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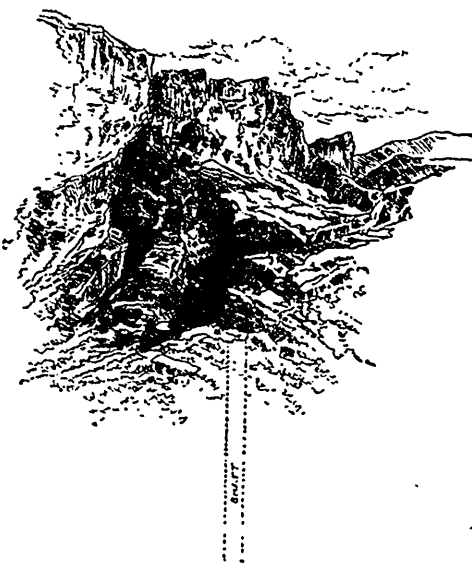
LYING IN STATE IN CAIRO.

"Egypt is only the façade of an immense sepulchre."—PAUL DE SAINT-VICTOR.



IN the Central Hall of the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities, ranged side by side, shoulder to shoulder, lies a solemn company of kings, queens, princes, and priests of royal blood, who died and were made imperishable flesh by the embalmer's art between three and four thousand years ago.

These royal personages are of different dynasties and widely separate periods. Between the earliest and the latest there intervenes a space of time which may be roughly estimated at seven centuries and a half. This space of time (about equivalent to that which divides the Norman Conquest from the accession of George III.) covers the rise and fall of the XVIIIth, XIXth, XXth and XXIst dynasties. During these four dynasties occurred the expulsion of the Hyksos invaders, the Asiatic conquests of Thothmes III., of Seti I., of Rameses II., the oppression and exodus of the Hebrews, and the defeat of the allied Mediterranean fleets of Rameses III. In a word, all the military glory and nearly all the architectural splendour of ancient



TOMBS OF THE PHARAOHS—EXTERIOR OF THE CAVE.

Egypt are comprised within the limits thus indicated. When, therefore, it began to be rumoured that the mummied remains of almost all the mightiest warriors and builders of this supreme epoch, together with the relics of kings and queens of a still earlier and a still later date, had been found at the bottom of a pit in one of the loneliest nooks of the western cliffs at Thebes, it was felt that a discovery of immense importance had indeed been made.