

THE CAMEL

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The camel by George P. Marsh

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GEORGE P. MARSH

THE CAMEL

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THE CAMEL

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ORGANIZATION HABITS AND USES

CONSIDERED WITH

REFERENCE TO HIS INTRODUCTION INTO
THE UNITED STATES

BY

GEORGE P MARSH

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PREFACE.

THE practicability and expediency of introducing the camel into the United States having long since engaged my attention as a problem of much economical interest, I availed myself of the facilities afforded by a late residence of some years in the Turkish empire, to investigate the subject more fully than it had been in my power to do in this country. Several months of travel in Egypt, Nubia, Arabia Petraea and Syria, presented opportunities for a good deal of personal observation, and I occasionally saw the Turcoman camel, and others of northern breeds, employed at different points in Asia Minor, and sometimes at Constantinople. I also gathered such information as I was able by inquiry and correspondence, and by consulting the books of travel and natural history to which I had access. By these means, I arrived at a strong persuasion of the probable success of a judiciously conducted attempt to naturalize in the new world this oldest of domestic quadrupeds, and at the same time I collected most of the materials which compose the following pages. Since my return to the United States, I have added to my

previous sources of information Ritter's valuable and learned essay, *Die geographische Verbreitung des Kameels*, in the thirteenth volume of his *Erdkunde*, Carucci's work on the Dromedary of Algeria, Hammer-Purgstall's erudite paper, *Das Kamel*, in the sixth volume of the *Denkschriften der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien*, and some other instructive treatises on the same subject. All these I have used freely, generally referring to chapter or page, though I may, very probably, have sometimes neglected to give credit, particularly in stating facts of almost universal notoriety. To save frequent reference, I remark here, once for all, that the passages embraced in quotation marks, without reference to the source, are borrowed from an article entitled "The Desert," in the ninety-first number of the *American Whig Review*, or from an unpublished journal of eastern travel by the author of that article. I ought also to add, that I have embodied in this volume the contents of a lecture delivered by me at the Smithsonian Institution in the winter of 1854-5, and printed with one of the Reports of that Institution.

The results of my own observations have in general accorded with those of previous inquirers. I have not the vanity to suppose that I have added anything to the existing stock of knowledge respecting an animal

which has been an object of enlightened curiosity to naturalists and travellers for more than twenty centuries; and, so far as possible, I have preferred rather to cite the testimony of well-known writers than to seem to claim the merit of discovery, by stating, on my own authority, facts which others had observed before me. Besides this, it has been agreeable to me thus to bear witness to the accuracy of observation and fidelity of description which characterize the writings of Tavernier, and Erman, and Bergmann, and Denham, and Burckhardt, and other votaries and too often victims of science, whose labors have done so much to facilitate the researches of later explorers in the same attractive field of knowledge.

The information which I have thus collected, and which I now lay before the public, has an important bearing on a question that the American government is bringing to a practical test. If the experiment shall fail, it will be neither because the attempt is in its nature hopeless, nor because the public agent entrusted with the charge of it, has committed any error in the execution of his duties, but because the means appropriated by Congress did not admit of an experiment on a scale extensive enough, and varied enough, to embrace all the reasonable chances of success. In any event, the present able Secretary of War, is entitled to

no little credit for the intelligence and zeal with which he has urged this interesting and important measure ; and it is earnestly to be hoped, that the national legislature will not refuse any further appropriation necessary to give a full and fair trial to a project which promises so valuable results.

I may be thought perhaps to have unnecessarily crowded my volume with details and citations, but I have intended to take a purely practical view of my subject, and I have therefore sought to condense into the limits I have prescribed to myself the greatest possible amount of information, and to fortify my statements by the most reliable authorities. The theme, if not unimportant, is humble, and I claim no merit but that of fidelity in presenting the conclusions at which I have arrived.

THE AUTHOR.

Burlington, Vermont, June 1, 1854.

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