

in spite of their extreme hardness, are not thrown away, but when bruised and soaked in water they are given to camels as food. But it is not only the *fruit* of the date-tree that is useful, the leaves are made into baskets, mats, and other things, and the tough, strong fibres of the leaf-stalks are twisted into cords and twine. The trunks of the old trees furnish a hard and durable wood, which is employed in the building of houses; and by piercing the tree a white juice is obtained which they call date milk; it has a sweet and pleasant taste, and is given to sick people as a refreshing drink.

Perhaps it may occur to you, that as the date-tree is so tall, it must be a difficult matter to get at its fruit, and so indeed it is, for there are no branches, as in our trees, to assist the climber—nothing but the straight, bare, and lofty stem. The way they manage it is this: a strong rope is passed across the back and under the arms of the climber, and he brings together the two ends round the tree, and ties them firmly in a knot. Then he places the rope on one of the notches, caused by the foot-stalk of an old leaf, and which are found at regular intervals, all the way up the tree; grasping the trunk with his knees and hands, he raises himself a few inches higher, holding fast with one hand, he then slips the rope over another notch a little higher than the first, and so on till he reaches the top. By constant practice the climber performs this with great quickness, and when he has arrived at the top of the palm-tree among the leaves, he plucks the fruit which grows in large bunches, and throws it down on the cloth which is spread to receive it.