

CLEOPATRA.

Being an Account of the Fall and Vengeance of Harmachis, the Royal Egyptian.

AS SET FORTH BY HIS OWN HAND.

By H. RIDER HAGGARD, Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "She," "Allan Quatermain," Etc., Etc., Etc.

Illustrated by NICHOLL after CATON WOODVILLE and OBERPENNHAAGEN.

INTRODUCTION.

IN THE recesses of the desolate Libyan Mountains that lie behind the temple and city of Abydos, supposed burying-place of the Holy Osiris, a tomb was recently discovered among the contents of which were the papyrus rolls on which this history is written. The tomb itself is spacious, but otherwise remarkable only for the depth of the shaft, which descends vertically from the rock-hewn cave, that once served as a mortuary chapel to the friends and relatives of the departed, to the coffin chamber beneath. This shaft is no less than eighty-nine feet in depth. The chamber at its foot was found to contain three coffins only, though it is large enough for many more. Two of these, which in all probability inclosed the bodies of the high priest, Amenemhat, and of his wife, father and mother of Harmachis, the hero of this history, the shameless Arabs who discovered them there and then broke up.

The Arabs broke the bodies up. With unhallored hands they tore the Holy Amenemhat, and the frame of her who had, as it is written, been filled with the spirit of the Hathors—tore them limb from limb, searching for treasure amid their bones—perhaps, as is their custom, selling the very bones for a few piastres to the last ignorant tourist who came their way, seeking what he might destroy. For in Egypt the unhappy, the living find their bread in the tombs of the great men who were before them.

But, as it chanced some little while afterwards, one who is known to this writer, and a doctor by profession, passed up the Nile to Abydos, and became acquainted with the men who had done this thing. They revealed to him the secret of the place, telling him that one coffin yet remained entombed. It seemed to be the coffin of a poor person, they said, and therefore, being pressed for time, they had left it unviolated. Moved by curiosity to explore the recesses of a tomb as yet unprofaned by tourists, my friend and I went to reveal its secret to him. What ensued I will give in his own words, exactly as he wrote it to me.

I slept that night near the Temple of Seti, and started before daybreak on the following morning. With me were a cross-eyed rascal called Ali—Ali Baba I named him—the man from whom I got the ring which I am sending you, and a small but choice assortment of his fellow-thieves. Within an hour after sunrise we reached the valley where the tomb is. It is a desolate place, into which the sun pours his scorching heat all the long day through, till the huge brown boulders which are strewn about become so hot that one can scarcely bear to touch them, and the sand scorches the feet. We rode on donkeys, for it was already too hot to walk some way up the valley—where a vulture floating far in the blue overhead was the only other visitor—till we came to an enormous bowlder polished by centuries of the action of sun and sand. Here Ali halted, saying the tomb was under the stone. Accordingly we dismounted, and leaving the donkeys in charge of a fellow-boy, went up to the rock. Beneath it was a small hole, barely large enough for a man to creep through; it had been dug by jackals, for the doorway and some part of the cave were entirely silted up, and it was by means of this jackal hole that the tomb had been discovered. All crept in on his hands and knees, and I followed to find myself in a place cold after the hot outside air, and, in contrast with the light, filled with a dazzling darkness. We lit our candles, and the select body of thieves having arrived, I made an examination. We were in a cave the size of a large room and hollowed by hand, the further part of the cave being almost free from drift dust. On the walls are religious paintings of the usual Ptolemaic character, and among them one of a majestic old man with a long white beard, who is seated in a carved chair holding a wand in his hand. Before him is passing a procession of priests bearing sacred in-

