

## AUTHOR'S NOTE

It may be thought that even in a story of Old Egypt to represent a "Ka" or "Double" as remaining in active occupation of a throne, while the owner of the said "Double" goes upon a long journey and achieves sundry adventures, is, in fact, to take a liberty with Doubles. Yet I believe that this is scarcely the case. The Ka or Double which Wiedermann aptly calls the "Personality within the Person" appears, according to Egyptian theory, to have had an existence of its own. It did not die when the body died, for it was immortal and awaited the resurrection of that body, with which, henceforth, it would be reunited and dwell eternally. To quote Wiedermann again, "The Ka could live without the body, but the body could not live without the Ka . . . . it was material in just the same way as the body itself." Also, it would seem that in certain ways it was superior to and more powerful than the body, since the Egyptian monarchs are often represented as making offerings to their own Kas as though these were gods. Again, in the story of "Setna and the Magic Book," translated by Maspero and by Mr. Flinders Petrie in his "Egyptian Tales," the Ka plays a very distinct part of its own. Thus the husband is buried at Memphis and the wife in Koptos, yet the Ka of the wife goes to live in her husband's tomb hundreds of miles away, and converses with the prince who comes to steal the magic book.

Although I know no actual precedent for it, in the case of a particularly powerful Double, such as was given in this romance to Queen Neter-Tua by her spiritual father, Amen, the greatest of the Egyptian

gods, it seems, therefore, legitimate to suppose that, in order to save her from the abomination of a forced marriage with her uncle and her father's murderer, the Ka would be allowed to anticipate matters a little, and to play the part recorded in these pages.

It must not be understood, however, that the fact of marriage with an uncle would have shocked the Egyptian mind, since these people, and especially their royal Houses, made a habit of wedding their own brothers and sisters, as in this tale Mermes wed his half sister Asti.

I may add that there is authority for the magic waxen image which the sorcerer Kaku and his accomplice used to bewitch Pharaoh. In the days of Rameses III., over three thousand years ago, a plot was made to murder the king in pursuance of which such images were used. "Gods of wax . . . . . for enfeebling the limbs of people," which were "great crimes of death, the great abomination of the land." Also a certain "magic roll" was brought into play which enabled its user to "employ the magic powers of the gods."

Still, the end of these wizards was not encouraging to others, for they were found guilty and obliged to take their own lives.

But even if I am held to have stretched the prerogative of the Ka, or of the waxen image which, by the way, has survived almost to our own time, and in West Africa, as a fetish, is still pierced with pins or nails, I can urge in excuse that I have tried, so far as a modern may,

to reproduce something of the atmosphere and colour of Old Egypt, as it has appeared to a traveller in that country and a student of its records. If Neter-Tua never sat upon its throne, at least another daughter of Amen, a mighty queen, Hatshepu, wore the crown of the Upper and the Lower Lands, and sent her embassies to search out the mysteries of Punt. Of romance also, in high places, there must have been abundance, though the short-cut records of the religious texts of the priests do not trouble themselves with such matters.

At any rate, so believing, in the hope that it may interest readers of to-day, I have ventured to discover and present one such romance, whereof the motive, we may be sure, is more ancient, by far, than the old Egyptians, namely, the triumph of true love over great difficulties and dangers. It is pleasant to dream that the gods are on the side of such lovers, and deign for their sakes to work the miracles in which for thousands of years mankind has believed, although the scientist tells us that they do not happen.

How large a part marvel and magic of the most terrible and exalted kind played in the life of Old Egypt and of the nations with which she fought and traded, we need go no further than the Book of Exodus to learn. Also all her history is full of it, since among the Egyptians it was an article of faith that the Divinity, which they worshipped under so many names and symbols, made use of such mysterious means to influence or direct the affairs of men and bring about the accomplishment of Its decrees.

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