

they came under our own eyes we shall be able to speak the more freely concerning them, without any suspicion that we are romancing or making up a story. We have seen rings, for instance, which removed all fear of paralysis or spasm from those who wore them on their fingers. If an epileptic patient put such a ring on the third finger, even although he be so overcome with the violence of the paroxysm as to be prostrated on the ground, he comes to himself and gets up. Here, too, should be added something which we do not give from the report of others, for the same we have seen with our own eyes and know by experience. If the above mentioned ring be worn on the third finger by a man in whom any ailment is latent and growing, so that it would presently break forth in an eruption, the ring would forthwith give an indication by breaking out in a sweat and, as if seized with a sudden sympathy, would put forth spots and become depraved in appearance."

He now becomes enamoured of his subject and adds a romance about a miraculous bell he saw in Spain, which its owner used to summon spirits and spectres, which Paracelsus asserts he saw him do many times. He has no doubt this bell was made of the marvellous electrum.* But to illustrate the subtlety of things and convince us that he is not romancing, this wonderful man refers to the now well-known fact that if gold or silver be suspended over mercury without touching it, the vapour of the mercury will at length amalgamate the precious metals and render them brittle. He concludes with a warning which is worth repeating: "It will now be for you to keep this great secret [of electrum] and mystery of Nature, and to take care that it does not fall into the hands of my adversaries; since it would be an indignity for them to get to know it. A pearl or a precious stone will not please a goose, because a goose does not know its price or value. It would infinitely prefer a turnip. We may fitly say the same of the Sophists."

In his book *Concerning the Nature of Things* he describes

*In another place Paracelsus tells us solemnly that he knew of a man who was nourished for years by a clod of earth placed upon his stomach and replaced by another as soon as it wasted away. One wonders if he did not say and write these things with his tongue in his cheek!