CHAPTER IX

THE TOMB OF HOREMHEB

In the last chapter a discovery was recorded which, as experience has shown, is of considerable interest to the general reader. The romance and the tragedy of the life of Akhnaton form a really valuable addition to the store of good things which is our possession, and which the archæologist so diligently labours to increase. Another discovery, that of the tomb of Horemheb, was made in 1908; and, as it forms the natural sequel to the previous chapter, I may be permitted to record it here.

Akhnaton was succeeded by Smenkhkara, his son-in-law, who, after a brief reign, gave place to Tutankhamon, during whose reign of six or eight years the court returned to Thebes. A certain noble named Ay came next to the throne, but held it for only five years. The country was now in a chaotic condition, and was utterly upset and disorganised by the revolution of Akhnaton, and by the vacillating policy of the three weak kings who succeeded him, each reigning for so short a time. One cannot say to what depths of degradation Egypt might have sunk had it not been for the timely appearance of Horemheb, a wise and good ruler, who, though but a soldier of not particularly exalted birth, managed to raise himself to the vacant throne, and succeeded in so organising the country once more that his successors, Rameses I, Sety I, and Rameses II, were able to regain most of the lost dominions, and to place Egypt at the head of the nations of the world.

Horemheb, "The Hawk in Festival", was born at Alabastronopolis, a city of the Eighteenth Province of Upper Egypt, during the reign of Amenophis III, who has rightly been named "The Magnificent", and in whose reign Egypt was at once the most powerful, the most

wealthy, and the most luxurious country in the world. There is reason to suppose that Horemheb's family were of noble birth, and it is thought by some that an inscription which calls King Thutmosis III " the father of his fathers " is to be taken literally to mean that the old warrior was his great—or great-great-grandfather. The young noble was probably educated at the splendid court of Amenophis III where the wit and intellect of the world was congregated, and where, under the presidency of the beautiful Queen Tiy, life slipped by in a round of revels.

As an impressionable young man, Horemheb must have watched the gradual development of free thought in the palace, and the ever-increasing irritation and chafing against the bonds of religious convention which bound all Thebans to the worship of the god Amon. Judging by his future actions, Horemheb did not himself feel any real repulsion to Amon, though the religious rut into which the country had fallen was sufficiently objectionable to a man of his intellect to cause him to cast in his lot with the movement towards emancipation. In later life he would certainly have been against the movement, for his mature judgment led him always to be on the side of ordered habit and custom as being less dangerous to the national welfare than a social upheaval or change.

Horemheb seems now to have held the appointment of captain or commander in the army, and at the same time, as a " Royal Scribe ", he cultivated the art of letters, and perhaps made himself acquainted with those legal matters which he was in later years destined to reform.

When Amenophis III died, the new king, Akhnaton, carried out the revolution which had been pending for many years, and absolutely banned the worship of Amon, with all that it involved. He built himself a new capital at El Amarna, and there he instituted the worship of the sun, or rather the heat or power of the sun, under the name of Aton. In so far as the revolution constituted a breaking away from tiresome convention, the young Horemheb seems to have been with the King. No one of

intelligence could deny that the new religion and new philosophy which was preached at El Amarna was more worthy of consideration on general grounds than was the narrow doctrine of the Amon priesthood ; and all thinkers must have rejoiced at the freedom from bonds which had become intolerable. But the world was not ready, and indeed is still not ready, for the doctrines which Akhnaton propounded ; and the unpractical model-kingdom which was uncertainly developing under the hills of El Amarna must have already been seen to contain the elements of grave danger to the State.

Nevertheless the revolution offered many attractions. The frivolous members of the court, always ready for change and excitement, welcomed with enthusiasm the doctrine of moral and simple life which the King and his advisers preached, just as in the decadent days before the French Revolution the court, bored with licentiousness, gaily welcomed the morality-painting of the young Greuze. And to the more serious-minded, such as Horemheb seems to have been, the movement must have appealed in its imperial aspect. The new god Aton was largely worshipped in Syria, and it seems evident that Akhnaton had hoped to bind together the heterogeneous nations of the empire by a bond of common worship. The Asiatics were not disposed to worship Amon, but Aton appealed to them as much as any god, and Horemheb must have seen great possibilities in a common religion.

