

WONDER TALES
OF THE
ANCIENT WORLD

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"THE STORY OF THE PHARAOKHS," "PEEPS AT
ANCIENT EGYPT," ETC.

CONTAINING TWELVE FULL-PAGE
ILLUSTRATIONS IN COLOUR

BY
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A. & C. BLACK, LTD.
4, 5 & 6 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON, W.

1915

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PREFACE

THE tales contained in the following chapters are practically all that have survived of their kind in ancient Egyptian literature. One or two stories have been omitted, either because they are too fragmentary to be capable of satisfactory retelling, or because, as in the case of the story of Wen-Amen, the narrative, though very valuable as history, has not much interest merely as a story; but those who read this volume will have a fair idea of the whole extant output of Egyptian literature in the department of fiction. The version given is free in the sense that some of the crudities of life which the ancient Egyptian expressed in remarkably plain language have been either omitted or expressed in accordance with more modern ideas, and that in some cases, which are all indicated, connecting links or conclusions have been suggested where the existing manuscripts are defective. In other respects the stories are told with as close

adherence as possible to the ancient sources. The story of Osiris, of course, is a retelling from Plutarch; all the others are directly of native Egyptian origin. To writers such as Erman, Wiedemann, Breasted, Maspero, Petrie, and others who have treated of Egyptian life, religion, and literature, this volume owes a great deal; but my debt is specially heavy to the *Records of the Past*, to Sir Gaston Maspero's "*Contes Populaires de l'Égypte Ancienne*," and to Professor Flinders Petrie's "*Egyptian Tales*." The details of the illustrations have been carefully kept, so far as possible, in accordance with actual details extant from the various periods of Egyptian history to which the incidents portrayed belong.

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CONSTANCE N. BAIKIE

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BOOK I
TALES OF THE WIZARDS

WONDER TALES OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

CHAPTER I

ABOUT THE PEOPLE WHO TOLD THESE WONDER TALES

Most people, I suppose, who ever trouble to think about the Egyptians, think of them as a very wonderful, but at the same time a very gloomy and terribly serious people. Their great country seems to be mainly interesting for old stones and old bones. While we think of their great buildings, such as the Pyramids and some of the temples, very extraordinary, we wonder why in all the world people ever were so silly as to build such things; and when we see their mummies, and learn what an amount of thought they used to give to death, and to the life that was to come after

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death, we are rather glad, on the whole, that such terribly serious people are all safely dead.

Most of this strange idea about these old Egyptians has arisen from the fact that nearly all we know about them has come from their tombs. What sort of folk would people think us if they had nothing but our churchyards to go by? We should like rather to be judged by our houses and our home life. But you can't do that with the Egyptians, for this reason: When an Egyptian made a tomb for himself, he knew that it was to be his resting-place for quite a long while, and so he made it very carefully; but when he built a house, he said, "Well, this may please me, but I shan't live in it for more than a few years, and my son, when he comes after me, may like something quite different." And so he built his house very prettily and comfortably, but very lightly, so that it would last his time and not much more. Perhaps he was wiser, after all, than we who have to go on sometimes living in places we don't like at all, just because our fathers built them. Anyhow, that is why you learn most about the Egyptians from their tombs, because the tombs have lasted far longer than the houses.

Another reason for our curious idea about the Egyptians is because some of the old Greek travellers who went through the country when Greece was very young and Egypt was getting very old, brought home some wonderful travellers' yarns about the tremendous wisdom and seriousness of the Egyptians. Some things they told were true; and some were partly true, only they had taken them up wrong; and some of them—well, I think the Egyptians had been playing a quiet joke off on the Greek globe-trotters, and were laughing in their sleeves at them all the time.

It was one of these Greeks who first told the story which, more than anything else, has made people believe that the Egyptians were a gloomy, sour, long-faced folk—the story, I mean, of how whenever a company was gathered at a feast, the model of a mummy in its coffin was brought in, dragged round, and shown to everybody with the words, “Look on this, and then eat and drink; for as this is, so shalt thou be.” It sounds very unpleasant and uncomfortable, certainly. Well, perhaps they did do that now and again, though certainly they did not do it always, or perhaps even often; but I am

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very sure that they enjoyed their feast none the less.

For, indeed, instead of being the dark, gloomy, mysterious people that we are apt to imagine them, the Egyptians were really one of the gayest, most light-hearted, and most easily amused of peoples. They were very fond of music and singing, and some of the oldest songs in all the world are the simple old verses that the workmen used to sing at their work—the fisherman as he hauled his nets, the farm-servant as he drove the oxen round and round to tread out the corn. They were very fond of sports of all kinds—fishing and fowling and hunting; and when their work or their sport was done, there was nothing they liked better than a big feast, with plenty to eat and drink, with garlands of roses to fasten on their heads, and sweet scents to fill the rooms with pleasant odour, and musicians, dancers, and acrobats to keep things going cheerily.

I said that most of our knowledge of them came from their tombs. Well, it is from the paintings on the walls of the tombs that all these pictures of feasting and merriment come; and surely they cannot have been so gloomy and sour if they adorned their very tombs with pictures of gladness and fun

Most of the other nations of old days had most unpleasant ideas about the other world to which people go after their life here is done. The Greeks thought of it as a dim, shadowy, gloomy abode, where the ghosts of even the greatest heroes wandered miserably and aimlessly about. The Babylonians and Assyrians called it The Land of No Return, where people live on dust and mud and dwell in darkness, and the Hebrews called it The Pit, and dreaded nothing so much as going down into it. But the Egyptians' Heaven was one of the cheeriest places you can imagine, where the good folks who had got there ploughed and sowed and reaped the most wonderful corn, whose stalks were three yards long with ears a yard more, and sailed, fishing and fowling, in little papyrus canoes, over beautiful lakes and canals, and then played draughts and enjoyed a glass of beer under the shade of the sycamore-trees in the evening.

Now, if you want to know what people really are like, I fancy as good a way as any of finding out is to learn what they like to read or to be told. There are some nations in whose literature you can scarcely imagine it possible to find a joke or even

a story that is not as solemn as a sermon. But the Egyptians were not like that; they liked a story with all their hearts; they liked it with a little taste of the wonderful and mysterious about it; they liked a joke in it, though some of their jokes seem rather clumsy to us, as I dare say ours would to them; and they liked the story, if possible, to end happily. So you will find nothing very solemn and nothing very terrible in these wonder tales. They are the simple, unaffected attempts of just about the first people who ever tried to make stories. No doubt the thing can be very much better done now—it ought to, after 5,000 years' practice—but, all the same, these stories should be interesting to us, for they are the forerunners of all the great race of “once upon a time,” and, indeed, of all our modern novels.

How is it that these quaint old tales have come down to our times? You can scarcely form any idea of how old they are. Some of them tell us of things that happened, if they ever happened at all, about 5,000 years ago. Some of them belong to much about the time when Abraham was journeying about in the world; and some of them Moses may have heard when he was a schoolboy learning

“all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” Now, I am very sure that no book of our times is likely ever to last so long as any of these old stories have done, and so the question is, How did they come to last like that?

You know that a great deal of the information that has come down to us from the days of ancient Egypt has lasted so long because it was carved in stone upon the walls of some great building. The Egyptians had a very beautiful form of writing, which is called “hieroglyphic,” or “sacred writing.” It is really made up of hundreds of little pictures—an eagle for an *a*, a lion for an *m*, and so on. And when they had anything very important to write, they carved it in this beautiful picture-writing, sometimes filling in the picture-letters with brightly coloured pastes, so that the whole story blazes with all sorts of colours. But that kind of writing was generally kept for very important things. There is one long poem telling of a great battle between the Egyptians and the Hittites which is carved on the walls of a great temple in Egypt; but it wasn't everybody who could afford to build a temple when he wanted to publish a poem. So most Egyptian books, and all Egyptian story-books, were written not in the beautiful and

difficult hieroglyphic, but in one or other of two simpler forms which we call "hieratic" or "demotic"; and they were written not on stone, but on papyrus. The papyrus, from which our word "paper" comes, was a reed with a long, fleshy, thick stem, which grew plentifully in Egypt. They used to split up the inside of the stem into broad, thin layers, which, when pasted crosswise over one another, were strong enough to bear writing upon.

Then the scribe, or writer, took his palette, which had holes for black ink and for coloured inks, and his pens, which were really little brushes made of reeds with their ends bruised, and painted in the letters on the papyrus, something in the same way as a Chinaman paints his letters now. Then the papyrus, when it was finished, was rolled together. (It might sometimes be a very long roll, for sheet was joined to sheet as the story went on. There is one papyrus in the British Museum more than one hundred and thirty feet long.) It was then put into a case, and when the owner of it wanted to read he took it out of the case and unrolled a little of the beginning. As he went on he rolled up on the one side and unrolled on the other until he got to the end.

Now, these rolls of papyrus were very costly to make, so that only rich people could afford to have them ; and they were very easily destroyed, so that great care had to be taken of them. And sometimes they were prized so much that when the owner of the roll died he left orders for his favourite roll or rolls to be buried in his coffin with him. And there the papyrus has lain, beside the mummy of its old owner, for hundreds upon hundreds of years, the desert sands drifting over them both, until some European explorer, or perhaps some Arab thief, has found out the old grave, dug up the coffin, and taken the precious papyrus out of its old master's keeping. Some years ago a lady's grave was discovered, and when her coffin was opened, they found, beneath her long, beautiful hair, a papyrus roll with part of Homer's great poem, the "Iliad," written upon it.

Nearly all the stories that follow in this book were written on papyrus. Where some of them were found is not known ; they were sold to tourists, who sold them or gave them to some of our museums. But one way or another they all have been dug up from under the sands of Egypt, which have preserved them safe and sound for all

these centuries. Of course, they are very brittle and fragile, and have to be very carefully handled; but using them with the greatest care (for they are worth infinitely more than their weight in gold), scholars have been able to read them and to translate what is written on them into English and French and German, so that we all can listen to the tales that people listened to in palaces and cottages when the world was young. One of the finest of these old rolls, with a long story on it, once belonged to a Pharaoh of Egypt, Sety II., when he was Crown Prince. He lived about twelve hundred years before Christ, and his is by no means one of the oldest of the rolls, so that you see how old they are.

When we come to read the stories we may look at them in two ways. The first is the way that only cares for the story itself—that is only anxious to find out what happened to the Doomed Prince, or how the Shipwrecked Sailor was saved, or how the Ghost made the Wizard Prince give back the magic roll. After all, stories are meant to be read that way too, and nobody can blame those who like to see their hero or heroine safely settled, and don't care much for anything else. And some of the

Egyptian stories are worth reading even from that point of view, especially those in which we can see the seeds from which some of our own favourite stories have sprung. We shall hear later on about the old Egyptian General whose adventures gave the first idea of the story of Ali Baba, and the sailor who was the original of Sindbad, and the Prince who has figured in the stories of nearly every country under the sun, sometimes as a Prince, sometimes as a Princess, but always under the shadow of the doom pronounced at birth by the Fates or Fairy Godmothers.

But quite apart from the interest of the stories, we may look at them from the point of view of what they tell us about the Land of Egypt itself, the people who lived in it, their manners and customs, what they thought and what they believed, and about the other lands and peoples which lay around Egypt. And in this respect these stories are of extraordinary value and interest. They give you pictures of all kinds of Egyptian life. You see Pharaoh in his palace, wearying of everything, and asking for stories to be told him, just as the Sultan in the "Arabian Nights" wearied till Scheherazade took him in hand. You see the extraordinary

belief that the Egyptians of all periods had in the power of magic. It appears in the very first story, the Story of the Waxen Crocodile, where you have the absolute beginning of the strange belief, which lasted in our own country down to comparatively recent times, and still lasts in Italy and other European countries, that you can make waxen images which will become alive and do harm to your enemies, or which can represent your enemies themselves, so that by injuring them you can injure the person you hate.

Rossetti's Sister Helen, who melts her waxen man that she may have vengeance on her false lover, is first cousin to the learned scribe Uba-ner, who lived more than 5,000 years ago, and made his waxen crocodile to avenge himself on the man who had wronged him. The belief in the efficacy of magic colours almost every one of the tales to the very last, in point of date, the stories of Setna, which are the most magical of all; and one remembers that these last stories belong almost to the very time at which we believe that Moses appeared at the Egyptian Court to plead for the oppressed Israelites. The scene in which the little boy Senosiris, the reincarnation of an old Egyptian

sage, confounds the Ethiopian wizard before Pharaoh and his Court, is strikingly suggestive of the scenes in the succeeding reign, when a greater power than that of the Ethiopian baffled the wisdom of the Egyptians, and the wizards of the Nile were forced to confess, "This is the finger of God."

Once again you go forth with the Egyptian explorer, first on the long roll of those who have sought to penetrate the mysteries of the Dark Continent; and you see the strange dangers and marvels that he believed to lie about his path—talking serpents, and vanishing islands, and young ladies who are brought to earth on the wings of a thunderbolt. Or you get a glimpse into the sinister realm of Court intrigue, with its atmosphere of suspicion, jealousy, and sudden death, then—as now—the natural medium in which an Oriental monarchy moves; and you see how the exiled Egyptian, suppliant for shelter among the tribes of Palestine, nevertheless comes surely to the top wherever his lot is cast, by virtue of his higher civilization, just as the Briton or the American takes the first place among the less civilized races of the earth to-day.

Stories like that of Tahuti, and the Doomed Prince, show you Egyptian sentiment in those

days, which, for Egypt, correspond most nearly with our own Elizabethan period ; the days when the land was beginning to waken to the idea of world-empire, and to reach forth her hands to those Syrian and Mesopotamian lands which were to be the scene of her greatest glories and greatest overthrows. And, perhaps not least important, the placid, peaceful, laborious life of the ordinary Egyptian fellah, who goes his quiet way, knowing little and caring less of the great deeds of the mighty ones of earth, is mirrored for us in the opening scenes of the Tale of the Two Brothers, with its extraordinary resemblance to the story of Joseph, and its strange later maze of reincarnations and wizardries.

The stories which are here narrated cover, from first to last, a period of about 2,000 years ; and they are a faithful—because an entirely unstudied—reflection of the changing manners, customs, and beliefs of one of the most interesting peoples of the world during two millenniums.

Scanty as the fragments may seem, there is no body of literature extant in any other land on earth which, from this point of view, has a value even remotely approaching that of these Wonder Tales of the Ancient World.

CHAPTER II

TALES OF THE OLD MAGICIANS

THE three stories which follow in Chapters II. and III. are written in an old papyrus, which was brought back from Egypt sixty years ago by an English lady, Miss Westcar. She gave it to the famous scholar, Lepsius, and it is now in the Berlin Museum, and is known as the Westcar Papyrus. It is the oldest of all the books of stories which have come down to us, for though the legends of the gods in their original form must, of course, have been the oldest of all, the form in which they are now best known is later than the Westcar Papyrus. Some scholars hold this book to have been written about the time of the Twelfth Dynasty, not less than 2,000 years before Christ, perhaps round about the time when Abraham was living; and though others do not think it quite so old, all agree that it must date from before 1500 B.C. But this, of course, only means that

our copy of the stories is 4,000, or at least 3,500, years old. The stories themselves are far older, just as a copy of Shakespeare's plays may be published this year, but contains stories which Shakespeare wrote 300 years ago, and some of which were many hundred years old already when he wrote them down in the form in which we now have them. Thus, these three stories are supposed to be told to King Khufu by his three sons, Khafra, Baufra, and Hordadef. Now, King Khufu reigned not later than 2900 B.C., and some think very much earlier. Khafra's Story of the Wax Crocodile mentions a King who reigned more than a hundred years before Khufu ; so that these tales take us very far back indeed. If Professor Petrie's views as to the dates of the earliest Egyptian Kings are correct, they take us back 6,000 years, and even if we take the shorter dates, they refer to events and people of about 5,000 years ago. Perhaps 1,000 years more or less scarcely matters much at that distance.

At the very beginning of Egyptian story-telling we notice that extraordinary belief in and love for magic of all kinds which has already been referred to. Zadkiel and the rest of his tribe would have

made their fortunes in Egypt, for the Egyptians believed with all their heart in the influence of the stars, in lucky and unlucky days, in omens of all kinds, and in the influence and significance of dreams. On certain days it was unlucky to bathe—a great deprivation, for the Egyptians of those days were a cleanly race, though the virtue does not seem to have been transmitted to their descendants. On others it was certain that if you went in a boat you would be devoured by a crocodile; while the 13th day of the month Mekhir was specially unlucky, because on that day the Goddess Hathor, or Sekhmet, went forth to slay the men who had rebelled against God—a story that you will find later on. Some people still believe that Egyptian magic was something very real and terrible. Here is a famous spell from which anyone may judge its quality. It is a spell for producing dreams which were supposed to convey knowledge and warning from the gods:

“Take a cat, black all over, and which has been killed; prepare a writing-tablet, and write the following with a solution of myrrh, and the dream which thou desirest to be sent, and put it in the mouth of the cat. ‘Keimi! Keimi! I am the

Great One in whose mouth rests Mommon, Thoth, Nanumbre, Karikha, Kenyro, Paarmiathon, the sacred Tau iee ieu aeoi who is above the heaven, Amekheumu, Neumana, Sennana, Ablanathanalba, Akramm, Khamaria, brasuia, lampsor, eieieiei aoeco theuris O.'” Then follows a lot more of similar drivel, and the spell ends: “‘Thy name answers to the seven vowels, a, e, ê, i, o, y, ô, iaooeao ouee oia. I named thy glorious name, the name for all needs. Put thyself in connection with N. N., Hidden One, God, with respect to this name, which Apollobex also used.’” Let us hope that N. N. got his dream, though it ought to have been a nightmare. The fact of the matter is that Egyptian magic is just as sensible as printers' pie, and just as terrible as a turnip lantern.

Khafra's story, according to Professor Petrie, was written by an anti-suffragist. Women always held a very influential position in Egypt, and this story was written to counteract their undue influence. It is the woman who is at the bottom of the mischief all through the story, and she comes to a very bad end, an end so unusual—for burning alive is scarcely ever heard of elsewhere in Egyptian story—that it is evident that her fate was meant as

an awful warning to any of her sex who might be tempted to presume on their favoured position in the land. By which it appears that the vexed question of women's rights is scarcely a thing of yesterday.

The fact that when Uba-aner takes the terrible crocodile into his hand it becomes nothing but wax again reminds one forcibly of the story of how Moses' rod, which had been changed into a serpent, became a rod again when laid hold of by its owner (Exod. iv. 4).

The amusement which Zazamankh the wizard devised for King Seneferu in Prince Baufra's story was exactly paralleled by that employed by the great Khedive of Egypt, Mehemet Ali, to divert him in his hours of ennui. It is not on record, however, that any miracle happened during the progress of his voyage.

Prince Hordadef's story really contains two tales. The first, which is really only the introduction, is a simple piece of wizardry; but the story of Rud-didet and her babies is something more. It was no doubt invented for a political and religious purpose. The Fifth Dynasty, which succeeded that to which King Khufu, the builder of the Great Pyramid, belonged,

was a priestly dynasty, devoted to the worship of Ra the Sun-god. It is from its rise that the Kings of Egypt begin to take, as part of their regular style, the title Son of the Sun. The story, which tells how the three babies (whose names in the original are those of the first three Kings of the Fifth Dynasty) are really the children of the Sun-god, was no doubt invented to explain and justify the revolution by which the priests of Ra seized the throne, and to glorify their dynasty.

The regard which was paid to Kings and to common folks respectively may be seen in the offerings which King Khufu makes to the Kings, his ancestors, and to the wizards. Nebka and Seneferu get a thousand loaves and one hundred jugs of beer. Uba-aner and Zazamankh have to content themselves with one loaf and one jug.

TALES OF THE OLD MAGICIANS.

Once upon a time it fell out that the great King Khufu, Lord of the Two Lands, bearer of the White Crown and the Red, was in his palace, and time hung heavy on his hands. He turned to this and that, and he knew not what to do, for the day

seemed long and weary. At last he said to his sons, the royal Princes, who were gathered about his throne: "Is there one among you who can tell me a tale of the wizards of the olden times?"

Then the royal son Khafra arose to speak, and he said: "I shall tell your Majesty the story of a wonder which befell in the times of your ancestor the King Nebka, of happy memory, on an occasion when he was going to the Temple of Ptah, Lord of Ankhtai.

"THE STORY OF THE WAXEN CROCODILE.

"Now, it fell out on a day when His Majesty went to the Temple of Ptah, Lord of Ankhtai, that he paid a visit to the house of the learned scribe, the first reciter, Uba-aner. Now, in the train of His Majesty there was a young page, of comely face and form, and when the wife of Uba-aner saw him, her heart was turned away from her husband, and she loved the young man. Without regard for her husband's welfare, she wasted his substance in gifts to the page, and she invited him to spend the day with her in a pavilion by the side of the lake in the garden of Uba-aner. There they passed the day in eating and drinking, and when

the evening came the page bathed in the lake. Now, when the steward of the house of Uba-aner saw the falseness of his master's wife, he said to himself: 'It is not good that such things should be done, and my master know nothing about them.'

"Therefore, when the dawn appeared, and the second day came, the steward went to Uba-aner and told him what had happened. When the first reciter, Uba-aner, knew all, he said to his steward: 'Bring me the casket of ebony, inlaid with vermilion, which contains my book of spells.' When the steward had brought it, Uba-aner fashioned a waxen crocodile, seven inches long; he recited a spell over it, and he said to it: 'When this page comes to bathe in my lake, then drag him to the bottom of the water.' He gave the crocodile to the steward, and said to him: 'Whenever the page goes down to bathe in the lake, throw the waxen crocodile in after him.' Then the steward went away, and took the crocodile with him.

"Now, it fell out that the wife of Uba-aner sent once more to the page, and said to him: 'Come and let us make a good day in the pavilion by the lake-side'; and to the steward, who had charge of the lake, she said: 'Prepare the pavilion by the

lake-side, for I am going to spend the day there.' The pavilion was prepared, and furnished with all kinds of dainties, and the lady and the page came and passed the day in amusements. When the evening came, the page went into the lake to bathe, according to his custom, and the steward cast the waxen crocodile into the water after him. The crocodile changed into a crocodile of seven cubits long; he seized the page, and dragged him under water.

“Meanwhile the first reciter, Uba-aner, remained at Court seven days with His Majesty King Nebka, Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt, while the page lay under the water without breathing. But when the seven days were past, and when the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebka, of happy memory, was going to the temple, the first reciter, Uba-aner, came before him and said: ‘May it please your Majesty to come and see a wonder which has happened in these days of your Majesty’s reign to a page of your royal retinue?’

“Then His Majesty went with the first reciter, Uba-aner. Uba-aner said to the crocodile: ‘Bring up the page out of the water,’ and the crocodile came forth, and brought up the page out

of the water. The first reciter, Uba-aner, said : ‘Stop!’ He cast a spell upon the crocodile, and made him stand still before the King.

“Then His Majesty, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Nebka, of happy memory, cried : ‘Mercy upon us, this crocodile is dreadful !’

“Uba-aner stooped down, he seized the crocodile, and it became in his hands nothing but a crocodile of wax once more. Then the first reciter, Uba-aner, told His Majesty King Nebka, Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt, the whole story, and how the page and his wife had deceived him.

“His Majesty said to the crocodile : ‘Take what is thine.’ Then the crocodile plunged to the bottom of the lake, and what became of him and the page no one has ever known. Then His Majesty, of happy memory, King Nebka, Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt, caused the wife of Uba-aner to be led to the north side of the palace ; there they burned her alive, and threw her ashes into the river. Behold, this is the wonder which happened in the days of thine ancestor of happy memory, King Nebka, Lord of Upper and Lower Egypt—one of the wonders wrought by the first reciter, Uba-aner.”

Then His Majesty, King Khufu, said: "Let there be offered to the Majesty of the King Nebka, an offering of a thousand loaves, one hundred jugs of beer, a bullock, and two measures of incense; and let there be offered also to the chief reciter, Uba-aner, of whose skill I have had proof, a loaf, a jug of beer, and a measure of incense." It was done as His Majesty commanded.

Then the royal Prince Baufra rose to speak, and he said: "I am going to tell your Majesty of a wonder which happened in the time of your father, King Seneferu, of happy memory, and which was wrought, among other wonders, by the chief reciter Zazamankh:

"THE STORY OF ZAZAMANKH AND THE LOST
CORONET.

"One day when King Seneferu was in his palace, he was terribly bored with everything. Nothing seemed to please him, and he was dreadfully depressed. He called his household together, and asked the courtiers if they could not devise something that would amuse him, and help to pass the time. They all suggested different things, but each bored His Majesty worse than the other.

At last the King said: 'Hasten, someone, and bring to me the chief reciter, Zazamankh;' and they brought him immediately. His Majesty said to him: 'Zazamankh, my brother, I have called together the whole royal household to see if any of them could invent something to relieve me of my weariness (for my heart is very heavy); but not one of them could imagine anything.'

"Then said Zazamankh: 'Let His Majesty condescend to go down to the lake of the Royal Pleasance, and let him man one of the royal barges with all the prettiest girls of the royal harem. Your Majesty's heart will grow light as you see them bending to their oars, and when you admire the beauty of the lake and its banks, and the fine lawns around it. For my share in this business, behold, this is how I shall arrange the voyage. Let them bring me twenty oars of ebony, inlaid with gold, with blades of tough wood, inlaid with vermilion, and let these twenty girls be chosen from among the very loveliest in the harem— young and fresh—and let them be clothed in fishing-nets.'

"All was done according to His Majesty's command. The girls swung to their oars, back and

forward, and His Majesty's heart grew light as he watched their rowing, when suddenly the loom of the steering-oar of one of the steerswomen struck her hair, and her coronet of new malachite fell into the water. Then she stopped her rowing song, and ceased to steer, and her companions on that side of the boat were silent also and ceased rowing. And His Majesty said : ' Why have you stopped rowing ?'

" They said : ' Our companion has stopped her rowing song and her steering.'

" His Majesty turned to her and said : ' Why are you not steering ?'

" She answered : ' My coronet of new malachite has fallen into the water.'

" ' Never mind,' said His Majesty ; ' go on, and I shall give you another one just as good.'

" But she said : ' I want my own coronet, and not another one just as good.'

" ' If that is so,' said His Majesty, ' bring me the chief reciter, Zazamankh.' They brought him at once, and His Majesty said : ' Zazamankh, my brother, I have taken your advice, and My Majesty's heart has rejoiced to see the rowing of the girls ; but, behold, the coronet of one of these

little ones has fallen into the water. She has stopped singing, she has stopped steering, and she has checked all her companions on this side of the boat. I said to her: "Why don't you steer?" and she said: "My coronet of new malachite has fallen into the water." I said to her: "Never mind, go on steering, and I shall give you another one, just as good"; but she said: "I want my own jewel, and not another one just as good."

"Then the chief reciter, Zazamankh, arose, and spoke wonderful words out of his magic book. Half of the water of the lake rose up, and stood upon the other half. The bottom of the lake was bare; for it was twelve cubits deep in the middle before, and now, where it was piled up, it was twenty-four cubits deep. Then Zazamankh leaped down upon the dry bed of the lake; he found the coronet of malachite lying upon the sand; he took it, and gave it back to the girl. Then he reversed his spell, and the water of the lake sank down, and was as before. So His Majesty passed a happy day with the royal household, and he rewarded the chief reciter, Zazamankh, with all sorts of good things. Behold this is the wonder which happened in the days of thy father, of happy

memory, the King Seneferu, and which was wrought, among others, by the chief reciter, Zazamankh, the wizard."

Then said His Majesty, King Khufu: "Let there be presented to His Majesty, the King Seneferu, of happy memory, an offering of one thousand loaves of bread, one hundred jugs of beer, a bullock, and two measures of incense; and let there be given also a loaf, a pint of beer, and a measure of incense, to the chief reciter, Zazamankh, the wizard, of whose skill I have had proof." It was done as His Majesty commanded.

