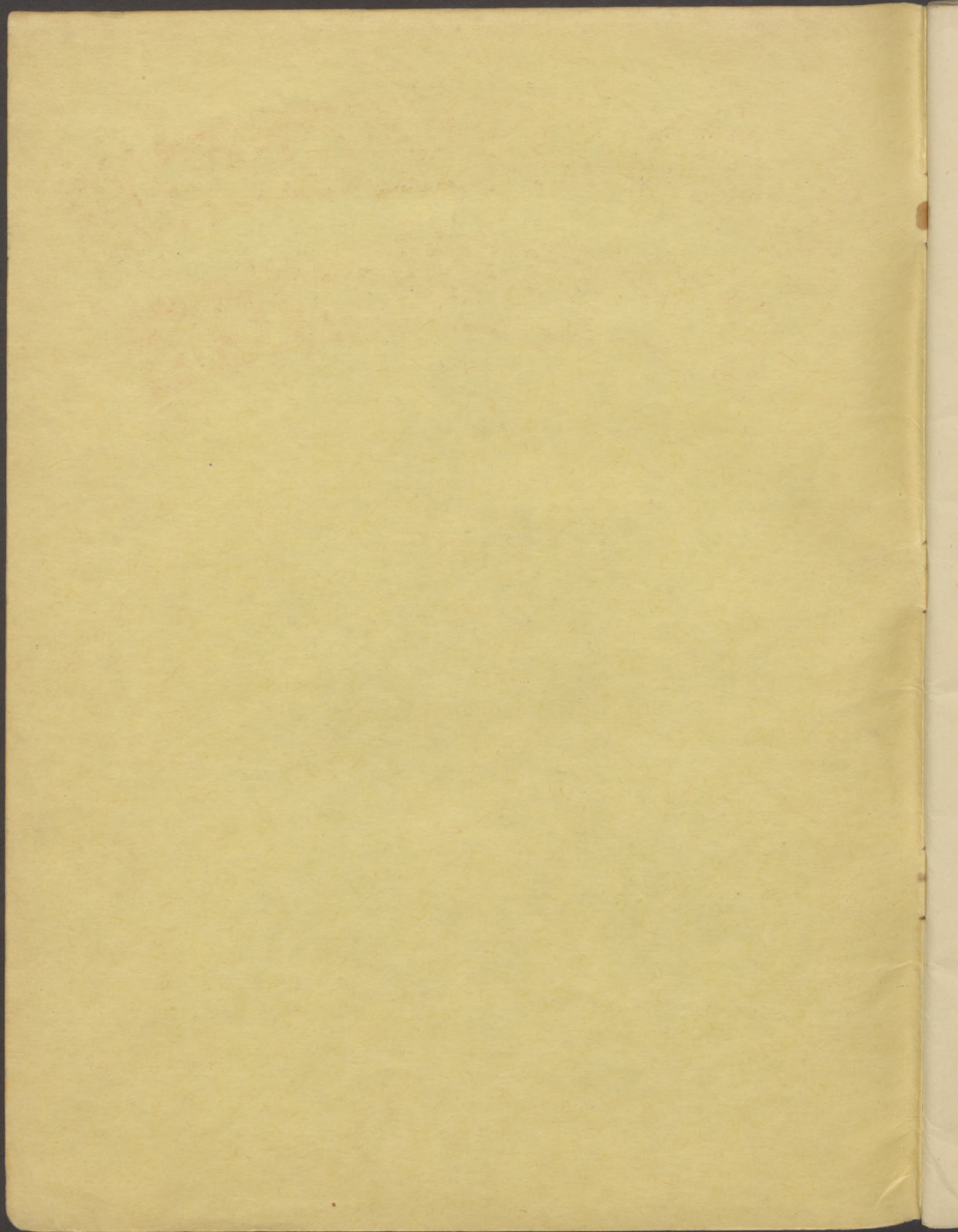


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# Old-Time Survivals in South Africa





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:: in South Africa ::





South Africa's "Covered Wagon."

# Old-Time Survivals in South Africa

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## Chapter One.

### IN THE LAND OF THE OX-WAGON.



Nearly 2,000 years ago the Roman artist who furnished the carvings on the Column of the Emperor Trajan at Rome thus portrayed the primitive but unmistakable ox-wagon used by the Teutonic ancestors of the Dutch South Africans.

**I**F YOU LOOK at the lower right-hand corner of the Union of South Africa's coat-of-arms you will notice the unmistakable outline of a tented ox-wagon, the most picturesque and most important of the many survivals from an exciting past in this ambitious and progressive country.

Side by side with an extensive system of electrified railways, with nearly a quarter of a million motor vehicles, with air services working to a schedule approaching 150 miles an hour, and with one of the most comprehensive and profitable state transportation undertakings in the world, lingers the oldest four-wheeled conveyance in history, virtually of the same design as that which Abraham

had when he trekked forth from Chaldea. It appears on Trajan's Column in Rome, as used 2,000 years ago by the Teutonic ancestors of the Dutch, and it may be recognised in mediaeval manuscripts.

The "Prairie Schooner," "Covered Wagon," or whatever else America has chosen to style the vehicle of her western pioneers, is in daily employment in Africa, not as a curiosity at historical pageants, but for purposes of solid money-making.



Despite the progress of the motor car, the immemorial ox-wagon still helps to link the lonely farms on the veld with the South African villages.

We still have in this Dominion a community of people who regard the wagon as their permanent home, the Trek-Boers, who linger on in the north-western parts of the Cape Province, in the lonelier reaches of Namaqualand.

On festive occasions the market squares of scores of South African villages may be seen—for all the progress of the motor car—choked with the lumbering “ships of the veld,” in which some farmers like to travel when they are not in a hurry.

Perhaps the proudest possession of the National Museum at Pretoria is the original trek-wagon of President Paul Kruger, the last man to govern a republican Transvaal, a shepherd boy who lived to win world-wide admiration and who to his dying day never lost interest in the carts that meant so much to his nation.