It is thought that Horemheb may be identified amongst the nobles who followed Akhnaton to El Amarna, and though this is not certain, there is little doubt that he was in high favour with the King at the time. To one whose tendency is neither towards frivolity nor towards fanaticism, there can be nothing more broadening than the influence of religious changes. More than one point of view is appreciated : a man learns that there are other ruts than that in which he runs, and so he seeks the smooth midway. Thus Horemheb while acting loyally towards his King, and while appreciating the value of the

new movement, did not exclude from his thoughts those teachings which he deemed good in the old order of things. He seems to have seen life broadly; and when the new religion of Akhnaton became narrowed and fanatical, as it did towards the close of the tragic chapter of that king's short life, Horemheb was one of the few men who kept an open mind.

Like many other nobles of the period, he had constructed for himself a tomb at Sakkâra, in the shadow of the pyramids of the old kings of Egypt; and fragments of this tomb, which of course was abandoned when he became Pharaoh, are now to be seen in various museums. In one of the scenes there sculptured Horemheb is shown in the presence of a king who is almost certainly Akhnaton; and yet in a speech to him inscribed above the reliefs, Horemheb makes reference to the god Amon whose very name was anathema to the King. The royal figure is drawn according to the canons of art prescribed by Akhnaton, and upon which, as a protest against the conventional art of the old order, he laid the greatest stress in his revolution; and thus, at all events, Horemheb was in sympathy with this aspect of the movement. But the inscriptions which refer to Amon, and yet are impregnated with the Aton style of expression, show that Horemheb was not to be held down to any one mode of thought. Akhnaton was, perhaps, already dead when these inscriptions were added, and thus Horemheb may have had no further reason to hide his views; or it may be that they constituted a protest against the narrowness which marred the last years of the idealist.

Those who read the history of the period in the last chapter will remember how Akhnaton came to persecute the worshippers of Amon, and how he erased that god's name wherever it was written throughout the length and breadth of Egypt. Evidently with this action Horemheb did not agree; nor was this his only cause for complaint. As an officer, and now a highly placed general, of the army, he must have seen with feelings of the utmost

bitterness the neglected condition of the Syrian provinces. Revolt after revolt occurred in these states; but Akhnaton, dreaming and praying in the sunshine of El Amarna, would send no expedition to punish the rebels. Good-fellowship with all men was the King's watchword, and a policy more or less democratic did not permit him to make war on his fellow-creatures. Horemheb could smell battle in the distance, but could not taste of it. The battalions which he had trained were kept useless in Egypt; and even when, during the last years of Akhnaton's reign, or under his immediate successor, he was made commander-in-chief of all the forces, there was no means of using his power to check the loss of the cities of Asia. Horemheb must have watched these cities fall one by one into the hands of those who preached the doctrine of the sword, and there can be little wonder that he turned in disgust from the doings at El Amarna.

During the times which followed, when Smenkhkara held the throne for a year or so, and afterwards, when Tutankhamon became Pharaoh, Horemheb seems to have been the leader of the reactionary movement. He did not concern himself so much with the religious aspect of the questions: there was as much to be said on behalf of Aton as there was on behalf of Amon. But it was he who knocked at the doors of the heart of Egypt, and urged the nation to awake to the danger in the East. An expedition against the rebels was organised, and one reads that Horemheb was the "companion of his Lord upon the battlefield on the day of the slaying of the Asiatics." Akhnaton had been opposed to warfare, and had dreamed that dream of universal peace which still is a far-off light to mankind. Horemheb was a practical man in whom such a dream would have seemed but weakness; and, though one knows nothing more of these early campaigns, the fact that he attempted to chastise the enemies of the empire at this juncture stands to his account for all time.

Under Tutankhamon the court returned to Thebes, though not yet exclusively to the worship of Amon; and

the political phase of the revolution came to an end. The country once more settled into the old order of life, and Horemheb, having experienced the full dangers of philosophic speculation, was glad enough to abandon thought for action. He was now the most powerful man in the kingdom, and inscriptions call him "the greatest of the great, the mightiest of the mighty, presider over the Two Lands of Egypt, general of generals," and so on. The King "appointed him to be Chief of the Land, to administer the laws of the land as Hereditary Prince of all this land"; and "all that was done was done by his command." From chaos Horemheb was producing order, and all men turned to him in gratitude as he reorganised the various government departments.

