

The Dragoman

certain liberties, and therefore takes others, and he merely indulges in a kiss now and then. I have watched him, and it does not worry me."

"The royal one!" repeated the dragoman scornfully.

"How do we know old Hatatcha's tales are true?"

"They must be true," returned Sëra, positively.

"My mother served Hatatcha's mother, because she was the daughter of kings. For generations the ancestors of Kāra have been revered by those who were Egyptians, although their throne is a dream of the past, and they are condemned to live in poverty. Be reasonable, my Tadros! Your own blood is as pure as ours, even though it is not royal. What! shall we Egyptians forget our dignity and rub skins with the English dogs or the pagan Arabs?"

"The Arabs are not so bad," said Tadros, thoughtfully. "They have many sensible customs, which we are bound to accept; for these Muslims overrun our country and are here to stay. Nor are the simple English to be sneered at, my Sëra. I know them well, and also their allies, the Americans and the Germans and French. They travel far to see Cairo and our Nile, and drop golden sovereigns into my pockets because I guide them to the monuments and explain their history, and at the same time keep the clever Arabs from robbing them until after I am paid. Yes; all people have their uses, believe me."

"Ah, you are wonderful!" ejaculated the old woman, with earnest conviction.