

far above the level of the ordinary detailed description of facts and processes. There is nothing of the dry-as-dust about Paracelsus. But his imagination often carries him away. His flights of fancy sometimes degenerate into what an unsympathetic reader might call 'drawing the long bow.' His ambition was enormous, and his vanity was perhaps a very conspicuous quality. He is, however, not singular, in that age, in talking and writing a good deal about himself. "Puffing" as a modern art is not done in the first person, but the newspapers abound in it. The difference is that Paracelsus and his contemporaries said and wrote plainly what they thought of themselves, as of everybody else. The great weakness of Paracelsus seems to have been his ungovernable impetuosity, —his lack of self-control. This led to those excesses which marred the influence of his great intellect, and which ultimately prevented him from taking the place for which nature had endowed him,—as the scientific leader of his age. In comparison with what he might have made it, his life must therefore be set down as a failure. But what a magnificent failure! He reformed medicine and originated a large part of the early practice and theory of chemistry; saw dimly the relation of the atmosphere to combustion and respiration; perceived the chemical nature of vital processes and thus laid the foundations of physiological chemistry; he originated the use of active principles of plants instead of the plants themselves; he showed that the idea of poisons is merely relative, and that by using small doses poisons may be employed as medicines; he showed that chemistry was an essential part of medical education; and he dominated the medical and chemical science not only of his own day but of several succeeding generations. In the words of Dr. Samuel Brown, "As strong-headed as Bacon, as inventive as Albrecht and Arnold, as indomitable as Sully, and as mighty an enthusiast as Basil Valentine, this man wanted the truthfulness of character which animated all his predecessors, and he fell." Sixty years after his death he is referred to by Shakespeare (*All's well that ends well*, Act II, scene 3,) his name being coupled with that of Galen, as if equally well known.

In order to prepare the mind for a short review of the