Only recently the leading cultural body of the Afrikaans-speaking section of the populace, the Afrikaanse Akademie, in selecting a theme worthy of detailed research and of the award of a special grant, decided on “The Place of the Ox-Wagon in South African History.”

Having once left the streets of the Union’s major cities it is hard to avoid



meeting these conveyances, the essential features of which remain as they were in the days when there was not a railway on the continent.

Despite the increasing number of motor trucks used on farms, the ox-wagon is still often the accepted mode of transport away from the main roads. The last available agricultural census of the country shows that there are over 87,000 of them belonging to settlers, and over 28,000 owned by natives.

According to one of South Africa's leading historians, James McCall Theal, who, in the Victorian era, had specially good opportunities for study, the standard Cape ox-wagon is almost identical with that found on the farms of the Netherlands in the 17th century, at the time when Jan van Riebeeck, the first Commander, planted the original settlement on the shores of Table Bay.

Old pictures show the correctness of Theal's statement. Nevertheless local conditions and inborn ingenuity prompted the Dutch of this country to introduce various improvements and modifications, which enable us to distinguish the trek-wagon from the American prairie schooner.

Why is the ox preferred for teams drawing such vehicles? As far as South Africa is concerned, we may trace the circumstance to the fondness for this animal shown by the Hottentots, whom the first colonists encountered at the Cape, and by the Bantu tribes whom they met farther to the east.

So it was very easy to transplant the ox-wagon from the Dutch and Flemish peasant homesteads to the veld on the other side of the world.

For over 200 years wagon-building has been one of the best established industries in South Africa. Despite the advance of the motor car, which forced many firms to turn from this craft to the manufacture of bus and truck bodies, the venerable workshops in the Cape Province still ply a busy trade.

Paarl, not far from Capetown, in the heart of the wine regions, is one of the main centres. Worcester is another, while some hundreds of miles off, King William's Town, in the Eastern districts, remains an outstanding producer.

How many wagons are turned out yearly in South Africa it is hard to say, since full statistics are not available, and those vehicles on the road will last for generations. Even a full century has been reached by some.

If you want to encounter typical specimens, it is best to travel inland, although they may be found at the very doors of the country's oldest city,



Perhaps the most famous of all ox-wagons in South Africa is that of President Paul Kruger, the great leader of the late Transvaal Republic. After the South African War of 1899 to 1902 this sturdy vehicle, in which the farmer-statesman had trekked the veld, went to England, and after a quarter of a century had passed the City of London Corporation returned it to the Government of the Union of South Africa as a token of friendship. Today it is kept as a national relic at Pretoria. Note the numerous drawers and boxes on the wagon, as well as its solid construction. (Inset) President Paul Kruger.

on the Cape Flats, where the shifting sands have shown them superior to the lorry for some tasks.

Looking out of the window of the railway train, you will note them crawling along the winding veld tracks, which latter owe their very existence to the grinding of the wheels.

You can find wagons outspanned for the sultry hours of the day near river banks, or waiting to be taken across "drifts" or fords by pont, which is the South African word for pontoon.

On the hectic, super-mechanised Witwatersrand goldfields, amid 40,000 cars and the vital rail transportation, the ox-wagon still ambles at the precise speed usual in the days of Abraham, past the mountains of tailings from thunderous stamp-battery houses that line the Main Reef Road.

Right through the night ox-wagons come in their hundreds to the central market of the Union's biggest city, bringing to Johannesburg vegetables and fruit from the growers, and returning in the dawn with loads of manure, collected gratis on the huge outspan or camping site, which, in close proximity to the Rialto, an obliging Municipality has specially reserved for this form of traffic.

Above all, however, the ox-wagon is among the means by which to reach the quarterly Nagmaal or Communion Service, held in every village, large and small, throughout the Afrikaans-speaking districts. Thousands of farmers to-day own cars, yet on such an occasion the father and mother of the family may agree to leave the sedan in the garage and to fetch out the very wagon on which grandfather effected the same trip.

By an ancient law, virtually every settlement in the country has its "outspan" (written "uitspan" in Afrikaans), where passing travellers are allowed to spend the night. This is a survival from the days when there were no hotels, and when men had to be hospitable lest their fellows be killed by wild natives or wild beasts.

So firmly established is the rule that it is embodied in the laws of the former republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.

To-day the outspan is a great convenience to motorists, who have at their disposal on each farm (a very great proportion of the country is divided into farms) an ample camping site wherever a public road passes. Other ancient rules specify that the traveller must also have access to water, to fire-wood—in moderation—and to a certain amount of grazing for any team that draws his vehicle.

Smaller towns possess outspans, which also serve as the market squares. Around them all the major structures—the church, the parsonage, the magistrate's court, the town hall, the main shops, and the offices of the Government—are frequently located.

When Nagmaal (Communion) time arrives the entire grassy space becomes filled with vehicles, among which the ox-wagon is pre-eminent.

Even Pretoria, the administrative capital of the Union, until recent times reserved Church Square, now adorned with ornamental fountains and surrounded by stately public buildings, for this homely purpose.

Before turning to the uses of the wagon, it may be as well to tell something of its construction.

The sources from which the timber was drawn a century ago are still, for the most part, being tapped.

Knysna, the little seaport abutting on the great indigenous forests of the Outeniqua Mountains, is the place whence the builders secure the mighty logs from which the harder-wearing parts of the framework are made.

Despite its apparent clumsiness, the design of the wagon is ideal for African conditions. Cases are on record where vehicles fell over the edge of cliffs in the Drakensberg Range without being smashed. Indeed, the very lack of springs allows them to absorb shocks which would break anything less sturdy. We have the evidence of the very best experts, the hundreds of old-timers, that if you are not in a hurry, few things can beat these conveyances for comfort.