The offices which he held, such as Privy Councillor, King's Secretary, Great Lord of the People, and so on, are very numerous; and in all of these he dealt justly though sternly, so that "when he came the fear of him was great in the sight of the people, prosperity and health were craved for him, and he was greeted as 'Father of the Two Lands of Egypt'." He was indeed the saviour and father of his country, for he had found her corrupt and disordered, and he was leading her back to greatness and dignity.

At this time he was probably a man of about forty years of age. In appearance he seems to have been noble and good to look upon. "When he was born," says the inscription, "he was clothed with strength: the hue of a god was upon him"; and in later life, "the form of a god was in his colour," whatever that may mean. He was a man of considerable eloquence and great learning. "He astonished the people by that which came out of his mouth," we are told; and "when he was summoned before the King the palace began to fear." One may picture the weak Pharaoh and his corrupt court, as they watched with apprehension the movements of this stern soldier, of whom it was said that his every thought was "in the footsteps of the Ibis,"—the ibis being the god of wisdom.

On the death of Tutankhamon, the question of inviting Horemheb to fill the vacant throne must have been seriously considered. A Hittite document recently discovered shows the late King's widow, Akhnaton's daughter, seeking an alliance with a Hittite prince, and promising to make him King of Eygpt; but there was another candidate, a certain Ay, who had been one of the most important nobles in the group of Akhnaton's favourites at El Amarna, and who was the father of the beautiful Nefertiti, Akhnaton's queen. Religious feeling was at the time running high, for the partizans of Amon and those of Aton seem to have been waging war on one another; and Ay appears to have been regarded as the man most likely to bridge the gulf between the two parties. A favourite of Akhnaton, and once a devout worshipper of Aton, he was not averse to the cults of other gods; and by conciliating both factions he managed to obtain the throne for himself. His power, however, did not last for long; and as the priests of Amon regained the confidence of the nation at the expense of those of Aton, so the power of Ay declined. His past connections with Akhnaton told against him, and in five years or so he disappeared, leaving the throne vacant once more. We hear no more of Tutankhamon's widow or of her Hittite alliance.

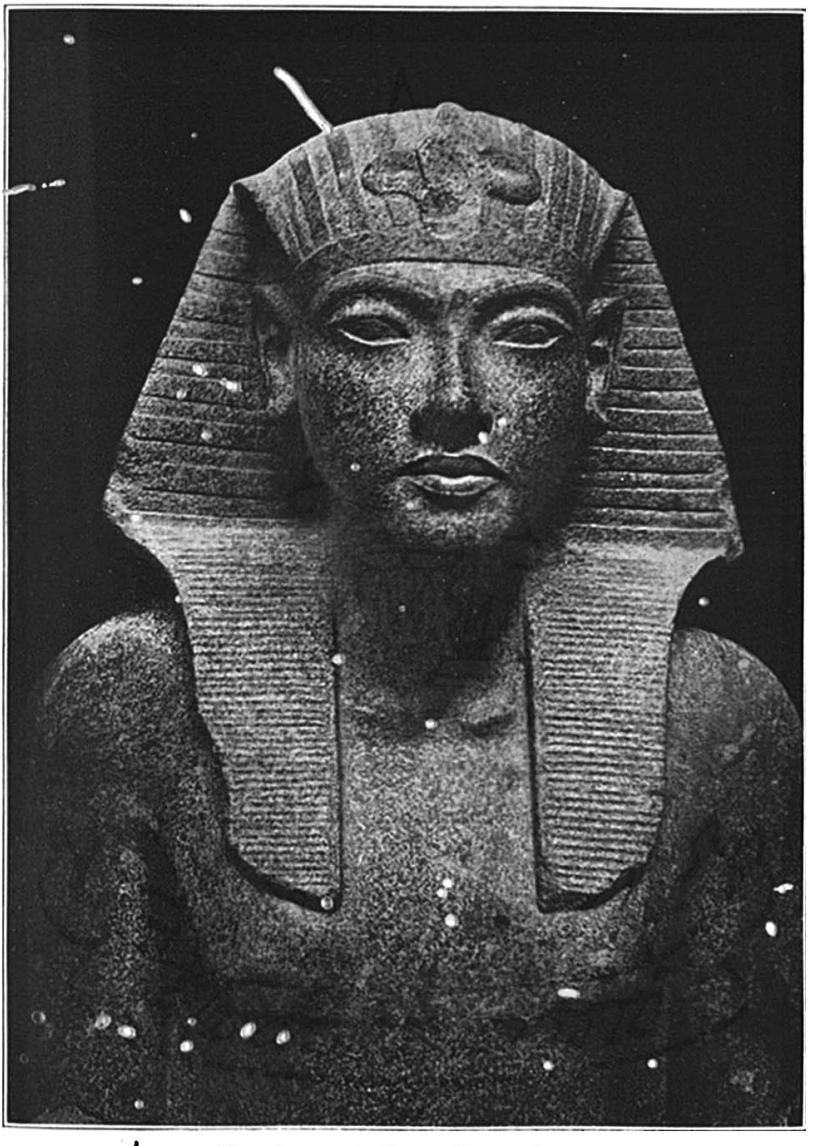
There was now no question as to who should succeed. A princess named Mutnezem, the sister of Akhnaton's queen, and daughter of King Ay, was the heiress to the throne. All men turned to Horemheb in the hope that he would marry this lady, and thus reign as Pharaoh over them. He was now some forty-five years of age, full of energy and vigour, and passionately anxious to have a free hand in the carrying out of his schemes for the reorganisation of the government. It was therefore with joy that, in about the year 1345 B.C., he sailed up to Thebes in order to claim the crown.

