

buried in jars in the corners of rooms have been found, and one adult, lying exactly in the middle of another chamber. The latter had apparently (to judge from the position of the arms) been bound, and the left hand was cut off. I hope to be in a position to give further particulars about this discovery in the next report, which will conclude the series presented under the present firman.)

THE IMMOVABLE EAST.

By PHILIP G. BALDENSPERGER, Esq.

(Continued from p. 126.)

WHEN the villagers tell stories among themselves about some wonderful adventure of a king's son, who found a treasure—and so on, and so on—they always begin with the formula : "There was once, and there was once, in the course of the centuries"; "there was a king," &c.;¹ and having told the story, the speaker will say, "The bird flew away—good evening to you all."² They may also ask riddles or recount fables about the fox. These are the most popular, and the following will show what they think about the craftiest of all animals :—

The Tiger and the Fox.—Abu Sliman (the nickname of the fox), walking about the fields, met Abu Tansar (from *nistr*), the eagle, and asked him how the world looked from the sky. The eagle said, "Why, it is so small that it can hardly be seen." But the fox would not believe this, and the eagle invited him to suffer himself to be carried aloft, so that he could see it for himself. So the fox rode on the back of the eagle, and up they went, till the earth was as small as a ball. On being questioned, the fox replied that it was like a ball. On they went, still higher and higher, till the fox said it was as small as the eye of a needle. Still the eagle ascended, and at last the fox said, "I don't see anything at all." "Well," said

¹ *Kán a-ma-kún, fi sa'át il-akräón, Kán fi hona malek, &c.*

(كان أهلكان في ساعات الآخران - كان في هنا ملك)

² (طار الطير ومسككم بالخمير)

the eagle, "what distance do you suppose it to be?" And the fox, trembling, said he did not know. But the eagle continued, "You had better measure the distance;" and so saying, he turned himself upside down and the fox tumbled into space, and with greater speed than he saw it disappear, the earth was reappearing and becoming larger and larger, till finally he fell on the fur coat of a fellah who was ploughing in the field, and had deposited his garment near by. By the time the ploughman had recovered from his astonishment the fox had run away with the fur on his back! Now, Abu Tanmar (from *nimr*), the tiger or leopard, was out for a walk, and seeing Abu Sliman in his new costume, asked him where he got it. The fox answered that he had become a tailor and made furs for sale. The tiger at once ordered one. "Hold still," said the fox, "I must have lamb-skins, two lambs for the back part, two for the front, and two for the sleeves." "All right," said the tiger, "give me your address and I'll send you six lambs, and as I cannot skin them I'll leave it to you, and you can eat the meat for the trouble." They stroked paws over the bargain (اعي، *bī'at*), and the fox gave his address. Next day the tiger brought the six lambs. Abu Sliman, with his wife and four children, feasted on the lambs, and thought no more about the promised fur. A fortnight afterwards Abu Tanmar met Abu Sliman, and after the usual salutations and remarks about the weather, the tiger asked how the fur was going on. "Well," said the fox, "the six lambs were just enough for the body, and there is nothing left for the sleeves." "Well," said the tiger, "I'll bring two more for the sleeves." Having done so, the family feasted again on lamb. A week passed by, and Abu Tanmar again inquired for his fur. "Well, it is beautiful, and only wants the collar," was the reply; so again another lamb for the collar was furnished. Having met him again, the tiger said, "Look here, I'm afraid you are telling me stories; give the fur at once, or I'll kill you"; and so saying he struck at the fox, but only got the tail. Then Abu Sliman pulled hard and left his tail in the tiger's paw and ran for his life, and just reached his hole in time. Abu Tanmar was very angry, but could not enter into the small hole; so he took a hornets' nest and stuck it above the entrance. Whenever the fox slowly approached and heard the humming of the hornets, he thought it was the growling of the tiger. Several days thus passed in anguish, and the fox, driven by hunger, began to eat his own

