

Dedication

My dear Mother,

I have for a long while hoped to be allowed to dedicate some book of mine to you, and now I bring you this work, because whatever its shortcomings, and whatever judgment may be passed upon it by yourself and others, it is yet the one I should wish you to accept.

I trust that you will receive from my romance of "Cleopatra" some such pleasure as lightened the labour of its building up; and that it may convey to your mind a picture, however imperfect, of the old and mysterious Egypt in whose lost glories you are so deeply interested.

Your affectionate and dutiful Son, H. Rider Haggard.

January 21, 1889.

Author's Note

The history of the ruin of Antony and Cleopatra must have struck many students of the records of their age as one of the most inexplicable of tragic tales. What malign influence and secret hates were at work, continually sapping their prosperity and blinding their judgment? Why did Cleopatra fly at Actium, and why did Antony follow her, leaving his fleet and army to destruction? An attempt is made in this romance to suggest a possible answer to these and some other questions.

The reader is asked to bear in mind, however, that the story is told, not from the modern point of view, but as from the broken heart and with the lips of an Egyptian patriot of royal blood; no mere beast-worshipper, but a priest instructed in the inmost mysteries, who believed firmly in the personal existence of the gods of Khem, in the possibility of communion with them, and in the certainty of immortal life with its rewards and punishments; to whom also the bewildering and often gross symbolism of the Osirian Faith was nothing but a veil woven to obscure secrets of the Sanctuary. Whatever proportion of truth there may have been in their spiritual claims and imaginings, if indeed there was any, such men as the Prince Harmachis have been told of in the annals of every great religion, and, as is shown by the testimony of monumental and sacred inscriptions, they were not unknown among the worshippers of the Egyptian Gods, and more especially of Isis.

Unfortunately it is scarcely possible to write a book of this nature and period without introducing a certain amount of illustrative matter, for by no other means can the long dead past be made to live again before the reader's eyes with all its accessories of faded pomp and forgotten mystery. To such students as seek a story only, and are not interested in the faith, ceremonies, or customs of the Mother of Religion and Civilisation, ancient Egypt, it is, however, respectfully suggested that they should exercise the art of skipping, and open this tale at its Second Book.

That version of the death of Cleopatra has been preferred which attributes her end to poison. According to Plutarch its actual manner is very uncertain, though popular rumour ascribed it to the bite of an asp. She seems, however, to have carried out her design under the advice of that shadowy personage, her physician, Olympus, and it is more than doubtful if he would have resorted to such a fantastic and uncertain method of destroying life.

It may be mentioned that so late as the reign of Ptolemy Epiphanes, pretenders of native blood, one of whom was named Harmachis, are

known to have advanced their claims to the throne of Egypt. Moreover, there was a book of prophecy current among the priesthood which declared that after the nations of the Greeks the God Harsefi would create the "chief who is to come." It will therefore be seen that, although it lacks historical confirmation, the story of the great plot formed to stamp out the dynasty of the Macedonian Lagidae and place Harmachis on the throne is not in itself improbable. Indeed, it is possible that many such plots were entered into by Egyptian patriots during the long ages of their country's bondage. But ancient history tells us little of the abortive struggles of a fallen race.

The Chant of Isis and the Song of Cleopatra, which appear in these pages, are done into verse from the writer's prose by Mr. Andrew Lang, and the dirge sung by Charmion is translated by the same hand from the Greek of the Syrian Meleager.

Introduction

In the recesses of the desolate Libyan mountains that lie behind the temple and city of Abydus, the supposed burying place of the holy Osiris, a tomb was recently discovered, among the contents of which were the papyrus rolls whereupon 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 the mortuary chapel for 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 unhallowed 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 amidst 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 Abydus, 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 bribed the Arabs to show it 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 named 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 rocks which are strewn about become so hot that one can scarcely bear to touch them, and the sand scorches the feet. It was already too hot to walk, so we rode on donkeys,

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 boulder polished by centuries of action of sun and sand. Here Ali halted, saying that the tomb was under the stone. Accordingly, we dismounted, and, leaving the donkeys in charge of a fellah boy, went up to the rock. Beneath it was a small hole, barely large enough for a man to creep through. Indeed 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. Ali 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.¹ Before him passes a procession of priests bearing sacred images. In the right hand corner of the tomb is the shaft of the mummy-pit, a square-mouthed well cut in the black rock. We had brought a beam of thorn-wood, and this was now laid across the pit and a rope made fast to it. Then Ali—who, to do him justice, is a courageous thief—took hold of the rope, and, putting some candles into the breast of his robe, placed his bare feet against the smooth sides of the well and began to descent with great rapidity. Very soon he had vanished into blackness, and the agitation of the cord alone told us that anything was going on below. At last the rope ceased shaking and a faint shout came rumbling up the well, announcing Ali's safe arrival. Then, far below, a tiny star of light appeared. He had lit the candle, thereby disturbing hundreds of bats that flitted up in an endless stream and as silently as spirits. The rope was hauled up again, and now it was my turn; but, as I declined to trust my neck to the hand-over-hand method of descent, the end of the cord was made fast round my middle and I was lowered bodily into those sacred depths. Nor was it a pleasant journey, for, if the masters of the situation above had made any mistake, I 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

