

fancy would be added to that of the hopes, and observation would not be permitted to correct the delusion, or to suggest sounder and more rational views.

The exaggeration of the vague notion of perfection and power in the object of the alchemist's search, was carried further still. The same preparation which possessed the faculty of turning baser metals into gold, was imagined to be also a universal medicine, to have the gift of curing or preventing diseases, prolonging life, producing bodily strength and beauty: the *philosophers' stone* was finally invested with every desirable efficacy which the fancy of the "philosophers" could devise.

It has been usual to say that Alchemy was the mother of Chemistry; and that men would never have made the experiments on which the real science is founded, if they had not been animated by the hopes and the energy which the delusive art inspired. To judge whether this is truly said, we must be able to estimate the degree of interest which men feel in purely speculative truth, and in the real and substantial improvement of art to which it leads. Since the fall of Alchemy, and the progress of real Chemistry, these motives have been powerful enough to engage in the study of the science, a body far larger than the Alchemists ever were, and no less zealous. There is no apparent reason why the result should not have been the same, if the progress of true science had begun sooner. Astronomy was long cultivated without the bribe of Astrology. But, perhaps, we may justly say this;—that, in the stationary period, men's minds were so far enfeebled and degraded, that pure speculative truth had not its full effect upon them; and the mystical pursuits in which some dim and disfigured images of truth were sought with avidity, were among the provisions by which the human soul, even when sunk below its best condition, is perpetually directed to something above the mere objects of sense and appetite;—a contrivance of compensation, as it were, in the intellectual and spiritual constitution of man.

5. *Magic*.—Magical Arts, so far as they were believed in by those who professed to practise them, and so far as they have a bearing in science, stand on the same footing as astrology; and, indeed, a close alliance has generally been maintained between the two pursuits. Incapacity and indisposition to perceive natural and philosophical causation, an enthusiastic imagination, and such a faith as can devise and maintain supernatural and spiritual connections, are the elements of this, as of other forms of Mysticism. And thus, that temper which led men to aim at the magician's supposed authority over the elements,