

bounced nearly off the wagon-bos and nearly spilled us off with wood and all included -- at the same time the back seat drivers came forward and tried to snatch away from my hands, the guiding rope I held. I kept cool -- nothing else. I begged them above all things to keep their seats and not try to jump off. At last they made a complete stop in the middle of the stream. Instead of stopping at the edge of it, like a horse or other animal -- they had to do this. No use to stop them in a critical moment as this. They allowed themselves ample time to drink, much to our provocation for we were in a miry place and every moment the wagon bugs were settling rapidly. It was impossible to make them move and they would not stop drinking -- they drank like a fish -- nostrils and every part of the head were completely out of sight in the water.

At last I got out of patience and immediately jumped off the wagon and with my clothes on and waded in. It was only knee-deep but miry. They did not take any particular notice of me -- would not stir. In the heat of the excitement I had forgotten my whip in the wagon and instead of asking my wives to hand it to me I started to give one of them at least a good kick to move them. In my attempt to do this from some unknown cause, I slipped and fell right close to the animal's hind quarters, with all possible chance of receiving a good kick from the beasts. I surely became much frightened but to my great surprise, I saw both of them turned, gave me a look and actually gave me the laugh "Ohoho!" just like an old person laughing at some ridiculous incident. Refraining myself from further embarrassment said to my wives: "I must be getting so awfully cheap, nowadays, for even oxen laugh at me."