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The Song Sparrow.

Bird of the door-side, warbling clear
In the springtime of fading year,
Well art thou named my own sweet lay
Piped from pining or naked spray,
As the smile of the sun breaks through
Chill gray clouds that curtain the blue.

Even when February, bleak,
Smiles with his front the traveler's cheek,
While the air has no touch of spring,
Bird of promise, we hear thee sing,
Long ere the first rathe blossom wakes,
Long ere the earliest leaf-and breaks.

April passes and May steals by;
June leads in the sunny July;
Sweet are the wood notes, loud and sweet,
Heard from the robin's and hung-bird's seat,
Then, as the green months glide away,
Sings with them as gayly as they.

August comes, and the melon and maize
Beak and swell in his fiery blaze;
Swallows gather, and southward bound
Wheel like a whirling round and round;
Thrush and robin their songs forget,
Till art cheerfully warbling yet.

Later still, when the summer spray
Reddens to crimson day by day,
When in the orchard, one by one,
Apples drop in the ripening sun,
They who pile them beneath the trees
Hear thy lay in the autumn breeze.

Comes November, sullen and grim,
Spanning with frost the rivot's brim,
Hush, hoarse winds from the woodlands tear
Each brown leaf that is clinging there;
Still art thou singing amid the blast,
"Soon is the Christmas season past."

Only when Christmas snow-storms make
Smooth white levels of river and lake,
Sifting the light snows all day long,
Only then do we miss thy song,
Sure to hear thee again when brightly
Climbs the sun to a higher noon.

Late when the sorrowing wind brought
Tidings of battle fiercely fought,
Marking with graves their bloody way,
Still wert thou singing near my door,
"Soon is the sturmiest season o'er."

Ever thus sing cheerfully on,
Bird of hope! as in ages gone,
Sing of spring-time and summer shades,
Autumn's pomp when the summer fades,
Storms that flee in the conquering sun,
Peace by enduring valor won.

—William Cullen Bryant in "Great Songs of
Great Poets."

Soliman: A Ship of the Desert.

The biggest desert in the world is in
Africa, and is called the Sahara. It is
almost as large as the Atlantic ocean,
but instead of water it is all sand and
rocks. Like the ocean, it is visited with
storms, dreadful gales, when the wind
scoops up thousands of tons of sand and
drives them forward, burying and crushing
all that comes in its way. And it has islands
and small green patches where the
bubbles through the ground, and ferns
and acacia and palm-trees grow. When
a traveler sees one of these fertile spots
afar off, he feels as a tempest-tossed
sailor does at sight of land. It is de-
lightful to quit the hot, baking sun, sit
in the shadow under the trees, and rest
the eyes, long wearied with dazzling
sands, on the sweet green and the clear
spring. Oases, these islands are called.
Long distances divide them. It is often
a race for life to get across from one to
the other. Sometimes people do not
get across! In 1861, a caravan of 2,000
persons died miserably of heat and thirst
in the great desert, and the sand covered
them up. Do you wonder at my saying
that the desert oases men?

Now, you will be puzzled to guess
what sort of ship it is which swims this
dry ocean. It is not a ship of the sea,
made by God to endure those dreadful
regions, in which no other beast of bur-
den can live and travel. I dare say
many of you have seen camels in men-
ageries. They are ugly animals, but
very strong and very enduring. With
a load of 800 pounds on his back, a
camel will travel for days at the rate of
eight miles an hour, which is as fast as
an ordinary ship can sail. More won-
derful still, he will do this without stop-
ping for food or water. Nature has pro-
vided him with an extra stomach, in
which he keeps a store of drink, and
with a hump on his back, made of jelly,
like fat, which, in time of need, is ab-
sorbed into the system and appropriated
as food. Is it not strange to think of a
creature with a cistern and a meat-saf
inside him? A horse would be useless
unless he had a cistern for water, and
a hump on his back, made of jelly, like
fat, in which he kept a store of food,
ready to be drawn upon when he was
in need of it. You would think that
the camel would be a very useful animal,
and that he would be a very good
creature to have. But he is not.

