THE RED CLOUD CHIEF.

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RED CLOUD, - - NEBRASKA.

AN UNROMANTIC VERSE.

We were walking in the moonlight
While the leaves were all a-quiver,
With the sighing breeze that swept the trees
And the branches through all wet with dew,
And the fire-flies in the June night
Were dancing on the river;
But earth's treasure
Brought no pleasure,
And the pain did not depart,
Though no grief was at my heart.
When I told him my condition—
The handsome young physician
Told me the reason that the breezes made me shiver
Was because I was afflicted with a very torpid liver.

—*Quiz.*

THE "PHILOSOPHER'S STONE."

The three great remedies for the irremediable evils of death, toil and ignorance of the future have been sought for, how earnestly and blindly! The alchemists, whose art flourished for so many centuries, would have it that alchemy was as old as man himself; that its name was derived from Shem, the son of Noah; that Noah himself must have possessed the elixir vitæ—that Hermes Trismegistus founded it among the Egyptians, where Moses learned it, as was proved by his making the gold of the golden calf float on the water. The Chinese claim to have known all about alchemy 4,400 years ago. Certain it is that in the first centuries of the Christian era there were pretenders to the art of making gold and silver in Rome, whom the authorities punished as knaves and impostors, and at Constantinople in the fourth century transmutation of metals was very generally believed in. These early Greek alchemists held that all metals were composed of two substances—metallic earth and a red, inflammable substance called "sulphur." The pure union of these produced gold, but other metals were mixed with and contaminated by various foreign ingredients, which the philosopher's stone would infallibly and instantly detect. Thence to the eighth century, when the delusion reappeared among the Arabs, its course cannot be traced with certainty. Geber, who flourished about 730, is credited with writing 500 treatises on the philosopher's stone and the water of life. Gold was to him the only metal in perfect health, and he believed that a preparation of gold would cure all the maladies incident to the animal and vegetable kingdoms. If he did not find the precious stone, he did find such valuable things as corrosive sublimate, the red oxide of mercury, nitric acid, and the nitrate of silver. For the next two centuries the Arabian philosophers practiced alchemy and astrology; but after Avicenna's death in 1036 the seat of their study was transferred to Europe, where it was at its brightest in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Among the most eminent men of the time was Albertus Magnus, who had Thomas Aquinas for a pupil. Between them they made, according to the legend, that famous brazen statue which spoke and acted as a servant. Albertus had the power of changing the seasons, it may be added. Artephius, who pretended to be 1,025 years old, declared that he had found the elixir, and the stone as well; to the latter discovery Alain de Lisle also laid claim, while Arnold de Villeneuve was said to have transmuted great quantities of lead and copper. He had an infallible recipe for perpetual life—semi-weekly anointings with the marrow of cassia and the nightly wearing over the heart of a plaster of Oriental saffron, red rose leaves, sandalwood, aloes and amber liquefied in oil of roses and white wax. The diet prescribed was a chicken a day, the fowls having been fattened for two months on serpents boiled in vinegar thickened with wheat and bran. From sixteen to thirty days of this food, washed down with good white wine or claret, made a man safe for seven years of life. His friend, Pietro d'Apone, had, if his contemporaries are to be believed, seven spirits bottled up whom he could release on occasion to do his bidding in any art or science. Though he could turn brass into gold, he operated very sparingly, and preferred the simpler process of paying his way in money, which returned to him next morning no matter what precautions had been taken by the person to whom it had been paid. In an evil hour he fell into the hands of the Inquisition and was hacked almost to death, dying, however, before his trial had been concluded. Raymond Lulli was a still more eminent adept, who labored concurrently at finding the philosopher's stone and converting the Mussulmans. A dubious story makes out that he once visited England and was assigned apartments in the Tower, where, if the legends do not lie, he made £6,000,000 worth of gold out of iron, quicksilver, lead and pewter. In his "Testamentum," Lulli boasted of having converted 50,000 pounds of these base metals into gold. Roger Bacon was a firm believer in the talismanic stone and an ardent seeker for it, though he did not therefore neglect his studies in physics and astronomy. Pope John XXII. was claimed by the alchemists as a distinguished worker in their craft, and they insisted that his bulls on the subject were only aimed at false pretenders, and claimed that the 18,000,000 florins he left in his coffers had been made, because they could not have been amassed. Jean de Meung, the author of the "Romande de la Rose," was another alchemist of note, and played a sad practical joke on the Cordeliers, to whom he bequeathed a weighty chest, which they fancied would contain his treasure, but proved to be filled with slates scrawled with hieroglyphics. Nicholas Flamel after studying the book written (in Latin!) by "Abraham, patriarch, Jew, Prince, philosopher, Priest, Levite and astrologer," for twenty-four years made a lot of mercury into silver January 13, 1382, and converted another large quantity of quicksilver into gold on April 25, and by simultaneously discovering the elixer of life was enabled to prolong his life to the age of 116, when he died, leaving a great treasure. Modern skeptics, however, insist that he was a miser and a usurer, who dabbled in alchemy. The tradition was long current that he was alive and was fated to see his 600th year, and so late as 1816 his house, in the Rue de Marivaux, at Paris, was taken and ransacked by a credulous seeker after his hoards or the secret by which he amassed them. In England, in 1404, the making of gold and silver was declared a felony, fears being entertained that some alchemist working with an ambitious Baron might overthrow the throne, but in 1454 the King issued several patents to associations formed for discovering the stone and elixer. George Ripley, the Canon of Bridlington, declared a quarter of a century later that he had discovered the process of making gold by calcination, solution, separation, conjunction, putrefaction, congelation, cofaction, cultination, fermentation, exaltation, multiplication and projection, but in his old age repented and owned his mistake. Bernard of Treves, his contemporary, spent seventy-one years and a fortune in experimenting with spirits of wine, urine, urpora, dung, mercury, melted lead, sea salt, common salt, vitriol, vinegar and aquafortis, and died confessing that the workers were fools. Sir George Ripley, in their language, was one of "the wisest men in this world, who have had run through their substance in seeking for the philosopher's stone." Nicolas Flamel had run through his fortune in the same search, and had to make up for the loss by copying and illuminating missals. Cyrano de Bergerac, who was over-witty for his time, and who died in 1655, was said to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Kenelm Digby, who died in 1665, was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Lord Bacon was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Isaac Newton was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Robert Boyle was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir John Herschel was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Humphry Davy was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Michael Faraday was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Thomas More was said to have been a believer in the philosopher's stone, and to have had his brain turned by his alchemistic studies. Sir Francis