To-day the "chassis" of an ox-wagon usually is of the same size preferred by the Voortrekkers, who brought civilisation to the unknown interior in the eighteen-thirties.

Ironwood, a type of rare African timber so heavy that it will not float in water, was (and is) selected for the "onderstel" or under-frame. Lack of this material, which has become too costly now, often obliges makers to use Australian hickory.

For the naves of the wheels the supremely hard yellowwood of the

How the older South African farmer still loves to spend the night on the veld. On the "outspans", provided by the law on every farm and in every town, for passing travellers, such sights as these may be seen every evening. This picture was taken just outside Johannesburg, the Union's largest city, now approaching half a million inhabitants.





Upsets like this still occur in the wilder reaches of South Africa, though modern highways make them increasingly rare. This one took place on an ancient trail over the Drakensberg used by the Boer "Voortrekkers," or pioneers, who left the settled regions of the Cape of Good Hope a century ago, as the American colonists in their Covered

Wagons left the original 13 States. The Drakensberg Mountains, with their wild and romantic scenery, reach a height of 12,000 feet, and are the loftiest in the Union.

Knysna bush is used, a timber so close-grained that an eighty-year old tree will be only nine inches thick. It attains an age of centuries.

Assegaiwood, the kind used in times not so very ancient by fierce tribesmen for their spear-shafts, is best for the drawing-gear, to which is fixed the famous "disselboom", which holds the harness of the team. Red pear, red els, white pear, and scores of other precious African timbers go to the making of the numerous characteristically-named sections of the conveyance—the skamels, voortang, voorkis, agterkis, katel, and so on.

Because it is designed to carry a large party of trekkers, together with their household goods, the dimensions of the wagon are so ample.

The katel was—and, once again, is—a particularly important section of

Where bridges are lacking, the strong-shouldered oxen paddle or swim through the African rivers. The immense length of the whip used by the black driver of the team, is a special feature. Despite its apparent shallowness, a stream such as this in flood time can become a majestic torrent.



the equipment. A framework of wood, it was detachable from the wagon and not unlike the skeleton of a bed. On this, strips of hide were stretched in a criss-cross pattern, and when the necessary layer of cushions and mattresses had been laid upon it, the women of the party had a comfortable sleeping-place.

As for the men, the traditional African custom is for them to spend the night underneath the floor of the wagon, while the natives are encamped a few feet off, in the lee of the vehicle, and with nothing between them and the stars.

During the heat of the day it is customary to hold a siesta, while the oxen gain their second wind and quench their thirst.

The hood which gives the wagon its familiar shape the world over, is identical with that appearing on the 17th century prints. Resting on sturdy, bent-timber wands, it is covered first with painted canvas to render it watertight, and then with a removable casing, which buttons down and allows the opening of flaps at both ends.

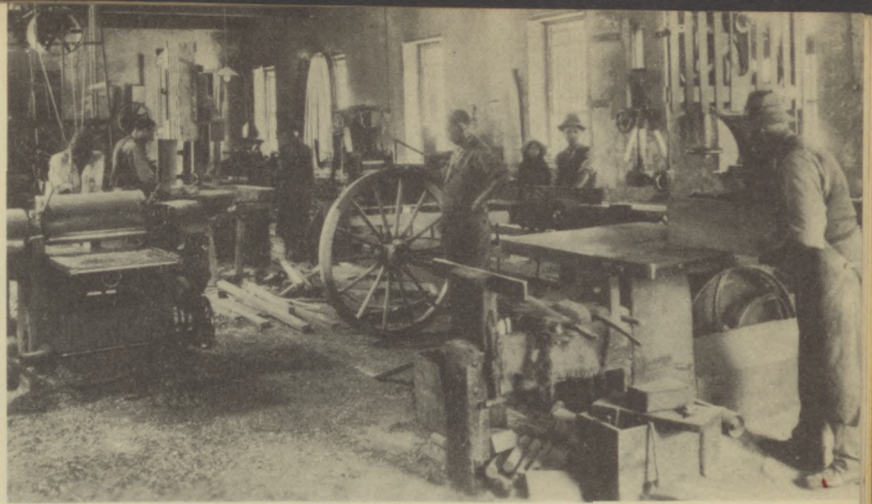
In the voorkis and the agterkis—the “front cupboard” and “back-cupboard”—innumerable necessaries for the journey can be stowed, while there is a special box along the sides wherein is kept the mass of straps, buckles, and other oddments used for the oxen and their harness.

Notwithstanding the slowness of the wagon—its speed is three to four miles an hour—it can be dangerous to the unwary traveller. The bed-plank which carries the bodywork is usually made to jut out in front for about 18 inches (to allow the driver to rest his feet) and at the back for the same distance, so that climbing in is rendered easier. Many a South African has tried to scramble on board, while the vehicle crawled along, by putting his foot on the movable centre-pole or “disselboom” and, if unlucky, has slipped to his death beneath the wheels. For the pole is but a precarious and movable rest, and once a man is among the hoofs of the oxen, it is almost impossible for him to escape the wagon's two- or three-ton weight.

During the eighteen-sixties one big improvement was made to the ox-wagon. Previously the sole way of moderating its speed or of preventing the vehicle careering down a hill was to lock the wheels with a chain and place a so-called “renskoer” or braking-shoe beneath the iron tyres, to prevent their being worn away. Since then, however, dates the installation of a brake, worked by a handle, which has become universal.

Captain J. E. Alexander, a famous British traveller, who explored the diamond regions of Namaqualand a century ago, and who wrote some well-

known books on his treks in Africa and America, declared, as an army man, that the Cape wagon-wheels were infinitely sturdier than those of the British gun-carriage of the time "The parts of the latter are open and rickety in hot weather, whereas the former are very strong. The wagon, too, is longer and more elastic, and it is quite astonishing to a stranger what severe work Cape wagons undergo without injury." Examine a good one carefully and you will notice quaint little ornaments in many colours painted along the sides of the frame. These are the traditional "blommetjies" or flowers on which the conservative farmer insists, just as did his "oupa."



