

### A NEW BIBLICAL MANUSCRIPT.

ABOUT five years ago two well-known German scholars, Harnack and Gebhardt, discovered a new manuscript of the Gospels at Rossano, a curious old town of Greek origin situated near the heel of Italy. That manuscript was of very great interest in many respects. It was a new manuscript of the sixth century at least, and its antiquity alone invested it with importance. It belonged to a very limited class again. It was written in letters of gold on a purple ground. It was a most expensive work therefore, and may represent to us the type of New Testament which Eusebius was commissioned to supply for the use of some leading Churches after the triumph of Christianity. The Rossano Manuscript was also embellished with a number of pictures, and was thus a specimen of very early Christian art. From another point of view this manuscript was important, because it illustrated the old Greek connexion between Constantinople and the eastern coast of Italy, which existed down even so late as the last century, when traces of the old Greek rites still existed in the services at Rossano. Another similar manuscript has now turned up on the opposite coast, and has been described by Pierre Batiffol, a member of the French Archæological School at Rome.<sup>1</sup> So long ago as 1881, L. Duchesne, another French scholar of the same school, mentioned its existence, deriving his knowledge from the work of Anthymus, Metropolitan of Berat, published at Corcyra in 1868.<sup>2</sup> Duchesne however knew it only by report. This year Batiffol was despatched by the French Minister of Public Instruction to inspect it. The French government, whether Imperial or Republican, seems animated by a more genuine spirit of learning and research than the British. He found in the library of the Albanian Metropolitan quite a store of ancient MSS., amounting to some twenty in number, partly biblical, partly liturgical, the most valuable of which

<sup>1</sup> *Melanges d'Archéologie et d'histoire publiés par l'Ecole Française de Rome.* 1885.

<sup>2</sup> Berat is a corruption of Belgrade. It must, however, be carefully distinguished from the Servian Belgrade on the Danube. Berat is situated on the little river Argent, which flows into the Adriatic nearly opposite Otranto in Italy. There is a very interesting description of the place in Tozer's *Highlands of Turkey*, vol. i. p. 218, and even of the personal appearance of Anthymus, the Metropolitan. The work above referred to was an ecclesiastical history of his see.

he here describes. It is a fifth or sixth century MS. of the Gospels of SS. Matthew and Mark, written like the Rossano one, in gold on a purple ground. It belonged originally to a monastery in Patmos, whence it passed probably to Asia Minor or Syria, and thence was carried by some chance to its present abode some time about the end of the fourteenth century. The great interest of the manuscript however centres in a note which it bears, stating that it was written by St. John Chrysostom, when he was deacon of the Church at Antioch, which of course cannot be true if critics are right in the date assigned to it, but may indicate its transcription from a text derived from the Antiochene school. This note was written afresh when the book was rebound in the year 1805, but professes to be a copy of a more ancient note to the same effect. The German government published a transcript of the pictures and part of the text of the Rossano MS. soon after its discovery. We hope the French government will not only give scholars the opportunity of studying the conclusions of their agents as can be done in the treatise of M. Batiffol, but also enable them to judge the value of the manuscript for themselves by a similar publication. Gebhardt has reviewed, with his usual learning, Batiffol's account of the *Codex Φ* as it is called, in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* for Dec. 12th.

It is a curious coincidence that just as this Biblical manuscript sees the light, another manuscript comes to us from the very same Greek Monastery of St. John, at Patmos, the original home as it would seem of the *Codex Aureus Φ*. The Acts or Passions of SS. Peter and Paul were originally Catholic documents, dating, in the opinion of Lipsius, the great authority on this subject, from the end of the second century. They were adopted by the Gnostics for their own purposes, and have given rise to various well-known ecclesiastical traditions about St. Peter, as that concerning his crucifixion with his head downwards, and specially to a very interesting and beautiful one, which we tell for the benefit of the reader who may not have met it. It sets forth how St. Peter was fleeing from Rome to avoid the rage of Nero, when he met Christ entering the gate through which he was leaving. Peter said to Him, "Domine, quo vadis?" "Lord, whither goest Thou?" words which every visitor to Rome will remember in connexion with a well-known spot. The Lord replied, "I am entering into Rome

to be crucified a second time." "Lord, is it to be a second time crucified?" said Peter. "Yes, Peter," replied Christ, "I shall be again crucified." Whereupon Christ ascended into heaven, and Peter, recalled to himself, returned to the disciples who had overpersuaded him to fly from Rome. These Acts have long been known in a Latin shape, while the traditions involved in them are found in Ambrose and other early patristic writers. The Greek text has been known to be in MS. at Patmos, but has never been printed. Lipsius has now published it in the new number of the *Jahrbücher für Protestantische Theologie*, being the first part of the volume for 1886. The accounts of both martyrdoms are very interesting, while we can recognise in the text many traces of the Gnostic and heretical legends which became intermingled with them. The Greek text now published by Lipsius is much purer and simpler than the Latin form as published by Tischendorf, and criticised by Dr. Salmon in his *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 436, with which there may be usefully compared his article on Linus in the *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, t. iii. p. 736. Perhaps the greatest interest of all attaching to these discoveries is the possibilities they suggest. Even Mr. Tozer does not seem to have thought of investigating the literary resources of the Cathedral perched on the romantic Albanian rock. How many another treasure may lie hidden amid the recesses of these comparatively unexplored regions!

*Trinity College, Dublin,*  
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P.S.—Professor Harnack has called my attention to the fact that I have misrepresented his views with respect to the Gospel of the Egyptians. In my article on the Fayûm Gospel Fragment, in the August Number of this Magazine, p. 136, I stated that he had changed his views since last year, about the relation of that Apocryphal Gospel to the Canonical St. Matthew. He points out that his views are still exactly the same as they were then. The mistake was mine in quoting his work on the *Teaching of the Twelve* from memory and without verification.

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