struments should have been dashed to pieces. Also, the bats continually flew into my face and clung to my hair, and I have a great dislike of bats. At last, after some minutes of jerking and dangling, I found myself standing in a narrow passage by the side of the worthy Ali covered with bats and perspiration, and with the skin rubbed off my knees and knuckles. Then another man came down, hand over hand, like a sailor, and, as the rest were told to stop above, we were ready to go on. All went first with his candle—of course we each had a candle leading the way down a long passage about five feet high. At length the passage widened out, and we were in the tomb chamber, I think the hottest and most silent place I ever entered. It was simply stifling. This tomb chamber is a square, cut out in the rock and totally devoid of paintings or sculpture. I held up the candles and looked around. About the place were strewn the coffin lids and the mummified remains of the two bodies that the Arabs had previously violated. The paintings on the former were, I noticed, of great beauty, though, having no knowledge of hieroglyphics, I could not decipher them. Beads and spiky wrappings lay around the remains, which, I saw, were those of a man and a woman. The head had been broken off the body of the man. I took it up and looked at it. It had been closely shaved after death, I should say, from the general indications—and the features were disfigured with gold leaf. But, notwithstanding this, and the shrinkage of the flesh, I think the face was one of the most imposing and beautiful that I ever saw. It was that of a very old man, and his dead countenance still wore so calm and solemn, indeed sorrowful a look, that I knew quite superstitious (though, as you know, I am pretty well accustomed to dead people), and put the head down in a hurry. There were still some wrappings left upon the face of the second body, and I did not remove them; but she must have been a fine, large woman in her day.

"There is the other mummy," said Ali, pointing to a large and solid case that had been broken up. I went up to it to examine it. It was well made, but I perfectly plain cedar wood—not an inscription, not a solitary god on it. "Never see one like him before," said Ali. "Bury great hurry, he no 'mafsh,' no 'fineesh.' Throw him down there on side." I looked at the plain case till at last my interest was thoroughly aroused. I had been so shocked by the sight of the scattered dust of the departed that I had made up my mind not to touch the remaining coffin—but now my curiosity overcame me, and we set to work.

All had brought a mallet and a cold chisel with him, and having set the coffin straight he began upon it with all the zeal of an experienced tomb-breaker. And then he pointed out another thing. Most mummy cases are fastened by four little tongues of wood, two on either side, which are fixed in the upper half, and passing into mortises cut to receive them in the thickness of the lower half, are there held fast by pegs of hard wood. But this mummy case had eight such tongues. Evidently it had been thought well to secure it firmly. At last, with great difficulty, we raised the massive lid, which was nearly three inches thick, and there, covered over with a deep layer of loose spices (a very unusual thing), was the body.

All looked at it with open eyes—and no wonder. For this mummy was not another mummy. Mummies in general lie upon their backs, as stiff and calm as though they were cut from wood; but this mummy lay upon its side, and the wrappings notwithstanding, its knees were slightly bent. More than that, indeed, the gold mask, which, after the fashion of the Ptolemaic period, had been set upon the face, had worked down, and was literally pounded up beneath the hooded head.

It was impossible, seeing these things, to avoid the conclusion that the mummy before us had moved with violence since it was put in the coffin.

"Him very funny mummy. Him not 'mafsh' when him go in there," said Ali. "Nonsense!" I said. "Who ever heard of a live mummy?"

We lifted the body out of the coffin, nearly choking ourselves with mummy dust in the process, and there beneath it, half hidden among the spices, we made our first find. It was a roll of papyrus, carefully fastened and wrapped in a mummy's cloth, having, to all appearance, been thrown into the coffin at the moment of closing.

All eyed the papyrus greedily, but I seized it and put it in my pocket, for it was agreed that I was to have all that might be discovered. Then we began to unwrap the body. It was covered with very broad, strong bandages, thickly wound and roughly tied, sometimes by means of simple knots, the whole work bearing the appearance of having been executed in great haste and with difficulty. Just over the head was a large lump. Presently the bandages covering it were off, and there, on the face, lay a second roll of papyrus. I put down my hand to lift it, but it would not come away. It appeared to be fixed to the stout, seamless shroud which was drawn over the whole body and tied beneath the feet, as a farmer ties sacks. This shroud, which was also thickly waxed, was in one piece, being made of a kind of linen like a garment. I took a candle and examined the roll, and then I saw why it was fast. The spices had congealed and glued it to the sack-like shroud. It was impossible to get it away without tearing the outer sheets of papyrus.

At last, however, I wrenched it loose and put it with the other in my pocket. Then in silence we went on with our dreadful task. With much care we ripped loose the sack-like garment, and at last the body of a man lay before us. Between his knees was a third roll of papyrus. I saw it, and then held down the lights and looked at him. Being a doctor, one glance at his face was enough to tell me how he had died.