CHAPTER III

TALES OF THE OLD MAGICIANS—*Continued*

DEDI THE WIZARD, AND THE SUN- GOD'S BABIES.

THEN Hordadef, the King's son, rose and said : " May it please your Majesty, so far your Majesty has heard stories of wonders which only the men of bygone days have known, and whose truth no man can swear to ; but I am able to bring before your Majesty's eyes a sorcerer of your own day, whom your Majesty does not know."

His Majesty said : " Who is he, Hordadef ?"

Prince Hordadef answered : " He is a man named Dedi, who lives at Ded-sneferu. He is a hundred and ten years old, but he still eats every day his hundred loaves of bread, and a whole side of beef, and drinks a hundred jugs of beer. He knows how to join on again a head which has been cut off, he knows how to make a lion follow him without

a halter, and he knows the plans of the house of 'Thoth." (Now, behold, His Majesty King Khufu had long sought those plans of the house of 'Thoth, in order to make a copy of them for his pyramid.)

Therefore His Majesty said: "Hordadef, my son, bring the man to me yourself."

Barges were prepared for the Prince Hordadef, and he set sail for Ded-sneferu. When the boats came to the landing-place, he sat upon a litter made of ebony, whose poles were of cedar-wood, inlaid with gold. Then, when he came to Ded-sneferu, the litter was set down, and he rose up to salute the wizard. He found him sitting upon a low couch at the door of his house, one slave at his head, scratching it for him, and another rubbing his feet.

Prince Hordadef said to him: "Thy state is that of one who lives in the restful shade of old age. Commonly old age is a coming into harbour, a wrapping of the mummy, a return to the earth; but, thus to rest at ease all day long, without bodily infirmities, without decay of one's mental powers, this is, indeed, a happy lot! I have come in haste to give you a special invitation from my father, His Majesty, King Khufu. You shall eat of the best

that the King can give and the Court provide ; and, thanks to His Majesty, you shall come at last with honour to your fathers who rest in their tombs.’

Dedi replied : “ Peace be to thee, peace be to thee, Hordadef, royal son, beloved of his father ! May thy honourable father praise thee, may he place thee amongst the elders ! May thy guardian angel triumph over his enemies ! and may thy soul find out the steep paths which lead to the gate of mercy, for verily thou art wise ! ”

Prince Hordadef stretched out both hands to him ; he helped him to rise, and he walked with him to the landing-place, holding his arm. Dedi said to him : “ I would need to have a boat for my household and my books. ” Two boats with their crews were granted him, and Dedi himself sailed in the barge along with the Prince Hordadef. Now, when he had arrived at the Court, the Prince entered to make his report to the Majesty of the King of the two Egypts, Khufu, and he said : “ Sire (life, health, strength !), my master, I have brought Dedi. ”

His Majesty answered : “ Bring him quickly to my presence. ” And when His Majesty had seated himself in the audience-hall of Pharaoh, Dedi was presented to him.

His Majesty said : “ How is it, Dedi, that I have never before seen you ? ”

Dedi answered : “ A man can only come when he is called. My King (life, health, strength !) calls me, and behold, I have come. ”

His Majesty said : “ Is it true, as they say of you, that you can join on again a head which has been cut off ? ”

Dedi answered : “ Surely it is true, sire, my master. ”

Then said His Majesty : “ Bring hither a prisoner of those who are lying in prison under sentence of death. ”

But Dedi cried : “ No, no, your Majesty ; not a man. Do not let us venture such a thing upon a human being. ”

So a goose was brought to him, and its head was cut off, and the goose was placed at the right side of the hall and its head at the left side. Then Dedi spoke words of power out of his book of spells. The goose rose up and hopped forward, the head did the same, and when the one had joined the other, the goose stood up and cackled. Then a pelican was brought, and the same thing happened. His Majesty ordered a bull to be brought, and its

head was struck off and fell to the ground with its halter. Dedi recited his spells, and the bull stood upright behind him, but its halter still lay upon the ground.

Then said King Khufu: "Do you know that people say of you that you know the plans of the house of Thoth?"

Dedi answered: "Pardon me, your Majesty, I do not know the plans themselves, but I know where they are."

"And where is that?" said His Majesty.

Dedi said to him: "There is a block of grit-stone in one of the chambers of the Library at Heliopolis, and the plans of the house of Thoth are in the block."

Then said the King: "Bring me the plans which are in this block."

But Dedi said to him: "May it please your Majesty, it is not I who shall bring them."

"Who, then, shall bring them to me?" said the King.

And Dedi answered: "They shall be brought to you by the eldest of the three children who shall be born of Rud-didet."

"By my faith," said His Majesty, "and who is she, this Rud-didet of whom you speak?"

Dedi answered him: "She is the wife of a priest of the god Ra, Lord of Sakhebu. She shall bear three children, who shall be the sons of Ra, Lord of Sakhebu, and the great god has said that they shall exercise this excellent dignity over this whole land (*i.e.*, shall be Kings), and the eldest of them shall be also High-Priest at Heliopolis."

Then His Majesty's heart was troubled; but Dedi said to him: "Why are your thoughts so sad, sire, my master? Is it because of these three children? Verily, I tell thee it shall not happen in thy day. Thy son shall reign, then his son, and then one of these."

Then said His Majesty: "When shall the children be born?"

The wizard replied: "They shall be born on the fifteenth of the month Tybi."

The King said: "If the banks of the canal of Letopolis were cut, I would go there myself to see the temple of Ra, Lord of Sakhebu."

And Dedi answered: "Then I will cause that there shall be four cubits of water between the banks of the canal of Letopolis."

When His Majesty had returned into his chamber, he said: "Let Dedi be lodged in the house of Prince

Hordadef, and let him dwell with him ; and let there be given to him a daily ration of one thousand loaves, one hundred jugs of beer, an ox, and one hundred bunches of onions.”

It was done as His Majesty had commanded.

* * * * *

Now it came to pass that the time for the birth of the children drew nigh. The Majesty of Ra, Lord of Sakhebu, said to Isis, to Nephthys, to Meskhent, to Heqt, and to Khnumu : “Go and watch over the birth of these three children of Rud-didet, who shall reign over this whole land, building your temples, furnishing your altars of offerings, supplying your libation-tables, and adding to your endowments.” Then these divinities set forth. The goddesses changed themselves into singing-girls, and Khnumu went with them in the guise of a porter. They arrived at the house of Ra-user, and they found him spreading out linen. They passed before him with their musical instruments, and told him that they had come to be present at the birth of the children. When the children were born, beautiful in all their members, they said : “These are kings, who shall reign over this whole land of Egypt.”

Then the goddesses went forth, and said to Ra-user: "Rejoice, Ra-user; for, behold, three children are born to thee."

He said to them: "My ladies, and what can I do for you? Behold, let me give this bushel of barley to your porter that you may carry it away as your wages to the brew-house."

So Khnumu loaded himself with the barley, and they set out for the place whence they had come.

But Isis said to the others: "What are we thinking about, that we have come to the house of Ra-user without doing a wonder for these children that we may tell it to their father who has sent us?" (*i.e.*, to the god Ra).

Then they made three royal diadems, and hid them in the barley; they brought down a storm of rain from heaven. They returned to the house of Ra-user, and they said: "Store for us this barley in a sealed chamber, until we come north again."

So the grain was stored in a sealed chamber.

Now, it fell out that one day, a fortnight after the children were born, Rud-didet said to her servant: "Is everything in good order in the house?"

The servant answered: "All things are in order; only the barley for brewing has not been brought."

Then said Rud-didet: "Why is the brewing barley not brought?"

The servant said: "It might have been ready long ago, only it was given to these singing-girls, and lies in the chamber sealed with their seal."

So Rud-didet said: "Go down and fetch it; Ra-user will give them more in place of it when they come back again."

The servant went and opened the room; behold, she heard voices, singing, music and dancing, all that one would do to welcome a King, in the room. She came back and told Rud-didet what she had heard. Then Rud-didet came down to the room, and could not find the place whence the sound came. She placed her head against the sack of barley, and found that the noise was inside it; therefore she placed the sack in a wooden coffer. She sealed it with another seal; she tied it round with leather, and she placed the whole in the store-room, and sealed the door with her own seal. When Ra-user returned from working in his garden, Rud-didet told him the whole affair, and

he was highly delighted, and they sat down and made a holiday of it.

Now, some time after all this, it befell that Rud-didet quarrelled with her servant, and caused her to be beaten.

The servant said to the others who were in the house: "Does she think that she can treat me thus, she who has borne three Kings? I will go and tell the whole affair to his gracious Majesty King Khufu."

So she went away, and she found her uncle, her mother's brother, who was busy bundling up flax.

He said to her: "Whither goest thou, my little maid?"

And she told him the whole story.

Then said her uncle: "And you have the impudence to come to me. I will teach you to rebel and play the traitress."

So he took a bunch of the flax, and gave her a sound thrashing. The servant ran down to the river to bathe her bruises; and, behold, a crocodile carried her away.

When her uncle ran to Rud-didet to tell her what had happened, he found the lady seated, her

head bowed upon her knees, and her heart sadder than tongue can tell.

He said to her: "Madame, why so sad?"

She answered: "Because of that little slut who was in the house; behold, she has gone away saying, 'I will go, and I will denounce them to the King.'"

Then the uncle made salaam, and said to her: "My lady, when she came to tell me what had happened, and made complaint to me, I gave her a sound beating; then she went to bathe her bruises, and lo! a crocodile carried her away."

(The rest of the story is lost; but probably it may have contained the account of how King Khufu endeavoured to obtain possession of the children who were to dethrone his descendants, and how the Sun-god's children escaped his efforts, and came at last to the throne.)

CHAPTER IV

THE WIZARDS OF THE EMPIRE: SETNA AND THE MAGIC ROLL

THE two stories of Setna and the Magic Roll, and Setna and his son Senosiris, which follow in Chapters IV. and V., are of very much later date than the Tales of the Old Magicians. The first was written in the time of the Ptolemaic Pharaohs of Egypt, about 300 B.C. or later; the second in the reign of Claudius Cæsar, about A.D. 46-47. At the same time, though they are thus almost modern, as things go in Egypt, they no doubt represent very ancient traditions which had been handed down in one form or another for many centuries. The Prince who gives the title to both stories is a well-known historical personage. Setna-Khaemuas (Setna Glory-in-Thebes) was the favourite son of the famous Egyptian Pharaoh, Ramses II., who may have been the oppressor of the Hebrews. In all probability he was destined

for the throne, for he exercised the highest offices during his father's lifetime, being High-Priest at Memphis among other things; but he died before the long reign of Ramses closed, and the succession fell to his brother Merenptah. Khaemuas had a great reputation in Egypt for learning; and, as almost always happened in ancient days—witness Michael Scott and Friar Bacon—a reputation for learning meant almost inevitably a reputation for skill in the magic arts.

The story of Setna and the Magic Roll is again double—a tale within a tale; and it is more difficult to decide the period to which the dead Prince, Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and his wife Ahura, are supposed to belong. There is no King of Egypt known who bears the name Mer-neb-ptah given by Ahura in her story. The probability is that the name is a corruption of one of the titles of the famous and magnificent Pharaoh Amenhotep III. The Setna part of the story, therefore, dates from about 1300 B.C., and Ahura's tale takes us back, roughly speaking, another century.

In Ahura's account of how Na-nefer-ka-ptah gained the book of Thoth we see again the persistent Egyptian belief in the possibility of making

and vivifying waxen images, and obliging them to do the will of their creator; while the enclosing of the book in a series of boxes is perhaps the oldest illustration of a formula for the protection of precious things which occurs in the wonder tales of almost all nations.

In the second story of the Setna tradition, apart from the reappearance, on both sides of the struggle, of the waxen images as instruments of the wizard's will, the interest centres upon the altogether extraordinary parallel which is presented, by the visit of Setna and his wondrous child to the underworld, to our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The date of the manuscript is such that it does not absolutely preclude the possibility of some echo of the parable of Jesus having floated down into Egypt and reached the writer of the tale; but it is also such as to render such a thing highly improbable. All that can be said is that the resemblance is wonderfully striking.

The contest between the old Egyptian wizard reincarnate in the boy Senosiris, and the reincarnation of the old Ethiopian wizard, naturally calls up the appearance of Moses and Aaron before the Egyptian Court, with the difference that here the

advantage, naturally, is made to lie with the native wizard, and it is interesting to remember once more that in the whole Setna tradition we are dealing with a person who almost certainly comes very close in point of time to the actual period of the Exodus, and who may have been absolutely a contemporary of the great Hebrew leaders.

The marriage of Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah to his sister the Princess Ahura, is strictly in accordance with ancient Egyptian ideas of a fitting matrimonial arrangement for children of the royal house; while the old priest's demand for two coffins to be made for him and a splendid funeral to be accorded him in return for his information, illustrates the extraordinary importance which the Egyptian mind attached to all details connected with the life after death. Na-nefer-ka-ptah's way of learning the spells of the book of Thoth, by copying them and then washing off the ink with beer, and drinking the beer, is a regular Oriental fashion of literally absorbing knowledge. Many Egyptian and Babylonian drinking-vessels, both ancient and modern, have charms engraved upon them whose virtue is supposed to be imparted to the liquid which is drunk from them. At the end of the story, "How Isis

stole the Great Name of Ra," will be found directions for using the story as a spell exactly as Nanefer-ka-ptah used the spells of the Magic Roll.

THE STORY OF SETNA AND THE MAGIC ROLL.

Once upon a time there was a great King of Egypt named User-maat-Ra (Ramses II.), to whom be life, health, and strength. He had a very large family, and one of his sons, whose name was Setna-Khaemuas, was a very wise and learned man. He used to spend nearly all his time studying the sacred books, or reading the inscriptions engraved upon the walls of the temple and the tablets in the cemetery of Memphis. Moreover, he was a great magician, there was none like him in all the land of Egypt. He knew all kinds of charms and spells, and could speak and write words of power that made all creatures and spirits do his bidding.

Now, it happened one day that Setna was standing in the court of the temple of the great god Ptah, reading the inscriptions on the walls, when a man of noble appearance who stood near him began to laugh loudly. Setna turned angrily to him, and said: "Why are you laughing at me?"

The man answered : " I am not laughing at you, but I am laughing to see you wasting your time reading these senseless words when I can tell you where to find a book which the god Thoth wrote with his own hand. To read it will make you only a little lower than the gods. There are two spells in it. When you repeat the first, you will charm heaven and earth, sea and sky, mountains and rivers ; you will understand what the birds say as they fly, and the serpents as they crawl ; and when you call to the fish, a divine power will bring them up to the surface of the water. When you repeat the second spell, though you were in your grave you will come back to life again as you were before ; and you will see the sun in the sky, and the moon in her changes, and all the company of the gods."

" By my life," said Setna, " show me where this book is, and I will give you anything you like to ask."

" The book is not mine," said the stranger. " It lies in the tomb of Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah, son of King Mer-neb-ptah (to whom be life, health, and strength). Only I advise you not to meddle with it, for Na-nefer-ka-ptah will make you bring it

back again, with a forked stick in your hand and a fire-pan on your head.”

As soon as Setna heard where the book was, he cared for nothing else on earth. He hastened away, as fast as his feet would carry him, to the King his father, told him everything that had been said, and asked his permission to go down into the tomb of Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and bring back the magic book. So he took with him his foster-brother An-he-hor-er-u, and for three days and three nights they searched the cemetery of Memphis, reading all the inscriptions on the tombs, that they might find the tomb of Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah. When at last, on the third day, they found it, Setna recited a spell over it; the earth opened, and he went down into the long rock-hewn passage that led to the chamber of the tomb, leaving his foster-brother to wait for him above. A vulture and a crow flapped slowly on before him down the passage till they came to the door of the chamber, where they perched, one on either side. A great stone closed the door of the tomb; but Setna, putting out all his strength, rolled it aside, and went boldly into the chamber.

At first his eyes were dazzled, for a great light

shone from the magic roll, and the whole chamber was as bright as day. After a little he looked round, and there was Prince Na-nefer-ka-ptah sitting in his chair, and beside him were the ghosts of his wife Ahura and his little boy Merab. Their bodies were buried far away up the Nile at Coptos ; but, by the power of his magic book, Na-nefer-ka-ptah had brought their spirits back to Memphis to keep him company in his grave.

So, when Setna came in, the Princess Ahura sprang up and cried : “ Who art thou ? ”

And Setna answered : “ I am Prince Setna-Khaemuas, son of King Ramses ” (to whom be life, health, and strength), “ and I am come to carry away this book of Thoth which I see between you and your husband. Give it to me, or I will take it by force.”

Then said the lady Ahura : “ Do not take it away, I beg of you ; but listen first to the story of all the evils which it has brought upon us, and how the getting of it shortened our days upon earth.”

So Ahura began, and told to Setna the story of the magic book.

THE STORY OF PRINCESS AHURA.

“ My name is Ahura, and when I was alive I was the daughter of King Mer-neb-ptah (to whom be life, health, and strength), and Na-nefer-ka-ptah, my husband, was my brother, and we loved one another very dearly. When I grew old enough to be married, the King my father said to the Queen my mother : ‘ See, Ahura our daughter is quite grown up, and it is high time that she was married. To whom shall we marry her ? ’ Now, I had told my mother that I loved Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and would have none other but him for my husband. So my mother said to my father : ‘ Ahura loves Na-nefer-ka-ptah ; let us marry them, the one to the other, according to the custom. ’ But my father said : ‘ We have only these two children, why should they marry one another ? Let us marry the one to the daughter of a General, and the other to the son of a General ; for this will be far better for the family. ’

“ That night there was a banquet in the palace, and I had to appear before Pharaoh my father ; but I was grieved at what he had said, and was not so gay and bright as usual. So Pharaoh said to

me: 'Little stupid, what folly is this that you have said to your mother about marrying your brother?' 'Oh, well,' I said, 'do what you like—marry me to the son of a General, and marry my brother to the daughter of a General, and let us be a happy family.' Then I laughed, and Pharaoh laughed, for he saw that I should never be happy without Na-nefer-ka-ptah. And he said to his Chamberlain: 'Marry Ahura to Na-nefer-ka-ptah this very night, and send to their house treasures of gold and silver, and all sorts of good things.' So we were married, and were very happy together for a while; and we had this one son, little Merab, whom you see.

"But after a time my husband began, like you, to think of nothing but reading the sacred books, and the inscriptions in the temples and the tablets on the tombs of the Pharaohs. Now, one day, when he was reading the writings on the walls of the Temple of Ptah, an old man who was standing by laughed at him. 'Why are you laughing at me?' said Na-nefer-ka-ptah.

"'I am not laughing at you,' said the old priest, 'but I am laughing to see you wasting your time in reading this nonsense. If you really wish to see something worth reading, come to me, and I shall

show you a book which Thoth wrote with his own hand. There are two spells in it. When you repeat the first you will charm heaven and earth, sea and sky, mountains and rivers ; you will understand what the birds say as they fly, and the serpents as they crawl ; and when you call to the fish, a divine power will bring them up to the surface of the water. When you repeat the second, though you were in your grave, you will come back to life again as you were before ; and you will see the sun in the sky, and the moon in her changes, and all the company of the gods.'

“ ‘ By the life of Pharaoh,’ said my husband, ‘ tell me anything you wish, and I will give it you, if only you will bring me where this book is.’

“ Then said the priest : ‘ If you wish me to show you where the book is, you must give me one hundred pieces of silver, and cause two coffins to be made for me, that so I may be buried as a rich priest.’

“ So the money was handed over, and the coffins were made, and then the priest said : ‘ The book you wish is in the middle of the River Nile at Coptos, in an iron box. In the iron box is a bronze box ; in the bronze box is a sycamore box ; in the

sycamore box is an ivory and ebony box ; in the ivory and ebony box is a silver box ; in the silver box is a gold box ; and in the gold box is the book. Round about the box are snakes and scorpions, and all sorts of crawling things ; and a deathless serpent keeps guard over all.'

"When my husband heard this he was so glad that he scarcely knew where he was. He came and told me all about it, and said : ' I am going to Coptos to bring back this book, and then I will never leave you any more.' But when I knew what was in his mind, I was very angry with the priest for what he had said, and I threatened him ; for I was sure that if my husband went up the Nile to look for the book, harm would come of it. Then I besought Na-nefer-ka-ptah not to go to Coptos ; but he would not listen to me. He went to Pharaoh and told him everything, and Pharaoh said to him : ' What do you really want, then ?'

" ' Give me your royal barge, with the crew and tackle,' said he, ' and I shall take my wife and my son, and go south and bring back this book ; and then I will never leave this place any more.'

"So we embarked on the royal barge and came to Coptos. When we arrived, the High-Priest and

the other priests of Isis at Coptos came down to meet us, bringing their wives to salute me. We offered sacrifice and stayed there for five days, the priests making holiday with Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and their wives making holiday with me. On the morning of the sixth day my husband caused a great quantity of pure wax to be brought to him. Out of it he made a boat with rowers and sailors. He recited a spell over them, which gave them life and breath, and then he launched the boat in the river, filling it with sand. Then he went on board, and I waited by the bank of the river, saying: 'I must see what will happen to him.'

"So Na-nefer-ka-ptah cried to his waxen sailors: 'Oarsmen, row me to the place where the book of Thoth lies;' and they rowed day and night, till in three days they came to the place. Then he threw sand into the river, and the water parted this way and that way, and lo! in the midst of the river-bed there was a great tangle of serpents and scorpions and all sorts of creeping things over the box. He recited a spell over them, and in a moment all their wriggling and twisting ceased, and they were held motionless by the power of his magic. Then he came to the deathless snake, and, as it reared its

fiery crest against him, he struck it a mighty blow, so that it fell dead before him ; but immediately it came to life again. A second time he slew it, and a second time it came to life. But the third time he filled his left hand with sand and drew his sword, and as the serpent reared up against him, he smote it so that it fell in two halves, and then in a moment he cast the sand between the writhing pieces of the creature's body, so that they could not come together again. The deathless snake was dead.

“Na-nefer-ka-ptah took the iron box out from the midst of the stiffened coil of serpents and scorpions, and opened it. Within it was a bronze box, and inside that a sycamore box, and inside that an ivory and ebony box, and inside that a silver box, and inside that a golden box, and in the golden box lay the book. He took it out, broke the seals and undid the knots, and unrolled it. When he had read the first spell, he charmed the heavens and the earth, the sea and the sky, the mountains and the rivers ; he understood what the birds say as they fly and the serpents as they crawl ; and when he called to the fish, a divine power made them come to the surface of the water. Then he recited another spell, and the



"SO WE EMBARKED ON THE ROYAL BARGE AND CAME TO COPTOS"

river closed again over the place where the box had been.

“So he went on board the waxen boat once more, and said: ‘Oarsmen, row me back again to the place where Ahura waits for me;’ and they rowed day and night for three days, till they found me sitting by the river-bank at Coptos. For all the time he was absent I had tasted neither food nor drink, but had sat like one dead.

“After we had welcomed one another, ‘By the life of Pharaoh,’ said I to him, ‘let me see this book for which we have taken so much trouble.’ He put the roll into my hand, and when I had read it, I could enchant everything just as he could. Then he made a copy of the whole book, washed off the ink with beer, and drank the beer; and so he knew everything that had been written in the roll of Thoth.

“So we embarked once more on the royal barge, and rowed northwards from Coptos. But the god Thoth had learned what we had done, and he went to Ra, the chief of the gods, and complained to him that Na-nefer-ka-ptah had robbed him of his book and killed its guardian serpent. Then said Ra: ‘He is in your hands, he and all that is his.’ Then Thoth sent a curse from heaven, saying: ‘Forbid

that Na-nefer-ka-ptah should ever return to Memphis safe and sound with his family.' In that very moment when the curse descended the little boy Merab came out from under the awning of the barge, and lo! he fell into the river. As he fell, all who saw him cried out, and his father came swiftly from the cabin. Swiftly, too, he spoke with words of power, and Merab rose to the surface of the water and was drawn on board. Then, as they laid him down on the deck, Na-nefer-ka-ptah recited another spell, and Merab opened his cold lips and told him all that had happened and how Thoth had accused him before the gods; but no spell could bring our little boy back to life again.

“So we returned sadly to Coptos, and there we embalmed little Merab, and laid him in the tomb with such honour as becomes a Prince of the house of Pharaoh; and we hastened northwards again, lest the King our father should hear first from others of what had happened, and should be troubled. But when we came to the place where Merab had been drowned, the curse wrought once more, and as I came out from under the awning of the barge, I too fell into the river. My husband brought me to the surface again by his spells; but

he could not bring me back to life. So he returned with me to Coptos, embalmed my body, and buried me beside our little son with the state that becomes a Princess.

“Then with a sad and lonely heart he embarked once more for Memphis; but as the barge passed the place where the curse had fallen upon us, he said to himself: ‘Would it not be better to die, and to be buried with them both? How shall I face Pharaoh and say to him: “I have taken your children with me; I have slain them, and now I come back alive to you”?’ He took a long piece of fine royal linen, and fastened the magic roll tightly round his waist; and then he went out from under the awning of the barge, and cast himself into the river. And all who saw it cried out: ‘Woe and lamentation! He is gone, the good scribe, the wise man who had no equal!’

“So at last the barge of Pharaoh finished its voyage, in very different guise from that in which it went forth, and no one knew what had become of Na-nefer-ka-ptah. But when the galley came to Memphis, Pharaoh and his courtiers, the garrison of the city, and all the priests came out in mourning garments to meet it; and, behold! they saw the

body of Na-nefer-ka-ptah, which, by his spells, had entangled itself with the steering-oars. They lifted it up, but none dared to take from his bosom the magic roll for which he had paid so dearly ; and when they had embalmed him and mourned him for many days, they buried him in this tomb.

“ Behold, therefore, Setna, I have told you all the sorrows which have come to us because of this book which you covet, and would fain take by force. You have no right to it, but we have ; for because of it our days of life on earth have been cut short. . . .”

So said Ahura ; but Setna would not listen to her pleading.

“ Give me the book,” he said roughly, “ or else I take it by force,” for he knew that the ghosts could not withstand a living man.

Then said Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and he spake craftily : “ If you are so hard-hearted, let us stake the book upon a game of draughts. I will play you for it, the best of fifty-two points.”

“ Done,” said Setna. So the board was taken from the funeral furniture ; and the two magicians, the living and the dead, sat down to play for the magic roll. Na-nefer-ka-ptah won the first game.

Triumphant, he recited a spell ; then he struck Setna on the head with the board, and Setna sank into the earth up to his knees. The pieces were arranged once more, and the second game began. It ended like the first, and Setna sank to his waist. Then the third game, Setna's last hope, went as the first and second had done, and the defeated wizard sank to his neck.

In despair he called for his foster-brother, An-he-hor-er-u, and said : " Hasten to Pharaoh, tell him what has happened, and bring here my book of incantations and the talisman of Ptah." An-he-hor-er-u hastened to the palace, and came back with the talisman. He placed it upon Setna's head, and Setna immediately rose out of the earth again. Then, stretching out his hand, he took the magic roll from between the two helpless ghosts ; and as he went forth from the tomb, light went before him, and darkness was behind him. Ahura wept as he went, crying : " Glory to the King of Darkness ! Glory to the King of Light ! All power is gone from our tomb." " Do not trouble yourself," said Na-nefer-ka-ptah, " I will make him bring back the book before long, with a forked stick in his hand and a fire-pan on his head." So Setna went

forth from the tomb, and it closed behind him, even as it was before, so that no man might know of the entrance. Then he went to Pharaoh, and told him all that had happened ; and Pharaoh said to him : “ If you are a wise man, you will put the book back in the tomb of Na-nefer-ka-ptah : otherwise he will make you bring it back, with a forked stick in your hand and a fire-pan on your head.” But Setna paid no heed to Pharaoh’s warning ; he could think of nothing but unrolling the book and reading it to everybody whom he met.