children, till they were all gone. But still the growling continued. He now proposed to his wife to wrestle (*batah*), the victor to eat the conquered. Accordingly they wrestled, and Mr. Fox was thrown down, but he said that it was not fair to be counted as vanquished for a single combat; so they tried again, and he was thrown again. "Now, look here," he said, "every good thing is based on three; let us therefore try again"; and this time he obtained the victory, and strangled and ate her. Being left alone in the world, and boxed up in his cave, he said to himself, "To die of hunger in here, or to die under the paws of the tiger, is about the same; better to try and leap out and escape if possible." So at once he leapt out, to find nothing but hornets flying to and from their nest. Sorry as he now felt for his lost wife and family, his main thought was that it was no use to grieve about them, but rather to think about his own salvation. The tiger would recognise him by his mutilated tail, so he must get out of this dilemma. Thereupon he sent an invitation to all the foxes of the neighbourhood to come and eat grapes in a beautiful vineyard. Of course, the foxes all arrived, and Abu Sliman took them in and bound every one by the tail to a vine, for he said he was afraid they might quarrel and call the attention of the sons of Adam to them. When all were greedily eating in silence, Abu Sliman slipped to a small hill and called out at the top of his voice:—"Gather, O owner of the vineyard, gather; your vineyard is full of wild beasts."¹ All the foxes pulled till they left their tails behind them, and Abu Sliman had no longer any fear for the future. The critical time at length arrived, and Abu Tanmar and Abu Sliman met. "Aha!" quoth the tiger, "there you are, lying tailor; this time you shall not escape your punishment." "What," said the fox, "I a tailor! I don't understand you; please explain the error." The tiger told his story, and showed how he recognised him by the missing tail. But Abu Sliman familiarly took him by the arm and said, "Come along, I'll show you tailless foxes by the dozen." Having made good his word, the outwitted tiger went his way, and Abu Sliman is now thinking what lies he can invent next.

We have already referred to the different salutations used by the Madâny; the fellahîn use other phrases, with the exception of

¹ *Hâsh yá Sâheb el-Karm hâsh, Karmak maldne wuhâsh*

(حوش يا صاحب الكرم حوش كرمك ملان وحوش)

Salam aleikum, to which they add *el-Awâf*, which means something like *no attack*, for it is to be remembered that the fellah considers his whole life to be in a kind of war, with only a longer or shorter period of armistice in between whiles. When they meet, after a long absence, one will say, *hay Allah ya flân* (حي الله يا فلان), “God is alive, so-and-so,” and will receive the answer, *tehyâd wad-dâm* (تحيا وتدوم), “May you live and prosper.” The worker is greeted, *Sah Badano* (صح بدن), “Strengthened be his (your) body,” and replies *Wabadano* (وبدن), “And his body.” A person riding on a donkey may not say *Salam aleikum* except he alight, but a horseman can say it. They put their hands in each other’s when they greet, but do not shake hands; they kiss one another on the shoulder, right and left, and one kiss on the cheek only when intimate. Parting wishes run, *خاطرك* (*hatrak*), and the answers are *ma’ salame(t)* (مع سلامك), “Your good-will,” and “With peace”; and after the journey they greet one another with “Thanks to God for the return in peace” (الحمد لله بالسلام). The fellah is armed on his travels—he is on “danger” (خطر, *haṭar*), not on a journey; and as soon as he is out of the precincts of his own village he is in enemy’s land. They trust nobody, and it is astonishing how sharp they are to find out the intentions of those they meet, even when they are a good way off. In their acuteness they are not inferior to the North-American Indian. The fellahin of the south and south-west of Jerusalem are of a more hospitable nature than those to the north of the town, where, curious to state, a stranger may have to go the round of the streets and beg for a loaf of bread from the women, or else he will receive nothing. In the south, on the other hand, any stranger will be taken into the guests’ room and provided with the necessary food and lodging. Hundreds of years have passed since that well-known event, the inhospitality of the men of Gibeah, when the Levite came from Bethlehem in Judah, and “there was no man that took them into his house to lodge” (Judges xix, 15), and yet that same inhospitality still survives in the ancient seat of Benjamin and Ephraim unto this day in spite of its Christian or Moslem inhabitants. For the same reason of self-preservation the fellah starting out does not say where he is bound for. Anybody meeting him on the way asks

"Where are you going—by the leveller (God)?" and the reply is "In God's ways."¹ When they return from their journey they are full of all kinds of adventures which they have had. Even if there is really nothing of any consequence, they can invent stories, and in this they are experts. Has he outwitted a hyæna? "O men! Do you remember the little 'Ain (spring) coming down from Fâghûr? When I came to Wâd-el-Biâr, the old hyæna, who made my father to tremble, was lying behind a wall, and when I was going to step on him, he jumped aside with a hideous laugh, and would have stolen my spirit but for my presence of mind. I drew my pistol and shot in his direction, yet he attacked me a second time in the thicket, a mile lower down; but this time I was ready, and called out to him before he howled at me, and full of shame he fled." Everyone knows stories about the same hyæna, how it has eaten women, and carried away donkeys, &c. How he has been a person, but for some misdeed is accursed, and is always trying to play tricks upon mankind; and they believe it so firmly that many a man feels his courage and sense gradually depart in its presence, for it is a great sorcerer. One of my servants was being enticed away by a hyæna one day. He was running after the hyæna, saying, "Yes, father, I'm coming"; but for the intervention of another, more stout-hearted, he would have followed the hyæna to his cave, at least so it was affirmed.