I will only say that I hope I shall never see such another look as that which was frozen on this dead man's face. Even the Arabs recoiled from it in horror and began to mutter prayers.

For the rest, the usual opening on the left side, through which the embalmers did their work, was absent; the fingers at least were those of a person of middle age, although the hair was already gray, and the frame that of a powerful man, the shoulders being of an extraordinary width. I had not time to examine very closely, however, for within a few seconds from its uncovering the unembalmed body, now that it was exposed to the action of the air, began to crumble. In five or six minutes there was literally nothing left of it but a wisp of hair, the skull, and a few of the larger bones. I noticed that one of the tibiae, I forgot it was the right or the left, had been fractured and very badly set. It must have been quite an inch shorter than the other.

Well, there was nothing more to find, and now that the excitement was over, what between the heat, the exertion and the smell of mummy dust and spices, I felt more dead than alive.

I am tired of writing, and the ship rolls. This letter, of course, goes overland, and I am coming by "long sea," but I hope to be in London within ten days after you get it. Then I will tell you of my pleasing experiences in the course of the ascent from the tomb chamber, and of how that prince of rascals, Ali Baba, and his thieves tried to frighten me into handing over the pappri, and how I worked them. Then, too, we will get the rolls deciphered. I expect that they only contain the usual thing, copies of the Book of the Dead, but there may be something clear for me here—six months, at the very least! And in that joyful prospect he fairly lost control of himself, and skipped about the room, shaking hands with us at intervals, and saying: "I'll translate—I'll translate it if it kills me, and we will publish it; and, by the living Osiris, it will drive every Egyptologist in Europe mad with envy! Oh, what a find! what a most glorious find!"

And O you whose eyes shall fall upon these pages, they have been printed, and here they lie before you—an undiscovered land wherein you are free to travel!

Harmachis speaks to you from his forgotten tomb. The walls of Time fall down, and as at the lightning's leap a picture from the past starts suddenly upon your view, framed in the gathered darkness of the ages.

He shows you those two Egypts that the silent pyramids looked down upon long centuries ago—the Egypt of the Greek, the Roman, and the Ptolemy, and that other outworn Egypt of the hierophant, hoary with years, heavy with the legends of antiquity and the memory of long-lost honors.

He tells you how the smoldering loyalty of Khem (Egypt) burnt up before it died, and how fiercely the old Time-consecrated Faith struggled against the conquering tide of Change, that drawn ever by the mystery of Mind, rose like the Nile at flood, and drowned the ancient gods of Egypt.

Here, in his pages, you shall learn the glory of Isis the Many-shaped, the Executor of Decrees. Here you shall make acquaintance with the shade of Cleopatra, that "Thing of Flame" whose passion-breathing beauty shaped the destiny of empires. Here you shall read how the soul of Charmion was slain of the sword her vengeance smiteth.

Here Harmachis, the doomed Egyptian, being about to die, salutes you who follow on the path he trod. In the story of his broken years he shows to you what may in its own degree be the story of your own. Crying aloud from that dim stoning time, in the history of his fall, he tells the fate of him who, however sorely tried, forgets his God, his honor, and his country.

CHAPTER I. OF THE BIRTH OF HARMACHIS; OF THE PROPHECY OF THE HIGH PRIEST AMENEMHAT; AND OF THE SLAYING OF THE INNOCENT CHILD.

Y OSIRIS who sleeps at Abydos, I write the truth. I, Harmachis, hereditary priest of the Temple, reared by the divine Sethi, afterwards a Pharaoh of Egypt, and now justified in Osiris, and ruling in Amenti, I, Harmachis, by right divine and by true descent of blood King of the Double Crown and Pharaoh of the Upper and Lower Land, I, Harmachis, who cast aside the opening flower of our hope, who turned him from the glorious path, who forgot the voice of God in hearkening to the voice of woman, I, Harmachis, the fallen, in whom are gathered up all woes as waters are gathered in a desert well, who have tasted of every shame, why by betrayal have betrayed, who, in losing the glory that is here, have lost of the glory that is there, who am utterly undone—I write, and by Him who sleeps at Abydos, I write the truth.