Now you know what sort of ship it
is that I am going to tell you about. It
was a camel, named Soliman. He was
of a rare and valuable breed, known as
"heric," or "consors," because they are
so much swifter than ordinary camels.
Soliman's master, Ahmed, was a poor
man. He never could have afforded to
buy a full-grown camel of this breed;
and Soliman had become his through
a piece of good fortune. When a
little foal, Soliman was found in a
lonely place in the desert, standing over
the dead body of his mother, who had
fallen in a fight with a snake. The
brown tent which was Ahmed's home,
the orphan baby grew up as a child
of the family, lay among the little
ones at night, and was their pet and
plaything all the day. They boys taught
him to kneel, to rise, to carry burdens,
to turn this way and that way. Little
the girls hung a necklace of beads,
shells, saved for him the best of the
food, sang him songs (which he was sup-
posed to enjoy), and daily kissed and
stroked his gentle nose and eyes. As he
grew big and strong, the pride of his
owners grew with him. Not another
family of the tribe possessed a heric.
Once and again, Ahmed was offered a
large price for him, but he rejected it
with disdain.

"Would I sell my son—the son of my
heart?" he said. "Neither will I part
with Soliman. By the prophet, I swear
it."

Of all the dwellers in the brown tent,

Soliman loved best Ahmed himself, and
his eldest son, Mustapha. With them
he was docile as a lamb; but if strangers
drew near, or persons he did not like,
he became restive and fierce, screamed, laid
back his ears, and kicked with his strong
hind legs. A kick from a camel is no
joke, I can tell you. All the desert
guides knew Soliman, and, for his sake,
Ahmed was often hired to accompany
caravans. Nay, once, at Cairo, Soliman
was chosen to carry the sacred person of
the Khedive on a day's excursion up the
Nile bank, which event saved the tribe
as a boast for months afterward.

It was the year after this journey to
Cairo that Ahmed met with a terrible
adventure. He and Mustapha, making
their way home after a long journey,
had just fallen to sleep away the noon-
hour, according to the custom of desert
travelers. Their camels were tethered
beside them, all seemed secure and
peaceful, when, sudden as the lowering
of a cloud, a party of Arabs, belonging
to a wild tribe at enmity with all men,
descended upon them. Ahmed and his
son defended themselves manfully, but
what could two men, surprised in sleep,
do against a dozen? In five minutes all
was over. The assailants vanished in a
cloud of dust, and Ahmed, who had been
struck down in the rush, recovered his
senses, to find his arms, baggage, belt,
money, everything gone, and his horse
wounded and motionless on the earth
beside him.

Ahmed thought him dead. They were
alone in the desert, a hundred miles
from home, without food or water, and
with a groan of despair he sat down be-
side his son's body, bowed his head, and
waited until death should come to him
also. An Arab believes in fate, and
gives up once for all when misfortune
occurs.

But Mustapha stirred, and Ahmed at
once sprang up. There was nothing he
could do for the poor boy, except to
wash and rub his hands; but this was
something, for presently Mustapha re-
suscitated to speak.

"Are they gone?" he asked.
"Yes, the accursed ones, they are
gone, with all our goods and with Soli-
man!" the prophet's curse light upon
them! Ahmed, rising from despair to
fury, Ahmed threw himself upon his
brother, and, using his hands, he
threw himself on the ground in help-
less rage. Mustapha joined in with
groans and lamentations.

When the father and son grew calmer,
they began to discuss the situation,
and to devise a means of escape. They
discussed it for hours, but they found
nothing but death in all directions. It
was their only chance of safety, but could
they reach it?

"I think I can walk," declared Mustapha,
tying up his wounded leg in a fold
torn from his turban. But he
limped sadly, and his tightly pressed
limbs showed pain as he moved. He was
faint with hunger beside him. Neither of
the men had eaten since sunrise.

Suddenly Mustapha uttered a joyful
cry, and lit it something from the earth.
"The prophet be praised!" he cried.
"My father, here is food. The robbers
have dropped a bag of dates." "Where?"
"Sure enough, there it lay, a heavy bag
of dates, shaken off from some camel's
pack during the struggle. Heavy as it
was, and hard to carry, Ahmed would
fain have it larger. It was their safety
from starvation. A handful of its con-
tent, and they were saved. They turned
back to begin their walk. What
wrought it was! Poor Mustapha lay down
every half hour from pain and weakness;
the sand was heavy, the darkness puzzled
them. When morning broke, they had
not accomplished more than half the
distance. All the night long they lay
they lay panting on the ground, eating
now and then a date, tormented with
thirst and heat; and when evening came,
they dragged themselves to their feet
again, and recommenced their painful
journey. Step by step, hour by hour,
they groped against the darkness, and
moment by moment they grew more
feeble, less able to bear up, till it seemed
as though they could no longer straggle
on. At last, the morning broke. Ahmed
raised his blood-shot eyes, seized Mustapha's arm, and pointed. There, not a
hundred paces away, lay the oasis. The
trees and bushes outlined against the sky.