1. This, I take it, is a portrait of Amenemhat himself.—Editor.

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. Ali 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 that I ever entered. It was simply stifling. This chamber is a square room cut in the rock and totally devoid of paintings or sculpture. I held up the candles and looked round. About the place were strewn the coffin lids and the mummied 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 spicy wrappings lay around the remains, which, I saw, were those of a man and a woman.² 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, so awful a look, that I grew 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 the other mummy,' said Ali, pointing to a large and solid case that seemed to have been carelessly thrown down in a corner, for it was lying on its side.

"I went up to it and carefully examined it. It was well made, but of 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 "mafish," no "fineesh." Throw him down here on side.'

"I looked at the plain case till at last my interest was thoroughly aroused. I was 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.

"Ali 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 mortices cut to

2. Doubtless Amenemhat and his wife.—Editor.

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.

"Ali looked at it with open eyes—and no wonder. For this mummy was not as other mummies are. 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 "mafish" 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, carelessly fastened and wrapped in a piece of mummy cloth, having to all appearance been thrown into the coffin at the moment of closing.³

"Ali 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 working 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 to fit the form like a garment. I took a candle and examined the roll and then I saw why it was fast. The spices had congealed and

3. This roll contained the third unfinished book of the history. The other two rolls were neatly fastened in the usual fashion. All three are written by one hand in the Demotic character.—Editor.

glued it to the sack-like shroud. It was impossible to get it away without tearing the outer sheets of papyrus.⁴

"At last, however, I wrenched it loose and put it with the other in my pocket.

"Then we went on with our dreadful task in silence. 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 secured it, then held down the light and looked at him. One glance at his face was enough to tell a doctor how he had died.

"This body was not much dried up. Evidently it had not passed the allotted seventy days in natron, and therefore the expression and likeness were better preserved than is usual. Without entering into particulars, 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 finely-cut features were those of a person of middle age, although the hair was already grey, and the frame was that of a very 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 began to crumble now that it was exposed to the action of the air. 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 forget if 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 this 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 papyri, and how I worsted 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 else in them. Needless to say, I did not narrate this little adventure in Egypt, or I

4. This accounts for the gaps in the last sheets of the second roll. —Editor.

should have had the Boulac Museum people on my track. Good-bye, 'Mafish 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 a learned acquaintance well versed in Hieroglyphics and Demotic writing. The anxiety with which we watched him skilfully damping 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? Cle—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, *the* Cleopatra, for here's Antony's name with hers! 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 shall drive every Egyptologist in Europe mad with envy! Oh, what a find! what a most glorious find!"

And O you whose eyes fall upon these pages, see, they have been translated, and 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 upon your view, framed in the darkness of the ages.

He shows you those two Egypts which 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 honours.

He tells you how the smouldering loyalty of the land of Khem blazed up before it died, and how fiercely the old Time-consecrated Faith struggled against the conquering tide of Change that rose, like 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 Executrix 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 smithied.

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 degree be the story of your own. Crying aloud from that dim Amenti⁵ where to-day he wears out his long atoning time, he tells, in the history of his fall, the fate of him who, however sorely tried, forgets his God, his Honour, and his Country.

5. The Egyptian Hades or Purgatory.—Editor.

Part 1
The Preparation of Harmachis

Chapter 1

Of the Birth of Harmachis; The Prophecy of the Hathors; And the Slaying of the Innocent Child

By Osiris who sleeps at Abouthis, I write the truth.

I, Harmachis, Hereditary Priest of the Temple, reared by the divine Sethi, aforetime 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 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, who through betrayal have betrayed, who in losing the glory that is here have lost the glory which is to be, who am utterly undone—I write, and, by Him who sleeps at Abouthis, I write the truth.

O Egypt!—dear land of Khem, whose black soil nourished up my mortal part—land that I have betrayed—O Osiris!—Isis!—Horus!—ye Gods of Egypt whom I have betrayed!—O ye temples whose pylons strike the sky, 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 Invisible Essence of all Good! and O Fate, whose balance rested on my hand—hear me; and, to the day of utter doom, bear me witness that I write the truth.

