

MARCH 13, 1914.

A GREAT SCHOLAR.

AT the age of eighty-three, the indefatigable and learned Hebraist, Dr. Ginsburg, died last Saturday. No scholar of our time has had so thorough a grip of the Massorah or the variant readings of the Hebrew Bible. His industry was ceaseless. At work in the room set apart for him in the British Museum he was to be found making his way through material that would have been the despair of an ordinary man. He was one of the revisers of the Old Testament and many dictionaries and encyclopædias are indebted to him for valuable articles. He came prominently before the public in connection with the Shapira Manuscript that caused so great a sensation thirty years ago. This purported to be an authentic account of the journeyings of the children of Israel, and was offered to the British Museum for £10,000. A battle raged on its genuineness, and it was reserved for Dr. Ginsburg to pronounce it a clumsy forgery, fabricated by four or five hands. The clue to the discovery was found in the strips of leather on which the text was inscribed. These were cut from the lower margin of disused synagogue rolls and Shapira six years previously had sold similar slips to the Museum. Following up this clue, it was soon seen that the scribes had made the Moabite stone inscription their model, and by a great effort to reproduce the character of the script and the grouping of the words, they had deceived many experts. Dr. Ginsburg was not to be led astray.

He detected fraud and disclosed its character as the work of a Jew of Northern Europe.