Poor Mustapha was so spent that his
father had to drag him across the short
dividing space. It was a small oasis,
not very fertile; but it was shade,
fresh water, and no ice-cooled sherbet
ever seemed more delicious than did
its brackish waters to the parched tongues
of the exhausted men.

All day and all night they lay under
the shadow of the acacias and the
casbahs, resting only to drink, and
falling asleep immediately. Shade,
and sleep, and water seemed the only
things in the world worth having just
then.

The second day they slept less, but it
was nearly a week before they could be
said to be wide-awake again. Such a
pair of scare-crows as they looked!
Their eyes were sunken, their faces
hadn't taken part of his clothes, and
the desert thorns the rest. Haggard,
wild, blackened by the sun, they gazed
at each other with horror; each thought,
"Do I look like that?" and each tried to
hide from the other his own dismay.

They could never tell afterward how
long they remained at the oasis. It
seemed years, but I do not suppose it
had been more than weeks. All day
long they looked wistfully toward
the horizon, in hopes of a caravan, but
the caravan never came. Slowly the
dates dwindled in the bag; slowly the
water was diminished in the well; a
little longer and starvation would be
upon them. They scarcely spoke to
each other those last days, but sat each
by himself in a sort of dull despair. At
night, when they fell asleep, they
dreamed of food, and woke in the morn-
ing to find themselves hungry. It was
terrible!

Then came a morning when they rose
to find the hard desert outline, which
they knew so well, vanished and gone,
and in its stead a smooth, shining lake,
fringed with trees and dotted with
islands, fairly gleamed. So near it
seemed, they heard the ripple of the
water and the rustling of the wind in the
tree-boughs. Mustapha stared as though
his eyes would burst from his head; then
gave a wild cry and was rushing away,
but his father held him fast.

"Stay, my son! Stay, Mustapha! it

is no lake—it is a device of Satan,
and what you behold is the mirage, spread
by devils for men's destruction."
"Let me go!" he shrieked Mustapha,
writhing and struggling.

But even as he strove, the soft water-
outlines shifted and trembled; the
lake rose in air, melted, and sailed off
into curling mist; the trees, the whole
fair picture, dissolved, and the well-re-
membered sands and black rocks took
its place. With a cry of horror, Mustapha
slid through his father's arms to the
earth, hid his face, and cried like a
child.

Next morning, only one date was left
in the bag. Ahmed put it in his son's
hand with a mournful look.
"Eat my son," he said; "eat, and
then we will die. Allah ill Allah!"

A long silence followed; then, as he
nothing more say. Suddenly,
from afar off, came to their ears the
tinkle of a bell.
Mustapha raised his head.
"Is it the mirage again, my father?"
he asked. "For it seems to me that I
hear the bell from the neck of Soliman,
our camel."

Eagerly they listened. Again the
bell tinkled, and, looking through the
bushes, they saw, floating toward them,
as it seemed, the form of a gigantic
camel. Soundless and still, it moved
nearly along, and, as it moved, it
threw away, or distinct, could be seen,
still dim and indistinct, veiled by the
mist of driving sand.

Suddenly Mustapha gave a start.
"My father," he cried, in an excited
whisper, "I see Soliman! I do not mis-
take! What do you see? Do you see
Soliman? Do you see him? Do you see
him?—his arched neck? Does not the
bell tinkle as with the voice of home?"

Then, half raising himself, he gave,
with all the power of his voice, the well-
known call.
Soliman—in it was indeed he—paused
as the sound caught his ears, and snuffed
the wind. Again came the call; he
wheeled, plunged, threw his rider, dash-
ed forward, orke through the bushes, and
in a second was on his knees before
his old master.