O Egypt! Egypt! dear land of Khem, whose black soil nourished up my mortal part—land that I have betrayed—O ye Gods!—Osiris!—Isis!—Horus!—ye Gods of Egypt whom I have betrayed!—O ye temples whose pylons strike the sky; ye temples whose faith I have betrayed! O Royal blood of the Pharaohs of Eld, that yet runs within these withered veins—whose virtue I have betrayed!—O Right divine of Kings betrayed by me!—O Invisible Essence of all Gods; and O Fate, whose balance rested on my hand—bear me witness, to the last day of utter doom, bear me witness that I write the truth.

What, then, is a man? He is a feather, but a feather blown by the wind. He is a fire, but a fire born of the fuel. He is a spirit, but a spirit having wings wherewith to sail to either destiny. He may choose the good, and on him doth rest the evil that he does. He is the helm unto the boat of Fate; he is the shadow that goes before the sword; he is the dream that presages the truth. There is no Chance; for man in his hour doth direct the Chance, and, as with a stylus, doth map upon the tablet of the world the thing that he brought about. So hath the Invisible decreed, and so for

ever to ever shall it be. And woe to him who faileth!

Even as I write, beyond the fertile fields, the Nile is running red as though with blood. Bright before me heats the light upon the far Arabian hills, and bright it falls upon the plies of Abouthis. At Abouthis, within the temples, still do the priests make orison, but as they know no more; still the sacrifice is offered, and the stony roofs echo down the prayers of those who pray. Still from here, from this lone cell within my prison tower, I, the Word of Shame, watch thy flattering banners, O Abouthis, flouting from thy pylon walls and hear the chants as the long procession winds from sanctuary to sanctuary.

O Abouthis, lost Abouthis! my heart goes out toward thee! For the day comes when the desert sands shall fill thy holy places! Thy gods are doomed, O Abouthis! New faiths shall make a mock of all thy holies, and centurion shall call unto centurion across thy fortress walls. I weep—I weep tears of blood; for mine is the weakness that brought about these evils and mine forever is their shame.

Behold it is written hereafter:

Here in Abouthis was I born, I, Harmachis, and my father, the justified in Osiris, was High Priest of the Temple of Sethi. And on that same day of my birth was born also Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt. In those fields I passed my youth watching the baser people at their labors, and going in and out at will among the great courts of the temples. Of my mother I knew naught, for she died when I yet hung at the breast. But ere she died, she told me of my father, the High Priest Amenemhat, who ever had been a man of pure gold and had it on his brow. And those who saw her did not narrate this little adventure in Egypt, or I should have had the Boulae Museum people on my track. Good-bye—"Madish Fineesh," as Ali Baba always said.

In due course my friend, the writer of the letter from which I have quoted, arrived in London, and on the very next day we paid a visit to an acquaintance well versed in hieroglyphics and demotic writing. With him we went to see the mummy, and my dampening and unfolding one of the rolls, and peering through his gold-rimmed glasses at the mysterious characters may well be imagined.

"Hum!" he said, "whatever it is, this is not a copy of the 'Book of the Dead.' By George, what's this? Cleo—Cleo—Cleopatra! Why, my dear sirs, as I am a living man, this is the history of somebody who lived in the days of Cleopatra! Well, there's six months' work before me here—six months, at the very least! And in that joyful prospect he fairly lost control of himself, and skipped about the room, shaking hands with us at intervals, and saying: 'I'll translate—I'll translate it if it kills me, and we will publish it; and, by the living Osiris, it will drive every Egyptologist in Europe mad with envy! Oh, what a find! what a most glorious find!'"

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CHAPTER II. OF THE DISOBEDIENCE OF HARMACHIS; OF THE SLAYING OF THE LION; AND OF THE SPEECH OF THE OLD WIFE, ATOUNA.

