

"Excuse me, barbarian prince. This is the first day of the three hundred and twenty-seven thousandth millennium."

My orthodoxy received a severe shock. However I had been accustomed to geological calculations, and was somewhat inclined to accept the antiquity of man; so I swallowed the statement without more ado. Besides, if such a charming girl as Hatasou had asked me at that moment to turn Mohammedan, or to worship Osiris, I believe I should incontinently have done so.

"You wake up only for a single day and night, then," I said.

"Only for a single day and night. After that, we go to sleep for another millennium."

"Unless you are meanwhile burned as fuel on the Cairo Railway," I added mentally. "But how," I continued aloud, "do you get these lights?"

"The Pyramid is built above a spring of inflammable gas. We have a reservoir in one of the side chambers in which it collects during the thousand years. As soon as we awake, we turn it on at once from the tap, and light it with a lucifer match."

"Upon my word," I interposed, "I had no notion you Ancient Egyptians were acquainted with the use of matches."

"Very likely not. There are more things in heaven and earth, Cephreus, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," as the bard of Philæ puts it.

Further inquiries brought out all the secrets of that strange tomb-house, and kept me fully interested till the close of the banquet. Then the chief priest solemnly rose, offered a small fragment of meat to a deified crocodile, who sat in a meditative manner by the side of his deserted mummy-case, and declared the feast concluded for the night. All rose from their places, wandered away into the long corridors or side-aisles, and formed little groups of talkers under the brilliant gas-lamps.

For my part, I strolled off with Hatasou down the least illuminated of the colonnades, and took my seat beside a marble fountain, where several fish (gods of great sanctity, Hatasou assured me) were disporting themselves in a porphyry basin. How long we sat there I cannot tell, but I know that we talked a good deal about fish, and gods, and Egyptian habits, and Egyptian philosophy, and, above all, Egyptian love-making. The last-named subject we found very interesting, and when once we got fully started upon it, no diversion afterwards occurred to break the even tenor of the conversation. Hatasou was a lovely figure, tall, queenly, with smooth dark arms and neck of polished bronze; her big black eyes full of tenderness, and her long hair bound up into a bright Egyptian headdress, that harmonized to a tone with her complexion and her robe. The more we talked, the more desperately did I fall in love, and the more utterly oblivious did I become of my duty to Editha Fitz-Simkins. The mere ugly daughter of a rich and vulgar brand-new knight, forsooth, to show off her airs before me, when here was a Princess of the Blood Royal of Egypt, obviously sensible to the attentions which I was paying her, and not unwilling to receive them with a coy and modest grace.

Well, I went on saying pretty things to Hatasou, and Hatasou went on deprecating them in a pretty little way, as who should say, "I don't mean what I pretend to mean one bit!" until at last I may confess that we were both evidently as far gone in the disease of the heart called love as it is possible for two young people on first acquaintance to become. Therefore, when Hatasou pulled forth her watch—another piece of mechanism with which antiquaries used never to credit the Egyptian people—and declared that she had only three hours more to live, at least for the next thousand years, I fairly broke down, took out my handkerchief, and began to sob like a child of five years old.

Hatasou was deeply moved. Decorum forbade that she should console me with too much expression; but she ventured to remove the handkerchief gently from my face, and suggested that there was yet one course open by which we might enjoy a little more of one another's society. "Suppose," she said quietly, "you were to become a mummy. You would then wake up, as we do, every thousand years; and after you have tried it once, you will find it just as natural to sleep for a millennium as for eight hours. Of course," she added, with a slight blush, "during the next three or four solar cycles there would be plenty of time to conclude any other arrangements you might possibly contemplate, before the occurrence of another glacial epoch."

This mode of regarding time was certainly novel and somewhat bewildering to people who ordinarily reckon its lapse by weeks and months; and I had a vague consciousness that my relations with Editha imposed upon me a moral necessity of returning to the outer world, instead of becoming a millennial mummy. Besides, there was the awkward chance of being converted into fuel and dissipated into space before the arrival of the next waking day. But I took one look at Hatasou, whose eyes were filling in turn with sympathetic tears, and that look decided me. I flung Editha, life, and duty to the dogs, and resolved at once to become a mummy.