The ancient craft of wagon-building still flourishes in Paarl, Worcester, and other towns of the Cape Province. Costly South African woods are cut on the mountain slopes, many of the pieces requiring timber centuries old. Machinery is used in the workshops, but the design of the wagons has hardly changed in a hundred years.

Wagonmaker's Vlei, a spot not very far from Capetown, by its very name tells of the importance of the industry once concentrated there.

As an example of the size of South Africa's earlier traffic, it may be mentioned that about 30 years ago over 12,000 ox-wagons yearly crossed a certain river drift into the Transkeian Native Territories. During the first great rush to the Rand goldfields 45 wagons left the railhead at Ladysmith daily,—16,163 altogether for the year 1889.

Even to-day at the lonelier stations or halts of the road motor services, ox-wagons are often encountered ready to carry to lonely mines in the bush such loads as do not require speed in delivery.

Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, author of that most famous of South African nature-books, "Jock of the Bushveld," was one of the celebrities who in their early days followed the profession of "transport rider." Many of the adventures recounted in that volume happened to him in the course of his treks through the country near Barberton and the Transvaal Low Country.

"Jock of the Bushveld Road," where the pioneers led their oxen in the 'seventies and 'eighties, with cargoes of flour, miners' picks, guns, clothes, blankets, and hundreds of other necessities, is to-day still in existence.

Thoughtful officials have marked it and made it accessible, so that the modern tourist may still follow that trail through what is now the Kruger



Nagmaal or Communion Camp. Farmers come in to the nearest village by wagon, and latterly also by car, to camp for a few days on the market square in the shadow of the Dutch Reformed Church, which most of them attend. Scenes such as this can still be seen in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. This is one of the most picturesque and interesting of all South African customs.

National Park. When Jock, who by the way really existed, hunted there with his master, this was virgin game country and no man thought of protective legislation.

Should you be seized with the desire to purchase a trek-wagon, do not assume that it is a cheap article. For a good one you may have to pay almost as much as for a motor car, the ordinary "Grahamstown type" costing about £120

new. Some of the "super" models, such as the one fitted with water-tanks and for use in the desert regions of Bechuanaland, built not very long ago for a native chief, or the monster ordered for Dr. Morkel, of Capetown, in 1872, which measured 23 feet along the bed-plank and 6 feet 6 inches to the top of the hood, run into hundreds of pounds.

President Kruger's wagon, which may be seen at the Pretoria Museum, could easily be reconditioned for use on the veld. It is somewhat narrower than those now usual on the farms because of the greater difficulty in earlier times of manoeuvring across mountain ranges and trackless bogs.

Even in our own day the Forest Department of the Union Government, which still employs large fleets of ox-wagons, has a number specially constructed on the so-called "kort-krink" design, with a short "wheelbase," so as to allow turning in the narrow lanes of the woodlands.

The Prince of Wales is one of the famous people who have travelled on a South African wagon. It happened on the occasion of the visit to the Union in 1925 of His Royal Highness.

Still further back, in 1881, His Majesty the King performed a similar journey when as a midshipman he came to South Africa. His Majesty was even offered one to take home. While the gift was not accepted, it is an historic fact that a real old-fashioned Cape cart, known in America as a buggy, with the pair of high wheels, was despatched to England and duly reached the stables at Windsor.



And on the occasion of the first royal visit to South Africa, paid in 1860 by Prince Alfred, later Duke of Edinburgh, a special ox-wagon, emblazoned with the Lion and the Unicorn, carried His Royal Highness for thousands of miles through the country from Table Bay to Natal and back again.

There is a very good reason for the appearance of an ox-wagon, the vehicle that helped to build a nation, on the coat-of-arms of the old Transvaal Republic. From this it was taken and put on the coat-of-arms of the present Union of South Africa.

Every one of the emigrants who left the Cape in 1835 to start the colonisation of the inner provinces travelled by ox-wagon. Behind the ox-wagons, parked in a circle and with the gaps between them filled with thorn-branches, crouched the pioneers in their desperate battles for survival against the native tribes of the interior. At the Voortrekker Museum at Pietermaritzburg, Natal, may be found relics of the fights, when the women loaded the guns from the wagons and when the muzzles were fired between the wheels.

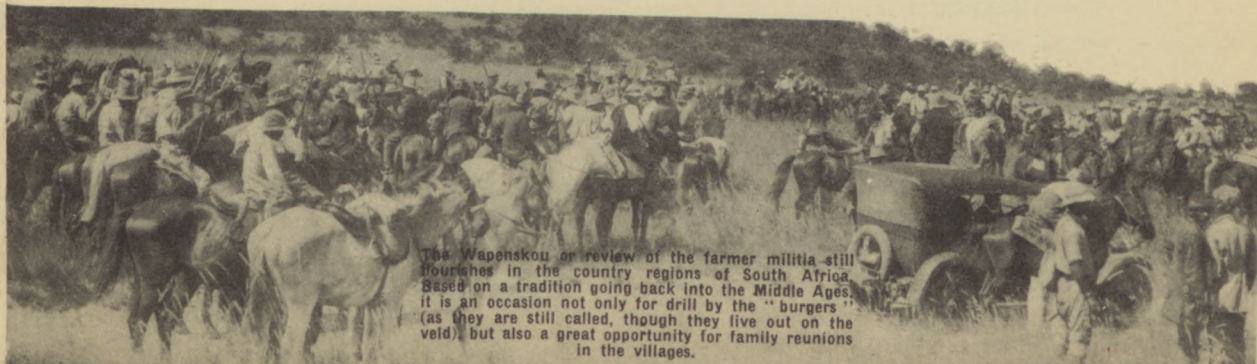
For the passage of ox-wagons the first roads were cut across the Hex River, the Drakensberg, and other mountain ranges.