Even while I write, beyond the fertile fields, the Nile is running red, as though with blood. Before me the sunlight beats upon the far Arabian hills, and falls upon the piles of Abouthis. Still the priests make orison within the temples at Abouthis that know me no more; still the sacrifice is offered, and the stony roofs echo back the people's prayers. Still from this lone cell within my prison-tower, I, the Word of Shame, watch thy

fluttering banners, Abouthis, flaunting from thy pylon walls, and hear the chants as the long procession winds from sanctuary to sanctuary.

Abouthis, lost Abouthis! my heart goes out toward thee! For the day comes when the desert sands shall fill thy secret places! Thy Gods are doomed, O Abouthis! New Faiths shall make a mock of all thy Holies, and Centurion shall call upon Centurion across thy fortress-walls. I weep—I weep tears of blood: for mine is the sin that brought about these evils and mine for ever is their shame.

Behold, it is written hereafter.

Here in Abouthis I was 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 Cleopatra, the Queen of Egypt, was born also. I passed my youth in yonder fields watching the baser people at their labours 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 before she died in the reign of Ptolemy Aulêtes, who is named the Piper, so did the old wife, Atoua, told me, my mother took a golden uræus, the snake symbol of our Royalty of Egypt, from a coffer of ivory and laid it on my brow. And those who saw her do this believed that she was distraught of the Divinity, and in her madness foreshadowed that the day of the Macedonian Lagidæ was ended, and that Egypt's sceptre should pass again to the hand of Egypt's true and Royal race. But when my father, the old High Priest Amenemhat, whose only child I was, she who was his wife before my mother having been, for what crime I know not, cursed with barrenness by Sekhet: I say when my father came in and saw what the dying woman had done, he lifted up his hands towards the vault of heaven and adored the Invisible, because of the sign that had been sent. And as he adored, the Hathors ⁶ filled my dying mother with the Spirit of Prophecy, and she rose in strength from the couch and prostrated herself thrice before the cradle where I lay asleep, the Royal asp upon my brow, crying aloud:

"Hail to thee, fruit of my womb! Hail to thee, Royal child! Hail to thee, Pharaoh that shalt be! Hail to thee, God that shalt purge the land, Divine seed of Nekt-nebf, the descended from Isis. Keep thee pure, and thou shalt rule and deliver Egypt and not be broken. But if thou dost fail in thy hour of trial, then may the curse of all the Gods of Egypt rest upon thee, and the curse of thy Royal forefathers, the justified, who ruled the land before thee from the age of Horus. Then in life mayst thou be

6. The Egyptian *Parcæ* or *Fates*.—Editor.

wretched, and after death may Osiris refuse thee, and the judges of Amenti give judgment against thee, and Set and Sekhet torment thee, till such time as thy sin is purged, and the Gods of Egypt, called by strange names, are once more worshipped in the Temples of Egypt, and the staff of the Oppressor is broken, and the footsteps of the Foreigner are swept clean, and the thing is accomplished as thou in thy weakness shalt cause it to be done."

When she had spoken thus, the Spirit of Prophecy went out of her, and she fell dead across the cradle where I slept, so that I awoke with a cry.

But my father, Amenemhat, the High Priest, trembled, and was very fearful, both because of the words which had been said by the Spirit of the Hathors through the mouth of my mother, and because what had been uttered was treason against Ptolemy. For he knew that, if the matter should come to the ears of Ptolemy, Pharaoh would send his guards to destroy the life of the child concerning whom such things were prophesied. Therefore, my father shut the doors, and caused all those who stood by to swear upon the holy symbol of his office, and by the name of the Divine Three, and by the Soul of her who lay dead upon the stones beside them, that nothing of what they had seen and heard should pass their lips.

Now among the company was the old wife, Atoua, who had been the nurse of my mother, and loved her well; and in these days, though I know not how it had been in the past, nor how it shall be in the future, there is no oath that can bind a woman's tongue. And so it came about that by-and-by, when the matter had become homely in her mind, and her fear had fallen from her, she spoke of the prophecy to her daughter, who nursed me at the breast now that my mother was dead. She did this as they walked together in the desert carrying food to the husband of the daughter, who was a sculptor, and shaped effigies of the holy Gods in the tombs that are fashioned in the rock—telling the daughter, my nurse, how great must be her care and love toward the child that should one day be Pharaoh, and drive the Ptolemies from Egypt. But the daughter, my nurse, was so filled with wonder at what she heard that she could not keep the tale locked within her breast, and in the night she awoke her husband, and, in her turn, whispered it to him, and thereby compassed her own destruction, and the destruction of her child, my foster-brother. For the man told his friend, and the friend was a spy of Ptolemy's, and thus the tale came to Pharaoh's ears.

