



HOW, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHY WE GOT OUR BIBLE.

Saluted by the monks and welcomed by the Prior, the entrance of M. Tischendorf for the third time was an event in the peaceful life of the Convent of Ste. Catharine. His patient search was rewarded by the discovery of many valuable fragments, and, thinking he had exhausted the treasures of the Convent, he made arrangements for his departure. On the eve of setting out he was strolling with the steward in the garden. The sun was setting in the western sky. The men were busy talking and chatting, when the steward begged his friend to sup in his cell. Possibly they might not meet again. Their friendship was not an old and tried one, but Tischendorf's courteous nature went in heartily with the invitation. Naturally the conversation turned on the mission of the student, and his enthusiasm warmed the heart of the steward, who, but rarely, had an opportunity of human intercourse. From a dusty corner of the cell he took down a bulky roll wrapped in a red cloth, and laying it on the humble but hospitable table, said with secret pride, "I too have read a Septuagint."

The Septuagint is the name given to the most ancient Greek version of the Old Testament which has come down to us, and was the one commonly in use among the Jews when our Saviour lived among them and taught them. The name is derived from a Greek word which means *seventy*, and the early Church Fathers tell us that 200 or 300 years before Jesus was born, an ancient King employed seventy learned men and asked them to translate for him in seventy days a collection of the laws of all nations, the Jews included. Hence the name *Septuagint*.

When therefore the steward of the Convent of Ste. Catharine laid the red bundle before his guest, and said "I too have read a Septuagint," he meant that he had read, and was placing before his friend, a copy of the same Scriptures which were put into the hands of Jesus himself when he stood up to read in the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke iv. 17). With a holy reverence the document was unrolled, and to his infinite surprise and rapture, Tischendorf saw before him the very fragments which fifteen years ago he had rescued from the flames, some other portions of the Old Testament, and the New Testament complete.

Transported with joy, which he did his best to conceal, and asking carelessly if he might puruse it in his chamber at his leisure, he bade his host good-night, and alone, in the peaceful solitude of the unpretentious part of the Convent which had been allotted to him, he sat, gazing in holy rapture, and gave way to the emotions which filled his breast. He knew that he held in his hand the most precious Biblical treasure in existence, a document whose age and importance exceeded all he had examined in twenty years. In the cold and dimly lighted chamber he immediately began to transcribe.

Next morning found him begging leave to take it to Cairo for careful copying. But the Prior was absent

and no one could give the desired permission. His eagerness was beyond control. He must set out to overtake the Prior. Every mark of respect was shown him. The Russian flag floated from the Convent walls; a parting salute echoed through the hills; and distinguished members of the Order accompanied him across the plains.

Overtaking the Prior at Cairo, a Bedouin was despatched on a camel to bring the M. S. with all speed, and in nine days the precious burden had arrived. In a temperature of 77° in the shade, and amid incredible fatigue and exhaustion, he transcribed 110,000 lines, a large number of which were faded and illegible, and blotted with alterations and corrections.

His official connection with the monastery entitled him to venture the suggestion that the original M. S. be presented to the Emperor of Russia as the Protector of the Greek orthodox faith, a proposal which was favorably entertained. In the Winter Palace at Tsarkeo—Selo, he laid before His Imperial Majesty his collection of M. S. S. in the centre of which the Sinaitic Bible shone like a brilliant gem. At the student's suggestion, an edition worthy of the M. S. and of His Majesty was prepared, and in the course of three years was completed, the greatest undertaking in Biblical Literature which the world had ever seen, a fac-simile copy in four volumes.

In 1862, twenty-three years after he consecrated himself to the work of research, M. Tischendorf once more repaired to St. Petersburg, carrying with him his priceless treasure, and on the celebration of the Millenary Jubilee of the Russian Empire, he presented it to Their Imperial Majesties.

Fac-simile impressions of it have been distributed throughout the Christian world. Through the kindness of the Russian ambassador in London, one of these was presented to the Presbyterian Theological College, Montreal. Medals, decorations, degrees, honours, were showered upon the head of the man, who, amid such hopeless discouragement, had been the privileged means of bringing to light, and bestowing upon the world, the most precious manuscript of the Bible we possess.

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"B" OR NO "B" THAT'S THE QUESTION.

WIDE-AWAKE, APRIL.

I really think my sister May
Is stupider than me;
Because she said the other day
There wasn't any "b"
In honey-comb, and spelt it just
"C—double o-m-e!"
Of course she's wrong. I told her so;
There's got to be a "bee"
Somewhere in honey-comb, because
He makes it, don't you see!

—♦♦♦—

GRANDMAMA'S BEST GAME.

So May climbed on the silken knee,
And Grandmama told her history;
What plays she played, what toys she had,
How at times she was naughty, or good, or sad.
"But the best thing you did," said May, "don't
you see?
Was to grow up a beautiful grandma for me."