Until the earliest villages were built the wagon was the home of the wandering families, who went on their hunting expeditions in the vehicle, and some of whose descendants still use it when they go shooting.

The wagon was the accepted public platform at meetings of the pioneers, and in villages it still sometimes serves the same purpose at election time.

Sixteen oxen is the usual team. The mode of harnessing has not changed since 1652, when the first wagons were put in use at the Cape; neither have the nicknames of the animals varied much—Veldman, and Witkop, and the like. Nor has the institution of the leader-boy varied—usually a native piccanin known as the voorloper. He is met on every South African highway.

Even in the heart of Johannesburg, adjoining the Central Municipal Power Station, you come upon a strange little side street, where practically nothing but whips are sold, great handles of bamboo, 12 feet or more from end to end. Attached to them are long thongs, skilfully cut out of strips of hide—those of giraffes were preferred before the creatures were accorded protection—with which the skilful coloured driver will flick the leader oxen so accurately that, for a wager, he has been known to kill a gadfly by this means.



The Wapenskou or review of the farmer militia still flourishes in the country regions of South Africa. Based on a tradition going back into the Middle Ages, it is an occasion not only for drill by the "burgers" (as they are still called, though they live out on the veld), but also a great opportunity for family reunions in the villages.



Readers of Colonel Deneys Reitz's South African War classic "Commando" may have speculated on the meaning of the title. Here is a modern commando, or levy of mounted farmers, each of whom, under the old South African law, must supply his own horse and bring his gun, riding through the streets of Pretoria, administrative capital of the Union, on the occasion of a memorial service to President Kruger.

Laws have been specially passed in the Transvaal and Orange Free State restricting the use of the whips, and are still put into force. None of the huge thongs can be wielded on a bridge across a river, and they may only be used with the greatest care in the streets of cities.

On the Witwatersrand goldfields the growth of traffic has caused a demand that certain streets be closed to ox-wagons, but many a day will pass before the last of them are seen. In spite of complaints about the clumsiness of the teams, the South African, in his heart of hearts, is rather proud of this remarkable relic of his ancestor's day.

Verily the wagon is a symbol of the Union's history.

## Chapter Two.

### IN THE OLDER SOUTH AFRICAN VILLAGES.

**A** TYPICAL Overysel village"—in these words the lay-out of Capetown and of many other settlements in the older parts of South Africa has been characterised by students.

Overysel is a province of the Netherlands, from which hailed a considerable proportion of the original 17th century pioneers.

The tenacity with which the people of the Union have clung to the town-planning ideas of their forbears is made plain by the likeness, which survives after nearly three centuries.

Even many South Africans are unaware that the idea of symmetrical double lines of houses in their villages, faced with ditches carrying water, is a relic of Old Holland. The grachten or canals of Amsterdam have their equivalents in this dominion in modest irrigation furrows.

"Erf"—a Dutch word, signifying a plot of land—is in almost universal use in South Africa though it is a survival from the period when colonisation at the Cape of Good Hope was unthought of.

"Water erf" and "droog (dry) erf" are the two main kinds of building lots in the modern African town, as they were in the mediaeval Netherlands.

The Heerengracht, or Gentleman's Walk, was a name found in Capetown until the eighteen-fifties, when it was replaced by the more famous designation "Adderley Street." Persons still living remember the little water furrows, from which the citizens satisfied their needs prior to the building of waterworks.

In such inland towns as Parys, Orange Free State, or Potchefstroom, Transvaal, the ancient Overysel institution of the little canals down the kerb-side, overshadowed by beautiful willows, may still be seen. South Africa's

occasionally dry conditions have alone prevented men from digging water-ways deep enough for boats.

Long before the pioneers thought of founding a village they were wont to build themselves a church. Round this focal point of all their interests, overlooking the great outspan on which they parked their wagons during service, the town was ultimately laid out. The chess-board pattern was preferred, and the central square also served as the market place.

Even when the mining camps, which grew into mining cities, were established, the rule was as far as possible preserved. Only in Queenstown,

No mail coaches are now in service within the limits of the Union, but the vehicles themselves, most of them American-built and of exactly the kind that served the Californian pioneers, have been preserved here and there. This fine old coach was photographed at Mafeking, of South African War siege renown, and used to run to what is now Rhodesia. Similar coaches, operated by various "lines,"



ran to Johannesburg, with its goldfields, and to Kimberley's diamond diggings, before the railway came.

Cape Province, originally a military outpost, the remarkable hexagon plan was adopted, and to this day you may walk along streets, at the end of which the founders intended, in case of need, to mount cannon to shoot down the invading blacks from across the neighbouring, unsubdued frontier. The crooked alleys of Kimberley are due to the haphazard paths cut by the original diamond diggers.

In every case the pioneers were at pains to leave a great deal of grazing for the cattle of the residents. Hence the "town lands" even of minor municipalities in the Union are often of colossal extent. From the spacious days of a century or so ago we have places like Carnavon, Cape Province, with a population of something over 2,600, possessing a civic area of 40 square miles; Colesberg, Cape Province (population about 3,000), with 60 square miles; and Graaff-Reinet (12,000 people), 73 square miles. Upington, with 4,200 inhabitants, black and white, covers no less than 163 square miles.

In the Transvaal the town lands of Potchefstroom extend over 104 miles, or 20 square miles more than the municipal area of Johannesburg, with a population approaching half a million.

Besides the permanent residences, each village as a rule boasts of a number of "Sunday-houses," to which the more affluent farmers betake themselves over the long week-ends, in accordance with old custom.

The occasional Cape winds, the South-Easters, are largely responsible for the South African modification in the original shape of the Dutch roofs. Instead of being peculiar to the country, as is generally assumed, similar scroll-



Where the horse survives. Though they are on the decline, post carts of the type which flourished in Victorian days still carry the mails to some of the country's lonelier villages. Here is a view taken in Natal, commonly known as "The Garden Province."

adorned gables were found on nearly every second house in 18th century Amsterdam.

