



THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

## Cato's Song.

"Cato, have you quite forgotten  
How you used among the cotton  
Still to sing some pleasant strain?"  
"Laws, miss, I can sing again."  
And the clear voice clearer rang,  
As he swung his hoe and sang:

"Ef you want de purest water,  
Jist go up de mountain side,  
Whar de ribber start his running  
Down to catch de great sea tide.  
Ef yo want de reddest roses,  
Yo will find them nodding high,  
Whar dem catch de blessed dew-drops,  
Whar dem see de morning sky.

"Would you eat dem sweetest peaches,  
Juicy, red, or yellow bright?  
Den you hab to climb up fur dem  
Whar dey grow right in de light.  
Ef you seek true friend or lover,  
Upward too de road you take:  
Hearts should nober trabel downward,  
Else dey mighty apt to break.

"Ef you look fur fame or glory,  
You must climb up with a will;  
Fur 'tis jest the same old story—  
Up, and up, and upward still.  
We am born down in de valley,  
But if heart and feet don't tire,  
We can still be going upward,  
Upward, higher, higher, higher.

"Higher! higher! higher! higher!"  
And at every cotton hill  
Well and swift he did his hoeing,  
Singing louder, clearer still,  
Till I heard the echoes ringing  
In my spirit brave and strong,  
Till I homeward turned me singing,  
Singing over Cato's song.

—Harper's Weekly.

## Superstitions of the Blackfeet.

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MR. FRANK H. CUSHING, who was commissioned by the Smithsonian Institution of Washington to investigate the history of the Zuni Indians, and who spent five years among them, becoming so influential as to be made second chief of the tribe, said to a friend, "If you are told that any primitive people is ignorant of its history, don't believe it. They know all about it."

In accordance with this statement we ask, "From what country came the Blackfeet?" Some of the aged Indians have stated that they remember when they were children hearing the old warriors tell how they came across the Rocky Mountains and were accustomed

to engage in battle with flint-headed arrows. All their early history is shrouded with uncertainty. From their traditions it appears that the great ancestor of the Blackfoot nation dwelt on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, that his children crossed the mountains and dwelt for a time on the Pacific Coast, where they mingled with other tribes and finally returned to the country in which they now live. That they must have associated with some other leading branches of the human family is evidenced by their language, religious ideas, customs and festivities. There are resemblances in the Blackfoot language to that of the Aztecs. In the numerous Indian migrations that took place, probably they were driven by tribes stronger than themselves and compelled to seek an abiding home on the plains of the Canadian North-West.

Indians are strong believers in dreams. They attach a great deal of importance to the visions that pass in review during the silent watches of the night. They impart a reality to the object seen that oftentimes haunts them on their journeys over mountain and plain. They are afraid of their dead friends, and when they dream that they have seen them they assert that the spirits of their dead friends have appeared unto them. An Indian chief died suddenly in one of the Blood Indian camps, and a few days afterwards two chiefs dreamt that they had seen him, and so great was their fear that they departed with all their people and sought another location several miles down the river.

Returning home one stormy winter evening a Blood Indian friend desired me to stay with him, but I politely refused. As he persisted in his entreaties I asked the cause, and he told me that I had to pass by two large trees, in the branches of which were two men buried, and that as I proceeded, the spirits of these men, which hover in the vicinity, would pursue me and try to carry me away to the land of the spirits. I enquired what he would do under the circumstances, and he replied that he would shoot his gun, shout several times and then run. As I smiled at his superstitious fears he sought to impress me with the advisability of whistling, that the noise made

by this performance might drive the spirits away.

I sat in conversation with several Blood Indians, amongst whom were some chiefs, and directing my enquiries to the belief of spirits elicited some information on the subject. During our social gathering I learned that the spirits will linger for some time around the house of their friends and will then depart to the favorite haunts of the spirits. Some of the men solemnly asserted that they had seen the spirits of their deceased friends; several stated that they put out of their lodges pieces of bread with pipes and tobacco, and that the spirits fed on the soul of the things and enjoyed the feast, although to our eyes they remained the same. This idea of object-souls is a prevalent one between Indian and savage tribes in the first periods of their existence. The dead fed on the souls of the things while the objects still remained the same.

