

The doctor, professional man as he was and inured to such spectacles, was startled! The plate before him showed the Princess's face in all its beautiful contour, but only dimly veiling a ghastly death's-head below. There was the whole bony structure of the head and the eyeless sockets; even the graceful, swan-like neck showed the articulated vertebral column that supported it in all its hideous reality. The beautiful shoulders were there, dimly as in a dream—but beneath was the empty clavicle, the knotty joint, the hollow sternum and the ribs of a skeleton half-length!

The doctor's voice broke the silence. 'My friend,' he said dryly, 'you see only the truth! You see what she really is, this peerless Princess of yours. You see her as she is to-day, and you see her kinship to the bones that have lain for centuries in yonder pyramid. Yet they were once as fair as this, and this was as fair as they—in effect the same! You that have madly, impiously adored her superficial beauty, the mere dust of to-morrow, let this be