Then it happened one day that, as he walked in the court of the temple of Ptah, he saw a very beautiful girl. There was not a woman in all the land to match her in beauty ; she was richly dressed and bedecked with golden ornaments ; a number of young girls walked behind her, and she had fifty-two servants in her train. When Setna saw her, he was enchanted with her beauty. He sent his page to inquire her name, and found that she was Tabubua, daughter of a priest of the cat-goddess Bast. So eager was he that he followed her to her house, and there pled hard with her that she would marry him. Really, he was in a dream which Na-nefer-ka-ptah had sent upon him by enchantment,

and Tabubua was an evil spirit sent to torment him ; but this he did not know. Before she would consent to marry him, Tabubua insisted, first that he should give her all his estate as her marriage portion, next that he should disinherit his own children, and at last that he should cause his children to be slain. So in his madness he granted her wishes ; the children were slain, and their bodies were cast to the dogs and cats, and Setna heard the hungry brutes crunching their bones while he sat drinking wine with Tabubua. Then he claimed her promise ; but, as he stretched out his arms to her, she gave a dreadful cry and vanished ; and Setna awoke, and found himself lying in a miserable hovel, without a stitch of clothes to cover him.

Terribly ashamed and frightened, he hurried back to Memphis, and when he got to the palace he found his children, to his great joy, not as he had seen them in his dream—all mangled and bleeding—but safe and sound. Everyone marvelled to see the wise Prince in such a state, and Pharaoh his father looked upon him and said : “ Setna, have you been drunk, that you come here in such a miserable condition ? ” So Setna told him the whole story of his evil dream, and Pharaoh said :

“ Well, I warned you already that you would come to a bad end unless you gave back the book. Now take it back to Na-nefer-ka-ptah, with a forked stick in your hand and a fire-pan on your head.”

So Setna took the book, and with a forked stick in his hand and a fire-pan on his head, he went down again into the tomb. When she saw him, Ahura said : “ Setna, you may thank the great god Ptah that you are here alive.”

But Na-nefer-ka-ptah chuckled and said : “ What did I tell you before ? ” And while they talked, behold the whole tomb was filled with light.

Then said Setna very humbly : “ What penance do you put upon me, Na-nefer-ka-ptah ? ”

And Na-nefer-ka-ptah answered : “ You see, Setna, that the bodies of my wife Ahura and my son Merab are still at Coptos, though by my arts their ghosts are here with me. I order you to go to Coptos and bring them here, that we may be all united in one tomb.”

So Setna took the royal barge and went to Coptos, and there he searched vainly for three days and three nights in the cemetery, moving the tombstones and reading the inscriptions upon them, but nowhere could he find the tomb of Ahura and



SETNA RESTORES THE ROLL TO THE TOMB.

Merab. At last he found an old, old man, and asked him if he knew where they lay. The old man thought for a while, and then said: "My father's father's father once said to my father's father: 'The tomb of the Princess Ahura and her son Merab is under the southern angle of the priest's house.'"

"Has the priest done you any harm," said Setna, "that you want me to knock down his house?"

"Keep me under guard," said the old man, "while you knock down the house, and if you do not find the tomb, you may punish me as a rogue."

So they put him under guard, and pulled down the priest's house, and under its southern corner they found the tomb with the bodies of Ahura and Merab. Then they built up the house exactly as it was before, and taking Ahura and Merab on board the barge, Setna went back to Memphis. Then Pharaoh (to whom be life, health, and strength) caused the dead Princess and her son to be carried with honour to the tomb of Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and when the family had been united once more, the tomb was sealed, and they were left in peace.

This is the complete writing of the story of Setna-Khaemuas, and Na-nefer-ka-ptah, and his wife Ahura, and their son Merab. It was written by the scribe Zeharpet, in the fifteenth year, in the month Tybi.

CHAPTER V

THE WIZARDS OF THE EMPIRE—*Continued*

THE TRUE STORY OF SETNA-KHAEMUAS AND HIS SON SENOSIRIS.

ONCE upon a time there was a great King of Egypt, called User-maat-Ra (to whom be life, health, and strength). He had a son named Setna-Khaemuas, who was the wisest of all scribes in the land of Egypt; but Setna had no child, and his heart was very sad, and so was the heart of his wife. Now, it fell out that one night when Setna's wife was sleeping, the god Imhotep appeared to her in a dream, and promised her that a son should be born to her and her husband, and that he should work great miracles in the land of Egypt. When the little boy was born, they called him Senosiris, and he grew so fast that when he was one year old people would have said he was two, and when he was two they would have said that he was three. His father was so fond of him that he could not

bear to let him out of his sight even for an hour. When he grew big he was sent to school, but in a very short time he knew more than his teacher. Then he began to read spells with the scribes of the Double House of Life of the temple, so that all who heard him were filled with wonder; and Setna delighted to take him before Pharaoh on festival days, that he might see him striving with his magic against the magicians of Pharaoh, and holding his own with the best of them.

Now, after this it happened one day when Setna was bathing on the terrace of his house and Senosiris with him, that they heard a loud lamentation. They looked down, and behold there was a rich man being carried to his burial in the Mountain of the West with great mourning and honour. And while they looked, behold, a poor man was carried also to his grave, wrapped in a mat, and with no one to follow him or to weep over him.

Then said Setna: "By the life of Osiris, Lord of the Underworld, may my lot in Hades be like that of the rich man for whom they make mourning, and not like that of the poor man whom they bury without honour!"

But Senosiris, his little son, said to him:

“Father, may your lot in Hades be like that of the poor man, and may there never happen to you that which is happening to the rich man in Hades.”

When Setna heard these words, he was greatly grieved, and said : “Are these the words of a child who loves his father ?”

Then Senosiris said to him : “If you wish it, I shall show to you, each one in his own place, the poor man over whom no one wept, and the rich man over whom such lamentation was made.”

So Senosiris, the little boy, recited his spells. He took his father by the hand, and led him to a place which he did not know, in the mountain of Memphis. Here were seven great halls, and in them were people of all sorts. They passed through the first three, no man offering to hinder them. In the fourth they saw a number of men toiling hard, while behind them asses devoured all the fruit of their labours. Beside them were men over whose heads hung bread and water. Every now and then they sprang up to seize the food, but as fast as they sprang, others dug away the ground from beneath their feet, so that they were no nearer the bread than before.

When they came to the fifth hall, behold the pivot of the great door turned in the eye-socket of a man who lay beneath it, beseeching the gods for mercy, and uttering terrible cries of pain. When they came to the sixth hall, Setna saw the forty-two gods of the jury of the other world, sitting to try the causes of the souls of men, while the ushers of the court called the causes. When they came to the seventh hall, Setna saw the great god Osiris sitting on his throne of pure gold, and crowned with his diadem with its double plumes. Anubis, the great god, stood on his left, and Thoth, the great god, on his right, while all around sat the jury of the gods. In the midst of the hall stood a balance, and there the hearts of men were weighed. Those whose sins were more than their virtues, their souls and bodies were cast to the Devourer of the Unjustified; but he whose virtues were more than his sins, was led in among the gods, and his soul went up to heaven among the souls of the blest.

Then Setna saw a distinguished person, clothed in garments of fine linen, standing in a place of honour close to the throne of Osiris; and while he marvelled at all this that he was seeing, Senosiris

said to him : “ My father, do you see this noble personage, clothed in fine linen, standing close to the throne of Osiris ? This is the poor man whom you saw being carried to the grave, wrapped up in a mat, with no one to mourn over him. When he came here to judgment, it was found that his virtues were more than his sins, and that on earth he had not had the good fortune and happiness that he deserved ; and so it was ordained that all the treasures of the rich man whom you saw carried with honour to his grave should be transferred to him, and that he should be placed among the souls of the blessed, near to the throne of Osiris. As for the rich man, his sins were found to be more than his virtues, and punishment has fallen upon him. It is he who lies beneath the door of the fifth hall, with the pivot of the door turning in his eye-socket, while he prays for mercy and utters cries of pain. By the life of the great god Osiris, was not I right when I said to you on earth, ‘ May your lot be like that of the poor man, and not like that of the rich ? ’ ”

Then said Setna : “ My son Senosiris, many are the wonders I have seen in Hades. Now may I know who are the men who toil while the asses

devour behind them, and who are they who leap to grasp the bread hanging over their heads, while others dig the ground from beneath their feet ?”

Senosiris replied : “ My father, the first are men who on earth were cursed of the gods, and who toiled day and night for their living, only that their extravagant wives might devour all that they earned. When they came to Hades, it was found that their sins were more than their virtues, and so their punishment here is the same as it was on earth. As for those whose bread hangs over their heads, and who yet can never reach it, these are men who on earth seemed to have prosperity in their grasp, but God’s providence, no man knew why, never allowed them to attain it. When they came here, it was found that their sins were greater than their virtues, and so their punishment here is the same as that which had begun for them on earth.”

So when Senosiris had spoken thus, he and his father returned to Memphis, and Setna could not tell what was the way by which he had descended into Hades. Therefore Setna marvelled greatly because of the things which he had seen in the other world, and when the little boy Senosiris was

twelve years old, there was not a scribe or a magician in Memphis who could equal him in the reading of spells.

Now, after this, it fell out on a day that Pharaoh was seated in the audience-chamber of his palace at Memphis, while all the Princes, the chief officers, and the great men of Egypt, stood before him, each according to his rank at Court. Then came there an usher to the King and said: "Thus and thus says a vile Ethiopian, even that he carries with him a sealed letter unto Pharaoh (to whom be life, health, and strength)."

So the man was brought unto the Court, and he made obeisance, saying: "Is there any man here who can read the sealed letter which I bring to Pharaoh without opening it or breaking the seals? If there is no man in Egypt, scribe or magician, who can do this, then I will proclaim Egypt inferior to the land of the negroes—my country."

When Pharaoh and his servants heard these words, they were greatly troubled, saying: "By the life of Ptah, where is there a wise scribe or a magician clever enough to read a letter without opening it or breaking the seals thereof?"

Then said Pharaoh : " Call to me Setna-Khaemuas, my son." When Setna came, he bowed to the ground and adored Pharaoh ; then he arose and stood upright, blessing and praising Pharaoh. Then said Pharaoh to him : " My son Setna, have you heard the words wherewith this filthy Ethiopian has spoken before my Majesty, saying, ' Is there a good scribe or a wise man in Egypt who can read the letter which is in my hand without opening it or breaking the seals ? ' "

The moment Setna heard this he was troubled and said : " Mighty Lord, who is there that can read a letter without opening it ? Nevertheless, let me have ten days' grace, that I may see what I can do, lest Egypt should be proclaimed inferior to the land of these gum-eating negroes."

Then answered Pharaoh : " So be it, my son Setna."

So they appointed a lodging for the Ethiopian messenger, and they made him filthy food, such as the Ethiopians love ; and Pharaoh arose from his throne heavy and displeased exceedingly, and went to bed without eating or drinking.

Setna went to his house, scarcely knowing whither he went. He wrapped himself in a mantle

from head to foot, and lay down upon his bed in great perplexity. His wife heard of it and came to his room. "Setna, my husband," she said, "you have no fever, your limbs are whole, your sickness is nothing but sadness of heart."

"Leave me, my wife," he answered; "the business that troubles me is not a matter to tell to a woman."

Then came the little boy Senosiris. He bent over his father and said to him: "My father, why have you lain down, heavy at heart? Tell me the troubles that weigh upon you, that I may take them away."

"Leave me, my son Senosiris," he answered; "you are too young to understand the matters that grieve my heart."

"Tell me them, all the same," said Senosiris, "that I may calm your heart with regard to them."

Then said Setna to him; "My son Senosiris, it is a vile Ethiopian who has come into Egypt, carrying with him a sealed letter, and saying: 'Is there anyone here who can read this letter without opening it? If there is no good scribe or wise man able to read it, I will proclaim Egypt inferior to

my country, the land of the negroes.' I have lain down grieved and heavy of heart over this business."

When Senosiris heard this he laughed in his father's face.

"Why are you laughing?" said Setna.

"I am laughing to see you making such a to-do over such a trifle. Rise up, my father, for I will read everything that is written in the letter without opening it or breaking the seals."

"But what proof can you give me, Senosiris, my son, that you can do this?"

"My father," said he, "go to your library in the basement of the house, and I will tell you the name of each book that you choose as you take it out of its case, remaining here myself all the time."

So Setna went to his library, and Senosiris read for him every book that he took out, without its being opened. Setna came up from the basement the happiest man on earth. He lost no time in going to the palace where Pharaoh was; he told him all that Senosiris had said, and Pharaoh rejoiced exceedingly.

When the morrow came, Pharaoh came into the audience-chamber in the midst of his nobles; he

sent for the vile Ethiopian, who was brought into the hall with the sealed letter upon him, and stood in the midst of the Court. The child Senosiris also came and stood in the midst, beside the vile Ethiopian. Then he spake thus against him, saying: "The curse of Amen thy god be upon thee, Ethiopian! Thou hast dared, then, to come to Egypt, the sweet pool of Osiris, saying, 'I shall proclaim the inferiority of Egypt to the land of the negroes.' May the anger of Amen thy god fall upon thee! Listen to the words which I shall recite unto thee, and which are written in the letter, and do not dare to deny them falsely before Pharaoh thy sovereign."

When the vile Ethiopian saw the child he bowed his head to the ground and said: "I will say nothing false concerning what thou sayest."

Here beginneth the story which Senosiris recited in the midst of the Court before Pharaoh and his nobles, the people of Egypt listening to his voice, while he read all that was written in the letter which the vile Ethiopian carried. Thus he spake:

"It happened one day, in the prosperous times of the King Siamen, that, as the King of the Land

of the Negroes took his siesta in the pleasaunce of Amen, he heard three vile Ethiopians talking in a house behind him. One of them spake loudly, saying, among other things, ‘If Amen would keep me safe from the anger of the King of Egypt, I would cast my spells upon Egypt, so that for three days and three nights there should be thick darkness, and no one should see the light.’ The second said, ‘If Amen would keep me safe from the anger of the King of Egypt, I would cast a spell upon Egypt, and bring Pharaoh of Egypt to the Land of the Negroes, give him publicly, before the King, five hundred blows with the courbash, and carry him back to Egypt in exactly six hours.’ The third said, ‘If Amen would keep me safe from the anger of the King of Egypt, I would cast a spell upon Egypt so that nothing should grow in the fields for three years.’

“Then the King of Ethiopia caused the three vile Ethiopians to be brought before him, and said to the second of them : ‘Execute by your magic spells that which you have said, and, by my god Amen, if you do it well, I will make you rich.’

“So the wizard, whose name was Horus, made of wax a litter with four bearers ; he recited a spell



"THE CURSE OF AMEN, THY GOD, BE UPON THEE, ETHIOPIAN!"

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over them, and breathed hard upon them ; he gave them life, and said : ‘ You will go to Egypt ; you will bring back Pharaoh to this place where the King is ; you will give him a good beating, five hundred blows with the courbash, before the King, and then you will carry him back again to Egypt, all in six hours, and not a minute more.’

“ They answered, ‘ We will leave nothing undone of what you have ordered.’ So the familiars of the Ethiopian hastened to Egypt ; they made themselves masters of the night ; they took possession of the Pharaoh Siamen ; they brought him to the Land of the Negroes where the King was ; they gave him a good beating, five hundred blows of the courbash, in public before the King, and then they carried him back to Egypt, all in six hours, and not a minute more.”

Thus spake Senosiris before Pharaoh and his nobles and the people of Egypt ; and then he said to the Ethiopian : “ The curse of Amen thy god be upon thee ! Are not my words the words of the letter which is in thy hand ? ”

The vile Ethiopian answered : “ Go on reading, for all your words are true, so far as you have gone.”

Then said Senosiris: "After all this had happened, Pharaoh awoke, sore all over with the blows which he had received. In the morning he said to his courtiers, 'What evil thing has happened to Egypt that I have been obliged to leave it?'

"Ashamed at their own thoughts, the courtiers said one to another: 'Has Pharaoh gone mad?' Then they said aloud: 'What is the meaning of the words which thou hast spoken before us, O great Lord?' Then Pharaoh arose; he showed them his back, all scarred with blows, and he said: 'By the life of the great god Ptah, someone has carried me to the Land of the Negroes during the night. They have given me a good beating, five hundred blows with the whip, before the King of the Ethiopians, and they have brought me back, all in six hours, and not a minute more.'

"When his courtiers saw the scarred back of Pharaoh, they uttered loud cries of astonishment. Now, the Pharaoh Siamen had a head librarian named Horus, son of Panehsi, and he was very wise.

"When he came before the King, he gave a great cry, saying: 'My lord, this is the magic of the Ethiopians. By the life of your royal house, I

will make them come to your house of torture and execution !

“Then said Pharaoh : ‘ Be quick about it then, lest I be carried to the Land of the Negroes another night.’

“So the chief scribe Horus went at once. He took his magic books and charms to the palace, and put a charm upon Pharaoh, so that the spells of the Ethiopians should not take hold upon him. Then he went to the temple of Thoth, the nine times great god, and prayed for his help.

“The image of the great god spake to him, saying : ‘ Go to-morrow morning to the library of the temple ; there you will find a shrine, closed and sealed ; open it, and you will find a box in which is a book which I have written with my own hand. Take it, copy it, and put it back again ; for it is the spell which protects against evil, and it will protect Pharaoh, and save him from the sorceries of the Ethiopians.’

“The wise scribe Horus therefore did as the god had told him, and wrote a charm for Pharaoh ; and the next night, when the familiars of the Ethiopian came, they could not master Pharaoh, because he was guarded by the spell which Horus had made for him.

“Next day Pharaoh told the chief scribe Horus all that he had seen during the night, and how the familiars of the Ethiopian had failed.

“Then Horus the son of Panehsi got a quantity of pure wax ; he made a litter with four bearers out of it ; he spake a spell over them ; he breathed hard upon them, and gave them life, and he said to them : ‘ You will go to the Land of the Negroes ; you will bring back the King of the Ethiopians to Pharaoh’s palace ; you will give him a sound beating, five hundred blows with the courbash in public before Pharaoh, and you will carry him back to the Land of the Negroes all in six hours, and not a minute more.’”

“They answered : ‘ Truly we will perform all that thou hast commanded.’”

“The familiars travelled swiftly by night on the clouds of heaven to the Land of the Negroes. They took possession of the King ; they brought him into Egypt ; they gave him a sound beating with the courbash, five hundred blows before the King of Egypt ; then they carried him back to the Land of the Negroes, all in six hours, and not a minute more.”

Thus spake Senosiris in the midst of the Court

before Pharaoh and his nobles, with the people of Egypt hearkening, and then he said: "The curse of Amen thy god be upon thee, wicked Ethiopian. Are the words that I speak those which are written in this letter?"

Bowing to the ground, the Ethiopian answered: "Continue to read, for all that thou hast said is as it is written."

Then Senosiris went on: "After all this had happened, and the King of the Ethiopians was back in the palace again, he awoke, sore all over from the blows which he had received in Egypt. He said to his courtiers, 'What my sorceries did to Pharaoh, the sorceries of Pharaoh have done to me. I have been carried into Egypt, beaten before Pharaoh, and brought back again.' He turned his back to the courtiers, and, seeing his scars, they made a great outcry. The King sent for Horus the Ethiopian magician, and said: 'Beware of the anger of Amen my god! Let me see how you will save me from the enchantments of your Egyptian rival.' The Ethiopian wizard made charms and fastened them upon the King to save him; but the next night he was carried to Egypt and beaten once more, and the same thing hap-

pened the third night. Then the King was very angry, and said to his wizard: 'Bad luck to you, enemy of Ethiopia! You have humbled me before the Egyptians, and have not been able to save me from their hands. By the life of Amen, unless you can save me from the spells of the Egyptians, I shall deliver you over to a cruel and lingering death!'

"'My lord the King,' said he, 'let me go into Egypt, that I may see this Egyptian wizard, and work my magic against him, and punish him for all that he has done.'

"So the King gave him leave to go, and he went first to his old mother, and told her all that had happened, and how the King had threatened him with a cruel and lingering death unless he was able to conquer the wizardries of the Egyptian magician. 'My son,' said she, 'be wise, and do not go near the place where Horus of Egypt dwells. If you go to Egypt to work magic, beware; for you cannot conquer the Egyptians, and you will never come back again to the Land of the Negroes.' 'It is of no use to talk in such a fashion,' said he, 'for I must go.' Then said his mother: 'Since you must go into Egypt, let us

fix upon signals between us, so that if you are conquered I may come to help you.' 'If I am beaten,' he said, 'whenever you drink or eat the water will change to the colour of blood, the food will change to the colour of blood, and the sky will change to the colour of blood before you.'

"So when they had agreed upon these signals, the Ethiopian wizard journeyed into Egypt. When he came into the hall of audience before Pharaoh, he cried with a loud voice, saying: 'Ha! who is this that works sorcery against me in the presence of Pharaoh, King of Egypt, and has brought the King of Ethiopia into Egypt against his will?' Then Horus the Egyptian wizard stood forth and cried: 'Ha! thou vile Ethiopian! Is it not thou who hast carried Pharaoh my master to the land of Ethiopia and beaten him there? Yet thou comest to Egypt saying, "Who works sorcery against me?" By the life of the god of Heliopolis, the gods of Egypt have brought thee here to punish thee! Gather thy courage, for I come against thee!' Then said the Ethiopian wizard: 'Is this dog who barks at me he who works magic against me?'

"So saying he spake a spell; and lo! a flame

burst out in the audience-chamber, and Pharaoh and the chiefs of the land of Egypt cried aloud: 'Help us, O Horus, chief of the scribes!' Then the Egyptian wizard spake a spell, and lo! a great rain from the south fell upon the fire, and it was extinguished in a moment. Then the Ethiopian spake another spell, and lo! a huge black cloud came over the audience-chamber, so that no one could see his neighbour. But the Egyptian wizard recited a spell towards the sky, and it became clear once more. The Ethiopian spake a third spell, and lo! a great vault of stone—two hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide—rose up over Pharaoh and his Princes to separate Egypt from its King. Pharaoh looked up; he saw the immense vault hanging over his head, and he and all that were with him uttered a great cry of fear. But Horus the Egyptian spake another spell, and behold! a papyrus boat appeared, and loaded itself with the great vault of stone and sailed away with it to the Lake Moeris.

“Now, when the vile Ethiopian saw that he could not contend with the Egyptian wizard, he made himself invisible by art magic, thinking to go back to the Land of the Negroes, his own country. But

the Egyptian wizard cast a spell over him, and, behold! Pharaoh and all his Court saw the vanquished wizard like a loathly bird, ready to fly away. Horus recited another spell, and cast him down upon his back with a falconer over him, his knife in his hand, ready to kill him. Then away in Ethiopia the signals which the Ethiopian wizard had agreed upon with his mother came to pass, and her food and drink changed to the colour of blood.

“ At once she changed herself into the form of a goose, and flew towards Egypt, where she hovered over the palace of Pharaoh, calling loudly to her son. Horus, the Egyptian wizard, looked up to the sky; he saw her there, and knew who she was. He spake a spell, and threw her down to the ground with a falconer standing over her, and threatening her with his knife. Then she changed her shape once more, and became again an Ethiopian woman, and besought the Egyptian wizard, saying: ‘ Slay us not, O Horus, son of Panehsi! but pardon our crime. Only give us a boat to travel in, and we will never return to Egypt.’ Horus refused to reverse his spells unless the wizard and his mother swore by the gods never to return to Egypt. She raised her hand and swore, and her son also swore, saying:

‘I will not return to Egypt until 1,500 years have passed.’ Then the Egyptian reversed his spells; he gave a boat to the Ethiopian wizard and his mother, and they hastened back to the Land of the Negroes.”

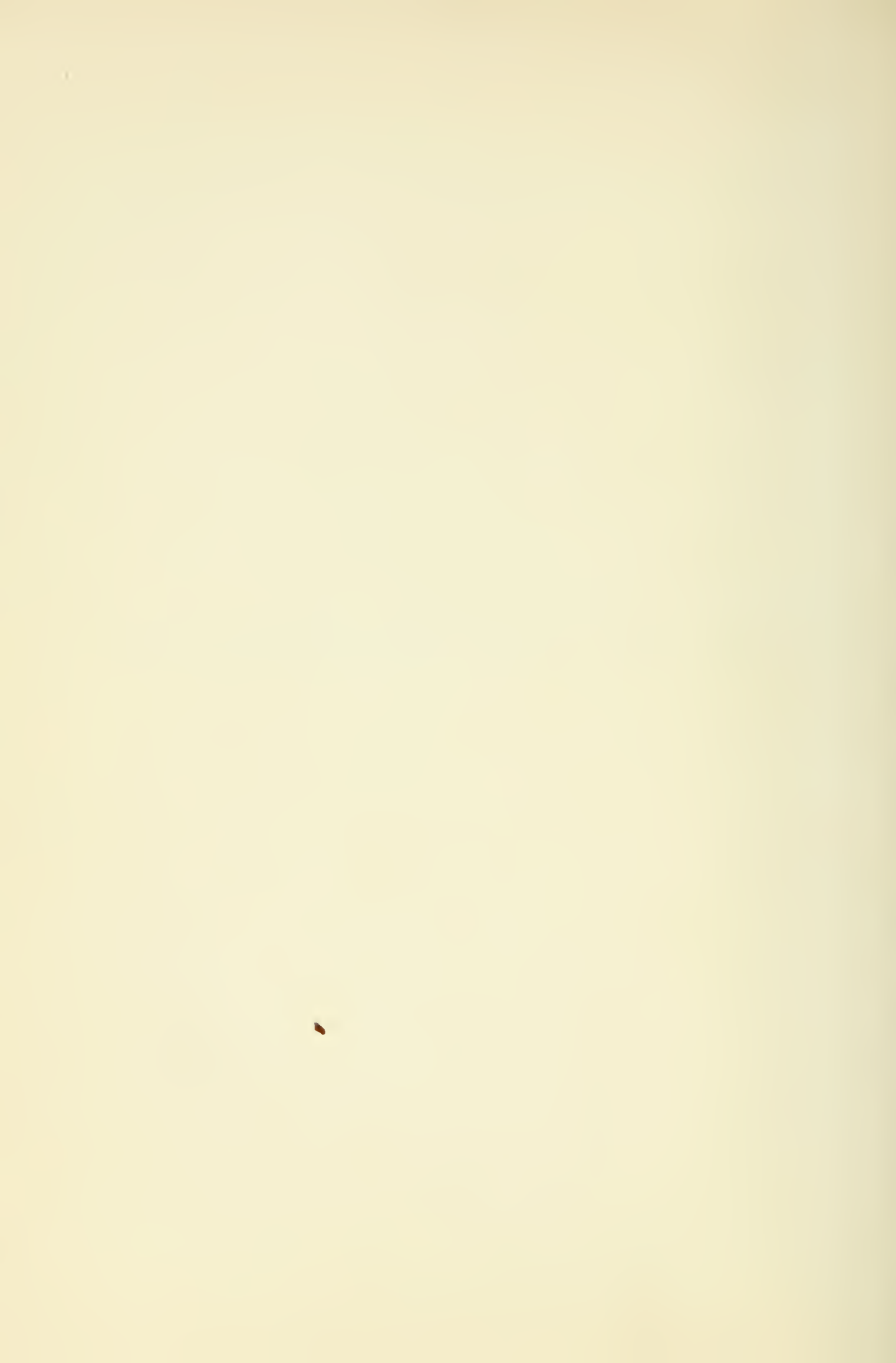
Thus spake Senosiris before Pharaoh, while Setna his father and all the people listened. Then, turning to the Ethiopian, who bowed with his head to the ground, he cried to Pharaoh: “By thy life, my mighty lord, this wretch whom thou seest here is Horus the Ethiopian wizard, whose wicked acts I have recounted. He has not repented him of his evil; but now that the 1,500 years have passed he has returned to work sorcery upon Egypt again. And I! I am Horus the Egyptian! When I learned in Hades that this vile Ethiopian was coming to bewitch Egypt, knowing that there was no scribe in Egypt strong enough to contend with him, I besought Osiris to let me return to earth again that I might hinder him from humbling Egypt before Ethiopia. I was born again as the son of Setna for this one end, that I might work wizardry against this filthy Ethiopian who stands here.”

