

CHAPTER XV

THE END OF THE PARTNERSHIP

“If all you boast of your great art be true,
Sure willing poverty lives most in you.”
— Ben Jonson, Epigram to Alchymists.

Dee now resumed diligently his writing in the other diary, which becomes a strange medly of daily affairs small and great. He sent Francis Garland to England with another letter to Walsingham, dated June 17, begging him to continue his opinion of Dee's fidelity towards Her Majesty and the realm. It would be useless as yet to render any account of commodity to them or their country reaped by this peregrination, “but I trust more will be glad of our coming home than were sorry of our going abroad.” He has not heard from Mr. Justice Young since May twelvemonth, but hopes his pitiful case of the books and other injuries endured have, by Walsingham's favour, had some redress. There is no news of importance but the Polish King's election, “the mysteries whereof, by the time this bearer reaches England, will be known to you.” “Remember me to your good lady and to your daughter Lady Sidney.” Money was now plentiful enough, and on September 1 Dee covenanted with John Basset (who had arrived at Trebona on August 20) “to teach the children the Latin tongue, and I do give him seven ducats by the quarter, and the term to begyne this day; and so I gave him presently seven ducketts of Hungary in gold, before my wife. God speede his work.” Arthur, who was just over eight, was getting on with his “grammar”; Katherine was six. Thus was another element introduced into the oddly assorted household, and on September 4 Dee writes: “Basset his hurly burly with T. Kelley.” Payments to Basset were entered regularly each quarter until August following, when the tutor, whose real name seems to have been Edward Whitlock, went off to Budweis on pretence of buying “cullors” — perhaps for painting, and never returned.

Various visitors came to Trebona, among them Pucci, bringing Christian Francke, the author of some books written against the Jesuits. Roseberg returned to Trebona, and finding a constraint existing in the relations of the household, set himself to reconcile them. “July 19th. a certayn kind of recommendation between our wives. Next day som relenting of E.K., also by my Lord's entreaty.” Rosenberg came and went frequently, so did his wife. Lord Biberstein, a friend of theirs, came to make Dee's acquaintance.

Alchemical experiments were being prosecuted with vigour. It was Dee's turn to make something prized, even if it were not gold. “Sept. 28th. I delivered to Mr. Ed. Kelley (earnestly requiring it as his part) the half of all the animall which was made. It is to weigh 20 ounces; he wayed it himself in my chamber. He bought his weights purposely for it. My Lord had spoken to me before for some, but Mr. Kelley had not spoken.” Secrecy being necessary, he is evidently using a word of hidden meaning.

Kelley was constantly riding to Prague, and in October, while he was away, “John Carpio [who had joined them at Trebona] did begyn to make furnaces over the gate. He used of my rownd bricks, and for the yern pot was contented now to use the lesser bricks, 60 to make a furnace.” Experiments on a large scale were about

to be begun, and when Kelley returned a week later, *terribilis expostulatio*, etc., is the entry under his name. Edmond Hilton returned from England, and a month later Francis Garland, bringing letters from Edward Dyer. He brought also letters from Court advising their return home. People in the neighbourhood were beginning to talk about the strange doings of the foreigners in the Castle, and the Captain Critzin of the Guard disdained to come to a wedding supper in the Rathhaus because Dee and Kelley were to be present. The household grew larger and larger. Thomas Kelley was married in June. In December, "Mr. John Carpio went towards Prague to marry the maiden he had trubbled; for the Emperor's Majestie, by my Lord Rosenberg's means, had so ordered the matter." He was absent till February 16, and in April brought his wife. Dee turned back to his books of tables, figures and symbols. "The 30 and 31 day I began to frame myself toward the practice of the Heptagonos of my 4th boke. God prosper my purpose." Kelley, on the other hand, was absorbed in alchemical studies. Perhaps the secret he had once professed to have captured had again eluded him.

"Dec. 12 afternone somewhat. Mr. Ed. Keley his lamp overthrow, the spirit of wyne being spent to[o] nere, and the glas being not stayed with buks about it, as it was wont to be; and the same glas so flitting on one side, the spirit ws spilled out, and burnt all that was on the table where it stood, lynnenn and written books — as the bok of Zacharius with the Alkanor that I translated out of French for some by spirituall could not [?]; Rowlaschy his third boke of waters philosophicall; the boke called Angelicum opus, all in pictures of the work from the beginning to the end; the copy of the man of Budwise Conclusions for the Transmutation of metalls, and 40 leaves in 40, intituled, Extractions Dunstani, which he himself extracted and noted out of Dunstan his boke, and the very bok of Dunstan was but cast on the bed hard by from the table."