AND after these things Ptolemy the Piper troubled us no more, nor did he again send his soldiers to seek for him of whom it was prophesied that he should be Pharaoh. For the head of the child, my foster-brother, was brought to him by the eunuch as he sat in his palace of marble at Alexandria, flushed with Cyprus wine, and played upon the flute before his women. And at his bidding the eunuch lifted up the head by the hair for him to look on. Then he laughed and smote it on the cheek with his sandal, and bade one of the girls crown Pharaoh with flowers. And he bowed the knee, and mocked the head of the innocent child. But the girl, who was sharp of tongue—for all of this I heard in after years—said to him "that he did well to bow the knee, for this child was indeed Pharaoh, the greatest of Pharaohs, and his name was the Osiris and his throne was Death."

At this saying Auletes was much troubled, and shook and trembled, for, being a wicked man, he greatly feared the entering into Amenti. He caused the girl to be slain, because of the evil omen of her saying, crying that he would send her to worship that Pharaoh whom she had named. And the other women he sent away, and played no more upon the flute till he was once again drunk on the morrow. But the Alexandrians made a song thereon, which is still sung about the streets. And this is the beginning thereof:

Ptolemy the Piper played Over dead and dying; Piped and played he well, Sure that not the innocent child Of the dank red sighing O'er the streams of hell. There beneath the shadows gray, With the sisters three, Shall he pipe for many a day, May the Frog his butter be! And his wine the water of that constriction, Ptolemy the Piper!

After this the years passed on, nor did I bring very little, know any thing of the great things that came to pass in Egypt; nor is it my purpose here to set them out. For I, Harmachis, will speak only of those things with which I have been concerned.

And as the time went on my father and the teachers instructed me in the ancient learning of our people and in such matters appertaining to the gods as it is meet that children should know. So I grew strong and comely, for my hair was black as the hair of the divine Nout, and my eyes were blue as the blue lotus, and my skin was as the alabaster within the sanctuaries. For now that these glories have passed from me I may speak of them without shame. Strong I was also. There was no youth of my years in Abouthis who could stand against me to wrestle with me, nor could any throw so far with the sling or spear. And much I learned to hunt the lion; but he whom I called my father forbade me to hunt, telling me that my life was of too great worth to be so lightly hazarded. But when I bowed myself before him and prayed he would make his meaning clear to me, the old man frowned and answered that the gods made all things clear in their own season. For my part, however, I went away wroth, for there was a youth in Abouthis who with others had slain a lion that fell upon his father's herds, and being envious of my strength and beauty, he set it about that I was cowardly at heart; in that when I went out to hunt I was when I had reached my seven-and-twentieth year and was a man grown.

It chanced, therefore, that as I went sore at heart from the presence of the High Priest, my father, I met this youth, who called to me and mocked me, bidding me know the country people had told him that a great lion was down among the rushes by the banks of the canal which runs past the Temple, lying at a distance of thirty stadia from Abouthis. And, still mocking me, he asked me if I would go and slay him; and I, who would go and sit among the old women and bid them comb my side lock. This bitter word so angered me that I was near to falling on him; but in place thereof, forgetting my father's saying, I answered that if he would come along I would go with him and seek this lion, and he should learn if I were indeed a coward. And at first he would not, for, as men know, it is our custom to hunt the lion in companies; so it was my hour to mock. Thereon he went and fetched his bow and arrows and a sharp knife. And I brought forth my heavy spear, which had a shaft of thorn-wood, and at the end thereof a pomegranate in silver, to hold the hand from slipping; and together, in silence, we went side by side to where the lion lay. When we came to the place it was near sundown, and there, upon the mud of the canal bank, we found the lion's slot, which ran into a thick clump of reeds.

"Now, thou boaster," I said, "thou lead the way into yonder reeds, or shall I?" And I made as though I would lead the way. "Nay, nay," he answered, "be not so mad! The brute will spring upon thee and read thee. See! I will shoot among the reeds! Perchance, if he sleeps, it will arouse him!" And he drew his bow at a venture.

And how it chanced I know not, but the arrow struck the sleeping lion, and, like a flash of light from the belly of a cloud, he bounded from the shelter of the reeds, and stood before us with bristling mane and yellow eyes, the arrow quivering in his flank. He roared aloud in fury, and the earth shook.

"Shoot with the bow," I cried, "shoot swiftly ere he springs!"