So saying, he spake a spell against the Ethiopian,

and he wrapped him in fire, which straightway consumed him in the sight of Pharaoh and all his Court. Then Senosiris himself vanished like a shade from before Pharaoh and his father Setna, and they saw him no more. Pharaoh and all his nobles marvelled exceedingly at what they had seen, saying: "Never was there a good scribe or wise man like Horus, the son of Panchsi; neither will there ever be another like unto him again." But Setna mourned, and made great lamentation, because his son had vanished like a shadow. In the fulness of time his wife bore him another son; but he never ceased to make offerings to the spirit of Horus the son of Panchsi, who had also been his little son Senosiris.

BOOK II

TALES OF TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE



CHAPTER VI

THE STORY OF THE SHIPWRECKED SAILOR AND THE TALKING SERPENT

OUR next story requires a little bit of explanation to begin with. It was found on an old papyrus roll which is now in one of the museums of Petrograd, and perhaps part of the story has gone amissing, for at present it begins very abruptly ; but we can quite well picture what must have gone before.

The story is told by one of the officers of an exploring vessel to his chief, the Prince in command of the expedition. The Egyptians, you know, were really the first African explorers. So long ago that we can scarcely realize it, they sent their ships away down the Red Sea to the country which we now call Somaliland. Of course they didn't call it Somaliland then ; they called it The Divine Land, or The Land of Ghosts, and they got all sorts of wonderful things from it—incense, and gold-dust, and giraffes and apes.

But besides that, they sent expeditions both by land and river southwards into the Land of Ethiopia and the Soudan. They called that land The Land of Wawat, and their expeditions were often quite big affairs, lasting many months, and sometimes running great risks. More than once a whole exploring party was cut off by the natives and never returned, and sometimes the Egyptians had to send a flying column of armed men down into the south country to bring back the bodies of the explorers who had perished, so that they might have honourable burial in their own country.

Well, then, you are to imagine one of these expeditions coming home by river. The great galley, gorgeous with scarlet and green and gold, comes flashing round the bends of the river between the stony Nubian hills, the rowers bending lustily to their oars because they know that every stroke is bringing them nearer home. In the waist of the great ship is piled the cargo—gold-dust in bags, ivory, ebony—perhaps a prisoner or two, one of them, maybe, a little dwarf, whom they are bringing down as a present to the Pharaoh. By-and-by he will be made a jester in the Court, and the King

and his courtiers will laugh at his uncouth dances and his quaint foreign ways.

Mile after mile the galley swings on, and now the great rock of Abu Simbel is passed. Some day a famous Pharaoh will come up here himself and order that rock to be made into a huge temple. The Egyptian architects will hew away at it till they have hollowed out the very heart of the cliff, and left it changed into the most wonderful of temples, in front of which four great statues of the Pharaoh, hewn from the solid rock, sit with their hands on their knees, looking solemnly across the river. But that will not be for many a long day yet, and meanwhile there is nothing but the great rock, bare and frowning and grim.

Still northward the galley swings day by day, until at last the Island of Philae can be seen in the distance, and the sailors know that they are almost at their journey's end. Behind the island lie the docks of Shellal, where their ship will moor, and the familiar thunder of the First Cataract is already in their ears as the vessel rushes onwards with a line of foam at her bows.

On board the vessel everyone is wild with excitement and delight at seeing Egyptian soil again

after so long a journey—everyone except one man. He lies under the awning in the gaily decorated little cabin at the stern of the ship, and his heart is very heavy. To-day his men will reach home and be at the end of all their toils and troubles; but his are only beginning. He has still to make a long journey down the river to Pharaoh's Court, and at the end of it he will have to make his report to the King. Perhaps he knows that the report is not too favourable; for some think that one of the ships of the expedition had been lost, or perhaps the cargo is not so good as was expected.

But even if he can report a most successful journey, he knows perfectly well that he will have no peace till the terrible interview with Pharaoh is over, for Pharaoh is God; to enter his presence is a terror. If he is angry with his servants, his anger is a consuming fire; and the Prince, as he lies in his cabin, feels that he would rather face the Nubian bows and spears a dozen times over than face "the good God" who is waiting to hear his story. So he lies tossing to and fro on his couch in the cabin, wondering whether his fate will be favourable or the reverse. If he makes a good impression with his report, or finds Pharaoh in a



"OUR SHIP WENT DOWN."

good humour, he may get promotion, and have a gold collar put round his neck by the King's own hand ; but if he does not happen to please the King, well, he knows what the upshot of that is likely to be—banishment to some miserable frontier-station on the eastern desert will be the least of it. Oh, if it were only all over, and he knew what his fate was to be !

In the midst of all his misery there comes in the ship-captain to make his report. He is an old sailor who has grown grey in the royal service, and has himself commanded smaller expeditions both on the river and on the Red Sea ; so, when he saw his chief looking utterly miserable, he knew perfectly what was the matter. He had been there himself, and knew what it was to have the report to Pharaoh hanging over one's head. So it came into his mind that he would try to cheer up his chief by telling him a story of his own adventures, and of the wonders that had befallen him. I dare say the Prince was in no great mood to listen to stories ; but he might as well let the old sailor talk as lie there eating his own heart out. So he signed to the captain that he could speak, and this is what the old man said :

“ Good luck, Prince ! Behold, we have reached home. They have taken the mallet and driven in the mooring-post, and the ship’s cable has been passed ashore. The crew is shouting and praising God, each man embracing his neighbour, and the crowd is shouting ‘ Good luck ’ to us. Without any loss among our soldiers we have reached the end of the Land of Wawat, we have passed the Island of Sen-mut, and now, see, we have come back in peace, and are in our own country. Listen to me, Prince, for I am talking simple sense without exaggeration. Pluck up heart, wash yourself, and pour water on your fingers. Then, when you are called to speak, answer the King like a man with a good heart in you. Reply to him without losing your head ; for a man’s speech either saves him or condemns him. Follow your own good sense, and may your speech be pleasing in the ears of Pharaoh.

“ Hearken, now, to me, and I shall tell you the story of a similar adventure which happened to myself. I was going to the Royal Mines, and I went down on the Great Green Sea in a vessel of one hundred and fifty cubits long and forty cubits broad. She carried one hundred and fifty

sailors, the very pick of all the land of Egypt, men who were both weather-wise and war-wise, and who were bolder than lions. They were sure that there would be no storm, and that no harm would come to us; but the tempest burst upon us while we were in mid-ocean, and before we could sight land the increasing wind had raised enormous waves. Our ship went down, and not one soul of the crew was saved except myself.

“I managed to seize a plank, and by good fortune a great wave washed me ashore upon an island. I passed three days alone, with no other companion than my own heart. Night by night I slept in the fork of a tree, and day by day I sallied out in search of something to eat. I found figs and grapes, magnificent pears, berries and grain, melons in abundance, fish and birds—there was nothing wanting that heart could desire. I satisfied myself, and left lying on the ground what was over of the abundance with which my hands had been filled. I made a fire-drill, I lighted a fire, and I made an offering to the gods.

“Suddenly I heard a voice like thunder, and I thought, ‘It is a great wave of the sea.’ The trees groaned, the earth trembled, I uncovered my face,

and looked round. Behold, a great serpent was drawing near! He was thirty cubits long, and had a beard more than two cubits in length; his body was overlaid with pure gold, his eyebrows were of true lapis-lazuli, and his form was even more perfect than his face. I flung myself on my face and made salaam before him, and, towering over me, he opened his mouth and spake, saying: 'What has brought thee here, what has brought thee here, little one, what has brought thee? If thou dost not tell me speedily what has brought thee to this isle, I shall quickly show thee, by burning thee to ashes, what it is to become invisible.'

"So he spake, and I hearkened without understanding; I was before him like a man without sense. Then he took me up in his mouth, he carried me to his lair, and he set me down there without any hurt. I was safe and sound, and no harm had been done to any of my limbs.

"Then once more he opened his mouth while I lay on my face before him, and this is what he said to me: 'What has brought thee, what has brought thee, little one, to this isle of the sea, whose two shores are washed by the waves?'

“ With my hands hanging down before him, I replied : ‘ I was going to the Royal Mines on a mission of the King in a ship of one hundred and fifty cubits long by forty cubits broad. She carried one hundred and fifty sailors, the pick of the Land of Egypt ; they were both weather-wise and war-wise, and they were bolder of heart than lions. They were sure that there would be no storm, and that no disaster would happen to us ; each one was stronger of arm and braver of heart than his neighbour, and there were no cowards among them. But the storm burst upon us while we were on the open sea, and before we could reach the land the gale increased, and raised enormous waves. I snatched a plank ; but, as for the ship, she perished, and of the crew not one survived but myself alone, who am now here before thee. And as for me, it was only by the good fortune of being washed up by a wave that I got to land.’

“ He answered me : ‘ Fear not, little one, fear not, and do not wear so sad a face ! If you have come to me, it is because the gods have allowed you to live, and have brought you to this Island of the Blest, where nothing is lacking, and which is

filled with all sorts of good things. Now, behold, you shall pass month after month, until you have spent four months on this island. Then a ship will come, with sailors of your own people ; you will go home with them, and you will die in your own town.

“ ‘ Now, it is a pleasure to talk about one’s own experience, when once the sadness is past ; so I shall tell you the exact story of what is in this isle. I was here with my brethren and my children, in the midst of them ; we numbered seventy-five serpents, my children and my brethren, without counting a young girl who was brought here by art magic. For, a star having fallen from heaven, those who were in the fire with the girl perished, even all my companions ; and, though I could not come near to the fire lest I should be destroyed, I found her afterwards lying among the dead bodies. But now she is dead, and all my brethren are dead, and I am alone. Now, if you are brave and of a stout heart, you shall yet clasp your children to your bosom, you shall embrace your wife, you shall see your own house ; and, best of all, you shall return to your own land and live among your own people.’ ”

“ Then I cast myself on my face and made

salaam, and I said to him : ‘ I shall describe your Highness’s being to my Sovereign ; I shall make him understand your greatness, and I shall send to you ointment, holy oils, perfumes, cassia, and the sacred incense with which men seek the favour of the gods. I shall recount what has happened to me, and what I have seen of thy wonderful nature, and they shall adore thee in my town in presence of all the mighty men of the earth. I shall slay for thee bulls in burnt-offering, I shall slay birds for thee, and I shall send thee ships laden with all the treasures of Egypt, as one would do to a god who is the friend of man in a distant and unknown land.’

“ He laughed at what I said, and, chuckling at his own thought, he answered me : ‘ Is there not plenty of myrrh under your eyes, and abundance of incense on every hand ? For, as for me, I am Lord of the Land of Ghosts, and I have myrrh in plenty ; only this holy oil which you talk of is not common in this island. But do not think that you will ever see this isle again ; for, as soon as you have left it, it will be transformed into waves once more.’

“ Now, behold, even as he had predicted, the vessel came after four months : and when I saw

her in the distance I ran and climbed a high tree, and I recognized the sailors. Then I went to tell the news to my good friend, the serpent; but I found that he knew of it already, for he said to me: 'Good luck, good luck, little one! Return to your dwelling-place, behold your children, and may your name be good in your town; these are my wishes for you.'

"Then I cast myself on my face, and made salaam before him, and he gave me gifts of myrrh, of perfume, of ointment, of cassia, of pepper, of antimony, of cypress, much incense, courbashes of hippopotamus-tail, ivory, greyhounds, apes, giraffes, and all excellent treasures. I loaded the whole upon the ship; then once more I cast myself upon my face, and adored the serpent. He said to me, 'Behold, in two months you will arrive at your own land, you will press your children to your heart, and, afterwards, in a good old age you will go to inherit new life in your tomb.'

"So then I went down to the shore where the ship lay, and I called the soldiers who were on board. I rendered adoration on the shore to the master of the island, and those who were with me on the ship did likewise. We returned to the



"BEHOLD, A GREAT SERPENT WAS DRAWING NEAR!"

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north, to the palace of the King, arriving there the second month, even as the serpent had said. I obtained audience of Pharaoh, and I offered to him the presents which I had brought from the enchanted island, and he honoured me in presence of the mighty men of the Double Kingdom. Behold he made me his personal attendant, and, for a reward of my labour, I received a number of handsome slaves. Look upon me now that I have come back to the land of Egypt, having passed through such hazards ; and take my advice, for it is a good thing for men to hearken unto wise counsel."

But the Prince would not listen ; he said wearily : " Do not be a fool, my friend ; does anyone give water to a goose the night before it is killed ? "

Thus it is finished, from the beginning to the end, as it has been found in the writings. He who has written it is the swift-fingered scribe, Ameny-Amenu (life, health, strength !).

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVENTURES OF SINUHE

THE story which follows differs from the others which we have to recount (with the possible exception of the tale of the capture of Joppa) in this, that it bears all the marks of being an absolutely true story. It gives a picture of Egyptian and Syrian life in the great period of the Twelfth Dynasty, when Egypt reached a height of power and splendour scarcely surpassed in her later days. The old King who dies at the beginning of the story is the Pharaoh Amenemhat I., and the King who succeeds him is Senusert I., a famous soldier of those old days. Why Sinuhe was so terrified when he heard of the old King's death is rather a puzzle. It is possible that he may have been closely connected with the royal family in some way or other, and may have been afraid that the new King might look upon him as a possible rival, and might think it advisable to get rid of him.

A general slaughter of brothers and other near relations has never been thought an out-of-the-way act on the part of a newly enthroned Oriental King, but rather a reasonable and prudent precaution. Or perhaps Sinuhe may have known that he had an enemy in the new King, and while he felt himself safe so long as the old Pharaoh was alive, he may have feared what might happen when his protector was dead.

Possibly some day an explorer may light upon the actual tomb that the wanderer was so proud of; and we may learn how it was that he was so frightened, and why, even when he came back to Egypt, he had to leave his family behind him in Palestine. Meanwhile he has left us a very useful and interesting picture of life in the East, not very long before the days of Abraham. We see the Egyptian fugitive with his higher training and greater skill in war, taking at once a leader's place among the Syrian tribesmen—just as an Englishman might do in Africa—while his single combat with the Syrian champion is quite in the style of David and Goliath. Then we see the Egyptian's passionate yearning for his native land, and, what seems strange to us, the manner in which he

counted it absolutely unbearable that he should have to be buried in a foreign country without all the funeral ceremonies on which the people of the Nile Valley laid such stress. And when the yearning has conquered the dread which he still had of the enmity of Senusert, and the fugitive is welcomed back to the Court with every mark of honour and regard, we see how overwhelming was the awe which was felt by a loyal Egyptian when he came into the presence of the Pharaoh, who, to him, was God manifest in the flesh. Altogether there is no piece of ancient Egyptian literature which gives a fresher or more vivid picture of the manners and customs of those far-off days than the story of the Adventures of Sinuhe.

The hereditary Prince, the King's servant, the Sole Friend, administrator of the royal domains, and Keeper of the Gate of the Desert, the true and beloved royal acquaintance Sinuhe, saith :

“ As for me, I am the attendant of my master, servant of the household of the hereditary Princess Neferit, the feudal chieftainess, the royal daughter of Amenemhat. On the seventh day of the third month of the season Akhet, in the thirtieth year of

his reign, the god entered his horizon, the King Sehotepabra flew up to heaven, and was united to the Solar disc, the members of the god were joined to Him Who had created them. (All this high-flown language simply signifies that King Amenemhat I. died.) Behold the place was in silence, all hearts mourned! the double Great Gate was shut and sealed, the courtiers crouched with head on knees, and the people lamented.

“Now, it was so that His Majesty had sent a great host to the land of the Libyans, and his eldest son, the good god Senusert (life, health, strength!), was in command. He had been sent to smite the foreign lands and to subdue the Libyan tribes, and now he was returning, bringing Libyan prisoners and numberless cattle of all kinds. The councillors of the palace had sent messengers westwards to tell the Prince of what had happened in the royal hall. The messengers found him by night on the march, for the matter was urgent. The Hawk soared with his followers without saying aught to the host; even the royal Princes who were with the army were commanded not to breathe a word of what had taken place.” (The Hawk is the new King Senusert, who hastens secretly with his body-

guard to the palace to secure the throne against any possible claimant.)

“But it came to pass that I was standing near, and I heard his voice as he spake. Then I fled, for my heart wellnigh burst, my arms were powerless, fear fell upon all my members, and I ran hither and thither seeking a place wherein to hide me. Slipping between two thickets that I might get off the beaten track, I journeyed southwards; but I did not dream of returning to the palace, for I knew not but that civil war might already have broken out there. I called down no blessing on the royal house, but I turned towards the district of the Sycamore. I reached the Isle of Seneferu, and I passed the day there in a field; at the next dawn I started again and fared onwards. I overtook a man by the wayside, and he cried me mercy, for I was terrible to behold. Towards evening I came to the town of Nekau, and I crossed the river on a rudderless raft, helped by the west wind. Then I travelled eastwards by the quarries of Aku and the land of the goddess Herit, Lady of the Red Mountain.

“Turning now towards the north, I reached the Royal Wall, built to keep back and to control

the desert tribes; and lest I should be seen by the guards upon the wall, I kept myself hidden all day in a thicket. When night came, I set out once more, and by the dawn of the next day I reached Peten, and rested in the defile of Kamur. Then thirst fell upon me and overwhelmed me. I fainted; my throat was parched; already I said in my soul, 'Verily this is the taste of death,' when suddenly I lifted up my heart again and gathered my strength—I had heard the noise of a caravan. The Arabs noticed me, and one of their chiefs, who had been in Egypt, recognized me. Behold, he gave me water, and caused milk to be boiled for me; then I went with him and his tribe, and one tribe passed me on to another. I turned away from the land of Sunu and reached the land of Edom, where I dwelt for a year and a half.

“Then the chief Ammianshi, who is the Prince of the Upper Tenu, sent for me to come to himself, and said: 'Thou wilt be happy with me, for thou canst hear the speech of Egypt in this place.' This he said because he knew who I was, and what was my quality; for some of the Egyptians who dwelt in the land with me had testified to him concerning me. Therefore he spake thus unto me: 'Where-

fore hast thou come hither? What had come to pass? Was it that the King Amenemhat, Lord of the Two Lands, had died, and thou didst not know what might be the result of his death?

“Then I answered him with guile: ‘Verily, when I was returning with the host from the land of the Libyans, I heard a report. My heart failed me, and drew me forth into the desert paths. I have not been accused, no one has blackened my face, I have had no fellowship with evil-doers, and my name has never been spoken by the mouth of the herald. What has brought me to this land I know not; perhaps it was the will of God.’

“Then said Ammianshi: ‘What will become of the land of Egypt without that beneficent god, the terror of whose name spreads among foreign nations like that of the goddess Sekhet in a year of plague?’

“Then I uttered my mind to him and spake thus: ‘God forbid that any evil should befall! His son hath entered into the palace, and hath laid hold on the heritage of his father. Verily he is a god who hath no equal, and none can compare with him. He is a master of prudence, wise in his plans, beneficent in his decrees, saying to one, “Go,” and

he goeth, and to another, "Come," and he cometh. He it was who already subdued foreign lands whenas his father still remained in the palace, and he reported to his father concerning all that had been ordered to be done. He is the mighty man of valour who toils with his sword, a champion who hath not his match, when he is seen rushing against the barbarians and plunging into the fray. He is a mighty bull who gores with his horns, and paralyzes the hands of his enemies; they cannot stand before him. He is the smiter who beats in the skulls of his opponents; none can make it good in his presence. He is the swift pursuer who destroys the runaway; there is no refuge for him who has turned to flee. When the armies clash together his heart is firm. He returns and returns again to the charge; never has he turned his back in the day of battle. He is strong and of a good courage, and when he sees crowds of enemies he lets no faintness enter his heart. When aught opposeth him, then he dasheth forward. His heart rejoiceth when he rushes upon the barbarians; he grasps his buckler, he overthrows the adversary. Never hath he need to strike a second blow when he slayeth, for there is none who can ward off the

stroke of his lance or bend his bow. The barbarians flee, for his arms are strong as the souls of the Great Goddess. In combat he knows no check; he spareth not, nor leaveth any remnant. He is the well-beloved, the conqueror of hearts, and his city loves him more than she loves herself; she rejoices in him more than in her native god, and men and women triumph because of him. He is the King who governed while he was yet in the egg, and who has borne the double diadem ever since his birth. Under his care the nation has increased, for he is God's gift to us, and the land rejoices to be ruled by him. He it is who hath enlarged our borders; he shall conquer the South, and the North shall be to him no more than a dream. He has been created to smite the desert rovers and to crush the rulers of the sands. If he should send his hosts hither, may thy name be pleasing in his sight, and curse not the King lest he hear of it! For he is rich in mercy and goodness to the lands which submit to him.'

“Then the chief of Tenu answered: ‘Verily Egypt is a happy land in that she knoweth the prime vigour of her Prince. As for thee, abide with me, and I shall do thee good.’ He gave me

rank before his own children ; he gave me his eldest daughter to wife, and he allowed me to choose for my own possession the very best land which he possessed, on the border of a neighbouring land. It is indeed a goodly land ; Iaa is its name. There are found figs and grapes in plenty. Wine is more abundant than water, honey and oil abound, and the trees are laden with all kinds of fruit. There is no end to the wheat and barley, and the cattle are without number. Great were the honours that were bestowed upon me, for the Prince himself came on my behalf and set me up as chief of one of the best tribes of his land. Every day bread and wine were brought to me, boiled and roast meat and fowl, besides the game of the land ; for every day the tribe hunted on my account, besides what my own greyhounds brought in. Food of all sorts was prepared for me, and milk cooked in various fashions. Thus I spent many years ; my children became mighty men, each one leader of his clan. The messenger who came from the North towards Egypt, or who returned from Egypt by the South road, tarried at my tent, for I welcomed every wayfarer. I gave water to the thirsty ; I set the wanderer on

the right way; I delivered him who had been spoiled. When the bowmen were sent to conquer the rebel Princes of the land, I ordered their march, for the chief of Tenu made me for many years captain of his host. Whenever I marched against a land the people trembled in their pastures by the wells. I carried off their cattle; I led captive their servants; I took their slaves; I slew their men. By my sword and my bow, my swift marches and my well-laid plans, I won the heart of the Prince, and when once he had learned my valour and the vigour of my arm, he loved me, and made me first of all his children.

“ Behold, a certain mighty man of Tenu came, and challenged me in my tent; he was a champion who had no equal in the land, for he had conquered the whole of Tenu. Being urged on by his tribe, he said that he would contend with me; he purposed in his heart to plunder me, and he boasted loudly that he would take possession of my flocks and herds. Ammianshi took counsel with me concerning the matter, and I said: ‘I have no knowledge of the man, and verily I am no friend of his. Have I ever opened his door, or broken into his enclosure? This is pure jealousy on his

part, because he knows that I am your captain. God be my guard, for I am like a bull in the midst of his cows when a young bull from without rushes upon him to take them for himself. Is he a bull greedy of battle, a chosen bull who loves to give blow for blow? Then if he has a heart to fight, let him speak his mind! Is God who knoweth all ignorant of what He hath foreordained?

“I spent the night in stringing my bow, preparing my arrows, unsheathing my dagger, and making ready my harness. When the day dawned, the whole land of Tenu came together; for he had foreseen this combat, and had gathered the men of his tribe and summoned the neighbouring lands. When the mighty man came, I rose and went forth to meet him. All hearts burned for me; men and women uttered cries, and all were anxious on my behalf, saying: ‘Is there indeed any other champion strong enough to contend with him?’ Behold, he grasped his buckler, his spear, and his javelins, ready for the fray. When he had tried all his weapons in vain against me, and I had turned aside his javelins so that they struck the earth harmlessly on this side and on that, he rushed upon me; then I drew my bow against him, and

as my arrow pierced his throat, he gave a loud cry, and fell upon his face. I made an end of him with his own battleaxe; I stood upon his back, and shouted my cry of victory, and all the tribesmen shouted with joy. Then I gave thanks to Mentu the War-god, while the friends of the vanquished mourned over him, and Prince Ammianshi clasped me in his arms. Behold, I took possession of all the goods of the fallen champion; I carried off his cattle, and all that he had wished to do to me that did I to him. I took all that was in his tent; I plundered his village and enriched myself with the spoil, and increased the number of my cattle.

“Thus, then, hath God shown himself gracious to him who was forced to flee into a strange land, so that now my heart rejoices. Once I was a fugitive, and now they speak well of me at the Court of Egypt; once I was a wanderer, wandering about half dead with hunger, and now I have bread to give to my neighbour. Once in misery I fled from my land in nakedness, and now I have abundance of garments of fine linen; once I had to run my own errands because I had no one to send, and now I have many vassals. My house is fine, my estate is large; I am remembered at the

royal palace. O ye gods, who have ordered my flight, be gracious unto me ; bring me back to the palace ; grant me to see once more the place of my heart's desire ! How great my happiness, if my body may lie at last in the land where I was born ! May my good fortune abide with me still ; may the Good God (Pharaoh) grant me peace. May he have compassion on the man whom he has forced to live in a foreign land. Is not his anger against me now appeased ? Let him hearken unto the man who beseeches him from a far land, and let him turn his heart towards him whom he has overwhelmed. May the King of Egypt be favourable unto me ; so shall I live by his gifts ; so shall I watch over the goods of the Queen of the Land who is in his palace, and hear the greetings of her children. Ah, to be young again ! for now old age draws nigh ; weakness hath possessed me. Mine eyes are heavy ; my arms hang down ; my legs are feeble ; my heart faileth. Death draweth near to me, and soon I shall be carried to the Eternal City and become a follower of the Lady of Death !

“ Now, behold, when mention of my affairs had been made to His Majesty the King Kheperkara

(Senusert I.), whose word is truth, His Majesty condescended to send me a message with royal gifts to rejoice my heart, gifts such as are given to the Princes of foreign lands, and the Princes of the Blood Royal sent me their greeting.

“ Copy of the Royal Order which was brought to thy servant concerning his recall to Egypt.

“The Horus, the life of lives, the Lord of the Red Crown and the White, life of lives, King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Kheperkara, Son of the Sun, living for ever and ever! An order of the King for the vassal Sinuhe! Behold, this order of the King cometh to thee that thou mayest learn his will concerning thee. Thou hast traversed strange lands from Qetem to Tenu, and hast gone from one land to another following only the counsel of thine own will. What hast thou gained thereby? Do not argue with my messengers, for thy words shall not be hearkened unto, and do not discuss this business with my councillors, for thy words shall be set aside. As for me, there is no ill-will in my heart towards thee. The Queen, who is thy Heaven, abides and flourishes in the Palace, her head is exalted above the Queens of the earth, and her

children are with her in the inner chambers of the Great House.

“Come thou therefore into Egypt, and see once more the home of thy birth, make salaam before the Great Gate, and join thyself to the King’s friends. For, behold, old age is now creeping upon thee ; thy strength faileth, and thy thoughts turn to the day when the wrappings shall be put around thee [the mummy-cloths], and to thy journey to eternal bliss. The oils for thine embalmment and the mummy-swathings have already been assigned for thee by the hand of Tait. Thy funeral procession hath already been arranged, and a gilded coffin, the head whereof is painted blue, hath been prepared, together with a canopy to cover the funeral sledge. Oxen shall draw thee to thy grave, singing-women shall wait before thee, funerary-dances shall be performed at the door of thy tomb ; the prayers of the tables of offerings shall be said for thee, sacrifices shall be slain for thee beside thy funeral pillars, and thy pyramid shall be built of white stone side by side with those of the Princes of the Blood. Thou shalt not die in a strange land, neither shall the people of the Aamu lead thee to thy grave, nor shalt thou be wrapped in a sheepskin

when thy funeral vault is made; but when thou hast come back hither there shall be amends for all the affliction that has gone over thee.'

“When this order came to me I was abiding in the midst of my own folk. As soon as it was read to me, I threw myself on my face, and bowed with my head in the dust; then in the joy of my heart I walked to and fro in my dwelling, saying: ‘Is it of a truth possible that such things shall be done unto me, even me, whom my heart hath led into strange lands? Beautiful verily is the compassion of the King which delivereth me from death! For the King’s spirit will allow me to end my days in mine own land.’