There was no time to be lost. Only three hours remained to us, and the process of embalming, even in the most hasty manner, would take up fully two. We rushed off to the chief priest, who had charge of the particular department in question. He at once acceded to my wishes, and briefly explained the mode in which they usually treated the corpse.

That word suddenly aroused me. "The corpse!" I cried; "but I am alive. You can't embalm me, living."

"We can," replied the priest, "under chloroform."

"Chloroform!" I echoed, growing more and more astonished; "I had no idea you Egyptians knew anything about it."

"Ignorant barbarian!" he answered with a curl of the lip; "you imagine yourself much wiser than the teachers of the world. If you were versed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, you would know that chloroform is one of our simplest and commonest anesthetics."

I put myself at once under the hands of the priest. He brought out the chloroform, and placed it beneath my nostrils, as I lay on a soft couch under the central court. Hatasou held my hand in hers, and watched my breathing with an anxious eye. I saw the priest leaning over me, with a clouded phial in his hand, and I experienced a vague sensation of smelling myrrh and spikenard. Next, I lost myself for a few moments, and when I again recovered my senses in a temporary break, the priest was holding a small greenstone knife, dabbled with blood, and I felt that a gash had been made across my breast. Then they applied the chloroform once more; I felt Hatasou give my hand a gentle squeeze; the whole panorama faded finally from my view; and I went to sleep for a seemingly endless time.

When I awoke again, my first impression led me to believe that the thousand years were over, and that I had come to life once more to feast with Hatasou and Thothmes in the Pyramid of Abu Yilla. But second thoughts, combined with closer observation of the surroundings, convinced me that I was really lying in a bedroom of Shephard's Hotel at Cairo. An hospital nurse leant over me, instead of a chief priest; and I noticed no tokens of Editha Fitz-Simkins' presence. But when I endeavored to make inquiries upon the subject of my whereabouts, I was peremptorily informed that I mustn't speak, as I was only just recovering from a severe fever, and might endanger my life by talking.

Some weeks later I learned the sequel of my night's adventure. The Fitz-Simkinses, missing me from the boat in the morning, at first imagined that I might have gone ashore for an early stroll. But after breakfast time, lunch time, and dinner time had gone past, they began to grow alarmed, and sent to look for me in all directions. One of their scouts, happening to pass the Pyramid, noticed that one of the stones near the north-east angle had been displaced, so as to give access to a dark passage, hitherto unknown. Calling several of his friends, for he was afraid to venture in alone, he passed down the corridor, and through a second gateway into the central hall. There the Fellahin found me, lying on the ground, bleeding profusely from a wound on the breast, and in an advanced stage of malarious fever. They brought me back to the boat, and the Fitz-Simkinses conveyed me at once to Cairo, for medical attendance and proper nursing.

When I returned to London and proposed to lay this account before the Society of Antiquaries, all my friends dissuaded me on the ground of its apparent incredibility. They declare that I must have gone to the Pyramid already in a state of delirium, discovered the entrance by accident, and sunk exhausted when I reached the inner chamber. In answer, I would point out three facts. In the first place, I undoubtedly found my way into the unknown passage—for which achievement I afterwards received the gold medal of the Société Khédiviale, and of which I retain a clear recollection, differing in no way from my recollection of the subsequent events. In the second place, I had in my pocket, when found, a ring of Hatasou's, which I drew from her finger just before I took the chloroform, and put into my pocket as a keepsake. And in the third place, I had on my breast the wound which I saw the priest inflict with a knife of greenstone, and the scar may be seen on the spot to the present day. The absurd hypothesis of my medical friends, that I was wounded by falling against a sharp edge of rock, I must at once reject as unworthy a moment's consideration.

My own theory is either that the priest had not time to complete the operation, or else that the arrival of the Fitz-Simkins' scouts frightened back the mummies to their case an hour or so too soon. At any rate, there they all were, ranged around the walls undisturbed, the moment the Fellahin entered.

Unfortunately, the truth of my account cannot be tested for another thousand years. But as a copy of this C. I. N. will be preserved for the benefit of posterity in the British Museum, I hereby solemnly call upon Collective Humanity to try the veracity of this history by sending a deputation of archaeologists to the Pyramid of Abu Yilla, on the last day of December, Two thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven. If they do not then find Thothmes and Hatasou feasting in the central hall exactly as I have described, I shall willingly admit that the story of my New Year's Eve among the Mummies is a vain hallucination, unworthy of credence at the hands of the scientific world.