Oriental slaves, who did the bricklaying, gradually brought innovations, like the usage, still favoured throughout the land, of building only to the height of a single story. They elaborated the stoep, on which such a great part of South African life is spent, from a front-platform verandah found in mediaeval Dutch City Halls.

\* \* \* \* \*

Life flows easily in the older country towns. Prominent citizens are even now referred to by sections of the Afrikaans Press as Uncle So-and-So, or Aunt So-and-So, in the affectionate way which history best exemplifies in "Oom Paul," President of the Transvaal.

Men still speak of the Western Cape Province as the "Boland," or "Upper Country," although they themselves may be living hundreds of miles farther from the coast. They cannot rid themselves of the mode of speech

One of the old-type professional diamond-diggers, who still flourish in the Lichtenburg, Barkly West, and other alluvial diamond districts. They are a type dying out, but fortunately for the sake of picturesqueness, some remain.



"Bok-Bok": One of South Africa's most popular games among boys. The basic idea, and even the quaint Dutch formula, spoken before the heap of youngsters collapses on the ground, is traceable far back into the Middle Ages. Marbles, hopscotch, and other games are played in a special fashion in South Africa, and show European, Oriental, and native influences. Folk-lore students consider them a fascinating subject.

A typical group on an ox-wagon. Note the "kappies" worn by the girls. The small boy in the front is the great-great-grandson of Piet Retief, leader of the farmers who emigrated from the Cape a hundred years ago and founded the Province of Natal, and later the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.



"Braai vleisand", or "Roast Meat Evening": An old South African Dutch custom, which includes the public roasting of meat in the embers at night. The function pictured here took place in Johannesburg.



Another amusing ancient local usage. Attired in the traditional Dutch "kappies" or bonnets, strongly reminiscent of those worn by America's pioneer mothers, these women are engaged in disposing of a monster sausage, 700 feet long, in connection with a "Worsbraaisand", a kind of rural sausage picnic.



How the early South African settlers transplanted the scrolled gables of their thickly-peopled home, Holland, to the more spacious Cape of Good Hope is made plain by comparing the view of Groot Constantia, the famous 17th century homestead on a wine farm near Capetown, with a house in Amsterdam, the main gable of which is essentially similar.



adopted by their ancestors 200 years ago, when the outskirts of settlement lay in the suburbs of Capetown.

So, too, the district of Malmesbury, near the Mother City, is to this day known as "Zwartland" to crowds of South Africans, who prefer a name that has been superseded in the official gazetteers for more than a century.

Port Elizabeth is often spoken of as "The Bay," from the days when Algoa Bay lacked any permanent settlement; while Johannesburg, the largest city in Southern Africa, to the old-fashioned is still the "dorp," or "village," of Victorian times.

From the very earliest days we get the custom, still followed in Namaqualand in the north-western parts of the Cape Province, of dwelling in "mat-houses," which consist of woven reeds placed over a portable framework. Some people have no other home, and some very interesting studies of their manners and customs were made not long ago by Mr. Erich Mayer, a well-known South African artist.

Slightly more ambitious is the "tent-house," of unbleached linen, really a comfortable type of marquee. Old prints by Barrow and other early travellers show the hunters of the eighteen-hundreds resting in their shade. The motorist has re-invented this style of shelter for erection overnight next to his car, but it always was commonplace out in the veld.

Trekking, in the original African sense, could be seen about six years ago, when the Angola farmers returned to the South-West Mandated Territory. Originally they had left the Transvaal in 1876 because of theological disputes in that then republican country. Striking out into the Kalahari Desert, about 500 of them took their wagons and their oxen into a waterless wilderness, in which not a few of them perished.

After a veritable Odyssey they ultimately reached Angola, where, at St. Januario de Humpata, they were given land by the Portuguese on which to settle. Here they remained, a self-contained and self-reliant community, hundreds of miles from civilisation, and keeping rather aloof from their Latin overlords. Fifty years later the Union Government, in response to their entreaties, assigned to them large areas of land in the Gibeon, Gobabis, and Grootfontein districts of South-West Africa. There in 1928 and 1929 about 1,500 of them were settled.

Although lorries were used to transport many of the families, the ancient ox-wagon remained greatly in evidence, and the colonists retain most of their pioneer habits. For persons wishing to study the pioneer in his least "modernised" environment, a visit to the descendants of the "Thirstland Boers" can be recommended.





Groote Schuur, late home of Cecil John Rhodes, and bequeathed by him as the official residence of the Prime Minister of the United South Africa, the founding of which he did not live to see, has gables which, despite their different setting, are clearly akin to those of the fine old Amsterdam warehouse, dating back to the days of Rembrandt and Frans Hals.

On a restricted scale South African settlers are still fond of trekking.

Hundreds own stretches of land in the Low Veld or Bush Veld districts of the Transvaal, to which they take their sheep and cattle during the barren winter months. The journey to the more pleasant and fertile tropic territories is carried out in patriarchal style, the farmer accompanying his black herdboys over the "berge" or mountains, camping by night on the wayside with his flocks.

From time to time colonists from South-West Africa, a country well-known for its cattle-breeding activities, "trek" a large number of slaughter oxen through the Kalahari Desert, following, from water-hole to water-hole, the track which was charted for their grandfathers by savage Bushmen.

Near the coast—and "near" in South Africa signifies within a radius of 300 or 400 miles—villagers and farmers enjoy trekking every year for a few easy weeks beside the breakers.

Scores of obscure coves along the coast are visited by families from the Backveld, the names of many spots not being known even to the South African townsmen. From Hondeklip on the West Coast to Mbotji on the lonely shores of Pondoland, groups of campers adopt the simple life, generally during the winter, when work on the farm is slack.

Many a prominent seaside resort first became known because the farmers went there on their annual trekking holiday.