“Then I returned unto the Majesty of the King of Egypt an answer praising his goodness and his mercy towards me, and giving thanks to him for his goodness in allowing me to return to mine own land. Then I celebrated a feast-day in the land of Aia and divided my goods among my children; my eldest son became chief of my clan, and the clan and all my property came under his authority, my vassals, all my cattle, my crops, and my date-palms. Then I journeyed southwards, and when I

arrived at Zaru the General in command of the frontier guard sent an orderly to the royal palace for instructions. His Majesty sent a courteous overseer of the royal household, and with him several barges full of gifts from the King for the Arabs who had come along with me to guide me to Zaru. I bade them good-bye, calling each one by his own name, and giving to each who had toiled for me his own share. Then I voyaged onwards, and food and drink and apparel were provided for me until I arrived at the royal city of Thet-tai.

“ Now, behold, when the next day dawned, I was summoned, a guard of ten men appeared to conduct me to the palace. I bowed to the earth before the Great Gate, then the Princes of the Blood who were loitering in the anteroom came to meet me, and the courtiers who were ordered to lead me to the audience-chamber brought me into the presence of the King. I found His Majesty seated upon the Great Throne, on the daïs of electrum ; I cast myself prostrate before him, and my senses left me. The Good God (Pharaoh) spake gently to me, but I was like a man bewildered in the twilight ; my spirit failed, my limbs refused their

office, my heart stood still, and I felt neither alive nor dead. His Majesty said to one of the courtiers: 'Raise him, and let him speak.' Then said His Majesty: 'Behold thou art come, then, who didst once take to flight, and who hast wandered in foreign lands. Old age hath come upon thee, and it is a comfort to thee that thy body shall be embalmed, and that the barbarians shall not carry thee to thy grave. Refuse not to speak when thou art questioned.' Then I trembled for fear of punishment, and I answered like a man in dread: 'What hath my lord now said? Lo, this is my answer. This befell not by my own deed, but by the will of God. My present dread is even as the dread which caused my flight. Behold me in thy presence. Thou art Life; let thy Majesty do according to his good pleasure.'

"Then the royal children passed before me, and His Majesty said to the Queen: 'See, here is Sinuhe, who has come like an Asiatic, looking like a regular desert-warrior.' She broke into loud laughter, and all the royal children burst out laughing together before the King, saying with one voice: 'Nay verily, O Lord King, this cannot be he!' But His Majesty said: 'In truth it is he!'

Then the Princesses took their cymbals, their castanets, and their sistra, and they danced and sang before His Majesty, speaking thus to him :

“ ‘Thy hands, O King, do mercifully ; may the blessing of the Queen of Heaven abide upon thee. The Golden Goddess gives life to thy nostrils, the Lady of the Stars unites herself to thee, as thou voyagest to the North wearing the Southern crown and to the South wearing the crown of the North, and with the Asp upon thy brow. Thy bow is strong, and thine arrow slayeth ! Give breath, therefore, to him who is afflicted, and grant this great boon to our entreaty on behalf of this chief Sinuhe, this Bedawy, who yet was born in Egypt !’

“Then said His Majesty : ‘Let him fear no longer, neither cry out in dread. He shall be an officer of the royal household, and take his place among those who stand around the throne. Go with him to the dining-hall, and see that food is provided for him.’

“When I went forth from the audience-chamber the royal Princes took me by the hand, and we passed on to the Great Gate. I was lodged in the house of a royal Prince, richly furnished, with its bathroom, its ceilings painted like the

heavens, its furniture sent from the Double White House (the royal treasury), clothing from the royal wardrobe, and choice perfumes. Each room was in charge of a chosen royal official, attending to his own particular duties. Then I cast off the years from my limbs, I shaved myself and dressed my hair, I washed off the dirt of the foreign land, and threw aside the clothing of the desert wanderer. I dressed me in fine linen, I anointed me with chosen ointments, I slept upon a bed, and I left the sand to those who live upon it, and cedar-oil to those who like the use of it.

“ There was allotted to me the house of a nobleman ; many bricklayers toiled in the building of it, all its woodwork was renewed, and delicacies were brought to me from the royal palace three and four times a day, besides what the Princes of the Blood were continually giving me. There was founded for me a stone pyramid amidst the pyramids, the royal quarry-master chose the site for it, the chief designer designed its decorations, the chief sculptor carved them, and the clerks of works attached to the cemetery scoured the country to make the furnishing of its store-chambers complete. Priests for my spirit were appointed, and all the

funerary equipment was provided. I made all the necessary appointments for the upkeep of the pyramid, acquired land around it, and established a funerary endowment suitable to a Royal Friend of the first rank. His Majesty caused my statue to be made. It was overlaid with gold, and the kilt thereof was of electrum (gold-silver alloy). Not for any common man would such things be done! May I enjoy the favour of the King until the day of my death shall come!" Thus the book is finished from the beginning to the end, as it hath been found in the writing.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TAHUTI TOOK THE TOWN OF JOPPA

WE have all read and delighted in the story of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and, above all, the part of the story where the Captain of the thieves brings his men into Ali Baba's courtyard in the oil-jars, and finds his clever stratagem defeated by the cunning and bravery of Morgiana. Now, here is a story of Ancient Egypt, quite possibly a true story in its main outlines, which, almost beyond a doubt, was the original fountain from which the idea of the robber-chief's oil-jars flowed. It is not, perhaps, a very great story, viewed as a story; but as you read it you will see how remarkably Tahuti's stratagem resembled that of the Captain of the Forty Thieves—with this exception, that Tahuti was entirely successful.

Before we begin the story, let me tell you that the Egyptians concerned in it are real historical people. The King, Menkheperra, is the great con-

queror, Thothmes III., the greatest soldier that Egypt ever bred. He was both a brave man and a skilful general, and Egyptian history becomes quite interesting at the point where the King, in opposition to the timid advice of all his Captains, himself leads his army in single file through the pass of Aaruna, in Palestine, and then scatters the whole army of the Syrian League, which had gathered at Megiddo to oppose him, by the mere dash and fury of his charge. Tahuti was one of the best and most trusted generals of this great soldier. Curiously enough, some relics of the crafty old veteran are lying to-day in some of the great museums of Europe. His dagger, perhaps the very one that he wore as he talked with "the Foe in Joppa," is at Darmstadt, and one of his funeral vases is at Leyden.

Most splendid and most interesting of all, because it tells us how much King Thothmes valued this faithful soldier, is the great gold salver, which now lies in the Louvre at Paris. It was given by the King, when the old soldier died, that it might be placed in his tomb and used by his spirit; and these words are written on it: "Given in praise by the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkhe-

perra, to the hereditary chief, the divine father, the beloved by God, satisfying the heart of the King in all foreign lands, and in the isles in the midst of the Great Sea, filling stores with lapis-lazuli, silver-gold, and gold, Keeper of all foreign lands, Keeper of the troops, praised by the Good Lord of both lands and his Double—the royal scribe 'Tahuti, deceased.”

So now we are to hear of one of the deeds by which the wily old soldier and scribe satisfied the heart of his King by the shores of the Great Sea, and if it does not seem to you anything very great as a story, remember that, but for it, you might never have had the best part of the story of your old friend Ali Baba. The idea of a fortress being taken by soldiers who are smuggled into it in one way or another is a very old one; but it is worth while noticing that this is the oldest of all such stories, and belongs to a considerably earlier period than even that of the Wooden Horse of Troy. The fragments of the story are found on a papyrus roll, now lying in the British Museum, on which is also found the story of the Doomed Prince. All that has been added to it in the present version is a small introduction to make the beginning of the story intelligible.

Now, it came to pass that in the land of Egypt there reigned a great King whose name was Menkheperra. He ruled in great power and glory over the Two Lands, and when he went forth to war, either against the vile Asiatics or the vile sons of Kush, they fell down in heaps before the chariot of His Majesty. Now, among the soldiers of Menkheperra, whose hearts were braver than lions, there was a general of infantry called Tahuti. He followed King Menkheperra in all his wars, whether in the North or the South; and everywhere he approved himself an excellent soldier, strong and of a good courage in the day of battle, and cunning to bring skilful devices to pass against the enemy. More than once His Majesty, with his own hand, gave to Tahuti "the gold of valour" before the whole army; for he was a mighty man of valour, who had not his equal in all the land.

Now, behold, it came to pass in those days that a messenger came from the land of Kharu (Palestine), and brought an evil report unto His Majesty, saying: "The Governor of the Northland has sent me unto thy Majesty, saying, 'The Foe in Joppa has revolted against His Majesty, and has slain the spearmen and the charioteers of

His Majesty, and, behold, we are not sufficient to fight against him.’”

Then His Majesty, when he heard these words, became furious as a panther of the South, and he called together the chief of the whole land—his Princes, his rulers, and his mighty men of valour. Then said His Majesty to them: “Behold, how this vile Asiatic has arisen against my Majesty! Whom shall we send, and who will go for us, that he may cause the Foe in Joppa to smell the ground before my Majesty, and may destroy his city?”

Then the General Tahuti arose and made salaam, and spake on this fashion to His Majesty: “O thou who art the Good God of Both Lands, in whose beams Upper and Lower Egypt rejoice every day, I will go for thee to bring down the pride of the high looks of this vile Asiatic; only let it be done unto me on this wise: Let the great leading staff of Menkheperra, in whose name is power, be given unto me for a season; let there be given unto me also spearmen and bowmen and charioteers, the best of the mighty men of the army of Egypt; then shall I slay this Foe in Joppa, and I shall take his city.”

Then said His Majesty: “What thou hast spoken

is good in mine eyes ; be it done according as thou hast said.”

Now, after many days, Tahuti came with his host unto the land of Kharu ; neither at this time did he purpose to fight against the Foe in Joppa, but rather to take him by guile. Therefore he made ready a great sack of leather, large enough to hold a man, and he caused the smiths of the army to make many fetters for the feet and manacles for the hands ; he caused them also to make one great set of irons with four rings, and many wooden stocks for the necks of men, and, chief of all, two hundred great earthen vessels. Then, when all things were now ready, he sent a messenger unto the Foe in Joppa, saying : “ Now, when this is come unto thee, know that I am Tahuti, Captain of the host of the land of Egypt, and I have followed the King of Egypt in all his wars. But now, behold, the King Menkheperra hath indignation and jealousy towards me because of my great deeds ; therefore I have fled from before his face, and I have carried away the great leading staff of His Majesty, in whose name is power, and I have hidden it in the forage of my horses. Now, therefore, let us speak with one another face to face in the field,

and if thou wilt, I will give thee the leading staff of Pharaoh ; and I, and all the men who are with me, even the best of all the mighty men of valour in Egypt, will fight for thee.”

Now, when the Foe in Joppa heard this saying, he rejoiced exceedingly because of the words which Tahuti had spoken. Therefore he sent unto Tahuti, saying : “ Let it be as thou hast said, and the gods do so unto me and more also if I make thee not as my brother, and give thee not the best of the land of Joppa !”

So the Foe in Joppa came out from the city with his charioteer, and with many of the women and children of the city ; and he came face to face with Tahuti. Then Tahuti took him by the hand, and embraced him, and caused him to enter into his camp ; but in his guile Tahuti had pitched his tent at a distance from the tents of his men, that so the companions of the Foe in Joppa might not see nor hear what befell their Prince. And while the Foe in Joppa ate and drank along with Tahuti, the men that were with him drank and were drunken along with the soldiers of Egypt.

Now, when they had well drunk, then said the Foe in Joppa unto Tahuti : “ Now, as touching this

great leading-staff of Menkheperra, of which thou hast spoken unto me, where is it? For my heart is set upon seeing it, and if thou showest it to me thou shalt do well." Now, Tahuti had hidden the leading-staff of Menkheperra in the forage of his horses, and the forage was in baskets, even as the forage of the chariot-horses of the host of Egypt was wont to be carried. Therefore, when the Foe in Joppa had spoken on this wise, Tahuti answered him: "If thou wilt, I shall cause my men to bring in the baskets of forage, and thou shalt see the great leading-staff of His Majesty the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Menkheperra." Then the soldiers of Tahuti came in, bearing the baskets of forage; and the eyes of the Foe in Joppa were blinded by his heart's desire, so that he could not see how he was falling into the pit which Tahuti had digged.

Now, it came to pass that they searched in the baskets of forage, and Tahuti found the great leading-staff; and the Foe in Joppa said: "By the soul of Menkheperra, show it unto me, for my heart desires to see it." Then Tahuti rose and stood erect, the leading-staff of Menkheperra in his hand. He seized the Foe in Joppa by his robe, and

he cried with a terrible voice ; “ Look on me, thou Foe in Joppa, behold the leading-staff of the King Menkheperra, the terrible lion, the son of Sekhet, to whom Amen, his father, gives might and strength !” Then, raising the staff in his hand, he struck the Foe in Joppa on the temple, and stretched him senseless on the ground. Meanwhile his trusty soldiers had seized and bound the men of the Foe with the fetters which Tahuti had provided, and their chief was now thrust into the leathern sack, bound hand and foot in the irons with four rings.

Now, behold, Tahuti caused his men to bring the two hundred great earthen vessels which had been made, and into each vessel he put a soldier, a mighty man of valour, with his harness and his weapons. Then he slung the jars on poles, each jar between two stout soldiers, and in the sides of the jars with the soldiers were other fetters and collars of wood ; and to the men who bare the jars he said : “ When you have entered the town, you shall break the jars and let your companions out, and you shall seize upon all the dwellers in the town and put them in irons immediately.” Then Tahuti went forth, and spake to the charioteer of the Foe in Joppa. “ Behold, O miserable one, thy

master is fallen! Now, therefore, go, say to his wife, 'Rejoice with me, for Sutekh our god has given into our hands Tahuti and all that is his!' Then shalt thou show to her as the spoil of the Egyptians these two hundred earthen vessels which are full of men of war, of fetters and of manacles."

Then in that great hour the heart of the charioteer melted within him for fear, and he hearkened unto the voice of Tahuti to do according unto his commands. So he went before the Egyptian soldiers, and cried to the Princess as she stood upon the wall over the gate: "Rejoice, for we are masters of Tahuti!" Then were the bars of the gate undone and the soldiers entered bearing the vessels. And when they were within the city they brake the jars, and their companions came forth, and they took possession of the city and all that were therein, both great and small, and bound them with fetters of iron and collars of wood.

And when the army of Pharaoh had taken the city, and Tahuti had refreshed himself, he sent a message even unto Egypt, to the King Menkheperra his master, saying unto him: "Rejoice! Amen, thy father, hath given into thine hands the

Foe in Joppa, with all his subjects and his city. Send, therefore, thy people to lead them into captivity, that thou mayest fill the house of thy father Amen Ra, the King of the gods, with men-servants and maid-servants, who shall be under thy feet for ever and ever.'

CHAPTER IX

THE DOOMED PRINCE

JUST as "the spacious days of great Elizabeth" were the time when our nation began to waken up to the idea of the great destiny that lay before it as a world-power, and to send its adventurous sons out into all quarters of the globe, so the early days of the Eighteenth Dynasty were the time when Egypt began to believe in her own future as a conquering power. The Egyptian never was either a great sailor or a great soldier by nature. He did creditably in both these capacities when circumstances urged him; but naturally he was always what he is to-day—a quiet, peaceable, hard-working, good-natured and submissive being, who will put up with a great deal if he only gets peace and quietness.

But about the year 1500, or thereby, before Christ, it seemed for a while as though the whole character of the Egyptian race had changed. After being

kept in subjection for a long time by the people known as the Hyksos or Desert Princes, the native Egyptians rose in rebellion, and after a long and fierce war drove their oppressors out. They followed them up across the desert into Syria, and then for several reigns the whole nation, accustomed to war, and proud of its newly found strength, seemed intent upon making itself ruler of the ancient world. First one King and then another led the Egyptian armies up through Palestine to the Euphrates, and at last all their efforts came to a head in the successful campaigns of the great soldier Thothmes III., of whom we have already heard in the story of Tahuti and the Town of Joppa. Thothmes conquered and held all the land from the border of Egypt to the River Euphrates, and before he died was by far the greatest and most powerful King on earth.

Now, the land north of Palestine, in which the Egyptians carried on these wars, became to them a kind of land of romance. It was to them what the golden city of Manoa and Eldorado were to the Spaniards and the English adventurers of the Elizabethan period. They called it Naharina—the Land of the Rivers—and it was the place where any

kind of adventure might be expected to happen. So the Prince in this story goes away to the land of Naharina, and remarkable things happen to him, as every Egyptian would naturally expect.

In this story we have what is probably the first recorded appearance of our old friends the Fairy Godmothers, who have been so hard at work arranging difficulties for the heroes of all the stories ever since. The Hathors, or Fates, who foretell the Prince's doom are really the genuine article in its first manifestation. The goddesses who made the crowns for Rud-didet's babies are different, and not on the same footing. They were sent down as an exception, on a special mission; but these are the regular practitioners without whose intervention no hero or heroine of any wonder tale has ever since been considered to be adequately started in life.

Here, again, we get no less than two instances of the secluded and inaccessible house which holds the hero or the heroine; and one of them has even the liberal provision of windows, which has been part of the stock plan of such houses from this time onwards. In fact, as Professor Petrie has pointed out, "it would not be difficult from these papyrus

tales to start an historical dictionary of the elements of fiction ; a kind of analysis that should be the death of much of the venerable stock in trade."

The story itself is found on one of the Harris Papyri in the British Museum. The papyrus was complete when it was discovered, but it suffered in an explosion which took place near the house at Alexandria in which it was stored. It is believed that a copy was made of it before the accident ; but no one knows what has become of it. So in the meantime we have no authentic information as to what happened to the Prince after the crocodile made its appearance and remarked, " I am thy doom, following after thee." Various attempts have been made to provide a satisfactory ending. Among others, one will be found in Andrew Lang's " Brown Fairy Book." The most elaborate, and perhaps on the whole the most satisfactory, is that of Ebers, and the general outline of his continuation of the story has been here followed, though the conclusion has been altered, and now owes its chief feature, the recognition, by the faithful dog, of the treacherous Princes of Kharu, to a well-known passage in the work of a greater romancer, the scene of the detection of

Conrad of Montserrat in "The Talisman." It must be admitted, however, that all such attempts to put a conclusion to the work of the early storyteller are more or less unsatisfactory and improbable. The chances are, reasoning from what we know of the Egyptian attitude of mind towards fate, that the Doomed Prince succumbed at last to one of his fates—probably to a blunder on the part of his dog; but only the discovery of a complete papyrus can settle the question.

Once upon a time there was a King who had no son to reign after him. He was very sorry because of this; he prayed to the gods to give him a boy, and they answered his prayer. When the Fates came to appoint the destiny of the little baby, they said: "He will die either by the crocodile, or by the serpent, or by the dog." When those who were with the child heard this, they went to tell it to His Majesty (life, health, strength!), and His Majesty (life, health, strength!) was very sad at heart over the doom which threatened his boy. So he caused a house of stone to be built for the boy on the edge of the desert; it was furnished with servants, and with all sorts of good things

from the royal household, and the child was never allowed to go out of it.

Now, it came to pass, when the boy grew big, that he went up one day on the roof of the house, and he saw a hound which ran behind a man who was travelling along the road. So he said to the page who was with him: "What is this creature which runs behind the man who is walking along the road?"

The page replied: "It is a hound."

The boy said to him: "Well, then, I want to have one exactly the same."

The page went to report the matter to His Majesty (life, health, strength!), and His Majesty (life, health, strength!) said: "Let them bring him a young puppy greyhound, so that he may not be grieved." And, behold, they brought him a young hound.

Now, after many days had passed over his head, when the child had grown a strong young man, he sent a message to his father, saying: "Wherefore should I be kept here like an idler? Since I am doomed to three evil fates, why should I not do according to my own desire; for, whatever I do, God will not less accomplish what is in his heart."

His father hearkened to his request ; he gave him all kinds of weapons, he gave him also his hound to follow him, he caused him to be escorted to the border of the eastern desert, and there it was said to him : “ Go wherever thy heart desires.”

His dog was with him, and he went wherever his heart inclined, living upon the best of all the game of the country. By-and-by he came to the land of the Prince of Naharina. Now, the Prince of Naharina had no child, saving one daughter alone. Therefore he had built for her a house whose seventy windows were seventy cubits above the ground ; he caused all the sons of the Princes of the land of Kharu to be gathered together, and he said to them : “ He who shall climb to the window of my daughter shall have her to wife.”

Now, many days after, while the Princes of Syria were at their daily occupation of trying to climb to the window of the Princess, the Prince of Egypt happened to pass by the place where they were. They greeted him, they conducted him to their camp, they led him to the bath, they gave fodder to his horses, they showed him every kindness, they poured perfume on him, they anointed his feet, they gave him food, and as they talked, they said

to him : “ Whence comest thou, gallant young man ?”

He answered : “ I am the son of an Egyptian, an officer of the chariot brigade. My mother died, and my father married a second time. When my stepmother had children of her own she hated me, and I have fled from her anger.” Then they embraced him, and kissed him, and welcomed him to their company.

Now, after certain days had passed, he said to the Princes : “ But what do you all here ?”

They answered him : “ We spend our time in trying to climb to the windows of this house on the rock, and whoever is able to climb to the window of the daughter of the Prince of Naharina, the same shall have her to wife.”

Then the Prince of Egypt said to them : “ If you will allow it, I shall enchant my limbs and try my luck in climbing along with you.”

They went to climb, according to their daily custom, and the Prince kept at a distance to watch them ; and the daughter of the Prince of Naharina marked him where he stood, and her countenance was turned towards him, and her heart also.

So when more days had passed, the Prince went

to climb with the sons of the chiefs, and he climbed so hardily that he reached to the window of the daughter of the chief of Naharina, and she kissed him, and embraced him with all her heart.

Then went a messenger to carry the good news to the father of the Princess, and said to him: "A man has climbed even unto the window of thy daughter."

The Prince questioned the messenger, saying: "What son of a Prince is he who has succeeded?"

And the messenger answered: "He is the son of an officer of the chariotry who has come as a fugitive from the land of Egypt to escape from his stepmother, who had children of her own."

But the Prince of Naharina broke out into fierce anger, and cried: "Shall I give my daughter to a refugee from the land of Egypt? Let him go home again."

Therefore they said to the young man: "Return to the place whence thou camest."

But the Princess held him close in her arms, and swore by heaven, saying: "By the life of Ra-Harmakhis, if ye take him from me, I will not eat, I will not drink, I will die within the hour."

The messenger went to repeat to her father all

that she had said, and the Prince sent his guards to slay the young man in the house where he was.

Then the Princess said: "By the life of Ra, if he is killed, I shall be dead by sunset. I will not remain alive an hour if I am separated from him."

So they went to tell this to her father, and he caused the young man to be brought into his presence along with the Princess. The young man was affrighted when he came before the Prince of Naharina; but the Prince embraced and kissed him, and said unto him: "Tell me who thou art, for, behold, thou shalt be my son."

The young man said: "I am the son of an officer of chariotry of the land of Egypt. My mother died, and my father married another wife. She hated me, and I have fled from before her face."

Then the chief gave him his daughter to wife; he gave him a house, servants, fields, cattle, and all kinds of good things.

Now, after a time, it came to pass that the young man said to his wife: "Behold, I am doomed to one of three evil fates—to die by the crocodile, or by the serpent, or by the dog."

"Why, then," said she, "do you not slay this dog which always runs before you?"

But he answered: "Nay, verily. I will not kill my dog which I have brought up since he was a puppy."

Thereupon she was very anxious about her husband, and she never suffered him to go out alone.

At length the young man wished to return home again, and he went down to the land of Egypt, his wife bearing him company. Now, after a time, the Prince was making a good day in his house in Egypt, and when the night came, he lay down upon his bed, and deep sleep came upon him. His wife filled a bowl with milk and placed it beside her while she kept watch over her husband. Then a great serpent came stealing forth from his hole to bite the Prince, but his wife beguiled the serpent by giving it the milk to drink. The serpent drank till it could drink no more, and lay helpless on the ground, and the Princess cut it asunder with blows of her axe. Then she aroused her husband, who was greatly astounded, and she said to him: "Behold, thy God has given into thy hands one of thy fates; he will also give thee the others." He made sacrifices to God, he adored him, and magnified his power day by day.

Now, behold, a great crocodile of the Nile came forth out of the river, and came even to the midst of the town in which the Prince dwelt; but there was a mighty man, a son of the giants, who overcame it, and shut it up in his dwelling. For many days he kept it closely shut up; only when the crocodile slept the mighty man went forth to walk in the cool of the evening, and, when the sun arose, he came back to his house. So it went on for two months. But one night, when the mighty man had left the crocodile asleep, and was gone forth to walk according to his custom, the crocodile awaked out of sleep, and seeing no one at hand to guard it, it stole out of the house and went down to the river, and there, lurking among the reeds by the river-bank, it watched for its prey.

When the day dawned the Prince went forth to hunt in his park, and his dog went with him. The dog ran off in pursuit of game, and the Prince followed. When he came to the river bank, he ran down to the margin of the stream after his dog, and behold the crocodile came forth from the reeds and laid hold upon him with its cruel jaws, and dragged him in among the reeds. Then said the crocodile to him: "I am thy doom, following

after thee. Whatsoever thou mayest do, thou and thy mighty man, thou must come to me at last. Yet now, behold, I shall let thee go this once, only thou must swear to me to kill the mighty man who has kept me so long in prison. If thou wilt not do this, thou shalt see the face of death."

Meanwhile the dog had seen that his master was in the power of the crocodile. He listened, and he heard the crocodile say: "Will you swear to me to slay the mighty man?"

The Prince answered him: "Why should I slay him who has watched over me?"

Then said the crocodile: "Your fate must have its way. If by sunset you do not give me the oath I ask, you shall see the face of death."

When the dog heard these words, he ran to his master's house, and there he found the Princess in tears because her husband had been so long away. When she saw the dog come back alone, she wept aloud and beat her breast; but the dog caught her by the hem of her garment, and pulled her towards the door, as though asking her to go out. She rose up, she seized the war-axe with which she had killed the serpent, and she followed the dog to that part of the river-bank where the crocodile was, near

to the house of the mighty man. There she hid herself among the reeds, and she neither ate nor drank, but prayed continually to the gods for her husband's life.

Then, as the evening drew on, and the sun was near to his setting, she heard the crocodile say once more: "Are you going to swear to me that you will slay the mighty man? If not, I carry you down the bank into the stream, and you shall see the face of death."

But he answered boldly: "Why should I slay him who has watched over me?"

Then the crocodile dragged the Prince down the bank quite close to the spot where the Princess was hidden, and just as he opened his jaws to devour his victim, she leaped out from the reeds and struck him over the skull with her axe; and the mighty man, aroused by the noise of the struggle, came rushing out, threw himself upon the half-stunned crocodile, and made an end of him. Then the Princess embraced her husband, and said: "Behold, God hath given thee into thy hands the second of thy fates: he will also give thee the third." He made offerings to God, he adored him, and magnified his power day by day.



THEN SAID THE CROCODILE TO HIM: "I AM THY DOOM, FOLLOWING AFTER THEE"

Now, after many days, it came to pass that enemies entered into the land. For the sons of the Princes of the land of Kharu were angry because the Princess had been given to wife to an Egyptian adventurer. Therefore they gathered their armies; they overthrew the army of the chief of Naharina, and they made him prisoner. As they could not find the Princess and her husband, they said to the old chief: "Where is thy daughter and that base son of a charioteer of Egypt to whom thou hast given her to wife?"

He answered them: "He is gone away with her on a hunting expedition. How should I know where they are?"

Then they considered, and they said one to another: "Let us divide our forces up into small bands, and let us go hither and thither throughout all the world, and whoever shall find them, he shall slay the young man, and take his wife to himself."

