

PAPER VII.—ON TWO MUMMIES FROM THEBES,  
IN UPPER EGYPT.

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When my father opened the mummy before you, in November last, he protected himself from the ridicule which follows mistakes on such occasions, by stating the many sources of error which may falsify the most careful diagnosis of the mummy. It was well that he did so, for a more thorough examination than we could make that night revealed a man and not a woman, as he judged it to be from the lid of the case.

The examination disclosed some curious particulars. It is a mummy of a youth who had hardly attained the age of manhood, and who had struggled up to that period of life through suffering and fearful physical deformity. He was only five feet in height,—had a small head and a sharp, thin face—was hump-backed—and lame, through the left leg being shorter than the right. The foot of the deformed leg is furnished with six toes. So crooked was he, that his embalmers—for the purpose of straightening him—passed a stick through the pelvis, transfixing the body. But that means failing, they bound him down to a heavy piece of wood, which they concealed among the bandages. The vertebral column is very much distorted, and the sternum lies almost upon the back bone. In order, therefore, to make the figure shapely, the embalmers stuffed a quantity of cloth between the integument and the ribs.

It was not a mummy of the first quality, nor yet of the most inferior preparation. The extremities seem to have been dipped in liquid bitumen; and bitumen appears to have been laid evenly over

the back, but only at spots upon the front of the body. The chest is covered with almost half an inch, of what is now a fine powder, but was, when laid on fresh, a consistent gummy substance, as its composition shows. And the head and face, upon which traces of bitumen are found, are preserved with the same compound. Under the microscope this powder presents the appearance of yellow crystals of different shapes and density of color. Dr. Anderson was so kind as to analyse 30 grains of it. The result he communicates in the following memorandum :

"I digested the 30 grs. for forty-eight hours in hot alcohol at 90 °; the residuum I digested for forty-eight hours more in the same way in water. On filtering there remained matter inodorous and tasteless, evidently vegetable ligneous matter, and weighing 12 grains—thus shewing that eighteen grains had been dissolved. The solutions, both in spirits and water, were bright and transparent, and on evaporation some salt of ammonia was carried off. I evaporated the spirituous solution to the consistence of ordinary varnish, and on applying it either to earthenware or wood, it answers as a varnish. That it is a resin and insoluble in water, is proved by dropping it into water which it at once renders milky and turbid. The watery solution is evidently vegetable mucous or gum, mixed with a certain portion of animal mucous or gelatine; the latter probably from some of the insects whose bodies were completely disintegrated."

The wood is probably cassia bark, which was largely used, and with which the whole cavity of the body is sometimes filled.

That the body had gone through the usual salting process is proved by the appearance of crystals of netron upon the brain, soon after exposure to the air. The brain had not been extracted. Upon removing the calvaria we found it lying on the occiput in a compact mass, shrivelled to about three and a half inches in its longitudinal diameter, and two inches in thickness. It retains distinctly its shape—the under part exhibiting the division between the cerebrum and cerebellum, and the upper part the division of the hemispheres and the convolutions. The dura mater adhered to the skull and retained, to a certain degree, its toughness.

The viscera were either in whole or in part mummied, wrapped up in cloth and shoved up into the chest, but their remains were undistinguishable. The abdomen was filled with cloth.

In the abdominal cavity, beneath the skin of the chest and face, in the orbits, and within the skull were found a few specimens of *Necrobia mummiarum*, and a great many perfect specimens of the *Dermestes pollinctus*, with some pupæ and innumerable empty cases.

Beside the gold emblem of the soul, found at our first examination on the pit of the stomach, nothing was enveloped with the body. That emblem was often worn as a personal ornament, and was thought to act as a charm. It has the body, wings and tail of a bird, with the head of a woman. The specimen in question weighs 3 dwts. and 10grs. The wings are coated with enamel, some fragments of which had fallen out before it was buried with the dead; and it bears other signs of having been well worn by the living.

The only peculiarity in the bandaging was in the unusual quantity of padding, which the decrepid form of the body rendered necessary.

On a previous visit to Egypt my father procured at Thebes a handsome male-mummy case, with body enclosed. From its elaborate workmanship it evidently contained a person of consequence. This was corroborated by the occurrence, among the usual hieroglyphical sentences upon the cover, of the name of King Amunoph I., the second ruler of the 18th dynasty—circa 1500 B.C., and by the discovery in the tomb of a very beautifully sculptured stone tablet and a painted wooden tablet, with the names of Amunoph and his immediate successor. We concluded that the mummy was that of a servant about the court, or some public officer of trust. On being unrolled, it revealed a life the very opposite of that which the poor decrepid lad had led. It was the mummy of a strongly-built man of 5 feet 10 inches, with a fine well-balanced head. The skull tells the story of his life. The frontal bone had been seriously fractured immediately behind the frontal eminence of the right side by a blunt instrument, which had depressed the bone over the surface of a square inch. The injury had been received so long before his death as to afford

time for all the changes which take place subsequent to fracture with great depression of the bone.

Another peculiarity illustrates his life. He was mummied when almost a skeleton. The skull clearly evinces this. Other parts of the body had been considerably injured by moisture, but the wrappings of the head were as sound as when they came from the loom. Beneath the wrappings we found spread a coat of transparent, ruby-colored gum, of about the consistence of honey, as fresh apparently as when laid on. But between this preservative layer and the bone, there does not exist a trace of integument. The bone was quite moist. The gum, on exposure to the air, soon dried, and now resembles the preservative mixture of the first mummy. Crystals of salt have since appeared upon the dry surface of the gum.

The rest of the body was in much the same state. Here and there only a little dry integument adhered to the bones. The cavity of the abdomen and chest was filled with earthy matter, and the skull contained only a few drachms of the preservative substance in fine powder. Not any trace of the lining membranes exist.

No ornament was found; but an unusual quantity of cloth was used to compensate for the deficiency of flesh.

There is no doubt that little else than the skeleton was embalmed. Coupling this with the fractured skull, we may suppose him to have been a warrior of rank and distinction who died on some foreign campaign, and whose remains were brought home in a state of decomposition to be embalmed and buried with pomp in the Theban necropolis. With whatever imaginary circumstances however we surround his death, his posthumous history was strange.

It is not often that marks of this kind occur to give an insight into the history of the mummified man. It is difficult to associate the ideas of humanity and even mortality with a mummy, until some sign of our common frailty reminds us that the mummy was once a suffering being like ourselves. Others than myself felt this

when we came to the deformed members of the poor lad. He had been a repulsive cripple—as deformed as is almost possible to be. Yet he had retained throughout his dreary life the love of parents who, though poor, had done their best to give him decent burial, and protect him in his passage to the other world by perhaps the only costly thing they had in their possession—a well-worn heirloom. These simple circumstances form a link most intimate between that far off past and the present, and make us feel that amidst the more external difference, whether of thought and opinion, or of outer life, there existed then as now the common human sympathies and natural impulses of the heart, which afford the best argument for the essential unity of our human race.