

works of Paracelsus, it will be well to get our perspective by a glance at the writings of a great contemporary, or perhaps more correctly, a predecessor, Basil Valentine. It will thus be easy to show that the peculiarities of style which characterise the works of Paracelsus belong to the period rather than to the man. Valentine wrote his *Triumphal Chariot of Antimony* when Paracelsus was a boy, but it was not printed till a century later. The title is suggestive of the mystical, fanciful treatment of the subject, which is evident when we open the book. The boastfulness and vanity which are charged against Paracelsus appear also in the pages of Valentine's work. But in, spite of these blemishes, the book is a valuable treatise on the properties of antimony and its compounds, and of their medicinal value, most of it new matter, the result of Valentine's own experiments and observations. But he often breaks out into scorn and invective, wild flights of imagination, theological disquisitions, and recommendations of himself and his writings, which will parallel anything to be found in the works of Paracelsus, with whom he shares a supreme contempt for the regular medical practitioner of his day. "What more would you have, my lord doctor? What say you, O expert surgeon? If I were to put to you some searching questions respecting the nature and cure of external wounds, I should find that there is in you about as much knowledge as there is in the brain of a cock on the title-page of a child's spelling-book." "If any one be opposed to my opinions, he will find a crushing reply in this work."

Valentine's description of "spirits" shows an interesting commingling of the older use of the expression by the Stoics to indicate the vital breath of things with the later idea of aerial beings or ghosts. But there is also a reference to the "spirits" of drugs. It is evident, however, that in Valentine's day the word, even when used in this connection, carried with it the idea of existences somewhat of the order of fairies, but not so well defined in the imagination. "Now there are different kinds of spirits which are partly visible and yet cannot be touched as the natural body of a man can be touched. Such are especially those spirits which have fixed their domicile in the elements, spirits of fire, light,—the aerial spirits which