So they went, some to the east, others to the west, to the north, and to the south; and those who went to the south arrived at the land of Egypt, at the very town where the young man dwelt with the daughter of the Prince of Naharina. But the mighty man saw them, and he ran to the

young man, and said to him ; “ Behold, seven sons of the Princes of the land of Kharu are drawing nigh to seek for thee. If they find thee, they will slay thee, and take thy wife to themselves. They are too many to be resisted ; now, therefore, flee before them, and as for me, I shall return to my brethren.”

Then the Prince called his wife unto him ; he took his dog with him, and they all hid themselves in a cave of the mountain. They had been there for two days and two nights, when the sons of the Princes of Kharu came with many soldiers, and they passed before the mouth of the cave, and none of them saw the Prince ; but as the last of them went by, the dog ran out at him, and began to bark. The sons of the Princes of Kharu remembered the dog, and they retraced their steps and entered the cave. Then the Princess threw herself before her husband to protect him ; but, behold, a spear pierced her, and she fell dead before him. The young man slew one of the Princes with his sword, and the dog slew another with his teeth, but the others smote them both with their spears, and they fell bleeding to the ground. Then the Princes dragged the bodies out of the cave, and

left them stretched upon the ground to be devoured by wild beasts and birds of prey ; and they went away to rejoin their comrades and to divide among themselves the lands of the chief of Naharina.

Now, behold, when the last of the Princes was gone, the young man opened his eyes, and saw his wife stretched upon the ground beside him, and the carcass of his dog. Then he groaned, and said : “ Of a truth, the gods accomplish without fail whatsoever they have decreed aforetime. The Fates had decreed, at my birth, that I should die by the dog ; and, behold, their sentence is accomplished. for it is my poor dog which has delivered me into the hands of mine enemies. Let me now die, for, without these two beings who lie beside me, life is unbearable.”

Then he raised his hands to heaven, and cried : “ O ye gods, I have in nowise sinned against you ! Therefore grant to me an honourable burial in this world, and in the world to come justification before Osiris and the gods of Amentet.” Having so spoken, he fell back as one dead ; but his voice was heard.

The nine gods came to him, and Ra-Harmakhis said to his companions : “ Fate is accomplished !

Now, therefore, let us grant new life to these two lovers, for it is right to recompense worthily the faithfulness which they have showed one to the other.”

And the mother of the gods, nodding her head, assented to the words of Ra-Harmakhis, and said : “ So great faithfulness deserves a very great reward.”

Last of all came the seven Hathors, and said : “ Fate is satisfied ! Now let them return to life.” And they returned to life straightway, they and the faithful dog also.

Then it came to pass that when the Prince of Egypt and his wife were restored to one another, the Prince went to his father, even unto Pharaoh (life, health, strength !), and showed unto him that he was his son, and told him all that had happened to him, and how his fate had been accomplished. “ Now, therefore,” said he, “ let Pharaoh give into my hand charioteers, and spearmen, and bowmen, that I may avenge me and my wife upon these vile sons of the Princes of Kharu.” Then His Majesty (life, health, strength !) gave command according to his request, and with chariots and spearmen and bowmen, even a great host, the

Prince set forth to go to Naharina. His wife remained in the house of Pharaoh, but his faithful dog accompanied him.

Now, when they came to the land of Naharina, the hearts of all the vile Asiatics failed them for fear to see so great an host coming against them. The Princes took counsel together, and said: "We cannot fight against so great an host. Therefore let us make submission unto this son of Pharaoh. He knows us not, nor how we have dealt with the chief of Naharina, and his hand shall be with us to establish our hands in the kingdom." Then the sons of the Princes of Kharu came before the Prince of Egypt, and bowed down with their faces to the ground, making salaam. But as soon as the dog saw the Prince of Kharu who had smitten him with the spear, he flung himself upon him, and bore him to the ground.

Then said the other Princes: "Doth the son of Pharaoh suffer his servants to be thus abused by this vile beast?" But the Prince of Egypt arose and said: "O ye sons of the Princes of Kharu, know ye not the man whom ye left for dead in the cave of the mountain in the land of Egypt? Now, therefore, your blood be upon your own heads; be-

cause ye showed no mercy, mercy shall not be shown to you." And to his Sardinians he said : " Cover their faces." Then the Princes of the land of Kharu were led forth and slain, and their bodies thrown to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field ; and the Prince of Naharina was delivered from the prison-house and established once more in the land.

And the Prince of Egypt returned with much spoil, gold, and electrum, and lapis-lazuli, to his own land, and he made offerings to God, and adored him, and magnified his might every day, and lived with the wife whom God had given him in great peace and prosperity, even unto a good old age.

CHAPTER X

THE TALE OF THE TWO BROTHERS

THIS is perhaps the most famous of all Egyptian tales, though by no means the most interesting. The manuscript of it was bought in Italy by Madame Elizabeth d'Orbiney, and sold by her to the British Museum. Since then the story has been translated and annotated at least twenty times. The original manuscript still bears in two places the name of its first owner, who was no less a personage than Sety Merenptah, then Crown Prince of Egypt, and afterwards Pharaoh (Sety II., 1214-1209 B.C.).

Nothing can be finer than the earlier part of the story, where the quiet toilsome life of the Egyptian tiller of the soil is set forth, as it was in the beginning, is now, and, in all probability ever shall be. The whole incident of the wicked wife and the quarrel between the two brothers is told with considerable dramatic force, particularly

where the younger brother reaps the reward of his kindness to and sympathy with the cattle in their warning of him concerning his brother's designs. Thereafter, however, the simple directness of the narrative ceases, and the thread becomes inextricably tangled with a multitude of marvels and transformations which may have been intensely interesting to the ancient Egyptians, but are merely wearisome to us. The only trace of the same constructive skill which is so evident in the earlier part of the story is seen in the character of the wonder-wife who is provided for Bata, and who remains, like all such doubtful gifts of the gods in fiction, utterly and consistently heartless and selfish.

Some of the resemblances of various features in the story to stock elements of fiction are sufficiently obvious. The extraordinary likeness between the earlier part and the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife needs no pointing out. The King's search for the beautiful damsel whose fragrant lock of hair had been found is a flower from the same root which produced the hunt for Cinderella when she had left her glass slipper behind her. And the request of Bata's selfish wife to the King is quite in the line of Esther's petition to Ahasuerus, and



BATA GOES PLOWING

that of the daughter of Herodias to Herod. "It is the Oriental way of doing business."

Once there were two brothers, sons of the same mother and father; Anpu was the name of the elder, and Bata was the name of the younger. Now, Anpu had a house and a wife, but his younger brother lived with him and had the lot of a younger brother. It was he who made the clothes; it was he who followed the cattle to the fields; it was he who did the ploughing, who thrashed the corn, and who did all the field work. For this younger brother was a most excellent workman; there was not his equal in all the land, and, behold, the spirit of God was in him. Now, for many days the younger brother followed his cattle, according to his regular custom, and returned to the house every evening laden with field produce. Then he set meat before his elder brother, who sat down with his wife and ate and drank; and then each night he went to sleep in the byre, along with the cows. When the new day came, and when he had baked the bread-cakes, he set them before his elder brother, who gave him his share to take with him to the fields. He drove out his cows to pasture

them in the fields, and, as he walked behind them, the cows said to him, "There is good pasture in such and such a place." So he listened to them, and understood what they said, and led them to the good grass which they wished. Therefore the cows which were under his charge became exceedingly fine, and they had calves in great number.

Now, it came to pass, in the ploughing season, that his elder brother said to him: "Let us prepare our team to begin ploughing, for the water of the inundation has gone back, and the ground has begun to appear, and is in good condition for ploughing. Go you to-day to the field with the seed, for we shall begin ploughing to-morrow morning."

Thus he spake to him, and the younger brother did everything exactly as he had been told. When the dawn appeared and the new day came, they went to the fields with their team to begin ploughing, and they were exceedingly happy at their work, and they stuck closely to it all day long.

Now, after a good many days, while they were still at work ploughing and sowing, Anpu sent his younger brother on an errand, saying: "Run and bring some more seed from the house."

The younger brother found his sister-in-law busy dressing her hair ; and he said to her : “ Rise and give me some seed, so that I may run back to the fields ; for my brother said, when he sent me, ‘ No loitering ! ’ ”

She answered : “ Go and open the bin yourself, and take away what you want, for I cannot move in case my hair should all come down again.”

The young man went into the stable, and chose a large jar, for he meant to take a great quantity of grain. He filled it with wheat and barley, and he came out of the shed.

She said to him : “ How much have you got upon your shoulder ? ”

He answered : “ Barley, three measures ; wheat, two measures ; in all five measures. That is what I have upon my shoulder.”

Thus he spake ; but as for her, she answered him, saying : “ How strong thou art ! I admire thy strength day by day.” And her wicked heart turned to him. She rose ; she caught him by the hand, and she said : “ I love you. Stay with me for a while. If you do, I shall make fine clothes for you.”

But the young man became furious as a panther

of the South because of the base suggestion she had made to him, and she was in deadly fear of him.

He spoke to her saying: "Verily you have been as a mother to me, and your husband has been as my father, my own elder brother, who has given me my living! Never repeat another word of this abomination which you have spoken to me, and, as for me, I will never let a word of it pass my lips to anyone."

He lifted up his burden, and went out to the fields; and when he reached his elder brother, they set to work again as before.

Soon the evening came; the elder brother went back to his house, and the younger brother followed slowly behind his cows, laden with all the tools for the field-work, and driving the cows before him to the byre in the farm steading. Now, because the elder brother's wife was terrified because of what she had said, she laid a plot. She took some grease, and some old linen, and besmeared herself, and arrayed herself in tatters, like one who has been beaten by a scoundrel, so that she might say to her husband: "Your younger brother has assaulted me." Therefore when her husband came back at

evening, according to his daily custom, when he arrived at the house he found his wife lying on the ground and making moan as if she had been ill-used. She did not pour water on his hands as she usually did ; she had no light burning for him ; but his house was in darkness, and she lay all defiled.

Her husband said to her : “ Who has been here with you ? ”

She answered : “ No one but your younger brother. When he came to fetch the seed for you, finding me sitting all alone, he made wicked suggestions to me. As for me, I would not hearken to him. I said to him : ‘ Am not I thy mother ? And is not thy elder brother as a father to thee ? ’ So I spake to him. Then he grew frightened, and he beat me to make me afraid to tell thee of the matter. Now, therefore, if you let him live, I shall slay myself ; for when he comes back this evening, and finds out that I have told of his villainy, it is perfectly plain what he will do to me.”

Then the elder brother became furious, like a panther of the South ; he gripped his dagger, and put a keen edge upon it. He went and hid himself

behind the door of the byre, meaning to kill his younger brother when he came back to drive his cows into the byre. Now, when the sun had set, the younger brother came back to the byre with his cows, laden, as usual, with the field-stuff. Just as she entered the byre, the first cow turned her head and said to her keeper: "Behold, thine elder brother is waiting before thee, with his dagger to slay thee; save thyself and flee from before him!" When he had hearkened to what the first cow said, the second, as she went in, spoke to him in the same words. He looked below the byre-door, and there he saw the feet of his elder brother, who was standing behind the door, with his dagger in his hand. Then the younger brother cast down his burden on the ground, he ran away as fast as he could, and Anpu ran after him, knife in hand.

Then Bata cried to the great god, Ra-Harmakhis: "My good lord! it is thou who dost discern between the righteous and the wicked!" Behold Ra heard his cry, and Ra caused a great canal to separate between the two brothers, and the canal was full of crocodiles, and the one brother stood on the one side of it, and the other stood on the other side; and the elder brother wrung his hands in

fierce anger because he could not slay his brother ; thus he did. Then the younger brother shouted to him from the opposite bank, saying : “ Stay there until the day dawns. When the Sun-god rises I shall plead my cause with thee before him, so that I may convince thee of the truth ; for I shall never be with thee again, I shall never dwell any more in the place where thou art ; I shall go to the Valley of the Acacia ! ”

Now, when the land brightened, and the new day came, Ra-Harmakhis arose and shone, and each saw his brother. Then Bata spake to his elder brother, saying : “ Wherefore didst thou come behind me to slay me by guile, without having heard what I had to say for myself ? Am not I thy younger brother ? Hast not thou been as a father to me ? And thy wife, has not she in very deed been as a mother ? Now, behold, when thou didst send me to fetch the seed, thy wife made evil suggestions to me ; and now she has twisted the matter to thee the wrong way about.” Then he told him truly all that had happened between him and the woman. He swore by Ra-Harmakhis, saying : “ As for thee, to come behind me, dagger in hand, to slay me by stealth, what an infamy ! ” Then

Bata took a knife and wounded himself sorely ; he sank down and swooned. Anpu cursed himself bitterly ; he stood there weeping over his brother ; he sprang towards him, but he could not cross to the bank where Bata lay because of the crocodiles.

Then Bata cried to him, saying : “ Lo, while thou didst imagine an evil deed of mine, thou didst not call to mind a single one of my good actions, or of all the things which I have done for thee ! Shame on thee ! Return to thine house, attend to thy cattle thyself, for I shall dwell no longer in the place where thou art ; I am going to the Valley of the Acacia. Now, behold, this thou shalt do for me, when thou hast returned to thine own house ; for thou must understand that certain things are going to happen to me. I am going to draw out my soul by art magic, in order that I may place it upon the top of the flower of the Acacia ; and when the Acacia is cut down, and my soul falls to the ground, thou shalt come to seek for it. Even though thou mayest have to pass seven years in seeking for it, do not be discouraged ; but once thou hast found it, place it in a vessel of pure water. Verily I shall return to life once more, and I shall requite the evil that has been done unto

me. And, now, behold, thou shalt know when something has befallen me, on this wise: When the cup of beer that is placed in thine hand shall foam, and when the cup of wine that is placed in thine hand shall be muddy. Make no delay, then, assuredly, when this hath happened to thee." So Bata went to the Valley of the Acacia, and Anpu returned to his house in sackcloth and ashes, with his hand upon his head. When he reached his house he slew his wife, he cast her carcass to the dogs, and he went in mourning for his younger brother.

Now, it came to pass that, for many days, Bata dwelt in the Valley of the Acacia alone, with no one beside him, spending the day in hunting the wild beasts of the desert, and passing the night under the Acacia, on the top of whose flower his soul was placed. And after a while longer he built a house with his own hands, and fitted it with all kinds of good things, that he might have a home to dwell in. One day, as he went forth from his home, he met the Nine Gods, who were going about to arrange the affairs of their dominion; and the Nine Gods spake all together, and said unto him: "Ah! Bata, bull of the gods, hast thou not dwelt here alone since thou didst flee from thy

native land before the face of the wife of thine elder brother Anpu? Behold, his wife is dead, and vengeance has been taken for all the evil that was done thee!"

Their hearts were exceedingly grieved for his sake, and Ra-Harmakhis said to Khnumu, the artificer god, "Lo thou! make a wife for Bata, that he may no longer dwell alone."

So Khnumu made him a companion to dwell with him, and she was more beautiful in all her members than any woman who dwelt in all the land; but she was evil of heart, though the spirit of all the gods was in her. The Seven Fates came to see her, and they said, with one accord: "She shall die by the sword." Bata loved her exceedingly, and she dwelt in his house, while he spent the day in hunting the wild beasts of the desert, that he might lay them before her. And he said to her: "Go not out of doors lest the River should seize thee; thou couldst not deliver thyself from him, for thou art only a woman. As for me, my soul is placed on the top of the flower of the Acacia, and if anyone else should find it, I must fight with him for it." Thus he revealed to her all that concerned his heart.

Now, after a time it fell out that when Bata had gone, as he was wont, to the hunt, and when the damsel had gone forth to walk under the Acacia which was close beside the house, lo! she beheld the River sending his waves after her, and she fled before him, and entered into the house.

The River cried to the Acacia: "Would that I could catch her!" And the Acacia cast to him a lock of her hair.

The River bore it to Egypt, and cast it up on the bank where the washermen of Pharaoh washed the royal linen. The scent of the lock of hair entered into the linen of Pharaoh, and complaint was made to the launderers, saying: "There is a scent of perfumed oil among the linen of His Majesty." The same complaint was made every day, so that the launderers were beside themselves with annoyance, and the chief of the laundry came to the bank to see what was wrong, for he was exceedingly disgusted at the complaints which were made day by day. He stopped and stood on the bank, just opposite to the lock of hair which floated in the water; he caused it to be brought to him; he found that it had an exceeding sweet savour, and he himself carried it to Pharaoh.

Then were brought the learned magicians of Pharaoh, and they said to His Majesty: "This lock of hair belongs to a daughter of Ra-Harmakhis, in whom is the spirit of all the gods. Since this is a tribute to thee from a foreign land, do thou cause that messengers be sent into every foreign land that they may seek for this damsel, and as for the messenger who goes to the Valley of the Acacia, let him take a great number of men with him to bring her back."

Behold His Majesty made answer: "That which we have decided is exceeding good;" and the messengers were sent forth. And many days after the men who had gone to foreign lands returned to make report to His Majesty; but as for those who had gone to the Valley of the Acacia, they did not return, for Bata had slain them, leaving but one alone from among them to return and tell His Majesty.

Then His Majesty sent many bowmen and spearmen and charioteers to bring back the damsel; moreover, a woman went with them, whose part it was to give into her hand all kinds of trinkets and ornaments such as a woman loves. So the damsel came into Egypt with her, and all the land

rejoiced at her coming. His Majesty loved her exceedingly, so that he named her "Great Royal Wife." Then Pharaoh talked with her as to what should be done concerning her husband, and she said to His Majesty: "Let the Acacia be cut down, and as for him, he will be destroyed!" Then were bowmen and woodmen sent with their tools to cut down the Acacia. They cut down the flower upon which was the soul of Bata, and he fell dead in that evil hour.

Now, it came to pass that when the dawn came upon the day after the Acacia had been cut down, Anpu, the brother of Bata, came into his house and sat down to eat and drink, having washed his hands. He took a cup of beer, and lo! it foamed over in his hand; he called for a cup of wine, and, behold, it was all muddy with sediment. He seized his staff, buckled on his sandals, girt his cloak about him, and belted on his sword; he journeyed to the Valley of the Acacia, he entered into his brother's house, and there he found Bata lying dead upon his bed. He wept when he saw his brother lying cold and stiff; but immediately he went forth to search for the soul of Bata under the Acacia, beneath which the younger brother used to sleep

at night. Three years he spent in the search without finding it. The fourth year had begun when the longing to go home to Egypt arose in his heart, and he said : " I will go to-morrow." Thus he said in his heart. Yet, when the land brightened and another day came, he still went forth under the Acacia, and spent the day in searching : and as he was returning in the evening, still looking around, as though loth to leave off the search, he found a seed, he brought it back with him, and, behold, it was the soul of his brother. He brought a cup of pure water, he cast the seed therein, and he sat down as he was wont.

Now, when it was night, the soul had absorbed the water ; Bata shuddered through all his members, and stared fixedly at his elder brother, while his soul was still in the cup. Anpu seized the cup of pure water in which was the soul of his younger brother ; he brought it to him, and Bata drank, and his soul returned to its place, and he became even as he had been aforetime. The two brothers embraced each other and conversed together, and then Bata said to his elder brother : " Lo ! I am going to become a great bull, which will have all the good marks. As for thee, seat thyself upon

my back when the sun rises, and when we come to the place where my wife dwells, I shall answer for myself. Therefore do thou bring me to the place where His Majesty dwells ; for Pharaoh will bestow great favours upon thee, and will load thee with silver and gold, because thou hast brought me to him ; for I shall be a great wonder, and everyone in the whole land shall rejoice because of me, and afterwards thou shalt go unto thine own town.”

Now, when the next day dawned, Bata changed himself into the form of which he had spoken to his brother. Anpu seated himself upon his back at dawn, and he came to the place where the King was. When the news was brought to His Majesty, he came and looked at the bull ; he was greatly delighted ; he made high holiday, saying : “ This is a great wonder which has happened.” And everybody in the whole land was glad because of him.

Pharaoh loaded Anpu with silver and gold, and he went and dwelt in his own town. Then Pharaoh also bestowed upon the bull many slaves and abundance of goods, for he loved him greatly, more than any man in all the land.

Now, after many days, it befell that the bull entered into the holy place, and he stopped at the

spot where the Great Royal Wife stood, and he began to speak to her, saying : “ Behold me, I am yet alive.”

She said to him : “ And who art thou ?”

He said to her : “ I am Bata. Thou knewest well, when thou causedst the Acacia to be cut down by Pharaoh, that it would destroy me, so that I could not live ; nevertheless, behold, I am still alive. I am a bull !”

Then the Queen feared exceedingly because of the word which her husband had spoken unto her. The bull went forth from the holy place, and His Majesty came to spend a holiday with his wife. She was at table with His Majesty, and he showed her great favour. Therefore she said to His Majesty : “ Swear to me by God, saying, ‘ Whatsoever thou sayest, I will hearken unto thee.’ ” He hearkened to what she said, and thus she spake : “ Give me the liver of this bull to eat, for he is no good for any kind of work.”

Pharaoh was exceeding sorry at what she said, and his heart was very heavy.

Nevertheless, when the next day dawned, His Majesty proclaimed a great feast, and ordered the bull to be offered up as a sacrifice, and His Majesty

sent one of the chief royal slaughterers to slay the bull. Now, when the blow had been struck, and while the bull was upon the shoulders of the men who carried him away, he shook his head, and two drops of blood fell towards the great double door of His Majesty ; the one fell on the one side of the great gate of Pharaoh, the other on the other side, and, behold, there sprang up two great persea-trees of wondrous beauty. Report was made to His Majesty, saying : “ Lo, a great wonder ! Two great persea-trees have sprung up during the night beside His Majesty’s great gate.” The whole land rejoiced because of them, and Pharaoh made offerings to them.

Now, after a time, His Majesty put on his diadem of lapis-lazuli, and hung around his neck garlands of all kinds of flowers. He mounted his chariot of electrum, and he went out from the royal palace to see the persea-trees. The Great Royal Wife followed Pharaoh in a two-horse litter, and then His Majesty sat down under one of the perseas, and his wife sat down under the other. When she was seated, the persea-tree spake to his wife : “ Ah, traitress ! I am Bata, and I still live in spite of thine ill-treatment. Well didst thou know

that to cause Pharaoh to cut down the Acacia was to destroy me ; then when I had become a bull, thou didst cause me to be slain.”

And after many days, when the Great Royal Wife was seated at His Majesty's table, and Pharaoh's heart inclined to her, she said to His Majesty : “ Swear to me by God, saying, ‘ Whatsoever my wife shall ask of me, I will hearken unto her.’ ” He hearkened unto her, and she said : “ Cause these two persea-trees to be cut down, that they may be made into beams.”

Then Pharaoh hearkened unto what she said. And, after a time, His Majesty sent skilled carpenters who cut down the two royal persea-trees, and made them into beams, while the Great Royal Wife stood and looked on to see it done. Then a chip flew from one of the trees, and fell into the mouth of the Queen, and in due course she bore a son. The news was carried to His Majesty, saying : “ A son is born unto thee ! ” Nurses and attendants were assigned to him, and the people of the whole land rejoiced. Pharaoh made a great feast on the day of naming the child. His Majesty immediately loved him exceedingly, and he was saluted “ Royal Son of Kush ” ; and after

some time he was created Crown Prince of the whole realm (being really, all the time, Bata in another incarnation).

Now, many days after, when Bata had for many years been Crown Prince, His Majesty flew up to heaven (*i.e.*, died), and Bata reigned in his stead. Then the new King said: "Let all the chief officers of My Majesty be summoned that I may inform them of all which hath happened unto me." His wife was brought before him, he judged her in their presence, and they ratified his judgment. Then his elder brother Anpu was brought unto him, and he made him Crown Prince of the whole realm. Bata ruled over Egypt for twenty years, then he passed into new life (*i.e.*, died), and his brother Anpu reigned in his stead from the day of his burial.

(This book is finished in peace, for the soul of the scribe Qagabu, treasurer of the treasure of Pharaoh—life, health, strength!—and the scribe Herua, and the scribe Meruemapt; the scribe Ennana, master of books, has written it. And whoever shall speak against this book, may the god Thoth fight against him!)

BOOK III
LEGENDS OF THE GODS

CHAPTER XI

THE EGYPTIAN GODS—HOW MEN REBELLED AGAINST THE SUN-GOD

THE Egyptians, as everybody knows, worshipped a great number of gods, and besides that their religion seems rather ridiculous to us at the first glance, because of the worship of all kinds of animals, which is generally the first thing that attracts attention in it. But in reality it was not nearly so ridiculous as it seems, for the animals were not actually worshipped as gods, but as emblems of that particular aspect of the divine power which they were thought to represent. The bull Apis, for instance, was worshipped with great reverence at Memphis. When a properly marked bull calf was born, there was great rejoicing in the land; he was brought to a grand abode at the temple; he was served all his life by trains of priests; and when he died he was buried in a magnificent granite coffin—finer even than those of

the Pharaohs. You can still see the coffins of these bulls at a place called the Serapeum, not very far from Cairo. But the Apis bull was not worshipped because he was a bull ; he was worshipped because people regarded him as the type of the creative power of the great god of Memphis, Ptah, whom the Memphites believed to have created the world. So with the other animals ; each was worshipped because people saw in it some likeness to an aspect of their god.

As for the multitude of gods, that largely arose from the fact that Egypt is such a long and straggly land. It is just a great river valley—length without breadth. The towns which grew up along the banks of the Nile had no neighbours at all on either the east side or the west, which are all desert, and so they kept each one pretty much to itself, and they thought out their own religious ideas, and in course of time there came to be a separate god for each separate town. But what one town believed about its own god was very much like what the next town believed about its god, though he had quite a different name and was represented by a different image.

There were two gods, however, in whom all the

Egyptians believed. The first, and the oldest, was the Sun-god—Ra they called him. People who have been in Egypt will never have any difficulty in understanding why the ancient Egyptians worshipped Ra, for the sun plays in Egypt a part that we in these cold northern lands have no idea of. Egypt is bathed in sunshine practically from year's end to year's end, and all life there depends on two things—the sun and the river. The other great god was called Osiris, and the reason of his being worshipped by the whole nation was that he was the god of the Resurrection; and of all people who ever lived in this world, the Egyptians were the people who believed most firmly in the Resurrection and the life everlasting. There were other gods who came to great honour in the land in later days, as the cities to which they belonged rose to power. Amen, for instance, who to begin with was only the insignificant god of a country town called Thebes, became for a while the great god of the land after the Theban Princes took the lead in driving out the Eastern invaders who had conquered Egypt. But Ra and Osiris were really, from first to last, the great gods of Egypt, whom everybody knew and everybody believed in, though

at the same time also they worshipped their own town or village god.

The stories which follow belong, with one exception, to these two great gods. They are very old, especially the stories relating to the Sun-god; and these, which are intensely interesting to the students of religion, may perhaps interest others also, as showing us what the very oldest people in the world thought about God and his relations to men, and how trouble and separation came between God and men. They show us, too, how natural men have always found it to imagine their god as "altogether such an one as themselves"—just a bigger man with much greater powers, but with a man's feelings and jealousies and bad tempers. The story of Osiris we know best from an account given of it by a famous Greek writer called Plutarch; but though there is no connected story like his in the actual Egyptian writings, yet we know from many references to Osiris that he was not far wrong in what he told. Probably he got his information from some Egyptian priest of Osiris, who told him what had been handed down for thousands of years about the great God of the Dead. These are probably the very oldest legends of human inven-

tion that exist in the world—far older even than the Tales of the Magicians, which belong to the age of the Pyramid builders. No one can tell how old they may be; but they are certainly six thousand years old at the very least, and perhaps hundreds or thousands of years older than that. Some of them are written, as we have them now, on rolls of papyrus, like the others of which we have been hearing, and some of them are cut in picture characters on the walls of tombs and on pillars in temples in different parts of the land of Egypt.

HOW MEN REBELLED AGAINST THE SUN-GOD.

