

which of all conveyances is the most ready and cheapest. Merchants and other travellers assemble themselves in caravans to avoid the insults and robberies of the Arabs. These caravans are often very numerous, and always composed of more camels than men. Each camel is loaded according to his strength,* and of this they are themselves so conscious that when overloaded they refuse to proceed, but remain in their resting posture till their burthen be lighted.

Large camels generally carry 1000, or even 1200lbs. weight; and the smaller 6 or 700. In these commercial journeys, they do not travel quick, and as the route is often seven or eight hundred leagues, they regulate their motions and journeys; they only walk, and go every day ten or twelve leagues; they are unloaded every evening, and are suffered to feed at liberty. In a country where there is plenty of pasture, they eat enough in one hour to ruminate the whole night, and to serve them twenty-four; but they seldom meet with such pastures, and this delicate food is not necessary for them. They even seem to prefer wormwood, thistles, nettles, furze, and other thorny vegetables to the softest herbs; and as long as

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* The Orientalists call the camel the *ship of the desert*, alluding to the heavy loads which it carries.