He arrived at Luxor at a time when the annual festival of Amon was being celebrated, and all the city was *en fête*. The statue of the god had been taken from its shrine at

Karnak, and had been towed up the river to Luxor in a gorgeous barge, attended by a fleet of gaily-decorated vessels. With songs and dancing it had been conveyed into the Luxor temple, where the priests had received it standing amidst piled-up masses of flowers, fruit, and other offerings. It seems to have been at this moment that Horemheb appeared, while the clouds of incense streamed up to heaven, and the morning air was full of the sound of the harps and the lutes. Surrounded by a crowd of his admirers, he was conveyed into the presence of the divine figure, and was there and then hailed as Pharaoh.

From the temple he was carried amidst cheering throngs to the palace which stood near by; and there he was greeted by the Princess Mutnezem, who fell on her knees before him and embraced him. That very day, it would seem, he was married to her, and in the evening the royal heralds published the style and titles by which he would be known in the future: "Mighty Bull, Ready in Plans; Favourite of the Two Goddesses, Great in Marvels; Golden Hawk, Satisfied with Truth; Creator of the Two Lands," and so forth. Then, crowned with the royal helmet, he was led once more before the statue of Amon, while the priests pronounced the blessings of the gods upon him. Passing down to the quay before the temple, the figure of the god was placed once more upon the state barge and was floated down to Karnak; while Horemheb was led through the rejoicing crowds back to the palace to begin his reign as Pharaoh.

In religious matters Horemheb at once adopted a strong attitude of friendship towards the Amon party which represented the old order of things. There is evidence to show that Aton was not at once persecuted; yet one by one his shrines were abandoned, and the neglected temples of Amon and the elder gods once more rang with the hymns of praise. Inscriptions tell us that the King "restored the temples from the marshes of the Delta to Nubia. He fashioned a hundred images with all their bodies correct, and with all splendid costly stones. He



A statue of Tutankhamen, the Pharaoh whose tomb was discovered by Lord Carnarvon in 1922. Now in Cairo.

established for them daily offerings every day. All the vessels of their temples were wrought of silver and gold. He equipped them with priests and with ritual-priests, and with the choicest of the army. He transferred to them lands and cattle, supplied with all equipment." By these gifts to the neglected gods, Horemheb was striving to bring Egypt back to its normal condition, and in no way was he prejudiced by any particular devotion to Amon.

A certain Patonemheb, who had been one of Akhnaton's favourites in the days of the revolution, was appointed High Priest of Ra—the older Egyptian form of Aton who was at this time identified with that god—at the temple of Heliopolis: and this can only be regarded as an act of friendship to the Aton-worshippers. The echoing and deserted temples of Aton in Thebes and El Amarna, however, were now pulled down, and the blocks were used for the enlarging of the temple of Amon—a fact which indicates that their original dedication to Aton had not caused them to be accursed.