Ra was the greatest of all the gods. No other god created him, but he created himself, and was from the beginning; and he was King both of gods and men. But it came to pass that when he had reigned for many ages over the world, men grew weary of serving him, and they said in scorn: "Behold, His Majesty the God Ra groweth old; his bones have become silver, his flesh gold, and his hair is pure lapis-lazuli." Thus they spake in rebellion against him, and His Majesty heard the wicked words which they

uttered. Then he called to him all the other gods, and they came to him quickly and silently at the great temple of the Sun in Heliopolis—the swift goddess of love and war, whom Ra calls the apple of his eye, and whom men call Hathor, or sometimes Sekhmet, when she is in the fury of war and destruction; and the god Shu, who holds up the heavens; and the god of the earth, whose name is Seb; and the goddess Nût, whose starry body arches from east to west across the world, and makes the midnight sky to all the men who live thereon. These and many others came at their Sovereign's call.

Now, when all these gods were come together to the temple of Ra, they made salaam before His Majesty, and said to him: "Speak thou unto us that we may hear thy words."

Then His Majesty spake unto Nu, who is the eldest of the gods, the god of the waters that were before the world was made, and thus he said: "O thou eldest of the gods, and ye other ancestral gods, behold, mankind, whom I myself created, hold counsel against me. Tell me what ye would do in this strait, and do ye take counsel for me, for I am loth to slay them until I

have heard what ye will say as touching this matter.”

Then spake Nu, the god of the waters, saying : “ O thou who art the greatest of all the gods, thy throne standeth fast, and great is the fear of thee ! Only turn thine eye against them who conspire against thee.”

But the Majesty of the god Ra answered : “ Behold, already men flee unto the hills, for their hearts tremble within them because of the evil words which they have spoken ; and who shall catch them among the dens and caves of the hills ?”

Then said all the gods before His Majesty the King of the gods : “ Send forth thine Eye in the form of the goddess Hathor. Let it destroy for thee these people who have imagined wicked devices against thee ; for there is none among mankind who can withstand Hathor when she descendeth to destroy.”

Then went forth the fierce goddess Hathor, whose delight is in battle and in slaughter, and wherever she went, up and down the long valleys that run among the hills, she slew mankind, and her heart exulted in the slaughter. And at night she returned well-pleased, and the great god Ra

spake to her, and said: "Come in peace, my daughter Hathor! Never will I be parted from thee, who hast avenged me on mine enemies."

And Hathor answered, with a fierce and cruel joy: "Long live the King! Blessed be his name who hath given me such a task to accomplish; for this liketh me right well, and when I lay hold of man to slay him, then my heart rejoiceth."

Then the Majesty of the god Ra answered: "Verily, I will triumph over mankind as their King, and will destroy them!"

But even while he spake his blood ran cold because of the dreadful joy which Hathor had in slaying the men whom he had created. So it came to pass that for many nights Hathor went forth throughout the land of Egypt as far as Henensuten, and her hands were red with slaughter, and she waded with crimsoned feet in the blood of the men whom she had slain.

But Ra looked forth upon the world and, behold, men were dying everywhere, and the great river ran red with blood. Then it repented him that he had sent Hathor forth to destroy, and he would fain have recalled her; but the word of the King of the gods could not be broken, neither could

Hathor be obliged to leave the prey which had been given into her hand. Therefore Ra took counsel with himself how he might by subtlety turn aside the heart of his daughter Hathor from the fierceness of her anger against men. Then spake the Majesty of the god, saying: "Call to me messengers; let them run like a blast of wind." They came, therefore, and made obeisance before the Majesty of the great god. Then spake Ra unto them: "Run swiftly even unto Elephantine, and bring thence to me abundance of the sleepy fruit that grows there. Hasten, so that it may be here before the dawn." Then the messengers ran swiftly, like the blast of wind that blows from the desert, and they came unto Elephantine, where the great god Hapi pours the waters of his river in thunder over the rocks that bar its passage. And at Elephantine there grew the crimson clusters of the sleepy fruit, whereof if one eat, or drink of its juice, heavy slumber and forgetfulness falls upon his eyes and brain.

Then the messengers of Ra gathered great plenty of the clusters of this fruit, and brought them back to His Majesty at Heliopolis; and Ra gave them to Sekti, the grinder-god who dwells in Heli-

opolis, that he should grind them. And while Sekti ground the sleepy fruit, the women-slaves crushed much barley, and made beer; and when the beer was ready the juice of the sleepy fruit was poured into it, and, lo! it became crimson, like human blood. And they filled seven thousand jars with the blood-coloured beer. Then came His Majesty the great god Ra, Lord of the Two Lands, with the other gods, to see this beer, ere yet the day had dawned. And when Ra saw the beer, he said: "This is excellent! Now will I protect mankind against Hathor by the virtue of this beer." Then said he: "Let these jars be carried and emptied over the land at the place where men are being slaughtered; and hasten, that it may be done while yet the night is dark and cool, before the dawning of the morning." It was done as His Majesty had commanded; and all the country on every side was flooded four palms deep with the beer, whose colour was even as the colour of blood.

Now, when the day dawned came the goddess Hathor, eager once more to slay; but when she looked abroad over the fields, she saw nothing but blood, blood on every hand, so that her feet stood in it, and her face was mirrored back to her crimson

from the crimson flood. Then her heart rejoiced yet more, and in the madness of her cruel joy she stooped and drank of the crimson tide at her feet ; and it liked her well, and she drank again, and yet again, and the fumes of the sleepy fruit mounted to her brain, and she went about drunken and helpless, and could no more see to slay man.

Then said the Majesty of Ra unto Hathor : “ Come back to me in peace, O sweet one ! Because thou hast done my will, therefore shall drinks be prepared for thee on every New Year’s Feast-Day of the sleepy fruit in which thine heart rejoices, and the number of the measures of them shall be according to the number of mine handmaidens the priestesses.” Therefore, even unto this day, on the feast-day of Hathor, sleepy drinks are made by all men according unto the number of the priestesses who wait upon the great God Ra in Heliopolis.

But though His Majesty had avenged him on his enemies and had spared the residue of them, his heart was still sore because of their ingratitude. Then spake he to Hathor : “ My heart is pained within me with a burning pain. Verily my heart is weary at the thought that I have to live with

such creatures as men ; I have destroyed some of them, but not nearly as many as I should have done according unto my might and my dignity."

Then answered the gods that were of his following : " Be not weary of heart ; thou hast but to command, and it is done, for thy might is according to thy desire."

But the Majesty of the god spake unto the Majesty of Nu : " Now, for the first time, I feel my limbs fail ; I will not wait until this weakness seizeth upon me a second time."

Therefore His Majesty the god Nu commanded Nût, the goddess of the starry heavens, to make an abode for the great god Ra, far from the men who had grieved his heart. And Nût raised herself over the earth in the form of a great cow, whose legs stood at the four corners of the world, north and south, east and west ; and Ra rested upon her back far above the sinful children of men. But when the earth grew light, and the morning dawned, it came to pass that men came forth into the fields again, and, behold, they saw that Ra, their god, was departed from them, and was seated afar upon the back of the celestial cow. Then their hearts failed

them for sorrow, and they repented them of their evil; and they went forth with their bows and did battle against the enemies of Ra. Then spake the Majesty of this god: "Your crime is forgiven you; for the shedding of blood hath brought remission, and the slaughter that ye have done for me atoneth for the slaughter that was purposed against me." Nevertheless, the great god would not return unto men, for he said unto Nût: "I have determined to cause myself to be uplifted into the sky. There will I dwell, and not on the earth, for it is full of evil."

And when the Majesty of the great god Ra had rested in heaven, he spake and said: "Let there be set a great field of Rest;" and the Field of Rest appeared. "I will gather plants in it;" and the Field of Bulrushes appeared; and all the flowers of these fields Ra turned into stars. Then Ra gave it in charge to Shu, the god of the air, and Nût, the goddess of heaven, to give light to all the sons of men who live upon earth. Then, calling to him Seb, the god of the earth, he warned him against the poisonous serpents that are in the world, saying: "Watch thou the reptiles of the earth and the water, and bid them beware of harming any-

thing. Let them know that though I go hence, I shall still shine upon them. Their father in heaven shall keep watch upon them, and thou shalt be their father on earth eternally. Let heed be paid to those creatures. The men who know my words of power shall charm them, and shall deal as they will with the creatures of the earth, charming those that are in their holes." Then the Majesty of the god Ra spake and said: "Let Thoth be brought unto me;" and Thoth was brought. The Majesty of the god spake unto him and said: "Let us go, thou and I, leaving heaven; and I will make a place, great and wonderful, in the Underworld, and in the Land of the Deep. There shalt thou write the names of those who did wicked deeds on earth, and there shalt thou imprison them, even the evil servants whom my heart hateth. And, behold, henceforward thou art in my place: and thou shalt be called Thoth, the Viceroy of Ra."

Now, when anyone wishes to recite the words of this book for himself, he shall rub himself with oil and ointment, an incense-burner full of incense shall be in his hands, behind his two ears shall be natron, and sweet-smelling ointment shall be upon his lips. He shall be clothed with two new gar-

ments, he shall be purified with water of the inundation, he shall wear white shoes upon his feet, and the figure of Truth shall be painted upon his tongue with green paint. Then shall he purify himself seven times in three days ; priests and men shall do the like.

CHAPTER XII

HOW ISIS STOLE THE GREAT NAME OF RA

Now, in the beginning, Ra was the divine god who created himself, maker of heaven and earth, of the breath of life, of gods and of men, of wild beasts, of cattle, of creeping things and flying fowl, and of the fish that are in the great river and the Very Green (the sea). He was the King of men and of gods, to whom the centuries are but years, who hath many names, whom none knoweth, whom even the gods do not know. But Isis was a woman, very cunning, and very mighty in words of power; and her heart was weary of the sons of men, and she was fain to dwell with the gods. Then she bethought herself in her heart that if only she knew the great secret name of Ra, which no man knoweth, saving only the god himself, and whose knowledge gives power over all beings, whether they be gods or men, she would be able to reign over the whole creation in heaven and on

earth, even as Ra did, and the majesty of the great god himself would be subject unto her.

Now, day by day Ra came forth in the excellency of his glory, journeying from his horizon in the East, till at eventide he came to his horizon in the West, and descended into the Underworld to lighten the eyes of those that sit in darkness. But now the burden of the years was coming heavily upon him, and he grew old ; so that his mouth watered, and the water fell down upon the ground as he dribbled. And Isis watched him, and with her hand she kneaded the water with earth and made clay thereof ; and out of the clay she moulded a sacred serpent with a head like unto a spear—even such a serpent as His Majesty the Pharaoh (life, health, strength !) wears coiled upon the front of the crown of the Two Lands. But she coiled it not about her head, but cast it in the way, on the path which the great god traversed day by day in his journey from the one horizon of the Double Kingdom to the other.

Now, it came to pass that the new day dawned, and the venerable god Ra came forth from his eastern horizon ; and the gods who followed him as their Pharaoh were in his train, and he went on

his journey as at other times. Then that sacred serpent that lay in the path raised its head and bit him. Then the great god opened his mouth, and his cry reached even unto heaven. The gods that were around him cried : “Lo ! What is it ? What aileth thee ?”

But Ra could not answer them. His jaws chattered, his limbs trembled ; and the poison rose in his veins and seized upon his flesh, even as the waters of the great river spread out across the lands in the days of the Inundation.

When the Majesty of Ra had quieted his heart, he cried unto his followers : “Come unto me, O ye children of my body ; ye gods who went forth from me, and whom I created. A painful thing hath injured me. My heart feeleth it, but mine eyes see it not ; neither did my hand create it. I know not who hath done this unto me ; never did I feel pain like this. No evil can be worse than this. Lo, I am a Prince, son of a Prince ; the seed of a god ! I am he of many names, and of many forms ! When my name was first pronounced it was hidden in me so that no magician might arise who should use art magic against me. Behold, I had come forth, according to my custom, to

look upon the things which I have made. I was walking in the Two Lands which I have formed, when something which I knew not stung me. Fire it is not, water it is not; yet my heart is burning, my limbs tremble, and my members shudder. Let all the children of the gods be brought unto me; they who have magic words, and an understanding utterance whose power reacheth unto heaven."

Then came the children of all the gods full of lamentation for the sorrows of Ra; and with them, mourning also in semblance, but joyful in her secret heart, came the subtle Isis, mistress of all guile and of magic arts, whose mouth is full of the breath of life, whose command drives forth disease, and at whose word the dead live again.

Laughing in her heart, she said: "What is it, O divine father? What is it? Verily a serpent hath spread this evil in thy veins; one of thine own creatures which thou hast made hath lifted up his head against thee. But of a truth it shall fall by my mighty spells. I will cause it to flee before the glory of thy rays."

Then the venerable god opened his mouth and answered: "Behold, I was walking in my daily

path. I was going abroad in the Two Lands of mine own earth; it was the desire of my heart to see that which I had created. Then of a sudden was I bitten of a serpent which I saw not. Fire it is not, water it is not; yet I am colder than water, and I am hotter than fire; all my limbs sweat. I tremble; mine eye seeth not the heavens, and the water runneth down my face as in the fierce heat of summer."

Then spake the subtle Isis, low and gently, as though her heart were sore for the sorrows of her divine father, while in very deed she rejoiced: "O tell me thy Great Name, my divine father, for only he can be delivered from the evil and live who is called by his secret name."

But Ra had no mind to tell to anyone his Great Name, lest his power should go forth with it, and another become greater than he; therefore he answered her on this wise: "I am the Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, the Maker of the Mountains and the River and the Inundation. I made the starry sky and the secret of the two horizons, and I set the souls of the gods within them. When I open mine eyes it is light; when I close them it is darkness. Maker of Hours and

of Days am I ; sender of Festivals and Fire-Bringer in all houses. I am Khepera in the morning, Ra at midday, and Tum in the evening."

Yet for all this Isis did nothing ; the poison was not turned back in its course, and the great god was not healed. Then she spake again : " In all that thou hast said thy name—thy Great Name—was not spoken. Now tell it unto me, that the poison may go forth from thee, for only he whose name is known to me can be healed and live."

And ever the poison burned with fiercer burning, and stronger was it than the living flame of fire. And at last the Majesty of the great god Ra could bear no more, and he cried : " I grant that Isis search me, and that my name pass from my bosom into her bosom."

Then there fell upon heaven and earth a space of awe and darkness, for the god hid himself from the gods, and the bark of eternity in which Ra traverseth the heavens was empty. But when the moment had come for the Great Name to go forth from his heart, the cunning Isis said : " Bind thyself with an oath, O Ra ! to give to my son Horus thy two eyes—the Sun and the Moon."

So the great god's name was taken from him,

and Isis, the great enchantress, cried: "Flee, poison! Go forth from Ra! Depart out of this god, and flow forth glittering out of his mouth! For I, I it is who work; I make the conquered poison to return to the earth whence it came, for the name of the great god has been taken from him. Let Ra live, but let the poison die!" Thus spake the cunning Isis, the Great One, the Mistress of the gods, she who knoweth Ra and the great hidden name of Ra itself.

Now, it is an excellent charm against the poison of any snake who should bite a man as the serpent of Isis bit Ra, to recite this story over an image of Ra as he setteth, or Horus, or Isis. Or let it be written down, and dissolve the writing in beer, and let the beer be drunk; or let it be written on a piece of linen, and worn for an amulet about the neck.

This curious old story illustrates the importance which the Egyptians, in common with many other nations, attached to the name, whether of a god, a man, or a demon. The knowledge of the true name, and the ability to pronounce it correctly, was supposed to give the possessor of this infor-

mation a magical power over the being whose name had thus got into other hands. A great part of an Egyptian's hope of happiness in the other world rested on the belief that he was able to address gods or demons, and even the very gates, fires, and rivers in the world of shades by their proper names, and so to exercise dominion over them. This superstition, as is well known, survives among Eastern races to this day. An Arab in Petrie's Sinai Expedition accounted for the supercilious look which is so conspicuous on the camel's face, by saying that to man it has been given to know the ninety-nine beautiful names of Allah, but the camel knows the hundredth, *and will not tell.*

CHAPTER XIII

THE PRINCESS AND THE DEMON

MANY years ago a great French scholar, who was exploring the temple of the Moon-god Khonsu, at Thebes, found there a pillar with a long inscription on it. At the top of the pillar there was a carved picture. On the one side stood King Ramses the Great, with a vessel of burning incense in his hand, welcoming an image of the Moon-god. The image is covered from sight in a gaily coloured shrine, which is carried in a model boat by means of long poles which lie on the shoulders of a number of priests. Just so the Ark of the Covenant was carried on the shoulders of the Jewish priests during the wanderings in the Desert. On the other side of the picture a priest is burning incense before another image of the Moon-god which has come out to meet its companion. Below the carving ran many columns of beautiful picture writing. The pillar is now in one of the museums

at Paris, and the writing on it has been several times translated. It turns out to be a story made up by the priests of the Moon-god in honour of their god ; and the wonders which it tells are pretended to have happened in the days of Ramses—that is to say, about the time when Moses was growing up in Egypt—though, as a matter of fact, the story was not written till hundreds of years after that. It shows us not only the tricks which the priests used in order to gain credit for their god, but also the way in which some of the images of the gods were made with joints, so that they could be made to nod or shake their heads so as to give whatever answer the priests wished to be given, favourable or the opposite, to any petition addressed to them.

Now, all that is here written befell in the days of the Mighty King, the Powerful Bull, the Conqueror, mighty with the sword, the destroyer of the tribes of the Nine Bows, the Lord of the Two Lands, User-maat-ra, Sotep-en-ra, Ramses Mer-Amen—a valiant warrior who commanded armies while he was still a child, and who rushes forward on the day of battle like the War-god. It came

to pass that His Majesty was in Naharina, the River-Land, where the great river Euphrates turns from his journey toward the western sea, and rolls south-eastwards towards the sea of the east. He passed through the whole land, as was his custom every year, and the Princes of all the countries round about came to make salaam before His Majesty, walking in order one behind the other, and bending low under the weight of the offerings which they brought to the Great King ; for each one brought from his stronghold of what was best in his land, store of gold, and of silver, of lapis-lazuli and of turquoise, and all the sweet-smelling woods of the land of Arabia.

But the Prince of Bekhten brought a gift more precious than any. For at the head of all the slaves who carried his tribute he set his eldest daughter, and she came before His Majesty, and bowed herself lowly before his throne, and besought him that he would give her life, and that she might find grace in his sight. Now, when His Majesty looked upon her as she stood before his throne, he remembered no more the gold and silver, the precious stones, or the sweet odours of the costly Arabian woods ; for she was very comely

to behold, and more beautiful than any other of the daughters of the land. Therefore his heart inclined unto her, and he lifted her up and set her upon the throne beside him, and made her his Great Royal Wife. And when he returned in peace to Egypt he gave her a new name, Neferu-Ra, "Beauty of the Sun," for that she was as beautiful as the Sun when he goeth forth in his glory. And Neferu-Ra became Queen over all the land of Egypt.

Now, it came to pass in the fifteenth year of the reign of the Great King, on the 22nd day of the month Payni, that His Majesty was in his royal city of Thebes, in the temple of the mighty god Amen-Ra, the Hidden One, the Lord of Karnak. Behold, while His Majesty was yet in the temple, a message was brought unto him, saying: "There is here a messenger from the Prince of Bekhten, who is come with numerous presents for the Great Royal Wife." Then the King sat upon his throne, and the messenger, with all his gifts, was brought into the presence, and he made salaam before His Majesty and said: "Glory be unto thee, who art the Sun of the outlandish people, and by whom we live."

Then, when he had adored His Majesty, he spake on this wise: "I come unto thee, O King, my master, concerning the younger sister of thyself and the Royal Wife, Neferu-Ra, whom men call Bint-resht, 'Daughter of Joy'—Daughter of Joy is she no longer, for a sore sickness hath fallen upon her and hath invaded all her limbs. Therefore her father, the Prince of Bekhten, hath sent me unto thee, that thou mayest order a wise man to be sent forth from thy house to see her and to drive out her sickness. For all men know that wisdom dwelleth in the land of Egypt, and that its physicians have skill to heal every sickness."

Then said the King: "Bring unto me the scribes of the Double House of Life who belong to the palace" (for so are they called who are skilled in medicine to heal divers diseases, and who are of the King's household). When they were come and had made obeisance, His Majesty spake unto them saying: "Behold, I have summoned you that ye may hear these words: 'Choose me out one of yourselves who is expert of heart in his calling, a scribe skilful to heal.'"

Then the scribes of the Double House of Life went out from the presence of His Majesty, and

they made election of the Royal Scribe Tahuti-em-heb, and when he had entered into the presence of the King, His Majesty gave him command to journey even unto Bekhten, along with the messenger of the Prince. But when he was come into the land of Bekhten, behold he perceived that it was no common sickness which had befallen the Princess Bint-resht ; for she was possessed of an evil spirit, and the demon who possessed her was exceeding stubborn and mighty, so that neither by drugs nor by art magic could he be driven forth. Then was Tahuti-em-heb greatly cast down, and his countenance fell, and the Prince of Bekhten sent a second messenger unto His Majesty saying : “ Now, when this is come unto thee, O Sire, my master, let thy Majesty order a god, and not a physician, to be sent unto me. For an evil spirit hath entered into my daughter, neither will he be driven forth maugre all the pains of the learned scribe whom thou didst send unto me at the first.”

Now, from Bekhten unto Egypt the journey is great, so that it was even the twenty-third year of the reign of His Majesty before the second messenger was come unto Thebes. Then, on the first

day of the month Pakhons, His Majesty came into the temple of Khonsu, the Moon-god, in Thebes. Now, in that temple there were two images of the god. The name of the one was called "Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes," and the name of the other was called "Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons." Then came His Majesty before Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes, and spake unto him, saying: "Excellent Lord, behold I come unto thee again, concerning the daughter of the Prince of Bekhten." Then Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes gave command that he should be brought unto Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, and the two images of the great god came face to face. Then said His Majesty unto Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes: "Excellent Lord, if it please thee to turn thy countenance unto Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, he will be ready to go even unto Bekhten." And Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes nodded his head twice before the eyes of all men, that so all might know that it was his will that Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons should be sent unto Bekhten. Then, said His Majesty: "Grant unto him thy virtue, so that I may send the majesty of this god unto Bekhten, that he may deliver the daughter

of the Prince of Bekhten from the demon of whom she is possessed." And Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes nodded his head twice, yet more openly, and, behold, he gave his magical power fourfold unto Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons.

Therefore His Majesty ordered that Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons should be sent forth to go unto Bekhten. And the image of the god was placed in the Great Bark, and around the Great Bark was an escort of five other boats borne on the shoulders of the priests, and on the right hand and on the left were chariots and horsemen. Thus they made their journey even for the space of a year and five months, and came into the land of Bekhten. And, behold, as they drew nigh, the Prince of Bekhten came forth to meet them with his mighty men of valour and his chief Captains. He came even into the presence of Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, and he made obeisance, bowing his face unto the dust, and thus he spake: "Thou hast come unto us. Oh, have mercy upon us, according unto the good words of the Lord of the Two Lands, Ramses, King of Egypt."

Now, behold, they brought the god even unto the

place where Bint-resht lay in her sickness, and when he had wrought mightily his magic over her, lo! she was sound and well in a single moment. Yea, the demon that was in her spake thus in the presence of Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, and in the hearing of all men: "Come in peace, O great god who drivest away the demons. Bekhten is thy city; its people are thy slaves; yea, I, even I myself, also am thy slave. Therefore, that I may satisfy thy heart as touching this matter for the which thou hast come hither, I shall depart at thy word to the place whence I came; only, that my power be not slighted, or mine honour lightlied, let thy Majesty command the Prince of Bekhten that he make a feast-day for me before I depart."

Then Khonsu nodded his head unto his priest, signifying unto him: "Let the Prince of Bekhten make a great offering to this demon."

Now, while these words were passing between Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons and the spirit, the Prince of Bekhten stood by with his chief Captains and his mighty men of valour, and they were all stricken with terror, and their hearts became as water within them. So when a great festival day had been celebrated for Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-

Demons, and for the demon of the Prince of Bekhten, and great offerings had been made unto them, the demon departed in peace to the place that his heart desired, according unto the command of Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons.

So the Prince of Bekhten and all the people of the land rejoiced greatly when they saw the power of the great god Khonsu. But the Prince of Bekhten took evil counsel with himself, and he discoursed with his heart, saying to himself: "Since this god has been given to Bekhten, why should I send him back to Egypt?" So Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons was kept in the land of Bekhten for the space of three years and nine months, and his shrine in Thebes stood empty. But it came to pass at the end of three years and nine months that the Prince of Bekhten was lying on his bed, and he dreamed a dream, and behold he saw the doors of the shrine of the great god Khonsu open, and therefrom there came a golden hawk with wings of many colours outspread, and the hawk circled high into the heavens, and flew away towards the land of Egypt; and the Prince of Bekhten knew that he had seen the spirit of Khonsu returning to his home.

So he awoke, and behold it was a dream; but

his heart was afraid and his limbs shivered with fear lest the wrath of the great god should fall upon him. And when it was day he called to him the priest of Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons, and said to him: "This god, who once dwelt with us, he returns to Thebes. Let his chariot also go to Egypt."

Then the Prince of Bekhten gave command that the god should be allowed to return to Egypt, and he gave unto him gifts very many and very precious, and along with his chariot he sent a guard of all the chief of his mighty men of valour, both of bowmen and horsemen. And when they came unto Thebes, Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons entered into the temple of Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes; he set the presents which the Prince of Bekhten had given him before Khonsu-of-Good-Counsel-in-Thebes; behold, he kept nothing for himself. Thus ended the journey of the great god Khonsu-the-Expeller-of-Demons. He entered his temple once more in peace on the 19th day of the month Mekhir in the thirty-third year of His Majesty the King of the Two Lands, Usermaat-ra, Sotep-en-ra, who lives for ever like the sun.



G. F. BAKER

THE GOD KHONSU FLIES BACK FROM BEKHTEN TO EGYPT.

CHAPTER XIV

THE STORY OF OSIRIS AND HIS WICKED BROTHER

Now, in the beginning of all things, it befell that Ra, the chief of all the gods, had a quarrel with Nût, the goddess of the heavens, whose starry body we see at night, arching from horizon to horizon as she bends over the earth; and in his anger he laid this curse upon her: that her children should not be born on any day in all the year. But so it was that Nût in her sorrow besought the help of another god who loved her—Thoth, the wisest of all the gods; and though Ra's doom once passed could never be recalled, yet Thoth, in his cunning, devised a way to evade it. For he went to Khonsu the Moon-god, who rules the night as Ra rules the day, and proposed that they should play at draughts together. No man knows what were the stakes on the side of Thoth, but the Moon-god wagered on his side the seventieth part

of all his light. And when they had played many games, the luck or the skill of Thoth proved the greater, and he won from the Moon-god the stake of so much of his own light. Then he gathered up the twelve fragments of light which he had won, and by art magic he made them into five whole days, and these he added to the three hundred and sixty days of Ra, which in olden times made the year; and even unto this day the Egyptians call these five days that belong not to Ra's year, "the added days," and they say that they are the birthdays of the gods. And since that unlucky game, the moon has never been able to shine in all his glory for the whole month, as once he did when the world was young; but when he has come to his full brightness, he dwindles slowly away again because of the light which he lost at draughts to the wily Thoth.

Now, therefore, upon these five days which Thoth added between the old year and the new, the curse of Ra did not rest, for they belonged to neither the one year nor the other; and so upon these five days were the children of Nût born, year after year: Osiris on the first day, Horus on the second, Set on the third, Isis on the fourth, and

Nephthys on the fifth. And when Osiris was born, it was not without signs and wonders being manifested throughout the world, that it might be clear to all men how great an one was He who had come to the earth. For a great voice was heard, sounding across all the world, though no man could see him who uttered it, and saying, "The Lord of all the earth is born." Moreover, it befell that when a worthy priest, named Pamylys, was drawing water for the service of the Hidden One, Amen, in his temple at Thebes, the spirit of the god came upon him, commanding him to proclaim in the hearing of all men these words: "The good and great King Osiris is born." And so it was that to this good priest was given the charge and upbringing of the new-born King, and a feast was made, to be kept for ever in his honour, and it was called the Pamylyia, after his name.

