

THE FORTRESS OF CANAAN.

"IN the first year of King Seti there took place by the strong arm of Pharaoh, the annihilation of the hostile Shasu from the fortress of Khetam, of the land of Zalu, as far as Kanaan. The king was against them like a fierce lion. They were turned into a heap of corpses in their hill country: they lay there in their blood; not one escaped to tell of his strength to the distant nations."

This fortress attacked by Seti I, in 1366 B.C., before the Exodus according to Brugsch, but perhaps during the time of the early Judges, is called in the great Harris Papyrus (of the time of Rameses III) a stronghold of the land of Zahi. It belonged to the Shasu or Bedawin, and had a stream and pool near it. The road by which Seti advanced led by Ribatha, which Brugsch believes to be Rehoboth, also in the land of Zahi, which he identifies with the Negeb or south country of Scripture. In 1700 B.C., we find an earlier king attacking the same land of Zahi, namely Aahmes, who advanced to Sheruhan (the Biblical Sheruhen or Shaaraim, Josh. xix, 6). The name Zahi is, on the tomb of this king, identified with Pen Nekeb, or the Negeb land. It was a country producing wheat (as shown by an inscription of Thothmes III), and also balsam. Fruit trees and wine are also mentioned as products of the land of Zahi, in another inscription of Thothmes III.

It seems curious that this name of Kanaan should apply to a hill fortress, yet the inscriptions seem to leave no doubt on the subject. The state of our geographical knowledge concerning Egyptian conquests does not perhaps justify the certainty with which some authorities identify the Syrian towns conquered by the Pharaohs; but in the present instance the indications are fairly definite and numerous. They show an advance from the vicinity of Gaza by Rehoboth (now *Er Ruheibeh*) and Sharuhen (which I have proposed to find in *Tell esh Sher'ah*), to the hill country which is evidently that included under the term Negeb in the Book of Joshua, namely, the hills south of Hebron.

On Sheet XXI of the Survey, the ruined site of *Kan'an* will be found marked south-west of Hebron. The word is spelt just as on the Egyptian inscriptions, and as the name Canaan is spelt in Hebrew. This word is entirely different from the *Kan'an*, which will be found as a name for several ridges of hill in the same district; for the name of the ruin begins with *Caph*, and contains the *Ain* as the third radical, whereas the name for a ridge, spelt with *Koph* and *Aleph*, is the plural of *Kann*, a peak, or hill-top.

The ruin occupies a knoll in a very important position on high ground. The two main roads to Hebron, one from Gaza by Dura (Adoraim), one from Beersheba on the south, join close to the knoll of Khurbet Kan'an, and run thence north-west about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Hebron. West of the ruin is the *'Ain el Unkur*, or spring of "crevisses," which issues from the rock and gives a fine perennial supply, forming a stream even in autumn. The

valley sinks suddenly from the little plateau where the spring issues, forming a deep ravine, now filled with fine orange gardens, orchards, and vineyards. It is here that the lake or pool apparently mentioned on the monuments may have once been formed by the abundant waters of the springs. There were several other good springs rather further west, draining into the same valley (Wâdy el Afranj), and 'Ain Abu el 'Adas, 'Ain Ibrahim, 'Ain Subeih, 'Ain Hameidân, are immediately to the north (see "Memoirs," Vol. III, p. 352, giving the enlarged Survey of the environs of Hebron). A small swamp (El Bussah, "the marsh") still occurs on the north, and the vicinity has a finer water supply than perhaps any spot in the Hebron hills. The vineyards are extensive, not only filling the Vale of Eshcol east of the fortress, but also covering the hill to the north; and the threshing-floors of Dura and Hebron are large. Thus not only is the name identical with that mentioned in the Egyptian records, but all the surroundings of the site, its mountain position, its water supply, its command of the two main lines of advance from Egypt, its situation within the Negeb of the Bible, agree in indicating the identification as certain.

Of the ruin little remains. Foundations occur on the knoll, with a ruined watchtower on the west. It is, however, clearly an ancient site, for rock-cut tombs occur on the west between the knoll and the spring, which are so rudely hewn inside as to be possibly of the most remote antiquity. I had occasion to visit the spot more than once in 1874, and again in 1882, and it has long been considered an important place, though never identified in a satisfactory manner. Dr. Rosen placed Debir at this spot, but the identification of that city with Ed Dhâheriyeh is in every respect more satisfactory. Yet later Mr. T. Saunders has proposed to place Holon here, though why he should do so is a mystery, as the places have only the final *N* (not a radical) in common; the true site of Holon is more probably *Beit 'Aula*, further west.

It appears, then, that King Seti's march was really an attack on the rich vale of Eshcol, the corn and vine lands of Hebron, a raid by one of the easiest ascents from Philistia to the Judean hills, either directed against the Hittites and Amorites and Kenites of Hebron, or (if we take an earlier date for the Exodus) against the children of Caleb. It was the fortress of Kanaan which guarded the approach to this rich country, and which the Egyptians stormed; and it was with a similar object many years later that Rehoboam built a fortress in a somewhat better position, but in the immediate vicinity, namely, at the town of Dura or Adoraim, about two miles to the west.

Curiously enough, Seti took his name from Set, the patron deity of the warlike Hittites, against whom he was contending on this expedition. It was the fall of this fortress of Kanaan, apparently, which opened the way for the triumphs of his son, Rameses II, in his attack on the northern Hittites at Kadesh on Orontes.