

portant bearing on his literary undertakings. He had been employed for years on a work which was to contribute both to the emendation of the text of the Alexandrian version of the Old Testament—which was the translation chiefly used in the church, being regarded by many Christians, who followed the old Jewish legend, as inspired, and of which the different manuscripts varied considerably from each other in their readings,—and also to the improvement of this translation itself, by comparing it with other ancient versions, and with the original Hebrew text. Origen, who was in the constant habit of disputing with Pagans and Jews on religious matters, had found, as he says himself, by his own experience, how necessary was an acquaintance with the original text of the Old Testament, to avoid laying one's-self open to the Jews, who ridiculed the ignorance of those Gentile Christians that disputed with them, when they cited passages from the Alexandrian version which were not to be found in the Hebrew, or when they showed that they knew nothing of passages which were to be found in the Hebrew only. He had therefore employed the wealth of his friend Ambrosius, and availed himself of his own frequent journeys, to collect various manuscripts of the Alexandrian version, and other ancient translations, which it was still possible to procure. Thus he had, for example, in ransacking every corner, found, in a cask at Jericho, an ancient translation, not before known to exist, of some books of the Old Testament. It now fell out, that this Juliana had become heiress to the writings of the Ebionite *Symmachus*, who had lived perhaps in the beginning of this century; and among these writings Origen found both his commentary on the gospel according to the Hebrews, and his version