WHEN we are studying and pursuing excellence, we are ensuring durability; and the more thoroughly the idea of durability enters into our work and guides our lives, the more valuable will be the one and the nobler and happier will be the other.

THE BRAVE GIRL OF GLENBARR.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

I.

OLD DONALD'S DECISION.

"If Mary Morrison will wed wi' me, I'll wed no other!" This was young Donald's decision. And the handsome, stalwart young Highlander looked as though he intended to carry into effect those few words that he had spoken to his father in Gaelic.

Donald Macbane was his father's only child; and, as his mother had died within a few days of his birth, he had never known any other parent than his stern father. A hard man was the elder Donald, ruling those about him with an iron will, and intent only upon improving his small farm to its utmost capability, so that he might leave it to his son as a goodly heritage. By its aid, young Donald might, in time, be so raised above the humble surroundings of his early days, that he might also pass as a laird. But that this scheme might be fully carried out, it was needful that his son should be married to a girl who had money or land of her own, and who would not come to him empty-handed and without a dowry. "A tocherless lass" was not to be thought of; and the future owner of the small farm on the hillside in the Barr Glen must be mated with a maiden who was similarly circumstanced as regarded property.

And such a girl was to be found within a mile or two. For, on the opposite side of the glen, on the opposite side of the Barr river, where it tripped down its rocky staircase to join the great Atlantic, there lived a girl, named Janet Baillie, who was the only survivor of the once large family of old Hugh Baillie, and who would inherit his farmstead, which was a place called Clachanais, and was about as large as old Donald Macbane's farm at Glenbarr. The two families had always been intimate and on good terms; and Janet had ever a sweet smile and a pleasant word for young Donald whenever they met, whether it were at home, or at kirk or market; and there seemed to old Donald no possible reason why these two young people should not make a match of it. There was no discrepancy either in years or position; and there was no obstacle in their way; for Donald Macbane had sounded Hugh Baillie on the subject, and found the old man quite agreeable to the match. They were "a fine stand-up couple," as old Donald often told himself; and there could not be a more appropriate proceeding than to marry them to each other, and look forward to the time when the two farmsteads of Glenbarr and Clachanais should belong to one proprietor. Old Donald had dwelt so much on the idea, that he considered it as good as settled. He was so much accustomed to have his own will carried out, that he did not anticipate the disagreeable novelty of any opposition coming from his son; especially when so favorable an arrangement was made for him, and such a nice girl as Janet Baillie was (as he supposed) ready to make him her husband. And now, to his surprise, when he had spoken to his son on the subject, and had suggested to him he might go to Janet, and ask her to name the day for the wedding, young Donald had replied to him with those astounding words: "If Mary Morrison will wed wi' me, I'll wed no other!"

Now, this Mary Morrison was the girl who lived at the farm, and whose daily work was about the house and its surroundings; and all her earthly riches were the wages that old Donald paid her. Therefore, it was an utterly upsetting notion to him, that his son should ruin his prospects by throwing himself away on a mere farm-servant, when he might have the heiress of Clachanais for the asking. The old man could not understand it; he could not comprehend that his son and heir should take up, as he phrased it, with a girl who was not worth a single sou— a sou being an extent of hill-pasture that would be sufficient to keep a cow or ten sheep. He could not imagine how such a thing could be. And yet, he had to confess to himself that such a thing would have to be; for he knew that his son followed his father in having a determined will of his own; and that when he had made that resolution regarding Mary Morrison, he would most assuredly abide by it, and carry it into effect. Yes, it would have to be, and all his dearly loved plans would be thwarted, unless he could devise some scheme to get the girl out of the way.

He had much talk with his son on the subject; he pleaded the cause of Janet Baillie, and sang the praises of Clachanais; but he found, as he had expected, that all his talk and all his pleadings led to no further result than making young Donald the more resolved in his intentions to wed no other than Mary Morrison. "We are plighted to each other," he said in Gaelic; "and we are only waiting till next May, when her time of service will be over. We shall then be married; and, if you do not like us to live here and help you on the farm, we shall turn our backs on Glenbarr, and go away to a home of our own. We are strong and healthy, and we love one another; and, please God, we can earn our livelihood quite as well together as if we were apart. I have nothing to say against Janet Baillie. She is a good girl, and I hope will get a good man for her husband; but she is not Mary Morrison." Then

old Donald said no more; but he hardened his heart against his servant, and he was determined, by fair means or foul, to prevent her from marrying his son. There was at least six months for him wherein to plot and plan, and something might occur, in that interval, to favor his wishes. Until next May, Mary Morrison would be his servant, and she could not leave her situation without his consent.