And as the years passed on, the good Osiris married his sister Isis, for such was the custom among the Kings of Egypt, and the wicked Set also married his sister Nephthys; but though she was married to him she loved him not, but all her heart was still with her good brother Osiris and her sister Isis.

So in the fulness of the time, it came to pass that Osiris was made King of Egypt. But in those days Egypt was not as it is now—a land of diligent and peaceful men, tilling the soil and reaping its fruits, and pious above all others in building temples to the gods. It was a land of fierce and cruel men, ever at strife with one another, living lives but little better than those of the beasts that perish, and even in their vileness eating human flesh. So Seb, the god of the earth, seeing the land's need of a good ruler, gave over to Osiris the government of the two Egypts to guide the lands into prosperity: the water, the air, the plants, the herds, all that flies and all that hovers, its reptiles and its wild beasts—all were given in charge to the son of Nût, and the two lands were contented therewith. For Osiris was a ruler among rulers, most excellent in wisdom and in goodness; he shone forth on his throne like the sun when he arises on the horizon, and sheds light on those who sit in darkness. He established truth and justice in Egypt; moreover, he was a mighty warrior, glorious when he overthrew his enemies, and powerful when he slew his foes. Yea, the fear of him fell upon all his adversaries, and he enlarged

the boundaries of his own land, and so excellently did he rule that the Great Nine of the Gods praised him, and the Lesser Nine loved him.

Neither did he confine his good works to the land of Egypt, but he journeyed over the rest of the world teaching people everywhere, and persuading them to submit to his will; for he did not constrain them by force of arms, but reasoned with them, teaching them by means of hymns and songs, and softening their natures by the sweet strains of music. Withal his wife Isis was his loyal and worthy helpmate, for she stood by his side in all things, and protected him from his enemies, warding off all dangers from him, and snaring his enemies by the excellence of her speech—for Isis was the most skilful in speech of all beings, whether gods or men—nor did her words ever fail. But the Red Fiend Set, the brother of Osiris, hated the good King and envied him. Yet even so he always cringed and bowed before him, and fawned upon him, for the fear of the justice and might of Osiris had fallen upon him. Moreover, the great god Ra, from whose eyes nothing is hidden, had seen the evil that was in the heart of Set, and had spoken unto him and his followers,

saying: "Have ye done aught against Osiris, and said that he should die? He shall not die, but he shall live for ever." So Set was constrained to hide his enmity, though he nursed it all the more in secret. And even when Osiris had passed away out of Egypt into other lands to teach and to bless them, Set, though fain to have found his opportunity in his brother's absence, was hindered and frustrated by the prudent counsel of Isis.

Yet though he could not profit by the absence of Osiris, the Red Fiend used the time to frame a conspiracy against his brother. There were those in Egypt for whom the wise and strong and righteous rule of Osiris was too strait, so that he had become hateful unto them. These evil men did Set seek out, speaking to one and then to another in secret places and in whispers, until he had got together a band of seventy-two men, evil-hearted like himself.

So when Osiris returned from his long journeyings, who so glad to meet him, who showed such smiling faces, as the black-hearted Set and his companions in guile? The better both to mask and to accomplish his evil designs, Set prepared a great feast to celebrate the home-coming of his

brother, so dearly beloved ; and to that feast were invited Osiris himself, and all who were with his traitor brother in his plot. Now, Set had caused to be made in secret a most wonderful chest. It was framed of costly wood from Lebanon, and inlaid with ebony and ivory from the Southland, with gold from the land of the Wawat, and with silver from Cilicia, and it was studded with the green turquoise of Sinai, beloved of Hathor, and with the lapis-lazuli that is as blue as the heavens, and so beautiful was it that no man could look upon it without desiring to possess it. And the length and breadth and height of this chest were so contrived in secret that they were exactly according to the measure of the stature of the good King Osiris.

Therefore when the company of conspirators was gathered, and Osiris in their midst, with Set, smiling upon him whom he meant to slay, and the garlands and the perfumes had been put upon the heads of the company, and men had well eaten and drunk, and song and jest were passing round, there came into the banqueting-hall certain slaves of Set, bearing upon their shoulders the wondrous chest. And when they saw it, all men cried out

in admiration of its beauty. Then said the cunning Set: "Behold, O great Osiris (to whom be life, health, strength), I have caused make this chest as a memorial to celebrate thy happy home-coming to thy land, and to thy brother who loves thee so dearly. And it is in my heart that the chest shall be given to that man in this company, whosoever he may be, who shall fill the chest with his own body, being neither too great nor too small. To him I say, it shall be given, whether he be the least worthy among us, or even thyself, O great Osiris! Now, therefore, let my lord the King speak the word, and thy servants shall prove which of them can fill the chest without excess and without deficiency."

So Osiris, in the guilelessness of his heart, said: "Let it be even as thou hast said, O my brother," and first one man, and then another of the company laid him down in the chest until all had made trial of it. But none of them fitted the measure of the chest, neither did any so purpose. So at last came Set, bowing and smiling unto his brother, and said unto him: "Behold, my lord, O King, the chest will fit none of us. Will not thy Majesty make proof of it? for save for thyself my vow

must go unfulfilled, and to none other would I so gladly give the chest as to my King and my brother." Then in the truth and simplicity of his upright heart Osiris the King arose, and did off the Red and White Crown of the 'Two Lands from off his head, and laid him down in the chest. And looking down upon his brother, the fashion of the countenance of Set was altered, and he looked even as a devil, for so he was in his heart; and he cried unto his fellows: "Now is this pestilent vagabond delivered into our hands." And they all ran upon him with one accord and fastened down upon the good King the heavy lid of the chest, and made it fast with many nails, and poured molten lead upon it to seal every opening, so that none might lie within it and yet live and breathe. And so, by the guile of his wicked brother died the good King Osiris, King of gods, and King of men also; but the end was not yet.

Now, when these evil men had thus foully slain their King and god, they took upon their shoulders the chest in which his body lay, and with jests and laughter they carried it to the bank of the great river, the River Nile. Then they flung it far into the stream, and returned rejoicing to their homes,

saying that Osiris was gone on his voyages again sooner than he had willed, and believing that they were done with him and his righteousness for ever. Yet the hearts of some misgave them, and the wicked murderer Set lived in fear lest even the shade of Osiris should return to trouble him. Therefore he ranged the land like a hunter day and night, giving out that he was hunting; but in good sooth the desire of his heart was only to make sure that in nowise could the chest have come to land, and Osiris been restored to life.

So Hapi, the great river, bore the chest with the dead god in it down his stream through the wide-lying marshlands which men of the Greek tongue call Delta; and at last it floated out upon the Great Green Sea by the Tanitic mouth of the river. Therefore the men of Egypt hold in abomination this branch of the river even unto this day, and never speak its name without cursing it. And all these things were done upon the seventeenth day of the month Athyr, when Ra the Sun-god was in the sign of the Scorpion, and when Osiris was in the twenty-eighth year of his reign, or, as some say, of his age.

Now, it came to pass that the first who knew what had befallen the King were the Pans and

Satyrs, creatures of the thicket and the fen, half men and half beasts ; for they had seen and heard the seventy-two as they bore the body of Osiris to the river. So they went and told it in the city nearest to them, and all men were amazed and affrighted with a great amazement and fear ; wherefore even unto this day any sudden affright of a multitude is called a Panic Terror. But Isis the wife of Osiris had need of no one to make report unto her of what had befallen ; for in that very moment when the soul of Osiris departed out of his body, there came to her by her inward spirit of knowledge the assurance that her husband had been slain by Set ; and so, taking her little son Horus, for she dreaded lest Set should slay the son as he had slain the father, she journeyed with him into the Marshlands of the North, seeking a place of refuge where she might bestow the child, while she went in search of the body of her husband.

So at last she came to the ancient city of Pe, which men oft-times call Buto ; for there dwelt the goddess Uatchet, whose name is also called Buto. Then she besought Uatchet that she would guard her son till she should come again ; and Uatchet took him and brought him up as her own.

And Isis by her art magic cast a spell upon all the land where the city stood, so that it floated like an island upon the waves of the Great Green Sea, and no man could draw nigh unto it to do the lad harm. Then Isis went on her journey to seek the body of Osiris.

Now, it was so that the winds and waves had borne the chest with the body of Osiris even unto the shore of the city of Byblos, where reigned King Malkander and Queen Athenaïs his wife; and the waves swept the chest gently into the branches of a bush of Tamarisk that grew by the sea. And when the Tamarisk felt the body of the god among its branches, it shot up in no long space of time into a great and beautiful tree, which grew around the chest and enclosed it on every side so that it was in nowise to be seen. And all men marvelled at the greatness and beauty of the Tamarisk-tree, insomuch that the thing came unto the ears of King Malkander. The King came therefore unto the place where it grew; and when he saw it so exceeding great and splendid, not knowing that within it was the body of a god, he ordered the tree to be cut down and made into the great centre pillar of his own presence-chamber, for that

so kingly a tree was fit for nothing meaner than a King's hall. Therefore the tree, with the coffin of Osiris in its heart, stood in the hall of King Malkander at Byblos.

Isis, therefore, having left her son at Buto, journeyed ever onwards seeking her husband's body; and as she went she asked of all men whether they had seen the chest. And when none could help her, she bethought her that she would turn to the children. And so it fell out, that meeting with some little ones by the wayside, she asked them if by any hap they had seen a chest floating on the river; and they answered her that but the other day while they were playing on the bank, a gaily adorned coffer drifted past them down the stream; and being amazed at its beauty they followed and watched it, and saw it drifting ever northwards until it was received into the waters of the Great Green Sea. And even unto this day the people of Egypt look upon children as being in some sort wiser than grown men, and having knowledge that men have lost; and this because of the wisdom of these children who directed the goddess Isis in her search.

So Isis journeyed on ever northwards, until at

last she came even unto Byblos; and her familiar spirits revealed unto her how that her husband's body was in the presence-chamber of King Malkander. Thereupon she went to the seashore at Byblos, and sat her down upon the yellow sand, close by a fountain where the Court-maidens of Queen Athenais came to bathe; and there she wept and made moan for her dead lord. And when the Queen's maidens came down to bathe, she offered herself to be their tire-woman, and braided for them their long hair with her fragrant fingers. Now, when they returned unto the Queen Athenais, she smelled a sweet savour, and, behold, it proceeded from the hair of her maidens; for Isis had perfumed all their hair in the braiding of it by the mere touch of her fingers.

Then said Queen Athenais: "Whence got ye this sweet savour that is in your hair?"

And they answered: "As we went to bathe, there sat by the waters a woman, sad and heavy of heart, and of an outlandish nation, but noble in bearing; and she tired our hair, and wheresoever her fingers touched, behold there abode this sweet savour."

Then Athenais sent her maidens to bring Isis unto her; and when they had seen one another

face to face, and talked one with the other, the heart of the Queen was turned unto the stranger, and she besought her to stay with her, and to become the nurse to her little son; for Athenais also had a son, and his name was called Diktys, and he was sick, as men deemed, even unto death.

Then said Isis, the skilful in counsel, the mistress of art magic: "Trust thy son into my keeping, and he shall be restored unto thee safe and well; but in mine own fashion must this thing be done, and none must look upon me or meddle with my doings."

So the Queen gave Diktys into the keeping of the stranger, and day by day the boy grew mightily in stature and in strength, so that his mother marvelled what means his nurse should use so to change him from imminent death to the fulness of life. And she questioned her maidens, and they answered her: "As touching this matter of the child, we know naught, save only this: that she feeds him not, giving him only the tip of her finger to suck, and that at night, when all men sleep, she bars the door of the presence-chamber, where is the great pillar of tamarisk wood, and listening at the door we can hear her pile the fire high with logs. And then we hear no other sound, save that there comes

from the hall a twittering like the twittering of a swallow flying round the fire."

When Queen Athenais heard these things, her heart was troubled for her child; so that night she hid herself in the presence-chamber that she might see for herself what would befall. And when all men slept, behold, Isis came into the presence-chamber carrying the child, and laying him down by the hearth, she piled the logs upon the fire until the flames roared, and the heart of the fire grew red and white with heat. Then, when all the fire was like a great furnace for heat, she cleared a space, hot and glowing, in the midst of it, and there she laid the child as in a cradle; but she herself changed into the form of a swallow, and flew round and round the tamarisk pillar, mourning and bewailing herself. And in all the room was heard nothing but the roaring of the flames and the twittering of the swallow.

Then Queen Athenais shrieked aloud, and springing forth from her hiding-place, snatched the child from the fire, and would have carried him away; but at her cry the swallow ceased to circle round the pillar, and in its place there stood Isis, the great goddess, angry and terrible.



ISIS BRINGS HOME THE DEAD BODY OF OSIRIS.

“O fool and slow of heart!” she said to the Queen, “wherefore didst thou doubt my power? Hadst thou not snatched him from the cleansing fire, within a brief space of days all that is mortal would have been purged from him, and he should have been as the gods, ever beautiful, ever young, ever strong; but now, because of thy folly, he must know age and decay and death even as thou.”

Then the heart of Queen Athenaïs became as water, for she knew that she stood before one of the immortal gods. And she called for her husband, King Malkander, and the twain besought Isis to accept of a gift, even whatever her heart desired; but she would have none, saving only this—that she commanded them to give her the pillar of tamarisk wood that stood in the presence-chamber. And when it was given unto her, she split it open, and took out the chest with the body of her husband; then, wrapping the rest of the pillar in fine linen of Egypt, and pouring sweet-smelling oil upon it, she gave it back to the King and Queen. Now, the King and Queen set it up in a temple which they built at Byblos unto Isis, and, behold, it is there even unto this day, and all men worship it.

So when Isis had found the body of her husband, she set the chest in a boat, and sailed away from Byblos. And some say that she took with her the little Diktys, the son of Queen Athenaïs, and that he was lost upon the voyage ; and other some affirm that her lamentation when she saw the chest was so terrible that the boy's heart failed him for fear, and he died ; and yet others say that he grew up and reigned in King Malkander's stead, and was a good King and a wise, above the wont of Kings, for that so much of the mortal and sinful part of his nature had been burned away in the cleansing fires. And between these three stories I cannot discern ; judge ye according as it seems good in your sight.

Queen Isis, therefore, in her ship sailed unto Egypt, and when she came over against the outgoing of the river called Phædrus, a cold wind from off the river went hard to overturn her ship and lose the chest. And in her anger she cursed the river, and behold it dried up, and so remains even unto this day. Then, coming to Egypt to a desert place, where she believed herself alone, she opened the chest, and looked upon her dead husband's face, and embraced him and wept bitterly, and the song of lamentation which she made, and which she and

her sister Nephthys sang, behold, it was written in stone and set up in the temples of the gods, and all men in Egypt know it even unto this day. And when she had mourned and wept, she hid the chest for a season in a place remote and unfrequented, and she herself went into the city of Buto that she might see how her son Horus fared in the care of the lady of Buto, Uatchet.

Now, while she was on her journey came the Red Fiend Set, hunting with his evil companions and his dogs; for his evil conscience would not suffer him to rest. And in the moonlight he saw the glitter of the chest which he himself had caused to be made, and knew it. At the sight his heart was inflamed with rage and terror, and he resolved to make an end of Osiris; so, opening the chest, he tore out the dead body of his brother and rent it into fourteen pieces, and the pieces he scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land of Egypt. Then he returned home, believing of a surety that he had put away the fear of Osiris from the earth for ever.

And when Isis was returned from Buto, she found nothing but the chest where her husband had lain, and she knew that her enemy Set had

done this thing ; therefore she went forth once more on her journeyings to find the fragments of the body of Osiris. And to take her through the lakes and canals of the land which the Greeks call Delta, she made her a boat of papyrus reeds, such as the men of Egypt have used ever since ; but Isis, the skilful in speech and in deed, was the first to make it. And when Sebek, the crocodile god of the land which the outlandish desert-folk call Fayum, saw the goddess in her skiff, he gave commandment unto his crocodiles in all the waters of Egypt not to do her harm. And, even unto this day, the crocodiles of the river of Egypt do no harm to any who journey in papyrus boats, whether it be that they fear the wrath of Isis, or that they still hearken unto the command of Sebek and honour the skiff which once carried the goddess. So Queen Isis went throughout all the land of Egypt, and wherever she found a part of her husband's body, she buried it and built a shrine. And thus it is, as some say, that there are in Egypt so many sepulchres of Osiris.

But other some aver, and the truth is with them, that she did not bury the fragments of the body, but only reared a shrine where each one was found.

But, having so deceived her enemy, she took the fragments with her, and when she had gathered them all together, she besought the great god Ra ; and the god heard her prayer, and he sent down from heaven Anubis, the fourth of his sons, whose head is the head of a jackal, and who guides the dead through the ways of the Shadow-World. And Anubis gathered together the members of Osiris and united them as they were at the first. And he wrapped the body in swathings of fine linen of Egypt ; and unto this day men do so unto their dead in the land of Egypt, calling them even by the name of Osiris. But though Anubis had done this unto the body of the god, Osiris remained cold and dead. Then came Isis, and waved her cunning hands over him, and wrought her spells ; and, behold, the breath of life came back into his nostrils, and he bestirred himself, and arose from the dead.

Yet because he had been dead and was alive again, the Council of the Gods gave judgment that he should not return to live as an earthly King among men, but that he should reign as King and judge of all the dead in the Under-World, giving justice unto all men according to the deeds done in the body. So Osiris dwelleth even now in the

Hall of the Twofold Truth, and all men who pass out of this world into the other must needs appear before his judgment-seat. There their deeds are judged, and their hearts are weighed. They who have done evil are condemned and perish in the jaws of the Devourer of the Unjustified ; but they who have done righteously are approved, and pass into the Fields of Rest, where is everlasting peace and abiding happiness.

But as for Set, the Red Fiend, he endures in defeat and misery. For when Horus the son of Osiris was grown and came to man's estate, he challenged the murderer of his father ; and though Set used all his arts and deceits he was overthrown and vanquished. But the end is not yet ; for Set is of the immortals and cannot be abidingly slain so long as men on earth are feeble and foolish. Therefore the fight goes on day by day ; and Set, ever overthrown, ever rises from his overthrow and renews the strife. But in the fulness of the time Horus shall one day overthrow him utterly ; and in that day Osiris shall return once more as King to this earth, and his kingdom shall be righteousness and peace.

CHAPTER XV

THE WANDERINGS OF ISIS

THIS is one of the many stories that belong to the great legend of Osiris. There must have been others which have not come down to us, for there are references in many Egyptian writings to parts of the adventures of Isis and Horus, of which we know nothing; but what we have is enough to show us that Plutarch was not only romancing when he told us the story of Isis and Osiris, but was really repeating what had been told to himself. Shortly before the coming of Christ Isis became by far the most popular of all goddesses, not only in her own land, but all through the Roman Empire. The story of the persecuted mother, and her faithful love to her son seemed to find an echo in men's hearts everywhere. The following story describes some of the adventures of Isis after the enemy Set had slain Osiris, and was trying to usurp his brother's kingdom and make himself master

of Egypt. It is written in hieroglyphics upon a large stone pillar which was made about four hundred years before Christ for an Egyptian priest. The pillar was dug up at Alexandria in 1828, and was presented by the ruler of Egypt, Mehemet Ali Pasha, to the Austrian statesman Prince Metternich. In the inscription the goddess herself is supposed to be speaking.

“I am Isis, the Great Goddess, the Lady of Magic, to whom belong words of power. Now, it befell that when the Evil One, the Red God Set, had slain his twin-brother, my husband Osiris, by guile, he seized upon me, and shut me up in prison that there might be none to stand between him and the lordship of Egypt. But there came unto me in the house where Set had placed me the great god Thoth, who is the Prince of Truth and Wisdom both in Heaven and on Earth, and he spake unto me saying: ‘Hearken unto me, O goddess Isis! It is a good thing to hearken, for he who will be guided shall live. Hide thyself with thy child which shall be born unto thee, and these things shall happen unto him: He shall grow and flourish in his body, and strength of every kind



ISIS AND HER SEVEN GUARDIAN SCORPIONS.

shall be found in him. Yea, he shall sit upon the throne of his father, and he shall hold the exalted dignity of "Lord of the Two Lands."

"Then I escaped from the dwelling in which my evil brother Set had placed me. At evening I left his house, and, behold, there journeyed with me Seven Scorpions, that were to travel with me as my guard, and to sting with their stings in my defence. Behind me came two of them, Tefen and Befen, on my right hand came Mestet, and on my left hand, Mestetef, and three went before my face to prepare the way before me, and their names were Petet, Thetet, and Maatet. And to these my guards I spake, charging them straitly: 'Salute no one, neither make acquaintance with any; speak to no Red Fiend, harm no child nor helpless creature, and be diligent to keep your eyes on the ground that ye may show me the way!'

"So they led me through the land, until at last they brought me to Pa-sui, the town of the Sacred Sandals, which is at the head of the land of the papyrus swamps. For here the river no longer runs in a narrow bed, but wanders hither and thither across the land, and the people of the land from here even unto the Great Green Sea in

the north are all marshmen, who are scorned by the people of the south. Then I arrived at Teb, and came to a part of the town where women dwelt. And as I journeyed along the road, looking for a place wherein to hide my head for the night, for I was weary and footsore, a certain woman of rank, whose name was Usert, saw me; but her heart was afraid because of the Seven Scorpions that were with me, and she shut her door in my face.

“ Then the Seven Scorpions took counsel together as to what should be done unto this woman for her hardness of heart, and they shot out all their poison on the tail of the scorpion Tefen, so that his sting should have sevenfold venom in it. But a peasant woman named Taha opened her door unto me, and into the house of this woman of low degree I went, and laid me down there and rested. But while I rested, the scorpion Tefen crawled in under the door of the house of the woman Usert, who had shut her door against me, and stung her son. And when she rose at his cry, behold, her house was on fire. There was no water to put it out, for it was not the time of the inundation; but a great marvel happened. The heaven grew black with clouds, and

the sky sent down water, so that the fire was quenched. Yet the heart of the lady Usert was heavy within her, and her sadness was great upon her, for her child lay in pain, and she knew not whether he would live or die ; and she ran through the streets crying with a loud voice for help, but none hearkened unto her, for all were in great fear because of the Seven Scorpions. But I heard the voice of her weeping, and it repented me of the evil for the child's sake, and I wished the innocent one who had done me no harm to live again. So I cried aloud to her, saying : ' Come to me ! Come to me ! There is life in my words. I am a woman well known for my skill to heal. I can drive out the devil of death by a spell which my father taught me ; for I am his daughter and his beloved.'

“ Then I came to where the child lay, still and cold as the dead ; and when I beheld him I laid my hands upon him and I spake this spell : ‘ O poison of Tefen, come forth, fall on the ground, go no farther. O poison of Befen, come forth, fall on the ground. For I am Isis the goddess, the lady of words of power. I am the weaver of spells, cunning to utter magic words. Hearken unto me, every reptile that stingeth, and let your venom fall

upon the ground. Poison of Mestet go no farther. Poison of Mestetef, rise not up in his body. Poison of Petet and Thetet, enter not his body. Poison of Maatet, fall upon the ground. Do not my words rule to the utmost limit of the night? Unto you I speak, O ye scorpions. For I am alone and in sorrow, and wherefore should our names be made to stink throughout all the nomes of the land of Egypt? The child shall live! The poison shall die! For my child Horus, that shall be, shall be saved through his mother Isis, and he who is stricken shall likewise be saved.'

“Then the child was restored, strong and well as before, and the fire in the house of Usert was extinguished, and the rain from heaven ceased. And the lady Usert repented and was ashamed because she had shut her door against me; and she brought to the house of Taha, the woman of low degree, gifts many and precious, and laid them at my feet. For I am the lady Isis, a great goddess, mistress of words of power, and mighty in word and in deed.

“Now I, Isis, bore my son Horus, the son of Osiris, in the papyrus-swamps where the great river spreads out over the land. And I rejoiced

greatly over my son, because now I knew that the avenger of his father had appeared, and that the Red Fiend Set should not have dominion over the land. I hid him, and I kept him secretly, for I was afraid of the Red Fiend. Then I went forth to the town of Am, and the people received me and did homage unto me, for they knew the greatness of my power, and were afraid. So when I had spent the day in gathering food for the child, I returned, and took Horus into my arms. But, behold, I found him lifeless, my beautiful Horus, my golden one, my fatherless child ! His tears and the foam on his lips had bedewed the ground, his body was relaxed, and his heart did not beat.

“Then I shrieked and made lamentation : ‘ My father is in the Under-World, and my mother in the realms of the dead, and my husband lies in his coffin. None have I to answer for me or to avenge me on mine adversary. I will call unto some one of the sons of men, if haply their hearts will turn unto me.’ So I called unto the marshmen, and their hearts turned at once unto me. The people came forth out of their houses, and hastened to me at my call. They lamented for the greatness of my sorrow, but none of them could help me or give

me back my son. There came a woman to me, the wisest and most experienced of the town. She said unto me: 'This cannot be the work of the Red Fiend, for Set does not come into this province, he does not wander through the land of Khemmis. May it not be that a scorpion hath stung him?'

"Then I laid my nose close to the mouth of the child, and I smelled the smell of the poison. I recognized the sickness of my son, the heir of the gods, and knew that he had been poisoned. I took him swiftly in my arms, and my cry rang even unto heaven: 'Horus is stung, O Great God Ra. Horus is stung, the inheritor of thy heritage!' Then came my sister Nephthys weeping, and her lamentations echoed through the swamps, and with her came Selkis, the scorpion goddess. And she said: 'What has happened? What has happened? Cry unto heaven, and the Sun will stop even in the mid-firmament, and the Boat of Ra will not travel across the sky so long as Horus is dead.'

"Then I made my voice reach unto heaven, and my cry came even unto the Bark of Eternity. Behold, in that hour the sun stood still in the mid-firmament, and moved not from his place. And out of the Bark of Eternity came Thoth, bringing

his magic with him, and a great commission from Ra, and thus he spake: 'What is the matter? What is the matter, O Isis, thou glorious goddess with the skilful tongue? Surely nothing evil hath happened to the child Horus? Lo I come from the Bark of the Sun, from his place of yesterday; for darkness hath come on, and light hath fled, until Horus is healed and given back to his mother Isis. Verily the defender of Horus is the Sun, who lightens both lands with his beaming eyes, and is the protector of the suffering. Verily the defender of Horus is the Ancient of Days who is in the mid-heaven, who gives commands to all who are there or elsewhere, and is the protector of the suffering. The ship of the Sun stands still, and the Sun moves not from his place of yesterday until Horus is made whole once more, and the sufferer is restored to his mother.'

"So Thoth, the great god, the Lord of Truth and of Wisdom, stood over the child Horus and spake his words of power on this wise: 'Wake up, O Horus. Thy defence is sure. Rejoice the heart of thy mother Isis. Let your hearts be glad, all ye that dwell in the heavens, for Horus, the avenger of his father, shall cause the poison to retreat. The

word in the mouth of Ra shall run swiftly, and the tongue of the Great God shall triumph. Now the Bark of Ra standeth still and moveth not, and the Sun's disc is in the place where it was yesterday, to heal Horus for his mother Isis. Come to earth; draw near, O ship of Ra, and ye mariners of Ra! Make the ship of Ra to come hither to heal Horus for his mother Isis. Lo I, even I, am Thoth, the first-born son, the son of Ra! The company of the gods have commanded me to heal Horus for his mother Isis. Behold the poison is its own destruction; it is destroyed because it smote the strong one. O ye gods, your temples are safe, for Horus liveth for his mother.' Then my son was given back to me alive and well, and the great god Thoth returned to the Bark of Eternity, and the Bark sailed on in heaven, and there was great joy among all the gods from the one end of heaven even unto the other. Now doth Horus my son grow strong in the town of Buto among the marshes; and in the fulness of the time he shall fight the Red Fiend Set, and overthrow him, and avenge me and Osiris his father upon our adversary."

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