

Of course there was only one method of travelling upon this route with the gipsy-van : this was to avoid it altogether, but to keep upon the natural soil on the side of the newly-made level.

My second van was most satisfactory, and was light in proportion to its strength and capacity. This was arranged specially for luggage, and was entirely closed by doors at either end, which were secured by bolts and locks. Above the luggage, and about two feet six inches below the roof, a sliding deck formed of movable planks afforded a comfortable sleeping-berth for a servant. In the front a projecting roof sheltered the driving seat, which was wide enough to accommodate four persons. I had fitted a pole instead of shafts, as public opinion decided against mules, and it was agreed that oxen were steadier and more powerful for draught purposes. After a careful selection, I obtained two pairs of very beautiful animals, quite equal in size to ordinary English oxen, for which I paid twelve shillings *per diem*, including the drivers and all expenses of fodder. I also engaged the necessary riding mules, as the vans were not intended for personal travelling, but merely for luggage and for a home at night. Our servants consisted of Amarn (my Abyssinian, who had been with me eight years, since he was a boy of nine years old in Africa), a Greek cook named Christo, who had served in a similar capacity upon numerous steamers, and a young man named Georgi, of about twenty-one, who was to be made into a servant. This young fellow had appeared one day suddenly, and solicited employment, while we were staying at Craddock's Hotel ; he was short, thickset, and possessed a head of hair that would have raised the envy of Absalom : in dense tangle it would have