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CHAS. H. S. DAVIS

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Edited by CHAS. H. S. DAVIS, M. D., Ph. D.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOL. XVII.

<i>Egyptiaca.</i> Joseph Offord	329
Arabia.—Explorations in	210
Archæological Notes . . . 29, 53, 84, 121, 146, 183, 216, 241, 287, 313, 349, 383	
Archæological Reports at the British Association	200
Architecture. A Celebrated Professor and Historian of Ancient	173
Architecture.—Early Christian	378
Babylonian Prayer.—A	50
Babylonia.—The Bible and. Joseph Offord	68
Book of the Dead.—The. George St. Clair	367
Book Reviews 26, 51, 81, 117, 144, 181, 210, 214, 238, 282	
Cairo Museum Catalogue.—The. Joseph Offord	261
Cheops.—The Personality of. W. M. Flinders Petrie	274
Cleopatra.—Something New about	21
Crete.—Miss Harriet Boyd's Exhibit at	43
Egypt. Archæology in	14
Egypt Exploration Fund.—Annual Meeting of	304
Egypt.—Israel in. F. Ll. Griffith	175
Egypt.—Notes from	301
Egyptians in Palestine.—The. Joseph Offord	107
Egyptians and the Zodiacal Light.—The Ancient. Joseph Offord	165
El. Elyon.—Henry Proctor	76
Goshen and the Exodus.—The Sojourn in the. J. C. Prasek	374
Greece.—Prehistoric Archæology in. P. Kabbadias	337
Greek and Roman Egypt.—The Coins of. Joseph Offord	33
Greek Physicians at the Court of the Cæsars.—Two. Joseph Offord	197
Hatshepsu at Thebes.—The Discovery of the Tomb of	40
Hebrew Alphabets.—The. Henry Proctor	133
Herculaneum.—Excavations at	340
High Place.—At a Mount Lebanon Marionete. Mrs. Ghosn el Howie	8
Hittites.—The Writing of the	278
Iron in Egypt.—The Use of	345

CONTENTS.

Jewish Race.—Is there a E. L. Pilcher	65
Knossos.—Dr. Evans on His Work at	266
Medical Authors.—Manuscripts of Mediaeval	38
Oculists' Seals.—Roman. Joseph Offord	229
Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient East. J. V. Prasek	268
Palestine Exploration Fund. Rev. Theo. F. Wright 24, 47, 78, 114, 141, 178, 207, 236, 277, 311, 347, 382	1
Patriarchs.—The Antediluvian. George St. Clair	1
Papyri.—Notes upon Greek and Latin. Joseph Offord	293
Papyri from Magdola in the Fayoun. Joseph Offord	103
Rock Tomb.—A Theban	136
Roman Forum Excavations	252
Roman Forum.—Recent Excavations in the	109
Sayings of Jesus.—New	169
Thebes.—Discovery of the most Ancient Temple at. E. Naville and H. R. Hall	97
Thothmes IV.—The New Chariot of. Joseph Offord	261
Turkestan.—Excavations at Anan in	253
Writing.—The Origin of. Henry Proctor	334

ILLUSTRATIONS.

Coins of Greek and Roman Egypt	Opposite page 33
Hebrew Alphabets	" " 133
Body Portion of the War Chariot of Thothmes IV.	" " 261
Two Heads from Greece and Asia Minor	" " 361

Biblia.

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BIBLIA, now in its 17th year, is the only publication in the United States devoted to Biblical Archaeology. Its object is to give the results of the latest researches in Oriental lands, particularly Egypt, Palestine and Syria.

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Contents for October.

TWO GREEK PHYSICIANS AT THE COURT OF THE CÆSARS,	<i>Joseph Offord, M. S. B. A.</i>
ARCHÆOLOGICAL REPORTS AT THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION	
THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND,	<i>Rev. Theo. F. Wright, Ph. D.</i>
EXPLORATIONS IN ARABIA.	
BOOK REVIEWS — NOLDEKE'S SYRIAC GRAMMAR. HOGARTH'S "THE PENETRATION OF ARABIA."	
ARCHÆOLOGICAL NOTES.	
THE EGYPT EXPLORATION FUND.	
THE PALESTINE EXPLORATION FUND.	

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Discovery of the most Ancient Temple at Thebes.

(By M. EDOUARD NAVILLE AND MR. H. R. HALL.)

The excavations carried on by the Egypt Exploration Fund from 1893 to 1896, following those of Mariette, in the temple of Deir-el-Bahari at Thebes are well known to every winter visitor to Egypt. After four years of excavation, the beautiful temple which was erected by the Queen Hatshepsu or Hatasu of the XVIIIth dynasty (B. C. 1500) was entirely cleared of the chaotic mounds of rubbish and Coptic walls which almost hid it from view. But after the conclusion of the excavations an unexplored space still remained to the south of the temple, and between it and the southern horn of the semicircle of cliffs which rise at the back of Deir-el-Bahari. This space was also covered by confused mounds of rubbish. During the past winter season of 1903-4 the systematic exploration of this untouched tract has been begun by us, working on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Fund, and has already met with a success which promises well for further work on the same site. The

net result of the work of excavation has been the discovery of another temple, side by side with the great building of Hatshepsu; this is the most ancient shrine yet discovered at Thebes, being the funerary temple or mortuary chapel of the King Mentuhetep Neb-kheru-rä, of the XIth dynasty (a.c. 2500). Fragments of architraves, &c., bearing the name of this King had previously been found at Deir-el-Bahari by MM. Mariette, Maspero, and Brugsch Bey, so that it had always been known that an XIth dynasty building had existed hereabouts. Also some fragments of octagonal sandstone columns, lying on the rubbish, had been conjectured to belong to this building, and the present excavations have shown this conjecture to be correct. But the precise position and nature of the building itself were unknown until now.

It is in an unexpectedly good state of preservation, and is, as far as can be seen, the best preserved of the few Egyptian temples which can show any buildings *in situ* which are older than the time of the XVIIth dynasty. The remarkable pyramid-temple at Abûsir, near Cairo, excavated by Dr. Borchardt for the German Oriental Society, is older, dating from the Vth dynasty, but is not so well preserved. Further, the newly-found temple has already yielded results of great importance to our knowledge of Egyptian art and architecture. A large number of the sculptured slabs which once adorned the walls of its pillared hall, some in good preservation, others fragmentary, have been found among the ruins. These originally depicted the coronation of the King in whose honor it was built, his reception of the magnates and chief warriors of his Court and of tribute bearers, his servants driving the cattle belonging to the domain of his temple and cutting down reeds to build boats with, the procession of funeral boats on the Nile—all scenes appropriate to the ante-chamber of a Royal tomb at that period. These reliefs vary in artistic quality; some are of the rough style which has usually been supposed typical of the work of the XIth dynasty, but others are of very good work, equal to the best XIIth dynasty, delicate in touch and at the same time bold and free in style. It cannot be