

Not so.

For when had they come to the sanctuary for this purpose, chanting and in procession? Nor were these all servants of the divinity. The populace had joined them. In that solemn litany he could hear the shrill wailing of women mingled with wild cries of despair such as he had never before, in the course of a long life, heard within these consecrated walls.

Or did his senses deceive him? Was it the groaning horde of unresting souls which he had seen from the observatory who were crowding into the sanctuary of the god?

Fresh horrors fell upon him; he threw up his arms in interdiction, and for a few moments repeated the formula against the malice of evil spirits; but he presently dropped his hands, for he marked among the throng some friends who yesterday, at any rate, had been in the land of the living. Foremost, the tall figure of the second prophet of the god; then the women devoted to the service of Amon-Ra, the singers and the holy fathers; and when at last, behind the astrologers and pastophoroi, he saw his son-in-law, whose home had till yesterday been spared by the plague, he took heart and spoke to him. But his voice was drowned by the song and cries of the coming multitude.

The courtyard was now fully lighted; but every one was so absorbed in his own sorrow that no one heeded the old astrologer. He snatched the cloak off his own shivering body to make a better pillow for the boy's tossing head, and while he did so, with fatherly care, he could hear among the chanting and wailing of the approaching crowd, first, frantic curses on the Hebrews, through whom these woes had fallen on Pharaoh and his people, and then, again and again, the name of the heir to the crown, Prince Rameses; and the tone in which it was spoken, and the formulas of mourning which were added, announced to all who had ears to hear that the eyes of the first-born of the king on his throne were also sealed in death.

As he gazed with growing anguish in his grandson's pale face, the lamentations for the prince rang out afresh and louder than ever, and a faint sense of satisfaction crept into his soul at the impartiality of Death, who spared not the sovereign on his throne any more than the beggar by the wayside.