceal it then call it "quintessence", for this name, and the accompanying nature, would be told by very few philosophers. Instead, the truth would surely be buried with them. Know well that it is called burning water, but it is not burning water, for it is not moist nor cold like common water. Furthermore, it burns and common water does not. No, it is not hot and moist like air, for air corrupts a thing at noon, which is well shown by generation of flies and spiders and other such. Surely it is always incorruptible if it is kept closed from evaporation. Also, it imparts incorruptibility and keeps a thing from corruptibility and rotting. The proof is thus: If a piece of meat, fish, or dead bird is put into [quintessence] it will not corrupt nor rot while it is therein. Furthermore, it will keep the living tissue of the human body from all manner of corruptibility and rotting. This is our quintessence, that is to say, mortal heaven, that God made for the preservation of the four qualities of the human body, just as He made His heaven for the preservation of the whole world. Know for certain that many philosophers and physicians that now live know nothing of this quintessence, nor the truth thereof since God did not want them to know it, because of their great burning greed and wicked living. As the Superior Quintessence, that is to say, the heaven of our Lord God does not give preservation and wonderful influences by itself, alone, to the world, but by means of the sun, planets, and other stars, so our quintessence, that is, mortal heaven does its work with the sun mineral, fine, shining, incorruptible, and of such quality that fire will not impair, corrupt, nor destroy. This is the gold gathered from the mine, from the earth, or from the stream. For gold of alchemy, made with corrosives, destroys the body--as Aristotle and many other philosophers have proven 8. Therefore, good natural gold of the mine of the earth is

called "sol" in Latin by philosophers, for it is the sun of our heaven like Sol the planet is in heaven above. For this planet gives to gold its influence, nature, color, and an incorruptible substance. And our quintessence, mortal heaven, is of the nature and the color of heaven. And our Sol, that is, fine gold of the mine, will make it beautiful and functional 9. And so these two joined together shall influence in us the conditions of heaven and of heavenly sun, inasmuch as it is possible in our deadly world, preservation and restoration of lost nature and renewal of youth. And it shall give abundant health. So I say that spices that draw humors from the knees, the legs and the feet receive particular influence of the stars of Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. This applies to other areas, etc. Do not reveal this book of divine secrets to wicked and greedy men but keep it secret. If you are poor, then take corrupt wine, that is, rotten, of a watery nature, but avoid any that is sour 13 , for the quintessence is naturally incorruptible and will be drawn out by sublimation The four elements, as it were, the rotten feces of wine, will be left in the bottom of the vessel. In truth, this is the watery matter from which is drawn our quintessence. You must then make, in an "ash furnace" 16 , a one-piece glass still with a hole at the top where the water will be put in and taken out. And so, by continual ascent and descent, the quintessence is removed from the corruptible composition of the four elements. Even before it is twice sublimed, the quintessence is more glorious, and more subtle, and far from the corruptions of the four elements when it has ascended only once. So repeat 1, times so that by continual ascent and descent, by which it is sublimed to a height of glory, it will be an incorruptible medicine, almost as heaven above and be of the nature of heaven. Therefore, our quintessence is worthy of the title "mortal heaven". And when you open the hole, if a heavenly sweet aroma sufficient to attract any natural person emerges, remove the distillate. You have our quintessence. Otherwise, seal the vessel and put it on the fire again until you have it. Another method of obtaining quintessence is this: Take the noblest and the strongest burning water that you may have distilled from pure, mighty wine and put it into a glass amphora with a long neck. Close the mouth securely with wax. Make sure that the neck of the amphora is turned downward and the bottom be turned upward. By virtue of the horse dung the quintessence ascends up to the bottom, and the gross matter of the water descends downward to the neck. After many days, when you take it out, gently lift up the amphora as it sits [without changing its position], and you will see a difference between the sublimed quintessence and the gross matter that is in the neck. The trick of separating one from the other is this: Take a sharp pointer or iron pick and pierce the wax that hangs in the mouth of the amphora, against the earth. When you have pierced to the bottom of the water, take out the pointer or pick. The earthly water that is in the neck will first come out until it reaches the interface between the water and the quintessence, that is, mortal heaven sublimed. When you see that the quintessence would run out after the earthly water was poured off, quickly put your finger over the hole and turn the amphora right side up. You then have our quintessence and the earthly water has been removed. This is an extremely important secret. The third manner is that you take a large glass amphora and seal it well. Bury it in the womb of a horse and the purity of the quintessence will be sublimed above and the gross matter will sit in the bottom. Take out gently as above and whatever is left behind should be put to the fire. The fourth manner is this: Take a glass or thick-glazed earthenware vessel and attach a foot-long tube of glass with a leg [into the vessel]. Seal the vessel with its cover so that the foot-long rod of glass within the vessel hangs in air so that the quintessence ascends to the cover in the manner of a boiling pot and descends by the glass. You may make this instrument without great cost. The fifth manner is to distill the burning water ten times by continual digestion in horse dung. The science of making heat without fire, by which you can make our quintessence without cost our trouble and without cost or loss of time: Take the best horse dung that is well-digested that you can find and put it within a vessel or else a pit made in the ground and coated with a paste made of ashes. Mix the dung well in this vessel or pit. It is necessary that the top of the vessel be in cold air so that the quintessence that ascends by virtue of the heat of the dung will thereby be turned into water by virtue of the coldness of the air and fall down again and ascend. Thus you have heating without fire, with little trouble. Another method of heating: Set your vessel in the strong rays of the sun in summertime and let it stand there night and day. If you are poor, ask a rich man who is your friend to lend you a good Florentine Florin Anneal it onto an iron plate as iron is annealed. Have an earthenware vessel filled with the best burning water that you can find and put the still-hot annealed florin into the water. Do this one or more times, for the

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more often done, the better it is. If you see that too much of the water is gone, exchange it for new and do so several times. When you have quenched the metal, combine all the waters. You should understand that the virtue of burning water is such that it naturally draws out all the virtues and properties out of gold and holds incorruptibly and an even heat. Then mix this burning water thus gilded with our quintessence and use it. Be careful not to quench the florin in our quintessence for then it would be lost.

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