tion; although the time had not yet arrived in which this fact was to be made one of the bases of the theory.

It has been said,[3] that in the adoption of the phlogistic theory, that is, in supposing the above-mentioned processes to be addition rather than subtraction, "of two possible roads the wrong was chosen, as if to prove the perversity of the human mind." But we must not forget how natural it was to suppose that some part of a body was *destroyed* or *removed* by combustion; and we may observe, that the merit of Beccher and Stahl did not consist in the selection of one road or two, but in advancing so far as to reach this point of separation. That, having done this, they went a little further on the wrong line, was an error which detracted little from the merit or value of the progress really made. It would be easy to show, from the writings of phlogistic chemists, what important and extensive truths their theory enabled them to express simply and clearly.

That an enthusiastic temper is favorable to the production of great discoveries in science, is a rule which suffers no exception in the character of Beccher. In his preface[4] addressed "to the benevolent reader" of his *Physica Subterranea*, he speaks of the chemists as a strange class of mortals, impelled by an almost insane impulse to seek their pleasure among smoke and vapor, soot and flame, poisons and poverty. "Yet among all these evils," he says, "I seem to myself to live so sweetly, that, may I die if I would change places with the Persian king." He is, indeed, well worthy of admiration, as one of the first who pursued the labors of the furnace and the laboratory, without the bribe of golden hopes. "My kingdom," he says, "is not of this world. I trust that I have got hold of my pitcher by the right handle,—the true method of treating this study. For the *Pseudochymists* seek gold; but the *true philosophers*, science, which is more precious than any gold."

The *Physica Subterranea* made no converts. Stahl, in his indignant manner, says,[5] "No one will wonder that it never yet obtained a physician or a chemist as a disciple, still less as an advocate." And again, "This work obtained very little reputation or estimation, or, to speak ingenuously, as far as I know, none whatever." In 1671, Beccher published a supplement to his work, in which he showed how metal might be extracted from mud and sand. He offered to execute

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[3] Herschel's *Introd. to Nat. Phil.* p. 300.

[4] Frankfort, 1681.

[5] Præf. *Phys. Sub.* 1703.