The "very bok of Dunstan" was no doubt a copy of the manuscript *Tractatus...de lapide philosophorum*, which was formerly ascribed to the Saint of Glastonbury. It was the constant companion of these two alchemists, held in awe and great esteem, as we see by Dee's words above.

In his new liberation from crystal gazing, Kelley became a changed and haughty being. He was established in his own apartments, and when he felt weary his former master was now summoned imperiously to come and amuse him! He sends the old man a message by his brother Tomas, saying, "You study too much, it is too late in the day to go to Cromlaw, as you intended, he wishes you to come to pass the tyme with him at play." Dee mildly consents: "I went after dynner and payd, he and I against Mr. F. Garland and Mr. Rob., tyll supper tyme in his dyning rome, and after supper he came and the others, and we played there two or three houres and frendely departed. This was then after the great and wonderful unkindness used toward me in taking my man." A week or two later Kelley sent for Dee late in the evening to come to his laboratory over the gate, to see how he distilled sericon, "according as in time past and of late he heard of me out of Riplay. God lend his heart to all charity and vertue."

It is evident that Kelley was jealously and secretly working at his experiments apart from Dee. He had learned much alchemy from his master and his master's wonderful library in the four years, but there was still knowledge stored in chambers

of Dee's brain of which he could not pick the lock. To enter those inner recesses had been doubtless Kelley's aim when he represented the spirits as bidding them share everything with each other. But he, on his part, had no intention of sharing anything that he discovered.

The year 1588 began badly, for the child Michael, on New Year's Day,

"going childyshly with a sharp stick of eight inches long and a little wax cadell light on the top of it [evidently the child was keeping Christmastide in good old German fashion], did fall uppon the playn bords in Marie's chamber, and the sharp point of the stik entred through the lid of his left ey toward the corner next the nose, and so persed through, insomuch that great abundance of blud came out under the lid, in the very corner of the sayd ey. The hole on the outside is not bygger than a pin's hed; it was anoynted with St. John's oyle. The boy slept well. God spede the rest of the cure. The next day after, it apperid that the first towch of the stikes point was at the very myddle of the apple of the ey, and so (by God's mercy and favor) glanced tothe place where it entred; with the strength of his hed and the fire of his fulness. I may make some shew of it to the prayse of God for his mercies and protection."

Dee of course was as skilled in medicine as any doctor of the time. He rendered medical assistance when Thomas Kelley's wife, Lydia, miscarried with twin boys. He notes his own symptoms carefully: "June 19, I had a grudging of the ague. June 22, I did evidently receive the ague and layd down. Jan. 17. The humming in my ears began." Another time "I was very sik uppon two or three sage leaves eten in the morning; better suddenly at night. When I cast them up, I was well."

The coldness between the two became unbearable to Dee, the peacemaker, of whom Aubrey relates that if ever any of his neighbours fell out, "he would not let them alone until he had made them friends." In April, he wrote to Kelley and his wife "2 charitable letters, requiring at theyre hands mutual charity." The same day he made friends with Captain Critzin, and on Sunday, when Jane ws churched after Theodore's birth, received the Communion with her. He hears of some fresh treachery of Pucci, and of Rosenberg's displeasure, but all is forgotten on May 10, when Kelley "did open the great secret to me, God be thanked!" A few days after, "Mistris Kelley received the sacrament, and to me and my wife gave her hand in charity, and we rushed not fromher." The reconciliation does not seem to have been altogether complete. Every visitor throughout that summer, Edmund Cooper, Joan Kelley's brother; Mr. Thomas Southwell, his friend; Edward Dyer, Francis Garland, and Count Rosenberg, all seem to have tried to patch up the quarrel, but things only grew worse.

The "great secret" opened by Kelley was no doubt the professed secret of the gold. Dee must very soon have found out the true value of this "secret," but apparently he continued to believe that Kelley had honestly transmuted base metal, and was keeping the method to himself. Nothing was less likely than that he would share his knowledge, even with the master who had taught him all he knew. The first essential in alchemy was secrecy. It is characteristic of Dee that he seems to have been more pained at Kelley's want of confidence in him, than chagrined at not knowing the secret. Of jealousy that Kelley was, or seemed to be, the successful alchemist, there is no trace. But Kelley was gradually undermining all Dee's

influence and friendship with Rosenberg, who was their one powerful friend. The Viceroy of Bohemia had much influence with the Emperor. He was constantly at the Castle or with Kelley in Prague. Kelley had stolen the old man's best workman, and was now turning all his friends against him. Rosenberg and Kelley were always working in secret, while he was left outside in the cold. "September 15th, the Lord Chancellor came to Trebona and went away on the 17th. The rancor and dissimulation now evident to me, God deliver me! I was not sent for." The pathos of the situation is irresistible. The man of a Continental reputation, whom five emperors had honoured, must stand aside and see his upstart pupil made much of and set on the high-road to fortune. But Fate was more just than she seemed, and Dee, who clung to the honest and true way, had in the end the better lot. Not in ease or success, truly; but who would not rather leave behind him the reputation of a sincere man deluded than that of a deceiver, even though not unmasked? Till then Dee says he had been "chief governor of our philosophical proceedings, but little by little I became hindered and crossed by fine and subtle devices, laid first by the Bohemians, somewhat by Italians, and lastly by my own countrymen."