Older styles of dressing are by no means extinct, neither in the villages nor on the farms. While as a rule, it is true, only the grandfathers and grandmothers maintain the tradition, the South African has an affection for the antique costumes. His Royal Highness the Earl of Athlone, late Governor-General of the Union, so admired a pair of velskoene, or skin hunting-shoes, which he saw in the possession of Senator G. G. Munnik, a well-known member of the Upper Legislature, that a special pair was made for him. "I have a letter," said Mr. Munnik, "thanking me for the velskoene, and adding that they fitted most comfortably. I myself go to all functions wearing these emblems of simplicity and ease."

Velskoene are shaped exactly as they were in the 18th century, and for that matter as they were in the 17th. A piece of carefully-softened hide is cut into a shape to suit the wearer, and is then sewn. It is believed that they were originated by the Hottentots.

The kappie is worn by some wives of farmers. Save that it is of more generous dimensions, it is the cowl preferred by the Dutch peasant women of Rembrandt or Adriaan van Ostade. Overshadowing the face in front, as was needed in a sunny climate, with wide flaps at the side and a system of tucks at the back, this glorified poke-bonnet is like those donned by the good-wives in the "Covered Wagon" and similar American films.

So, too, the idea of the klapproek or flapped trousers, which carry a strap at the waist, is a survival on African soil of a garment worn by Continental "villeins" in the 16th century.

The approved style of Voortrekker hat possessed a brim of enormous width, lined below with green material. No longer are they made of straw plaited on the farm, but the bought models are not very different from those of 100 years back. From every part of a country district groups assemble when that characteristic South African function, the wapenskou, takes place. Like the bulk of the country's military system, it is a product of the soil, based on mediaeval precedent.

When in the 17th century the cattle-stealing Bushmen swooped down on the outposts and a fierce border warfare began, the farmers hastily gathered together as a mounted levy or commando and set off in pursuit of the robbers.

Again, the first Dutch colonists of the Transvaal and Orange Free State organised themselves into commandos to fight the native tribes, upon whom they had to direct almost incessant campaigns.

Republican armies in the South African War were still based on the commando as a unit, and the venerable system, which has proved its suitability to African conditions from the earliest days, was preserved when, in 1912,

the present National Defence Force was created by General J. C. Smuts.

Commandos rode against the Germans in South-West Africa during the Great War, doing excellent work in desert country, alongside the regimental units from the South African cities. And to-day, in times of peace, commandos still gather in the smaller towns for their annual training at the wapenskou.

By law and by custom the farmer who belongs to a commando is obliged to furnish his own horse and a certain amount of food, while the Government supplies his gun and his ammunition. The custom is to let the men elect their own officers, as they had to do in the days when the first settlers were completely cut off from other nations.

Few spectacles are more exciting in South Africa than a commando, un-uniformed, as has always been the case, thundering across the veld during the manoeuvres at wapenskou.

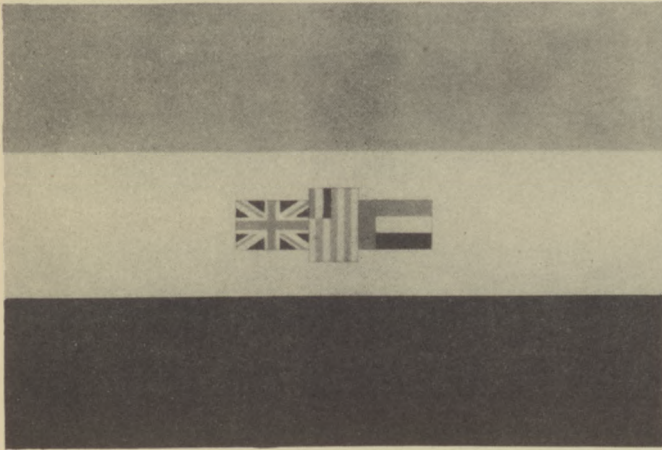
As early as 1680 the custom was practised of "shooting at the popinjay," a quaint-looking stuffed bird. Modern musketry tests are very similar, save that the targets are of a more humdrum kind. In some districts the idea of a "King of the Marksmen" is still maintained, and at the great annual Bisley at Booyens, Johannesburg, the mediaeval custom of chairing the winning "skutter" is observed.

When any distinguished visitor, like General Hertzog or General Smuts, comes to a village, it is customary for the local commando to turn out and accompany the honoured guest on the last part of his journey. To-day the procession often includes motor cars, but the visitor is expected to take his place on a spirited animal provided for his transport.

The wapenskou, save in times of economic depression, usually lasts several days, during which time the entire village is full of horses, of men



Freemasons in South Africa have the most ancient lodge in the Southern Hemisphere. Erected in the shadow of Table Mountain (the outline of which can be discerned in the background) the "Loge de Goede Hoop," as it is styled, has existed for more than 200 years and is still flourishing.



The present South African flag, adopted by Parliament in 1927, is based on the banner, coloured orange, white and blue, which was used in the days of Holland's greatness, in the 17th century. It was the same one which Jan van Riebeeck, who started the first settlement, hoisted in 1652 on the shores of Table Bay. Apart from this, the flag has associations with England, to which half the South African nation traces its ancestry, because it was flown by William of Orange when he took over the throne with Queen Mary in 1688, after the "Glorious Revolution." Symbolical of South Africa's later history is the emblem in the centre, which comprises the Union Jack and the flags of the old Transvaal and Orange Free State Republics.

ern Cape Province a still older art is practised by white farm boys. They will take an assegai, and as skilfully as any native, give the spear the necessary quivering impact that sends it hurling through the air, 60 yards or more. As a form of sport this is regarded as one of the most strenuous but exciting known.

\* \* \* \* \*

Despite his alleged sternness, the dweller on the South African veld is by no means averse to merry-making.

