ON THE ANTIQUITY OF ALCHEMY.

Though I am no alchemist, yet as a relaxation from severer studies, I have read with considerable attention the works of the most celebrated writers on alchemy; and, as the result of this reading, am induced to think, that there is as much historical evidence for the truth of this art, as for any past transaction, which is believed on the testimony of those that record it. I was much gratified, therefore, to find, in the preceding number of the Classical Journal, the arguments of those who contend that the Egyptians possessed this art, displayed with so much ability by Sir William Drummond.

Certain very respectable authorities, however, for the great antiquity of this art, appear not only to have escaped the notice of that gentleman, but of all the modern writers with whom I am acquainted. The authorities are these: Manetho, in the 4th book, p. 66, of his astrological poem, entitled Apotelesmatica, has the following lines:

Και μονὴ Κυβερνία συνὴ καλὸρ Φαεθοντι
Ρωῦρας χρυσοίο, και Υδαγγενος ελεφαντος
Εργατονιος δεικνυι

i. e. "Venus alone, in conjunction with the beautiful Phaethon (the sun), indicates MAKERS OF GOLD, and workers of Indian ivory." This Manetho lived in the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, to whom also he dedicated his work.

In the second place, the Empress Eudocia, in her Greek Dictionary, p. 108, published by Villoison, observes as follows, concerning the so much celebrated Golden Fleece: Διονυσος ο Μιτυληνας, ανθρωπον φης γεγενθαι παιδαγγον του Φρυξου, ονοματι Χρυσιν παι δερας χρυσομαλλον, ους ας ποιητικαι φερεται, ἀλλα βιβλιον ἐν θερματι γεγραμμενον, περιεχον ανθρωπον δει γεγενθαι δια χρυσιας χρυσον εικος αυτο το της λεγει, χρυσου ανοματων αυτο δερας, δια την εξ αυτων ενεργιαν. i. e. "Dionysius the Mitylenean says, that a man whose name was Carius," was the pedagogue of Phryxus, and that the sheep-skin had a golden fleece, not conformably to poetic assertion, but that it was a book written on skins, containing the manner in which gold ought to be made, according to the chymic art. Justly therefore, did those of that period denominate the skin golden, through the energy proceeding from it." This Diony-

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* This word, as the learned reader well knows, signifies a ram.
On the Antiquity of Alchymy.

sae, as Fabricius shows (in Biblioth. Graec.), lived somewhat prior to Cicero.

In the third place, Plotinus, in his treatise On Matter, speaks of the analysis of other metals into gold, as a thing possible to be effected. For he says, "Analysis also shows the existence of matter [i.e. of the formless and ultimate subject of bodies]. Just as if a pot should be analysed into gold, but gold into water; and water when corrupted, requires an analogous process." Καὶ ἡ ἀναλυσις δε οἱν ει η φιλαρτ εις τον χρυσον ὅ δε χρυσος εἰς ωάρ, καὶ τα ωάρ δε φθιομενον το αναλογον αναιτει. What Plotinus here says of the analysis into gold, is perfectly conformable to the assertion of Albertus Magnus, as cited by Becher in his Physica Subterranea, p. 319. For his words are, "Non dari rem elementatum, in cujus ultima substantiatio non reperitur aurum." That all metals likewise may be analysed into water is the doctrine of Plato, who in his Timæus says, "that water is twofold; one kind of which is humid, but the other fusile." And he adds, "that among all those which we denominate fusile waters, that which becoming most dense from attenuated and equable parts, is of a uniform kind, and participates of a splendid and yellow color, is that most honored and valuable possession gold, which is usually impelled through a rock."

In the last place, in the selections from Chemical Greek Manuscripts, in the Bibliotheca Graec of Fabricius, Tom. 12. p. 765, there is an extract from a treatise of one Olympiodorus to Petasius, king of Armenia, in which among other things it is said, "that the art of making gold was most diligently concealed by the Egyptians; that those who were skilled in the art, alone exercised it for the use of the king; and that these men accompanied him in his wars, in order to supply his treasury." For the sake of the learned reader, however, and as the extract does not appear to be much known, I will transcribe the whole, as given by Fabricius.

