

'Nay, Pharaoh, the Queen of Egypt.'

By Seti's side there was another throne, that in which he had set dead Merapi with a crown upon her head. He turned and looked at it a while. Then, he said,

'I see that this seat is empty. Let the Queen of Egypt take her place here if so she wills.'

She stared at him as if she thought that he was mad, though doubtless she had heard something of that story, then swept up the steps and sat herself down in the royal chair.

'Your Majesty has been long absent,' said Seti.

'Yes,' she answered, 'but as my Majesty promised she would do, she has returned to her lawful place at the side of Pharaoh — never to leave it more.'

'Pharaoh thanks her Majesty,' said Seti, bowing low.

Some six years had gone by, when one night I was seated with the Pharaoh Seti Meneptah in his palace at Memphis, for there he always chose to dwell when matters of State allowed.

It was on the anniversary of the Death of the First-born, and of this matter it pleased him to talk to me. Up and down the chamber he walked and, watching him by the lamplight, I noted that of a sudden he seemed to have grown much older, and that his face had become sweeter even than it was before. He was more thin also, and his eyes had in them a look of one who stares at distances.

'You remember that night, Friend, do you not,' he said; 'perhaps the most terrible night the world has ever seen, at least in the little piece of it called Egypt.' He ceased, lifted a curtain, and pointed to a spot on the pillared portico without. 'There she sat,'