Serpent stories are most thrilling accounts. Everyone has met an enormous serpent, which waylays men, and cuts persons in two. The story-teller has narrowly escaped an attack of a most dangerous serpent, at least as thick as the thigh of a man. The serpent was coiled, and, being Friday, he remembered the words, "Either kill or be killed," which never fail on Fridays. He took out his broad sword, which was sharp enough to divide a grain of wheat when on a heap, and struck several times, but the feathers (!) were about a span long on its back. Here he stops to hear the effect on the assembly; everyone shakes the head, and says, "This is a thousand-year-old serpent" (مَا لَفِيفَةٌ, *muâlafat*), and no sword, pistol, or musket can penetrate its skin. He was lucky enough, though, to get at its throat, and the body was more than would fill a large basket. Then the bystanders put their heads together in twos and threes, and tell the most marvellous stories. One has seen

¹ *Fain ya mossahel* (فَيْنَ يَا مُسَاهِل) 'alâ bâb Allah (عَلَى بَابِ اللَّهِ).

a poisonous serpent—they are all poisonous in their stories—pass a field, and the grass withered at its passing. Another knows a ‘*Arbid*, three metres long, but harmless, black as the night, hot as fire, swift as lightning, laying in wait; his hair stands on end (in point of fact they can never make it lie down, being so short!) whenever he passes there; that *hanish* (حنيش) is at least a hundred years old; his grandfather, when a boy, knew him there, and he cuts people in two! There is a legend known in all the mountains of Judea about a monster serpent which had passed its thousandth year (at that age serpents go to the sea and become whales), and had been the terror of all the Beni-Hassan and the ‘*Arkûb*, eating sheep, goats, and even children, but hiding so well that it could not be discovered. One day, however, the time had arrived for its transformation, and it went down the Wâd Jesmain, followed by all the armed villagers of the district. But the balls slid off as if they were shot at rocks, and those who looked down from the heights saw the shining body gliding away like a river, on which the rays of the sun were reflected. As the monster approached the sea, more warriors gathered together, but all in vain, and near Ascalon it plunged into the sea, and was heard of no more. The story is perfectly true; was not the father of the narrator’s great-grandfather among the pursuers?¹

As a rule, the people are afraid of serpents, and know very little about them save that they are dangerous, and the Dervishes exhibit the most innocent reptiles, and make them believe that they are only tamed by them and through the grace of the Erfa‘i. It is hardly necessary to refute the above fables. Palestine, from north to south and east to west, according to Canon Tristram’s researches, has thirty-three species of serpents, of which only six are poisonous. I may add that during ten years of research in Judea and Philistia I captured hundreds of innocent kinds, and only twice I caught the deadly *Daboia Xanthina* (*Daboja Viper*, *Za’ra[t]*), a young one, about half a foot in length, on the mountain of Urtas, and a big one, $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet in length, at Jaffa. This one, when pursued, inflated the skin of its neck like the cobra. Daboias have often been brought to me by a black Dervish who was not afraid of them at all, although he made me tremble when he put his hand in the *jirab* and coolly drew it out,

¹ One is reminded of the old legend of Ascalon, according to which the goddess plunged into the sacred pool and was changed into a fish.

without being bitten. But he, in his turn, was equally frightened to see me handle the (quite harmless) *Eryx jaculus*—a beautiful sand-snake called *barjil* (برجيل), and reputed to be poisonous at the head and tail. These beautiful creatures have all the colours of granite, and shine like polished stone, and never attempt to bite.

But the people see no distinction between one kind of serpent and another, and the proverb, “The serpent and (take) the stick,” shows sufficiently that all serpents are put into the same class of dangerous beasts; even the *Pseudopus apoda*, a lizard without legs (أبو القرع), *Abu l-kare'*, is supposed to be most deadly by some. There are some places where they believe them to be poisonous once a year only, but as this unique period cannot be recognised by the appearance of the reptile, it is much better to kill every serpent out of hand! They give names to different kinds of serpents, it is true, designing them by their colour, place of abode, motion, &c.; but beyond that they do not go.
