

is found mentioned among the Greeks than purple and scarlet; which two colours and blue had, however, been long known, for they are particularly named by Moses. It is thought also that the ancient colours exceeded the modern in permanency, but were not nearly so bright.

Limited, however, as the ancients seem to have been to natural substances, it cannot be denied they made good chemical use of them, and therewith performed many operations which we carry on by means of artificially made bodies, and indeed there are upon record circumstances which would seem to involve a knowledge not now possessed, and a knowledge in some cases almost necessarily chemical. Was it an acquaintance with chemistry, for example, that enabled the Magicians of Egypt, in the terms of the narrative, to turn water into blood? or Moses to destroy the Golden Calf? the means narrated for the accomplishment of the latter operation are not those which we should take to produce a like result, and to a chemist the passage containing the details presents difficulties not easy of solution.

It is much later on in the world's history that we meet with anything like description of chemical operations, and these were limited at first to the pursuits of Alchemy. The unsettled question as to the origin of the word Chemistry does not help us much in deciding where its processes were first attempted, but it was probably in Egypt. Hermes Trismegistus, who is said to have lived in the year of the World 2076, is generally quoted as the oldest of the Alchemists, but the writings attributed to him are considered to be certainly spurious, and somewhat more credit is given to one Geber, an Arabian, who is thought to have lived in the 7th century, as being the author of chemical treatises which are among the oldest extant and which were published in 1523; treatises on alchemy were also published in 1130, and at intervals up to the middle of the 17th century. The chief object of the alchemists was the transmutation of the common metals into silver and gold, especially the latter; they sought also to prolong life, in spite of the ills that flesh is heir to, to the patriarchal duration, and one of them is said to have attained the age of 1025 by the miraculous use of his medicines. Both these effects were expected from their much desired philosopher's stone, some of whose properties are thus described in the so-called writings of Hermes; by its means "through the permission of the Omnipotent, the greatest disease is cured, and sorrow, distress, evil, and every hurtful thing evaded; by the help of which we pass from darkness to light, from a desert and wilderness to a habitation and a home, and from straitness and necessities to a large and ample estate;" and another worthy, after giving minute details for the preparation of it, says, "Thus, friend, you have a description of the universal medicine, not only