The strange partnership had now run its tempestuous course to the end, and the heterogeneous colony of English men and women at Trebona was about to break up, never all to meet again. The first to depart was Mistress Kelley, thankful, no doubt, to disentangle herself from the web of pretences, deception and bickerings. On October 17, "Mistress Kelley and the rest rode towards Pouchartz in the morning." She was on her way to England, and only once thereafter does this young woman's name enter into our story. [On November 23, Francis Garland and Mr. Dyer's servant,

Edward Rowley, who had come back a week or two earlier, left for England. Dee sent by them a most important letter to the Queen, also letters to Dyer, Mr. Young, and to Edmond Hilton. News from England travelled slowly, and Dee had not long since heard of the glorious defeat of the Spanish Armada of the previous May. The victorious captains, Frobisher, Drake, Hawkins, were all well known to him, and with the Admiral in chief command, Lord Howard of Effingham, he was very familiar at Court, for his wife had been Jane's early patron and friend. Patriot that Dee was, yearning to get back to England, he now wrote to the Queen a letter of congratulation (dated November 1-, 1588) upon the splendid victory of her navy. It was couched in the graceful and fantastic terms of homage of the day, and is a literary production well befitting a man of his reputation. The letter is reproduced from the original. It is printed by Ellis in *Letters of Eminent Men*.

[REPRODUCTION OF LETTER GOES HERE]

He speaks in it of his proposed return, and begs for a safe conduct through all the domains of princes and potentates which lay between him and home. "Happy are they that can perceive and so obey the pleasant call of the mightie Lady Opportunitie." The answer, of course, took long to come, but he began to make his preparations slowly. He gave to Kelley the wonderful convex glass which the Queen had so often admired. A fortnight after, Kelley gave it to Rosenberg, and the Count presented it to the Emperor. Dee says the Emperor had long esteemed it, but he has not told us when he showed it to Rudolph. He had described the mirror in his Preface to Billingsley's *Euclid* (see ante, p. 25).

On February 4 he also made over to Kelley “the powder, the books, the glass, and the bone, for Rosenberg, and he tereuppon gave me discharge in writing of his own hand subscribed and sealed.” Rosenberg was away, and did not trouble to return to bid him good-bye. Instead he wrote to Kelley to take his leave of Dee for him, and said that he would send instructions to his man Menschik to “dispatch him,” perhaps with some settlement of a financial character.

On the afternoon of February 16, 1588, Kelley rode away to Prague, taking most of the assistants with him: John Carpio, F. Garland, Simkinson. Dee never saw him again.

Three new coaches had been ordered in Budweis, and when they were ready, Dee dispatched Edmond Hilton (who had returned from England in December) to Prague to buy a dozen coach and saddle horses. Money was plentiful at this time, the practice of economy was impossible to Dee, so he set off to travel homewards in state, as became a man to whom an emperor had offered a princely salary. It was very unnecessary, even absurd, but it was characteristic of Dee and his exalted ideas, not so much of himself, as of his peculiar mission. The journey cost, as he reckoned up afterwards, more than 600 pounds. The horses — twelve young Hungarian coach horses and three Wallachees for the saddle- -cost 120 pounds, and cheap they were at that. The three new coaches, with harness, saddles and bridles, cost 60 pounds; and the hiring of two or three waggons for his goods, books, furniture, vessels, etc., ran into 110 pounds. Then he had an escort of twenty-four soldiers from Diepholt to Oldenburg, as permitted by the Emperor’s passport; and from Oldenburg to Bremen, the Duke of that province sent six musqueteers to protect him. It was a dangerous time to ride abroad, as he says, not long before the outbreak of the Thirty Years’ War. A party of eighteen horsemen had lain in wait for his caravan for five days, but a warning came through a Scot in the garrison of Oldenburg, and Robert, the Landgrave of Hesse, extended his powerful protection.

The train of coaches and waggons, with the travellers and their baggage, left Trebona on March 11. The Castle had been their home for a year and a half, and we can fancy Jane, at any rate, dreading to take up once more the old wandering life. For it was to be a year and three-quarters more before they set foot in England. On the 18th they were in Nuremburg, where they stayed two nights; on March 26 they reached Frankfurt-am-Main, and on April 19, five weeks after leaving Trebona, they were in Bremen, their present destination.