The process of restoration was so gradual that it could not have much disturbed the country. Horemheb's hand was firm but soothing in these matters, and the revolution seems to have been killed as much by kindness as by force. It was probably not till some years later that he showed any tendency to revile the memory of Akhnaton; and the high feeling which at length brought the revolutionary king the name of "that criminal of El Amarna" did not rise for some considerable time. The difficulties experienced by Horemheb in steering his course between Amon and Aton, in quietly restoring the old equilibrium without in any way persecuting those who by religious convictions were Aton-worshippers, must have been immense; and one cannot but feel that the King must have been a diplomatist of the highest standing. His unaffected simplicity won all hearts to him; his toleration and broadness of mind brought all thoughtful men to his train; and his strong will led them and guided them from chaos to order, from fantastic Utopia to the solid old

Egypt of the past. Horemheb was the preacher of Sanity, the apostle of the Normal, and Order was his watchword.

The inscriptions tell us that it was his custom to give public audiences to his subjects, and there was not a man amongst those persons whom he interviewed whose name he did not know, nor one who did not leave his presence rejoicing. Up and down the Nile he sailed a hundred times, until he was able truly to say, " I have improved this entire land ; I have learned its whole interior ; I have travelled it entirely in its midst." We are told that " his Majesty took counsel with his heart how he might expel evil and suppress lying. The plans of his Majesty were an excellent refuge, repelling violence and delivering the Egyptians from the oppressions which were around them. Behold, his Majesty spent the whole time seeking the welfare of Egypt, and searching out instances of oppression in the land."

It is interesting, by the way, to note that in the eighth year the King restored the tomb of Thutmosis IV, which had been robbed during the revolution ; and the inscription which the inspectors left behind them was found on the wall when Mr. Howard Carter discovered the tomb a few years ago. The plundering of the royal tombs is a typical instance of the lawlessness of the times. The corruption, too, which followed on the disorder was appalling ; and wherever the King went he was confronted with deceit, embezzlement, bribery, extortion, and official tyranny. Every Government officer was attempting to obtain money from his subordinates by illegal means ; and *bakshish*—that bogie of the Nile Valley—cast its shadow upon all men.

Horemheb stood this as long as he could ; but at last, regarding justice as more necessary than tact, we are told that " his Majesty seized a writing-palette and scroll, and put into writing all that his Majesty the King had said to himself." It is not possible to record here more than a few of the good laws which he then made, but the following examples will serve to show how near to his heart were the interests of his people.

It was the custom for the tax-collectors to place that portion of a farmer's harvest, which they had taken, upon the farmer's own boat, in order to convey it to the public granary. These boats often failed to be returned to their owners when finished with, and were ultimately sold by the officials for their own profit. Horemheb, therefore, made the following law:—

"If the poor man has made for himself a boat with its sail, and, in order to serve the State, has loaded it with the Government dues, and has been robbed of the boat, the poor man stands bereft of his property and stripped of his many labours. This is wrong, and the Pharaoh will suppress it by his excellent measures. If there be a poor man who pays the taxes to the two deputies, and he be robbed of his property and his boat, my majesty commands: that every officer who collects the taxes and takes the boat of any citizen, this law shall be executed against him, and his nose shall be cut off, and he shall be sent in exile to Tharu. Furthermore, concerning the tax of timber, my majesty commands that if any officer find a poor man without a boat, then he shall bring him a craft belonging to another man in which to carry the timber; and in return for this let the former man do the loading of the timber for the latter."

The tax-collectors were wont to commandeer the services of all the slaves in the town, and to detain them for six or seven days, "so that it was an excessive detention indeed." Often, too, they used to appropriate a portion of the tax for themselves. The new law, therefore, was as follows:—

"If there be any place where the officials are tax-collecting and any one shall hear the report saying that they are tax-collecting to take the produce for themselves, and another shall come to report saying 'My man slave or my female slave has been taken away and detained many days at work by the officials,' the offender's nose shall be cut off, and he shall be sent to Tharu."

One more law may here be quoted. The police used often to steal the hides which the peasants had collected to hand over to the Government as their tax. Horemheb, having satisfied himself that a tale of this kind was not merely an excuse for not paying the tax, made this law:—

"As for any policeman concerning whom one shall hear it said that he goes about stealing hides, beginning with this day the law shall be executed against him, by beating him a hundred blows, opening five wounds, and taking from him by force the hides which he took."

