

with it, are John Joachim Beccher and George Ernest Stahl; the former of whom was professor at Mentz, and physician to the Elector of Bavaria (born 1625, died 1682); the latter was professor at Halle, and afterwards royal physician at Berlin (born 1660, died 1734). These two men, who thus contributed to a common purpose, were very different from each other. The first was a frank and ardent enthusiast in the pursuit of chemistry, who speaks of himself and his employments with a communicativeness and affection both amusing and engaging. The other was a teacher of great talents and influence, but accused of haughtiness and moroseness; a character which is well borne out by the manner in which, in his writings, he anticipates an unfavorable reception, and defies it. But it is right to add to this that he speaks of Beccher, his predecessor, with an ungrudging acknowledgment of obligations to him, and a vehement assertion of his merit as the founder of the true system, which give a strong impression of Stahl's justice and magnanimity.

Beccher's opinions were at first promulgated rather as a correction than a refutation of the doctrine of the three principles, salt, sulphur, and mercury. The main peculiarity of his views consists in the offices which he ascribes to his *sulphur*, these being such as afterwards induced Stahl to give the name of *Phlogiston* to this element. Beccher had the sagacity to see that the reduction of metals to an earthy form (*calx*), and the formation of sulphuric acid from sulphur, are operations connected by a general analogy, as being alike processes of combustion. Hence the metal was supposed to consist of an earth, and of something which, in the process of combustion, was separated from it; and, in like manner, sulphur was supposed to consist of the sulphuric acid, which remained after its combustion, and of the combustible part or true sulphur, which flew off in the burning. Beccher insists very distinctly upon this difference between his element sulphur and the "sulphur" of his Paracelsian predecessors.

It must be considered as indicating great knowledge and talent in Stahl, that he perceived so clearly what part of the views of Beccher was of general truth and permanent value. Though he<sup>1</sup> everywhere gives to Beccher the credit of the theoretical opinions which he promulgates, ("Beccheriana sunt quæ profero,") it seems certain that he had the merit, not only of proving them more completely, and applying them more widely than his forerunner, but also of conceiving them

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<sup>1</sup> Stahl, *Præf. ad Specim. Becch.* 1703.