

the poor beast looked starved. Georgi had accordingly saved the whole of the allowance I had paid for food of the best quality, which he had pocketed while his animal was turned out to graze. "Where are my oxen?" I inquired of the conscious Georgi; who wisely remained silent. I now turned to Theodori's team, and I at once perceived that he also had exchanged one of the superb oxen which I had hired, and upon which I had depended for drawing the gipsy-van; but the new purchase was a very beautiful animal, although inferior in height to its companion, which had much fallen off in condition, having been fed upon the same unnutritious food. I had been regularly done, as the animals for which I had paid highly had not only been neglected, but had been exchanged.

I very quickly explained to the proprietors that they had no right whatever to exchange the oxen which I had engaged, and for which I was paying in my absence, therefore I should refuse to accept them, as the contract was broken; and I immediately ordered the camels to be loaded with the contents of the carts. Fortunately the discharged animals were grazing within a few yards of our camp.

My servants now explained that Georgi the thick-headed had been done by his dear friend and companion Theodori, "the man of ability," who had accompanied me into the Carpas with the sole intention of cattle-dealing. It appeared that after my departure from Gallibornū, Theodori had suggested to his friend that a saving might be effected in the keep of four animals by reducing them to two, and he advised that they should at once sell each one ox, and arrange to purchase new animals by the time that I should return; they would by this method