To carry out these laws he appointed two chief judges of very high standing, who are said to have been " perfect in speech, excellent in good qualities, knowing how to judge the heart." Of these men the King writes: " I have directed them to the way of Life, I have led them to the truth, I have taught them, saying, ' Do not receive the reward of another. How, then, shall those like you judge others, while there is one among you committing a crime against justice ? ' " Under these two officials Horemheb appointed many judges, who went on circuit around the country; and the King took the wise step of arranging, on the one hand that their pay should be so good that they would not be tempted to take bribes, and, on the other hand, that the penalty for this crime should be most severe.

So many were the King's reforms that one is inclined to forget that he was primarily a soldier. He appears to have made some successful expeditions against the Syrians, but the fighting was probably near his own frontiers, for the empire lost by Akhnaton was not recovered for many years, and Horemheb seems to have felt that Egypt needed to learn to rule herself before she attempted to rule other nations. An expedition against some tribes in the Sudân was successfully carried through, and it is said that " his name was mighty in the land of Kush, his battle-cry was in their dwelling-places." Except for a semi-military expedition which was dispatched to the land of Punt, these are the only recorded foreign activities of the King; but that he had spent much time in the organisation and improvement of the army is shown by the fact that three years after his death the Egyptian soldiers were swarming over the Lebanon and hammering at the doors of the cities of Jezreel.

Had he lived for another few years he might have been famous as a conqueror as well as an administrator, though old age might retard and tired bones refuse their office. As it is, however, his name is written sufficiently large in the book of the world's great men; and, when he died, about B.C. 1315, after a reign of some thirty-five years,

he had done more for Egypt than had almost any other Pharaoh. He found the country in the wildest disorder, and he left it the master of itself, and ready to become once more the master of the empire which Akhnaton's doctrine of Peace and Goodwill had lost. Under his direction the purged worship of the old gods, which for him meant but the maintenance of some time-proved customs, had gained the mastery over the chimerical worship of Aton; without force or violence he had substituted the practical for the visionary; and to Amon and Order his grateful subjects were able to cry, "The sun of him who knew thee not has set, but he who knows thee shines; the sanctuary of him who assailed thee is overwhelmed in darkness, but the whole earth is now in light." In later years the names of Akhnaton, Smenkhkara, Tutankhamen, and Ay were all removed from the records as being tainted with the Aton-worship; and Horemheb was described as the immediate successor of Amenophis III, some thirty years thus being added to the actual length of his reign.

The tomb of this great Pharaoh was cut in the rocks on the west side of the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings, not far from the resting-place of Amenophis II. In the days of the later Ramesside kings the tomb-plunderers entered the sepulchre, pulled the embalmed body of the king to pieces in the search for hidden jewels, scattered the bones of the three members of his family who were buried with him, and stole almost everything of value which they found. There must have been other robberies after this, and finally the Government inspectors of about B.C. 1100 entered the tomb, and, seeing its condition, closed its mouth with a compact mass of stones. The torrents of rain which sometimes fall in winter in Egypt percolated through this filling, and left it congealed and difficult to cut through; and on the top of this hard mass tons of rubbish were tossed from other excavations, thus completely hiding the entrance.

In this condition, the tomb was found by us in February 1908. We had been working on the side of the valley

opposite to the tomb of Rameses III, where the accumulations of *débris* had entirely hidden the face of the rocks, and, as this was a central and likely spot for a "find", it was hoped that when the skin of rubbish had been cleared away the entrance of a royal tomb might be exposed. After a few weeks of digging, the mouth of a large shaft, cut into the limestone, was cleared. This proved to lead into a small chamber half-filled with rubbish, amongst which some fine jewellery, evidently hidden here, was found. This has been published by Mr. Davis in facsimile, and further mention of it here is unnecessary. Continuing the work it was not long before traces of another tomb became apparent, and in a few days' time we were able to look down from the surrounding mounds of rubbish upon the commencement of a rectangular cutting in the rock. The size and style of the entrance left no doubt that the work was to be dated to the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty, and the excavators were confident that the tomb of either Tutankhamon or Horemheb lay before them. Steps leading down to the entrance were presently uncovered, and finally the doorway itself was freed from *débris*.

On one of the door-posts an inscription was now seen, written in black ink by one of the Government inspectors of B.C. 1100. This stated that in the fourth year of an unknown king the tomb had been inspected, and had been found to be that of Horemheb.

