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## The Camel; the Ship of the Desert.

(By C. A. Urann, in 'S. S. Messenger'.)

Early as the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the camel constituted the fast line of transports plying between the countries, cities and towns, conveying passengers, merchandise, and freight of all sorts across the sandy deserts.

From the earliest days of sacred history, the camel has been known as a domestic animal of great value because of its power of endurance.

Of the two distinct varieties, there are innumerable sub-varieties; that known as the Arabian, or African camel has one

On the camel's forehead grows a thick clump of wool which protects what little brain it possesses from the intensity of the sun's rays. The queer shaped, long nostrils are so exceedingly sensitive to dampness that the animal becomes aware of the neighborhood of water even though ten or more miles distant; and if the wind is blowing these sensitive nostrils close so tight that not even the finest atoms can penetrate the natural barriers.

The knees and other exposed parts are thickly calloused, the two-toed feet are webbed, which prevents their sinking in the soft sand, and the under parts are well padded, enabling the animal to travel with a springy, elastic step; but what is perhaps

Then it is very greedy and never knows when it has had enough; and it is generally determined to go straight ahead regardless of consequences. If the smell of water or sight of herbage tempts it to turn aside from the regular way it never stops to think, but goes on and on, sometimes to be recalled to the right path, but more often to its own destruction.

The camel will often drop contentedly down on the burning hot sand, under the direct rays of the scorching sun, because it does not stop to think and look for a more suitable place; and then it seldom remembers over night what it has been taught through the day.

But notwithstanding the camel's stupidity he has a few traits which teach a lesson to human beings; one is, he makes the most of his opportunities. If he comes to a well-spring he partakes freely thereof. He feeds on fresh herbage when it is to be obtained, and when it fails he has resources within, a richness which serves him well. With a leathern, or rope noose about his nose and a rope attached to his lip also, this swaying, rolling ship of the desert is led on by a driver, or else is driven by a sharp iron prod; and if once set in motion, he goes straight ahead until jerked down by the driver, or he falls down while asleep.

One traveller tells of trying in various ways to force the camel he was riding to kneel that he might dismount; but no! the creature was unmindful of jerks, prods or other modes of persuasion and he was forced to slide from his high seat to the ground. When he faced his unaccommodating beast he discovered that he had his great soft eyes raised to a tuft of a neighboring palm, which the traveller says he could not have reached with a ladder, and was munching away as though feeding on the green palms; and so intolerably stupid is the creature by nature, that he probably would have stood there munching an imaginary feast until he died of starvation.

Desert travel has but little variety to delight the eye of the traveller; and as the motion of the camel is usually very soothing to its rider, he spends much of his time sleeping, and often both rider and camel journey on while sound asleep.

A day's march for a camel carrying from 500 to 600 pounds luggage is twenty-five or thirty miles per day, and often for three days without water or food. A fleet dromedary, carrying one rider and a waterskin, will travel fifty or sixty, and even ninety miles in a day, and continue at the former rate of speed for five consecutive days. But if a camel travels without drink and food he becomes a most abject appearing creature. When the journey ends his long swaying neck wilts down to the ground for want of water, just as a long-stemmed flower will wilt under similar circumstances, and his eyes assume a vacant, pathetic stare; while the hump, or humps, on his back, those marks of class distinction, become exhausted in supplying his working powers with fatty sustenance, and hang over his back, limp and empty. Then it is that the stupid creature requires watching to save its life.



hump, and the Bactrian, or Indian camel, has two humps on its back. The former are stronger and more frequently used for carrying heavy burdens, while the latter, more fleet of foot, are sought for riding purposes; but both are without doubt the most stupid of animals. 'As stupid as a camel,' would be much more expressive than is the common phrase of as stupid as a pig, were people fully aware of the utter lack of intelligence in these animals, whose only beauty lies in their velvety, soft eyes, for they are the most awkward and ungainly of all animals. Yet they are by nature strangely adapted to the life they lead, and have led since they were known to man.

most important of all, he is blessed with a water-tank stomach, and a storehouse of fat in his hump, or humps, so he is able to travel for days without water or food.

And, after all, this ungainly, awkward beast is not unlike some specimens of the human family one meets from day to day, as, for instance, he never stops to think and often suffers thereby; for a camel will eat whatever it sees that is green, and although it may have suffered tortures from having again and again tasted of the brilliant green leaves of what is known as camel-poison, it will continue to eat it all the same, nor stop until it dies, unless prevented from so doing by its driver.