

crowned the lion "king of the desert." A little reflection, however, would have suggested to them that this animal would necessarily perish of thirst in the sandy plain. The lion of the desert is a pure creature of the imagination. The African lion does not quit the mountains, where he finds both water and his prey. If you question the Arabs in reference to the presence of the "king of animals" in the desert, they reply, "Are there, then, lions in your country, which drink air, and eat sand? With us, the lion has need of fresh water and living flesh."

The ostrich alone, thanks to his sobriety, can venture with impunity into the sandy wilderness, which is also permanently inhabited by a large lizard, with glittering scales, the *shob*, or salamander of the desert.

The domestic animal of the Sahara is the camel, as the reindeer is that of the Arctic steppes. These two species of animals thrive admirably in the zone of the deserts; they seem predestined to facilitate and render practicable man's abode in these desolate regions. The camel carries within him a natural reservoir of water, which enables him to remain whole weeks without drinking, and which, after his own death, may save the life of his driver. The instinct of the animal divines at a great distance the oases, and the springs, or basins, of water; moreover, he foresees, like other animals, the advent of the tempest, and, especially, of the simoun. The *mahari*, the most valuable species of camel, is of incredible vigour and swiftness. It is said that in a day of twenty-four hours he will accomplish the journey from Tripoli to Rh'adames (upwards of one hundred leagues), but he succumbs on arriving at the goal. His ordinary day's march is thirty to forty leagues. That of the common camel is much shorter.

The caravans which, on the back of this patient animal, traverse the great desert, are accustomed to direct their route by piles of stones, called *kerkours*, which indicate the neighbourhood of the springs and guide the travellers. Each passer-by throws a stone