While distributing Sunday-school papers among some children, I gave away a copy with an illustration of the raising of Lazarus. On my departure a boy came running after me, stating that the paper was bad, because it had the picture of a ghost on it and he could not keep it. Some Indian nationalities ascribe to inanimate things the thoughts and feelings of intelligent beings. The Blackfoot nation possesses ideas akin to these. Winds are said to result from the flapping of the wings of a great bird in the mountains, and other phenomena are said to arise from the influences of animate things, or because the dead objects inherit the powers of living things. These Indians have, like many others, a superstitious dread about portraits. They seemed to feel that part of their personality left them and was reproduced in the photograph. It is only within the past year that the fear so prevalent has begun to subside. Superstition is interwoven in many of their customs and also in their religious worship. When a person is lying sick, and the medicine-man is praying preparatory to performing his incantations and dispensing his medicine, no one is allowed to enter the lodge. The strange mysteries that enshrouded these superstitions of the past are losing their power, and the Indian mind, groping in the

darkness for the light to direct, is gradually assuming an attitude of independence that will ultimately bring success.

## The Ship of the Desert.

WITHOUT the aid of this faithful beast of burden the trackless deserts of the East would be almost as impassible as a stormy sea without a ship or vessel. The camel is the most uncouth and ungainly of living things; but its very apparent deformities are the features which give it its distinguished usefulness. Its clumsy-looking and widespread feet prevent it from sinking into the sand, and give its gait an elasticity peculiar to itself. Its long pendulous lip is its organ of prehension by which it gathers the thorns and prickly plants of the desert; and its nostrils can be closed at will against the wind-driven sand. The hump upon its back is a storehouse of food, which is slowly reabsorbed through its long marches, and secures it against death from the unavoidable privations of the desert. The rough callosities on the chest and legs are the points on which it rests when it kneels to receive its burden. The stomach contains a number of large cells which the animal can fill with water to the amount of several quarts, and thus carry a supply for its own wants for about a week—a supply which sometimes yields with its life to save that of his master. The camel supplies the Arab with milk, and occasionally with its flesh, which resembles beef, for food; the hair seems to make clothing, and the skin for leather. The chief value of the camel, however, is as a beast of burden; its strength, power of endurance, ability to subsist on the coarsest food, to go without water, and to travel over the yielding sand, has justly earned for it the title of "Ship of the Desert." The ordinary load of a camel is about 600 pounds, though for short journeys it can carry a thousand pounds. Its speed is seldom more than three miles an hour, and the swiftest dromedaries will not exceed ten; but the pace can be kept up for twenty hours without rest. Riding on a camel is a most terrible way of travelling to the uninitiated, as the peculiar swinging and jerking gait jolts one almost to a jelly. The camel is frequently mentioned in the Bible, as our young readers will see by referring to Genesis 12. 18, 24; 19. 44, 64; 30. 43; 37. 21; Judges 6. 5; 7. 12; 8. 21; 2 Kings 8. 9; 1 Chron. 5. 21; Esther 8. 10; Job 1. 3, 17; Isaiah 21. 7; Matt. 9. 4; 19. 24; 23. 24. We recommend that these passages be turned to. They throw much light on the uses, etc., of this strange animal.

Those who believe that there's nothing in a name, would do well to consult this list from the Philadelphia directory. A man by the name of Shanks teaches dancing; one Drinkwater inconsistently keeps a liquor saloon; Black is a coal merchant; one Saylor is a mariner; Painter is an artist; Law practises his name; Birch teaches school, and Lamb sells beef.

In the city of Damascus, which contains a population of 200,000, a missionary reports "that in many of the Mohammedan houses groups of men are gathered to read and study the Bible, and while engaged in discussion the inmates of the harem had gathered about the windows and listened, and seemed much interested."