We had hoped now to pass into the tomb without further difficulty, but in this we were disappointed, for the first corridor was quite choked with the rubbish placed there by the inspectors. This corridor led down at a steep angle through the limestone hillside, and, like all other parts of the tomb, it was carefully worked. It was not until two days later that enough clearing had been done to allow us to crawl in over the rubbish, which was still piled up so nearly to the roof that there was only just room to wriggle downwards over it with our backs pressing against the stone above. At the lower end of the corridor there was a flight of steps towards which the rubbish

shelved, and, sliding down the slope, we were here able to stand once more. It was obvious that the tomb did not stop here, and work, therefore, had to be begun on the rubbish which choked the stairway in order to expose the entrance to further passages. A doorway soon became visible, and at last this was sufficiently cleared to permit of our crawling into the next corridor, though now we were even more closely squeezed between the roof and the *débris* than before.

The party which made the entrance consisted of Mr. Davis, Mr. Ayrton, Mr. Harold Jones, Mr. Max Dalison, formerly of the Egypt Exploration Fund, and myself. Wriggling and crawling, we pushed and pulled ourselves down the sloping rubbish, until, with a rattling avalanche of small stones, we arrived at the bottom of the passage, where we scrambled to our feet at the brink of a large rectangular well, or shaft. Holding the lamps aloft, the surrounding walls were seen to be covered with wonderfully preserved paintings, executed on slightly raised plaster. Here Horemheb was seen standing before Isis, Osiris, Horus, and other gods; and his cartouches stood out boldly from amidst the elaborate inscriptions. The colours were extremely rich, and, though there was so much to be seen ahead, we stood there for some minutes, looking at them with a feeling much akin to awe.

The shaft was partly filled with rubbish, and not being very deep, we were able to climb down it by means of a ladder, and up the other side to an entrance which formed a kind of window in the sheer wall. In entering a large tomb for the first time, there are one or two scenes which fix themselves upon the memory more forcefully than others, and one feels as though one might carry these impressions intact to the grave. In this tomb there was nothing so impressive as this view across the well and through the entrance in the opposite wall. At one's feet lay the dark pit; around one the gaudy paintings gleamed; and through the window-like aperture before one, a dim suggestion could be obtained of a white-pillared

hall. The intense eagerness to know what was beyond, and, at the same time, the feeling that it was almost desecration to climb into those halls which had stood silent for thousands of years, cast a spell over the scene and made it unforgetable.

This aperture had once been blocked up with stones, and the paintings had passed across it, thus hiding it from view, so that a robber entering the tomb might think that it ended here. But the trick was an old one, and the plunderers had easily detected the entrance, had pulled away the blocks, and had climbed through. Following in their footsteps, we went up the ladder and passed through the entrance into the pillared hall. Parts of the roof had fallen in, and other parts appeared to be likely to do so at any moment. Clambering over the *débris* we descended another sloping corridor, which was entered through a cutting in the floor of the hall, originally blocked up and hidden. This brought us into a chamber covered with paintings, like those around the well; and again we were brought to a standstill by the amazingly fresh colours which arrested and held the attention.

We then passed on into the large burial-hall, the roof of which was supported by crumbling pillars. Slabs of limestone had broken off here and there and had crashed down on to the floor, bringing with them portions of the ceiling painted with a design of yellow stars on a black ground. On the walls were unfinished paintings, and it was interesting to notice that the north, south, east, and west were clearly marked upon the four walls for ceremonial purposes.

The main feature towards which our eyes were turned was the great pink granite sarcophagus which stood in the middle of the hall. Its sides were covered with well-cut inscriptions of a religious nature; and at the four corners there were figures of Isis and Nephthys, in relief, with their wings spread out as though in protection around the body. Looking into the sarcophagus, the lid having been thrown off by the plunderers, we found it

The entrance of the Tomb of Horemheb in the Valley of the Tombs of the Kings

empty except for a skull and a few bones of more than one person. The sarcophagus stood upon the limestone floor, and under it small holes had been cut, in each of which a little wooden statue of a god had been placed. Thus the king's body was, so to speak, carried on the heads of the gods, and held aloft by their arms. This is a unique arrangement, and has never before been found in any burial.