"Up, up, my father! there is no time
to lose!" cried Mustapha, grown stronger
in a moment. "Up, up! for the robbers
are close upon us!"
In fact, wild cries and clouds of dust
showed that the foe had taken the alarm
and were hurrying toward them. Ahmed
and Mustapha were mounted, and
Soliman, like a ship at full sail, was
speeding away with them. And where
was the camel who overtook him, even
when he was loaded double? Fast and
swift his legs, swinging fore and aft,
and backward, and forward, and
backward, and forward, and backward,
all traces of the pursuers had disappar-
ed behind them, and they were free to
turn their course toward the brown
thorns, rest, and food, and welcome
had waited so long for their coming,
and where, after a little time, their
handbags and their bundles seemed to them
only like a bad dream.

As for Soliman, he hardly could be
more tenderly treated or beloved than
before this adventure; but if the fresh-
est water, the prickliest furze,—if
bowls of sour milk,—if a triple net-
tice of shells,—if brushing and groom-
ing,—if soft pats from childish fingers,
and sweet names murmured in his ears
by girlish voices can make a camel
happy, then is Soliman the happiest of
beasts. Soliman no longer, however,
his name changed to "The Blessed,"
in memory of the day when, as a state-
ship, he came over the desert sea,
and bore his starving masters to home,
and life, and liberty.—Susan Coolidge
in "St. Nicholas."

What Two Words were Good For.

Dean Stanley never loses a chance to
make a point on an anniversary. When
called upon to preside at any meeting,
he always asks himself if the day is the
anniversary of any great event, or the
birthday of any famous person, in order
to deduce some fitting lesson. On the
last Saturday of the year he appeared at
the industrial exhibition in London, and
at once reminded the working-classes
that that day was the anniversary of an
event which happened 700 years ago,
and which caused a great disturbance to
the country. It was the anniversary of
the murder of Thomas-a-Becket, in con-
nection with whose life there was a cir-
cumstance which well illustrated the
principle on which he was about to en-
large. People sometimes imagined that
the small things they saw before them
were not worthy of pursuit; whereas, in
reality, small things often deserved
consideration. A story was told which re-
ferred to the father and mother of
Thomas-a-Becket. His father, who was
a Londoner, went to the crusades, and
having been taken prisoner, married an
Eastern lady. He was afterwards ransomed
and returned to England, but he was
unable to carry away his wife with
him, and she remained in Syria. She,
however, determined to travel to Euro-
pe—a difficult task, as she knew only
two words of English, "Gilbert" (the
name of her husband), and "London." She
got through Europe by mentioning
at every town she came to the word
"London," at which place she was recon-
ciled to the father and mother of
Thomas-a-Becket. Her father, who was
of her other word, "Gilbert," and, hav-
ing found her way from street to street,
she at last discovered the house of her
husband near London bridge. This was
an example of the effect that could be
produced by making the very greatest
use of whatever little advantage she
possessed.—New York Tribune.

Sea Serpents.

The gigantic whale captured in Febru-
ary last in the Gulf of Taranto, Italy,
has been subjected to a critical examina-
tion by Professor Capellini, who, in a
report lately published, states it is his
opinion that the whale is of a species
hitherto unknown to science, and he has
named it *Balanea tarantina*, in allusion
to the locality of its capture. This un-
looked-for discovery of a new species of
huge marine animal, taken in connection
with the alleged appearance of another
"monster" a short time later, and in
the same neighborhood, as vouched for
by the officers of the royal yacht *Or-
sola*, is regarded as a strong argument
in favor of the existence of unknown
huge marine living objects, such as are
popularly indicated by the name of "sea-
serpents."

FARM, GARDEN AND HOUSEHOLD.

Winter Farm Economics.

The *Prairie Farmer* says: There are
so many things that the farmer may do
at home, in his own workshop, as well
as another can do for him, that it is
surprising that so few are without a kit
of wood working tools, a shoeing ham-
mer, some horse nails, pinchers for iron,
copper, rivets, screws, and other neces-
sary articles as will enable him to com-
plete many a handy job without the
intervention of the carpenter. The time
required to do the work, if often
found to be less than is spent in going
to and from the mechanic's place of
business. Thus with a few tools the
wood work of harrows, plows, cultivators,
and other tools about the farm may
be repaired. By having a few
extra handles of forks and other imple-
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