Οὐμπλιοδόρου φιλοσόφου Ἀλεξάνδρου πρὸς Πετασίου τὸν βασιλέα Ἀρμενίου εἰς τὸ κατ' εὐργίαν Ζωζίρου ὅσα ἀπὸ Ερμοῦ καὶ τῶν φιλοσόφων ἑσυχικὸν εἰρημένα. Ινcipit: Γίνεται η ταράξια απὸ μοιὸν ἰοῦν ίε να καὶ ἡ Μισσαρι ιε, &c. In hoc apospasmatio multa nova indigna relatu, quae ecerpere juvat. Εὐδος γαρ τοῖς ἀρχαῖοι συγκαλυπτείν τὴν αλήθειαν, καὶ τα παντα τοῖς αὐθέντοις εὐθύλα διὰ αὐλλογίων τινῶν καὶ τεχνη ἐν περισυνθεῖν εὐχρηστοῖς, ὅ μοιον ἔστιν τοῖς τεχνης τεχνης τὴς αρχικῆς αὐθών καὶ συνοτιούσιν ἐκδότης συνεστράτευσαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὰ τά κοινα γυμνὰ διὰ ἀλλαί τινων μοιραίων μεταφέρουσι, καὶ τούτο αὐτὸ Πλατάνα καὶ Αριστερεί τὴν αὐλλογίον αὐλλογίον. —Δητὶν δηλαδὴ τὴν γαμον αὐθῶν οὐσίως, καὶ νεκρών οἱ ἀρχαιοί διὰ τὸ κυρίον οὐσίαν, ἄνθρωπον καὶ τὸ τετρασύλλαβως, καὶ τὸ τετραγεμίμον. —γνωσι ὅτι τὰ σκεπτικὰ στη
On the Antiquity of Alexandria.

77


The most remarkable circumstance in this extract is, that permission should be given by the Egyptian kings, to the Jews alone, latently to practise, to write about, and to publish this art. Perhaps this most singular exception in favor of the Jews, was owing to

1 Al. χρυσεχματα, τιν χρυσεχματα.
2 This Dioscorus was a priest of Serapis in Alexandria, so that he lived prior to the destruction of the ancient temples. See the treatise of Synesius to him, in the 4th vol. of Fabricius.
In Euripidem Commentariorum

their being mere expert in the art of making gold, and in consequence of this supplying the royal treasuries more speedily, and more abundantly than other alchemists. For they were always a people immoderately addicted to gain.

THOMAS TAYLOR.

Manor Place, Walworth, July 9.

IN EURIPIDEM COMMENTARIUM

Joannis Seager, A.B. Bicknor, Wallicæ in comitatu Monumethia Rectoris.

NO. I.

Hecuba, v. 265.

'Αλλ' οὐδὲν (inquit Hecuba) αὐτῶν (Achilleum) ᾑδ' ἐγ' (Polyxena, cædi destinata) ὀφραγαται κακῶν.

'Ελένην νῦν αἰτεῖν χρῆ τάφο προσφάγματα.
Προσφάγμα τὸ σινε causa conjectit Beckius. Porson.

Si 'Ἐλένην et προσφάγματα diverse rei accusativi sunt, et constructio eadem quæ in Posce deos veniam, sine causa tantum conjectit Beckius; nam, quod ad sensum, προσφάγματα, numero plurali pro singulari posito, a προσφαγμα τι non discrepant: sin ejusdem rei accusativi 'Ελένην et προσφάγματα, si Helena ipsa victima, loco Polyxenæ, Achilli poscenda fuit, plus quam supervacanæa conjectura Beckii; sensus enim aversatus est, et melius fuisse dare 'Ελένην νῦν αἰτεῖν χρῆ τάφο προσφαγμα τοι—Porro, versus sequenti (366) pro Kínn γὰρ ὀλέσως νυν εἰς Τρολαν τ' ἀγι, legendum, Kínn γὰρ ὀλέσως νυν, "H ἙΣ Tρολαν Γ' ἀγι. "Quae quidem ad Trojam ducit." [At to vix unquam sententiam claudit. Ed.]

Hecuba, v. 605. (603. ed. Pors.)

Mη θρηγᾶναι μου μηθός, ἀλλ' εἰργαν ὀχλον
Τῆς παιδὸς. Sic maie vulgo legebantur hæc verba Hecubæ de Polyxena jam jam moritura. Porsonus, subdistinctione post ὀχλον posita, τὸ μου recte cum τῷ παιδὸς colligavit. Sed quanto elegantius fuissest Mη θρηγᾶναι MOI μηθόν, ἀλλ' εἰργαν ὀχλον, Τῆς παιδὸς!

Hecuba, v. 1000. (986. ed. Pors.)

Hecuba. Oλθ' οὖν ὦ λέξαι σοι τε καὶ παιδὸν ὠλω;
Polyimestor. Οὐκ οἶδα. τὸ σφ' τοῦτο σμανεῖς λόγον.
Hecuba. 'Εστω φιληθής, ὦ σφ νῦν ἐμαί φίλε.
Polyimestor. Τ' χρημ', ὦ καμὰ καὶ τίνυ εἰδεναι χρεών;