In all directions broken figures of the gods were lying, and two defaced wooden statues of the king were overthrown beside the sarcophagus. Dead flowers were found here and there amidst the *débris*, these being the remnant of the masses of garlands which were always heaped around and over the coffin.

Peering into a little side chamber on the right, we saw two skulls and some broken bones lying in the corner. These appeared to be female, and one of the skulls may have been that of Mutnezem, the queen. In another small chamber on the left there was a fine painting of Osiris on the back wall; and, crouching at the foot of this, a statuette of a god with upraised hands had been placed. As we turned the corner and came upon it in the full glare of the lamps, one felt that the arms were raised in horror at the sight of us and that the god was gasping with surprise and indignation at our arrival. In the floor of another ante-chamber a square hole was cut, leading down to a small room. A block of stone had neatly fitted over the opening, thus hiding it from view; but the robbers had detected the crack, and had found the hiding place. Here there were a skull and a few bones, again of more than one person. Altogether there must have been four bodies buried in the tomb; and it seems that the inspectors, finding them strewn in all directions, had replaced one skull in the sarcophagus, two in the side room, and one in this hiding-place, dividing up the bones between these three places as they thought fit. It may be that the king himself was buried in the underground chamber, and that the sarcophagus was a sort of blind;

for he had seen the destruction caused by robbers in the tomb of Thutmosis IV, which he had restored, and he may have made this attempt to secure the safety of his own body. Whether this be so or not, Fate has not permitted the body of the great king to escape the hands of the destroyer, and it will now never be known with certainty whether one of these four heads wore the crown of the Pharaohs.

The temperature was very great in the tomb, and the perspiration streamed down our faces as we stood contemplating the devastation. Now the electric lamps would flash upon the gods supporting the ransacked sarcophagus, lighting for a moment their grotesque forms; now the attention would concentrate upon some wooden figure of a hippopotamus-god or cow-headed deity; and now the light would bring into prominence the great overthrown statue of the king. There is something peculiarly sensational in the examining of a tomb which has not been entered for such thousands of years, but it must be left to the imaginative reader to infuse a touch of that feeling of the dramatic into these words. It would be hopeless to attempt to put into writing those impressions which go to make the entering of a great Egyptian sepulchre so thrilling an experience: one cannot describe the silence, the echoing steps, the dark shadows, the hot breathless air; nor tell of the sense of vast Time and the penetrating of it which stirs one so deeply.

The air was too bad to permit of our remaining long so deep in the bowels of the earth; and the falling ceilings were a source of much danger. We therefore presently made our way through the halls and corridors back to the upper world, scrambling and crashing over the *débris*, and squeezing ourselves through the rabbit-hole by which we had entered. As we passed out of this hot, dark tomb into the brilliant sunshine and the bracing north wind, the gloomy wreck of the place was brought before the imagination with renewed force. The scattered bones, the broken statues, the dead flowers, grouped themselves

in the mind into a picture of utter decay. In some of the tombs which have been opened the freshness of the objects has caused one to exclaim at the inaction of the years; but here, where vivid and well-preserved wall-paintings looked down on a jumbled collection of smashed fragments of wood and bones, one felt how hardly the Powers deal with the dead. How far away seemed the great fight between Amon and Aton; how futile the task which Horemheb accomplished so gloriously! It was all over and forgotten, and one asked oneself what it mattered whether the way was difficult or the battle slow to win. In the fourth year of the reign of Horemheb a certain harper named Neferhotep partly composed a song which was peculiarly appropriate to the tune which ran in one's head at the opening of the tomb of this Pharaoh whom the harper served:—

"(1) Behold the dwelling of the dead. Their walls fall down; their place is no more: they are as though they had never existed. (2) That which hath come into being must pass away again. The young man and the maidens go to their places; the sun riseth at dawn, and setteth again in the hills of the west. Men beget and women conceive. The children, too, go to the places which are appointed for them. O, then, be happy! Come, scents and perfumes are set before thee: *mahu*-flowers and lilies for the arms and neck of thy beloved. Come, songs and music are before thee. Set behind thee all cares; think only upon gladness, until that day cometh whereon thou shalt go down to the land which loveth silence."

Horemheb must often have heard this song sung in his palace at Thebes by its composer; but did he think, one wonders, that it would be the walls of his own tomb which would fall down, and his own bones which would be almost as though they had never existed?