

LIGHT ON EARLY EGYPT.

If recent excavations in Egypt have the significance claimed for them, the recorded history of that country extends back for a thousand years before the so-called "ancient empire." Two despatches of great importance have reached this country within the last month. The French Egyptologist, Amelineau, believes he has discovered the head of the worshipped Osiris at Abydos, and Dr. Borchardt, of the Ghizeh Museum, announces that he has found at Negadah the resting place of Menes, the first king of the first dynasty, 5004 B.C. The name of Menes was revered throughout the ancient empire as that of the prince who made the canals of Egypt and who united Upper and Lower Egypt. Until now both Osiris and Menes have been regarded as more mythical than historical. They have been an Egyptain Cadmus and Romulus, but are now likely to be placed on the pages of living history much sooner than the latter more recent heroes.

In the late archaeological researches at Negadah, Abydos and Toukh—all not far below the First Cataract—no one has worked more enthusiastically than Jacques de Morgan, who until the last few months has been Director-General of Antiquities in Egypt. The probable meaning of his discoveries was first explained to a New York audience on the evening of the 10th of February, when Henry de Morgan, of New York City, described his brother's work in a lecture before the Numismatic and Archaeological Society. In 1895, Mr. Flinders Petrie obtained permission from Jacques de Morgan, then Director-General of Antiquities in Egypt, to make excavations at Abydos, and although Mr. Petrie followed the old school of archaeologists in ascribing the ruins to the late empire, the result of his work served only to convince Mr. De Morgan that it belonged to a much earlier date. The tombs themselves are archaic, and the inscriptions are hardly decipherable on account of the difference in language. The implements found there were remarkable for fineness, and made differently from those found in the tombs of the later empire. Last of all, tradition has always ascribed to Abydos great antiquity and peculiar sacredness.

The two great royal tombs at Negadah have been known for a long time, but the European archaeologists had avoided them until eleven months ago, when Jacques de Morgan, accompanied by Professor A. Wiedemann, of the University of Bonn, gave careful study to the place. One tomb had been ransacked by natives, but the other was intact, and became the special object of research. Here were found a quantity of amphoræ, unknown in the later imperial tombs. These amphoræ were sealed and contained grain, grapes, figs, fat and incense, and, while the grain and fruit had crumbled the fat was still oily, and the incense had not lost its resinous attribute. Decorative art had reached a high point. A flock of ducks in a fresco found at Negadah would not look strange in