The long evenings of winter had now come on, and the year was hastening to its close. The range of hills that stretched their length to Beinn-an-Tuire was covered with snow, and it lay deeply down in the hollows of the glen. In the last week of the year the younger Donald had left Glenbarr to go to a great cattle fair that was to be held in the northern part of the county, which fair lasted over the two last days of the old year and the first day of the new year, which day went by the name of Hogmanay, and was celebrated with much rejoicing and many old-world customs, including those of the "first foot," the wassail bowl, and the guizards. Donald's attendance at this Hogmanay Fair necessitated his absence from Glenbarr during several days, and was one of the few important events of the twelve months that made a change in the ordinary monotony of their every-day life. He had said good-bye to Mary, promising to bring her a Hogmanay fairing, and hoping that his next gift to her would take the form of a plain gold ring.

On the last evening of the old year, old Donald was sitting by the peat-fire on the hearth, in front of which Louth, his faithful collie, had stretched himself in luxurious ease. On the other side, seated on a low stool, was Mary Morrison, busily engaged in knitting. The wind was howling outside, and the drifting snow was clogging the doorways. Old Donald broke the silence that had been long reigning between them by making some remarks about his son's absence at the cattle fair—a theme which had its full interest for his servant. They spoke in Gaelic; for the English language was but little used by the natives, except when they went to a market town, and even there many people could be met with who had "got no English."

"My son seems bent upon making you his wife," at length said old Donald; "but I don't like to give my consent, unless I am quite sure that he is going to be married to a brave girl."

"But," pleaded Mary, "I think that I am a brave girl, Mr. Macbane."

"If you think so," said the old man, "are you ready to prove it by your actions?"

"If it is anything that a girl may do, Mr. Macbane, I am ready to do it for the love that I bear to your son."

"It is nothing more than to walk to the old church at Saddell," old Donald referred to the ruins of Saddell Monastery.

"Oh, I can easily do that, Mr. Macbane. You know that I have often walked there, in the summer or spring. It is not more than six miles as the crow flies."

"Yes; but the road is a bad one, and is made longer by the high hills and the deep glens. And there is snow on the ground."

"But it may be clear to-morrow, or the next day."

"If you want to win my son by proving yourself to be a brave girl, you must not wait for a fair-weather walk that could be taken by Janet Baillie, or any other girl in the glen; but you must do something out of the common way."

"I am ready to do it for Donald's sake. Whatever Janet Baillie may do, I will try and do more."

"I shall require you to go to the old church at Saddell this very night, and to be back here by breakfast time in the morning."

"I think Janet Baillie would not do that! but I will do it, or try to do it; though it is a wild night for such a walk and to such a place."

"That is not all," said the stern old man, though his voice trembled somewhat, as he made known to her his resolve. "I must have full and certain evidence that you have been to the old church; and though I never knew you to tell me a falsehood, yet, in this case, I must have further proof than your mere word. There is an old tomb inside the church: it is at the further end from the door, on the right-hand side, and stands under an arch. It is the great Macdonald's tomb; and on it there is a skull—the skull, they say of a murderer."

"Yes! I have seen it," she said, with a shudder.

"Are you brave enough to make your way alone, and through the snow, to that church, this very night; and, in proof that you have been there, to bring me back from thence the skull?"

"And what if I do so?"

"In that case I will withdraw my opposition to your marriage with my son; and I will not only give my free consent, but I will also make over to him the half of all that I have, so that he marry you in comfort, and before May-day, if he chooses to do so."

"That will be grand news for him when he comes home from the fair."

"Yes! if you have performed your part of the bargain; but it will take a brave girl to do what I have set you."

"And am I not a brave girl, Mr. Macbane?"

"That will depend upon your own showing. I shall certainly consider you to be very brave, and deserving of my son, if you will do as I propose, and go to Saddell Church this night, and show me, by breakfast time to-morrow, the