But the courage had left the breast of the boaster. His jaw dropped down and his fingers unlocked their hold so that the bow fell from them. Then with a loud cry he turned and fled behind me, leaving the lion in my path. But while I stood waiting my doom—for though I was sore afraid I would not fly—the lion crossed himself, and turning not aside, with one great bound swept over me, touching me not. He lit, and again he bounded full on the boaster's back, striking him such a blow with his great paw that his head was crushed as an egg thrown against a stone. He fell down dead, and the lion stood and roared over him. Then I was mad with horror, and, scarce knowing what I did, I grasped my spear, and with a shout I charged. As I charged the lion lifted himself up on his hinder legs to greet me, so that his head stood up above me. He smote at me with his paw, but with all my strength I drove the broad spear into his throat, and, shrinking from the agony of the steel, his blow fell short and did no more than rip the skin. Back he fell, the great spear far in his throat. Then rising he roared in pain and leapt twice the height of a man straight into the air, smiting at the spear with his fore paws. Twice he leaped thus, horrible to see, and twice he fell upon his back. Then his strength spent itself with his rushing blood, and, groaning like a bull, he died; and I, being but a lad, stood and trembled with fear, now that all cause of fear had passed.

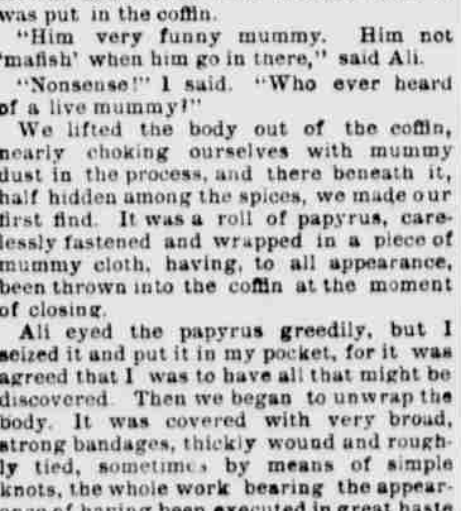
—St. Joseph's academy, at Greensburg, Pa., has adopted the phonograph in teaching elocution. It magnifies defects of enunciation, and at a recent test a pupil honestly tried to repudiate as not his own a speech it had recorded. He could not believe he was so faulty.

—The number of converts in the Japanese mission of the American board has increased in fifteen months from 4,225 to 7,998, a gain of 2,867. This is the most remarkable record of any mission connected with the board, with the exception of the great gathering in the Sandwich Islands.

—It is calculated to make the British feel small as a nation when they read that a special commissioner sent over from Japan to report upon the condition of Great Britain under Christianity has made a feature in his report of the amount of drunkenness he saw, and recommends the Japanese not to adopt the British religion.



I WAS LOWERED BODILY.



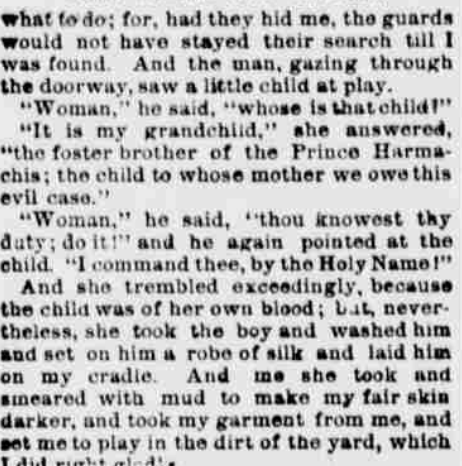
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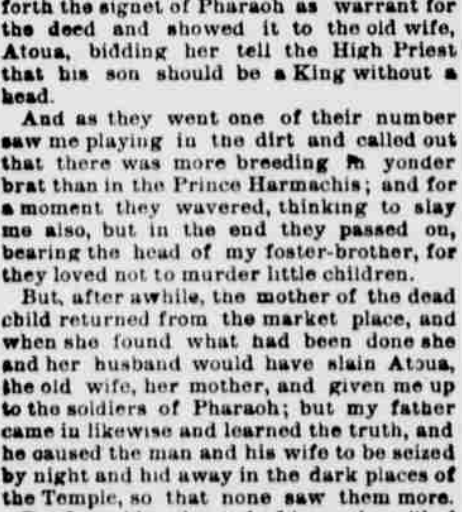
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