



GALLANTRY A LA MODE.

Her Eccentric Uncle.—Er—how lovely your complexion is this evening, my dear. May I ask whose Soap—?

THE SHIP OF THE DESERT.

[1009 B.C.]

It was long past midnight, and still the lights were burning in the editorial rooms of Solomon; for the sage was alone with his confidential secretary, Karshish Al Hakkadosh, an Arabian learned in the law. The two were carefully going over all the exchanges, clipping proverbs. Karshish used to call the exchanges "King Solomon's Mines"; but not while Solomon himself was within hearing. Credit was never given an exchange for its wise sayings; it was only when reprinting a gem of thought that smacked of the savor of antiquity that Solomon would make a slight acknowledgement of indebtedness, thus:

The ridiculous side of life goes far towards making it endurable.
—*Ex.*

They had sent down to the foreman the copy for a leaded column of proverbs, when Solomon said to Karshish, "Now that we have the night free before us, I wish to take counsel with you about an important affair. Her Majesty of Sheba, I have reason to believe, intends to put me through a course of questions to-morrow."

The secretary signified his attention.

"I have a presentiment," Solomon continued, "that she will ask me, among other things, why the camel has been given a hump on its back."

The secretary was thoughtful for a few moments. "When Adam, the father of all mankind," he said, "was naming the beasts in the garden, the camel ambled before him clumsily. Adam said, jocosely, 'Now you hump yourself,' and the camel—"

"Your wit, my good Karshish," Solomon replied, "ambles as clumsily as the camel. I have heard that account before."

Karshish reflected. "When I was in Egypt," he began, "a learned man at Thebes told me of a tradition—"

Solomon was smiling incredulously.

"I would scorn to invent a tradition on the spur of the moment," said Karshish indignantly, and went on with his story.

"Joseph, the son of Jacob, I need hardly tell you, was with his brothers on the plains of Sichein, when they fell in with a party of commercial travellers representing the leading wholesale houses of Upper Egypt in the dry goods and drug lines. Now the manuscripts mention obscurely a pit, in which Joseph was placed, and from which he was afterwards taken out. I think that the fact of the travellers being commercial men, and indeed the whole weight of evidence and probability, leans towards the theory that what is written of was a jack-pot. However, the whole transaction rests in a mist of obscurity; only this much is certain, that Joseph accompanied the travellers into Egypt—and it is no doubt owing to his being in their company that he saw so much of what is known as 'life.'"

"We were speaking of the hump on the camel's back," said Solomon, yawning.

"As Joseph and the travellers journeyed over the desert," continued Karshish, "they told stories, and involved themselves in arguments—it is a custom nowadays, too. Hotep, one of the drug travellers, insisted that it was two years before the general election in Lower Egypt when the Amunen-Phlaros ministry was turned out, that the clerk of the Egyptian Hotel at Thebes had, in the north sample room, first nicknamed Albendis 'Chippy.' Albendis, who was one of the party, and a drug traveller himself, denied the date. The argument grew warm. 'I tell you, Chippy,' Hotep said, 'that when I rise to talk about dates, I generally know what I am talking about. Why, when I was at school I was a dab at dates. I used to carry off—gentlemen, I may be allowed to say that I used to carry off the date-palm.'"

Immediately, without a moment's warning, the camel upon which Hotep was riding doubled together like a jack-knife, and shot Hotep up three parasangs into the atmosphere. The camel is a patient animal. But this was the last straw. Joseph left it on record that this was the first camel to have a hump on his back. He shot Hotep so energetically that he was unable to straighten out his spinal column again; and the hump has now become a general characteristic of the animal, as a resultant of hereditary transmission.

"I gather from the expression on your countenance," said Karshish Al Hakkadosh in conclusion, "and from the fact that you are muttering to yourself, that you consider the account which I have just given you untrustworthy, incoherent, and lacking in all that appertains to the truth. It is now two o'clock; before retiring, I shall take the liberty of saying, O king, that the man who mutters to himself is generally talking to a fool," and Karshish bowed himself out of the apartment.

Solomon thought the matter over for a while, and wrote down his secretary's last words—that was a proverb to the good, anyway.

W. J. H.

"Is that Toronto's crack pitcher?" said a Buffalo man in a tone of contempt, as he sat in the grand stand and watched Crane deliver a high ball. "Call him a crack—" A foul tip landed the ball on the critic's stomach and he doubled up. "By gum, he *is*!" was all he said when he got his wind back.