

The Last Egyptian

A little withered woman with an erect form and a pleasant face met Tadros, the dragoman, just within the doorway.

"Welcome!" she said, crossing her arms upon her breast and bending her head until she was nearly double.

"Peace to this house," returned Tadros, carelessly, and threw himself upon a bench.

Sëra squatted upon the earthen floor and looked with pride and satisfaction at the dragoman's costume.

"You are a great man, my Tadros," she said, "and you must be getting rich. We are honored by your splendid presence. Gaze upon your affianced bride, O Dragoman! Is she not getting fat and soft in flesh, and fit to grace your most select harem?"

"I must talk to you about Nephthys," said the dragoman, lighting a cigarette. "She is too free with these dirty Fedahs, and especially with that beast Kāra."

His tone had grown even and composed by this time, and his face had lost its look of anger.

"What would you have?" asked old Sëra, deprecatingly. "The girl must carry water and help me with the work until you take her away with you. I cannot keep her secluded like a princess. And there are no men in Fedah except old Nikko, who is blind, and young Kāra, who is not."

"It is Kāra who annoys me," said Tadros, puffing his cigarette lazily.

"Kāra! But he is the royal one. You know that well enough. The descendant of the ancient kings has