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Had we waited patiently in the chamber it would no doubt have been possible to make our way out in the usual manner, but it was too late to think of that now. There was no course open but to go on, so I said nothing about our terrible mistake to my wife, who had not noticed the noise, being in front and absorbed by the spectacle before her.

granite, with elaborately sculptured sides, and spread over the surface of the couch were numerous cushions and variegated mats, somewhat resembling the curtains, but thicker in the web. Resting on this royal tier were two human forms, side by side, in a semi-reclining attitude. Both were clad in sumptuous robes, and on the head of each was an elaborate structure, partly crown and partly tiara. The form on the right hand was that of an old man, with very prominent features and a small pointed beard almost snow-white in color, but his partner was lovely female in the bloom of youth.



THEIR EYES FIXED UPON US WITH A STEADY, INQUIRING LOOK.

the movement of the gigantic operculum, and I deeply regret that while we were crawling up the gallery I did not observe the construction of the wall more attentively, especially at the lower end, and also along the whole extent. I said just now that my wife was entranced at the spectacle that met her view on emerging from behind the lens frame. It was indeed no wonder that this should be so; and what followed her, after a few moments, I too, was equally stricken with amazement. A vast, lofty hall, decorated in a style and with a degree of richness surpassing anything either of us had ever seen appeared before us; everything it contained being clearly visible in the brilliant yet soft toned light. It was octagonal in shape, with a curtailed recess in one of the sides; the other seven being thickly covered with sculptured figures similar to the temple coverings of upper Egypt, save that the coloring was superb, and as bright as the day it was first laid on. Interspersed in all directions were glittering trophies composed apparently of jewels and precious stones, while in niches and on pedestals were statues exceeding life size, and either made of solid gold and silver, or else thickly covered with layers of the precious metals. To give an adequate idea of the majestic apartment, and all that it contained, would require a volume; it is impossible to do more than indicate in a fragmentary manner some few special points that a hurried examination enabled us to notice.

less we at length ventured to descend. On somewhat closer inspection it turned out that our involuntary homage to royalty had in reality been paid to the king of terrors. The two shapes on the couch were mummies, but the embalming process had been so perfectly and artistically carried out that even the lapse of centuries had not given rise to the slightest signs of decay. The glittering eyes that had caused us so much fear turned out to be simply a skillful combination of diamonds and crystal, fitted with minute springs that allowed of an infinitesimal amount of movement in the orbs under the influence of the faintest current of air. In this way the lifeless effect of perfect immobility was obviated, and it was only natural that at first we should have thought ourselves in the presence of living beings.

suddenness of the occurrence quite started us out on our wits, though like drowning people we still retained our mutual grasp. At last the rate of progress began to slacken sensibly; had the initial velocity been maintained, we should inevitably have been dashed to pieces at the bottom. Fortunately, however, the speed became gradually less and less as the netness of the declivity diminished, till finally it dwindled down to not more than a few miles an hour. Then suddenly my foot struck against something which seemed to give way before the impact, and the next moment we were lying, comparatively unharmed, but absolutely breathless, on a heap of beautifully soft sand under the starlit sky.

As may be supposed, a long time elapsed before we came to ourselves after this last fearful experience. What we had gone through before was bad enough, but nothing could stand, or even approach, the awful sensation of falling through darkness, in momentary expectation of being destroyed in some terrible manner.

When we were once more sufficiently collected to look about us with something like composure I found that we had emerged in the temple of the Sphinx. It was almost inconceivable that we could have come all that distance underground, but the incontestable fact remained that we had done so. The great block of stone which yielded so readily to my foot had fallen back into its original position, and was indistinguishable from the rest. It was impossible, therefore, to tell which one it was, though I tried for some time to identify it.

Thus ended this most extraordinary adventure. Sometimes it seems to me like a dream, and the few people to whom we have related it have invariably been politely incredulous. The queen's ring however remains. It is unquestionably a genuine relic of the ancient times, and experts all unite in assigning to it an age that is almost fabulous.

It was not for some considerable time that we mustered up enough courage to approach the dais, but seeing that the dais remained perfectly motionless, we at length ventured to descend. On somewhat closer inspection it turned out that our involuntary homage to royalty had in reality been paid to the king of terrors. The two shapes on the couch were mummies, but the embalming process had been so perfectly and artistically carried out that even the lapse of centuries had not given rise to the slightest signs of decay.

The left hand of the youthful bride of countless summers was hanging near the edge of the couch, and a ring which no doubt had slipped off one of her fingers, was lying on the floor at some distance from the dais. Happening to catch sight of this ancient gem close to my feet I had mechanically picked it up and it in my pocket. It was a sapphire set in gold, and on the inner surface there was a very clearly cut cartouche.

Having by this time almost got over our supernatural alarm we were naturally anxious to examine the royal mummies more accurately, and for this purpose proceeded to ascend the two or three steps which, I should have said, separated the recess from the remainder of the hall. These steps were wide and shallow, but otherwise not remarkable. Hand in hand we advanced, when all at once dais and canopy, marble couch and mummies seemed to fly up into the air, and before we could realize what had happened we found ourselves sliding down an inclined plane with frightful rapidity, and in darkness as complete as that which we had experienced during our imprisonment in the chamber. The revolving stone on which we simultaneously stepped simply swung back into position, while with ever-increasing momentum we shot down, apparently into the very bowels of the earth.

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