

The rolls exhibited to the Academy are evidently copied from two of these smaller MSS., containing the separate sections of the Law; and it is remarkable that the Chinese emissaries of Bishop Smith, at their recent visit to the synagogue, found the very same number of Pentateuch rolls which existed in Father Gozani's time, together with a large number (they do not say exactly how many) of the smaller MSS. As it was thought very desirable to possess some of these MSS., on the chance of their proving to be of great antiquity, and therefore valuable for critical purposes, Bishop Smith sent back his Chinese missionaries, furnished with the means of making purchases, to pay a second visit to the Jewish colony. This expedition was undertaken in July last, and was attended with complete success. They assembled the whole congregation, to the number of 300, in the synagogue, and publicly announced the object of their visit. The bargain was struck, and six of the larger synagogue rolls were purchased for 40 *taels* of silver, or about £130. These are described as written without points, on sheep-skins sewed together, as is usual in this class of MSS.; they contain each a copy of the whole Pentateuch, and are in excellent preservation, except one, which has suffered injury in a flood, and this one is unfortunately that which is supposed to be of the greatest critical value, having been, in all probability, the original from which the others were copied, as Father Gozani has recorded. If so however, and if the story told him of the transcription of the others be true, it is probable that this is the only one which can be of any real value. Forty other smaller MSS. were also procured, but no description of them or of their contents, has been given by the Bishop of Victoria. Some of these MSS., however, he tells us, have been sent to London.

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Major Larcom stated that he had received a letter from Captain Broughton, who is now in Hong Kong, relative to

the very same publication by the Bishop of Victoria, to which Dr. Todd had alluded. It would be seen from the following extract of this letter that Captain Broughton, in that distant land, still remembered the Academy :—

“ *Hong Kong, 29th January, 1852.*

“ I have a pamphlet for you which you may consider a curiosity. You may not have heard of the discovery in China of a sect of Jews, quite in the interior, 700 miles from the coast. They were found at a place called K'ae-fung-foo, last year, by two Chinese missionaries, who brought back with them six Rolls of the Law, each containing a complete copy of the Pentateuch, which are written on thick sheep-skins, sewed together. The account of their journey and discoveries was published. I shall take an early opportunity of sending you one, which, when done with, I beg you will present to the Academy. It will be accompanied with fac-similes of the MSS., copied by the Chinese, who are very expert at such work. They have outlived their language, while they retain to the full extent their exclusive caste and habits. Not a single individual could read the Hebrew books. They had been without a rabbi for fifty years, which may account, in addition to their poverty and destitute state at present, for their having parted with the rolls so easily. By the kindness of the the Bishop here, I have been able to obtain the pamphlet, journey, and fac-similes, and I shall send them to you by the first safe hand.”

The thanks of the Academy were voted to Captain Broughton.

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Sir William R. Hamilton made some remarks on continued Fractions, and on their connexion with Quaternions, but desired to reserve a fuller account of his views for a future meeting of the Academy.