Now, Pharaoh was much troubled thereat, for though when he was full of wine he would make a mock of the God of the Egyptians, and

swear that the Roman Senate was the only God to whom he bowed the knee, yet in his heart he was terribly afraid, as I have learned from one who was his physician. For when he was alone at night he would scream and cry aloud to the great Serapis, who indeed is no true God, and to other Gods, fearing lest he should be murdered and his soul handed over to the tormentors. Also, when he felt his throne tremble under him, he would send large presents to the temples, asking a message from the oracles, and more especially from the oracle that is at Philæ. Therefore, when it came to his ears that the wife of the High Priest of the great and ancient Temple of Abouthis had been filled with the Spirit of Prophecy before she died, and foretold that her son should be Pharaoh, he was much afraid, and summoning some trusty guards—who, being Greeks, did not fear to do sacrilege—he despatched them by boat up the Nile, with orders to come to Abouthis and cut off the head of the child of the High Priest and bring it to him in a basket.

But, as it chanced, the boat in which the guards came was of deep draught, and, the time of their coming being at the lowest ebb of the river, it struck and remained fast upon a bank of mud that is opposite the mouth of the road running across the plains to Abouthis, and, as the north wind was blowing very fiercely, it was like to sink. Thereon the guards of Pharaoh called out to the common people, who laboured at lifting water along the banks of the river, to come with boats and take them off; but, seeing that they were Greeks of Alexandria, the people would not, for the Egyptians do not love the Greeks. Then the guards cried that they were on Pharaoh's business, and still the people would not, asking what was their business. Whereon a eunuch among them who had made himself drunk in his fear, told them that they came to slay the child of Amenemhat, the High Priest, of whom it was prophesied that he should be Pharaoh and sweep the Greeks from Egypt. And then the people feared to stand longer in doubt, but brought boats, not knowing what might be meant by the man's words. But there was one amongst them—a farmer and an overseer of canals—who was a kinsman of my mother's and had been present when she prophesied; and he turned and ran swiftly for three parts of an hour, till he came to where I lay in the house that is without the north wall of the great Temple. Now, as it chanced, my father was away in that part of the Place of Tombs which is to the left of the large fortress, and Pharaoh's guards, mounted on asses, were hard upon us. Then the messenger cried to the old wife, Atoua, whose tongue had brought about the evil, and told how the soldiers drew near to slay me. And they looked at each other, not knowing

what to do; for, had they hid me, the guards would not have stayed their search till I was found. But the man, gazing through the doorway, saw a little child at play:

"Woman," he said, "whose is that child?"

"It is my grandchild," she answered, "the foster-brother of the Prince Harmachis; the child to whose mother we owe this evil case."

"Woman," he said, "thou knowest thy duty, do it!" and he again pointed at the child. "I command thee, by the Holy Name!"

Atoua trembled exceedingly, because the child was of her own blood; but, nevertheless, she took the boy and washed him and set a robe of silk upon him, and laid him on my cradle. And me she took and smeared with mud to make my fair skin darker, and, drawing my garment from me, set me to play in the dirt of the yard, which I did right gladly.

Then the man hid himself, and presently the soldiers rode up and asked of the old wife if this were the dwelling of the High Priest Amenemhat? And she told them yea, and, bidding them enter, offered them honey and milk, for they were thirsty.

When they had drunk, the eunuch who was with them asked if that were the son of Amenemhat who lay in the cradle; and she said "Yea—yea," and began to tell the guards how he would be great, for it had been prophesied of him that he should one day rule them all.

But the Greek guards laughed, and one of them, seizing the child, smote off his head with a sword; and the eunuch drew forth the signet of Pharaoh as warrant for the deed and showed it to the old wife, Atoua, bidding her tell the High Priest that his son should be King without a head.

And as they went one of their number saw me playing in the dirt and called out that there was more breeding in yonder brat than in the Prince Harmachis; and for a moment they wavered, thinking to slay me also, but in the end they passed on, bearing the head of my foster-brother, for they loved not to murder little children.

After a while, the mother of the dead child returned from the market-place, and when she found what had been done, she and her husband would have killed Atoua the old wife, her mother, and given me up to the soldiers of Pharaoh. But my father came in also and learned the truth, and he caused the man and his wife to be seized by night and hidden away in the dark places of the temple, so that none saw them more.

But I would to-day that it had been the will of the Gods that I had been slain of the soldiers and not the innocent child.

Thereafter it was given out that the High Priest Amenemhat had taken me to be as a son to him in the place of that Harmachis who was slain of Pharaoh.

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