

ARABIC PROVERBS.

Used to characterize some villages in the District of Akka.

By G. SCHUMACHER.

THE following proverbs are commonly known amongst the natives as epithets to the names of villages and cities, to characterize their inhabitants. I have not been able to reproduce these epithets as desirable, following a regular succession, according to the geographical position of the respective villages, but have picked out what I found trustworthy and popular, hoping to complete them occasionally.

Owing to personal experience, I found these proverbs to be in every way indeed characterizing, and if repeated in the respective village either lead to a welcome, or if they sound unfavourable, to a—row. The notes added will explain the proverbs somehow.

1. 'Akka حكا : "Sellim wakfy 'Akkâwy," سلم وقفي صكاوي
 "The Akkiote salutes (greet) while standing." lc

Note.—The inhabitants of the city of Akka are known for their scant hospitality; if a stranger arrives, he is greeted on the street and not invited with the usual "tafaddal" (take advantage) to come home (where the actual reverences ought to be made), to sit down and rest, from fear of staying. The negligence of saying "tafaddal" is equal to the expression, "Go, and look for another lodging!"

2. Haifa حيفا : "Fessâd el Moy Haifâwy," فساد الماء حيفاوي
 "The Haifiote is a water spoiler."

Note.—Haifa has no spring, and the wants of the city are obtained from more or less filthy (dug) wells. According to Muhammedan law, the true-believer has to wash himself before praying, with pure, clean water; this law can therefore not be strictly observed at Haifa, and its Moslem inhabitants as well as the place was somehow disregarded for this reason. Recently the wells have been kept cleaner and the project of building an aqueduct will—it is hoped—annul this ill-reputation.

3. Nazareth الناصرة : "Kartm el Yadd Nasrâwy," كريم اليد نصراوي
 "The Nazarene is free to give" (generous).

Note.—Hospitality is—in general—practised very freely at this city. Society meals and invitations are a daily occurrence at Nazareth,

while at Akka and at Haifa they are seldom. Nazareth is a conservative place, whose customs, language and manners resemble those of the Fellahîn, while Akka and Haifa have adopted un hospitable habits of the "Franj."

4. *Et T'reh* (near Haifa) الطيرة :

"Kebîr esh Shâsh Tîrâwy," كبير الشاش طيراوي
 "He with a large turban is a Tiriote."

Note.—The Tiriotes, from ancient custom, wear large linen cloths, slung around their ugly heads, in the form of a turban, in order to have the appearance of an "Adamy," a quiet, good man. But in reality they are the greatest thieves, the untrustworthiest crowd around, and are known as such everywhere.

5. 'Athlit ('Atlit) عتليت :

"Kebîr et Tuhly 'Atlîty" كبير الطحلة عتليتي
 "The one with a large milt is an Atlitian."

Note.—The unhealthiness of the air and the water at Athlit causes a general sickness of the milt among its inhabitants. They are easily known by their bloated gastric regions and their yellowish, pale colour.

6. *Sarafend* صرفند :

"Dîk el Mezâbil Sarafandy," ديك المزابل صرفندي
 "The Sarafandiate is a cock on the manure hill."

Note.—This little flattering epithet has its origin from the huge manure hills found in the village and its vicinity. Their summit being the most conspicuous point of the village, the elders and Sheikh meet there at sunset and overlook the adjacent country. Naughty tongues say that, having no Jâma', they use this summit as a "Mêdany!" (minaret).

7. *Kefr Lâm* كفر لام :

"Kefr Lâm ifrish wa nâm," كفر لام افرش و نام
 "At Kefr Lâm prepare thy bed and sleep (rest)."

Note.—The hospitality of this village is so well known that it became a proverb. If any stranger, whoever it may be, arrives at the place, it will cost him quite a trouble to be off again, without spending a night there. The village is small and poor, but meals and attention are as good as anywhere in the district.

8. *Jeba'* كباب العسل جمعاوي "Kabâb el 'Asal Jeba'âwy," جمع
 "The *Jeba'ite* is a honey cake."

Note.—Honey of a superior quality is found abundantly at *Jeba'*, therefore the guests are generally treated with bread, butter and honey, or honey cakes; the latter being a dainty-bit for an Arab taste, the village has been long famous for it.

9. *Ijzim* اشقر الشارب جزماوي "Ashkar esh Shârib Jizmâwi," اخزم
 "The one with a fair (red) haired moustache is a *Jizmiote*."

Note.—In fact the inhabitants of this large village can be recognized by their red hair, or at least red moustaches. This colour is not esteemed by the natives (excepted when the bearer is a lady), and little trust is placed in red-haired men. The inhabitants of *Ijzim* are renowned bandits, and do every honour to their epithet.

10. *'Ain Ghazâl* عين غزال :

"Râs ej Jûd 'Ain Ghazâl," رأس الجود عين غزال

"The head of generosity is *'Ain Ghazal*."

Note.—This proverb sounds well, and the small village indeed merits every praise, owing to the liberal way in which they generally deal with their neighbours; but they have no spring, and are obliged to bring their water supply from a good distance, therefore they only give you a drink if forced to do so, never willingly, and the proverb was recently changed into the following:—

"Talabna el Akel, ta'mûna, talabna el Moi, ma sakuna."

طلبنا الاكل، طعمونا، طلبنا الماء، ما سقونا

"We asked to eat, they gave us, we asked for water, they gave us no drink."

11. *Tantûra* طنظورة أم العتورة "Tantûra Umm el 'Atûra," طنظورة
 "Tantûra is the mother of the heroism" (of the brave).

Note.—This down-trodden village, from external appearances, does not agree with this proverb; but as I have become more closely acquainted with its people, I have found their manner of acting as men, their agreement of mind, whenever a joint step (towards government or neighbours) is wanted, contrary to the childish actions of other fellahîn, fully to justify an admiration for them. Unfortunately the climate of *Tantûra* is very bad.

12. *Fridîs* فريديس أم الطعريس "Fridîs Umm et T'aris," فريديس
 "Fridîs, the mother of the immoral."

Note.—It is said that the reputation of its women is not very high, and that of its men still less; but in general they are not worse than other *Fellahîn* in this respect.

The above-mentioned proverbs are said to be centuries old, nevertheless they are still striking, and if held against a Tiriote for instance, asseverating his innocence in this or that before the Kâdy, he will hardly reply anything else in his Fellahin dialect, but : "Ya Ghânim, mfn ely Kallatsh " (literally) " My shepherd, who told you."

G. SCHUMACHER.

HAIFA, 10th May, 1887.

NOTE BY M. CLERMONT-GANNEAU.

ON page 108 of the April *Quarterly Statement*, Captain Conder disputes the reality of the two Phœnician characters that I found on the monolith of Siloam, and refers the reader to the "Jerusalem" volume of the "Memoirs." I can only find one passage in that volume referring to the characters. In this (page 7) Captain Conder says: "The remains of two letters, apparently of the earlier Hebrew character, have recently been observed on this tomb by M. Clermont-Ganneau, which might serve to class this monument as one earlier than those already mentioned." I formally maintain my opinion. I have had in my hands a squeeze of the letters which confirms me.

On page 105 of the same number, Captain Conder seems to assert that my identification of Hippos with *Susyeh*, where he says that Hippos was identified with Susitha by Neubauer. That identification was made long ago by Lightfoot. My discovery is this, I pointed out that *Susitha* is no other than the Arabic *Susyeh*, and that *Susyeh* mentioned by Mussulman geographers represents the name and site of Hippos.