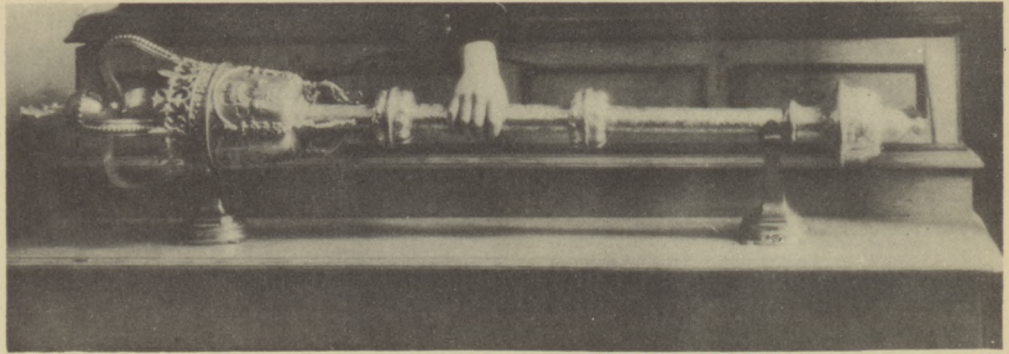
At old-fashioned weddings in the Western Cape the pretty custom of strewing paper flowers is observed. This comes from France.

Barkly East, in the northern part of this province, knows a quaint Dutch survival, for it makes bride and bridegroom, at the more conservative ceremonies, sit beneath a wreath of blossoms.

Formerly the floor at Dutch weddings was always strewn with bits of gold and silver paper. Due to the British Settlers, of whom some 4,000 came to the Cape in 1820, the use of rice and confetti at weddings took its place.

Nearly everywhere in South Africa's Backveld the musicians are coloured fiddlers. Stray jazz bands find their way to the lonelier parts when times

camping on the market square, and of guns leaning against the verandahs of the shops. When the time comes for marksmanship competitions it is always made plain that the Dutch farmer, even in the 20th century, has not lost that pre-eminence as a shot which has made him, like his ancestors, famous the world over. Hunting and fighting, both of them matters of daily routine to the Voortrekkers, explain the South African's superlative skill with a rifle. In the East-

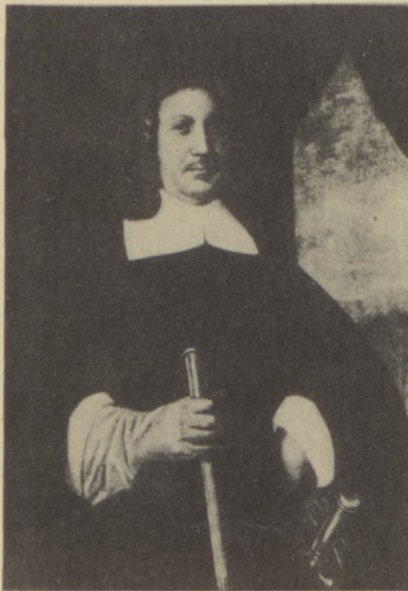


No more fascinating relic exists in South Africa than the box in which the Mace of the Union Parliament is kept. It is from the wood of "van Riebeeek's Thorn-tree," which was estimated to be 80 years old when the first Dutch settlers arrived at Capetown in 1652. It was already growing in the days of William Shakespeare and Queen Elizabeth, and it survived until mid-Victorian times, when, standing in the lee of the Colonial Parliament House, near the top of Adderley Street, Capetown, it was blown down in a gale. By unanimous resolution it was decided to have its wood made into the box for the Mace. Incidentally, the latter is a replica of the one used by the House of Commons, and, through a curious error, it shows the initials "C.R." (Carolus Rex), or Charles the First, in whose time the famous original "Bauble," immortalised by Oliver Cromwell, was made. Below : Jan van Riebeeek, first commander at the Cape of Good Hope.

are bad in cities, but every farmer prefers to hear the rollicking tunes that are obligatory at picnic parties and other open-air functions.

Folk music is probably more highly developed in South Africa than in any other dominion.

Some of the songs date back to the Middle Ages, as for instance the one



about "Die Nonnetjie en Die Rid-dertjie" (The Little Nun and The Little Knight), which treats of subjects utterly removed from the conditions prevailing in this Continent. Malmesbury is a town traditionally keen on dancing, but, curiously enough, it is the elders more than the children who are expected to take it up. The "tikkie-draai" or "three-penny turn" is one of the vigorous, uproarious steps favoured from the old days. Other amusing versions of the quadrille are the "horrelpyp" or "organ pipe," as well as the "konterdans." Because of the scarcity of public halls in some small villages, dances are held in the one place offering sufficient space, namely, the Court Room. Climatic conditions as well as lack

of accommodation are responsible for the frequency with which these affairs take place out-of-doors. Here, too, we have a curious reversion to mediaeval usage.

An echo of a tragic happening in South African history over 206 years ago, namely in 1729, is contained in a children's rhyme :

*"Poot aan poot, Van Noodt is dood,  
Waarnatoe? Sy swerrenoot."*

In English this means :

*"Paw to paw, Van Noodt is dead,  
For what reason? For his wickedness."*

Governor van Noodt an old-time administrator of the Cape of Good Hope, is said to have sentenced some soldiers, who escaped from ill-treatment, to be executed. For this, says legend, he was struck dead by Providence as he sat in his chair (which still exists at Capetown).

South African children play many games that their forbears brought out from Europe ; others, like their peculiar fashion of playing marbles in the "long-finger style," hail from the Orient, and a third group of pastimes, such as the "five stones" and others with cattle bones, was copied from the natives,

The Virginia Reel, as played in America, has its African prototype in "Siembamba," while "Wat Maak Oom Kalie Daar?" (What is Uncle Kalie

With pick-axe, and with mortar and pestle, accompanied by his faithful native "boy," the modern South African prospector still seeks gold in the fashion of the Victorian pioneers. Although the most modern methods are widely employed, the ancient system of "panning" and washing gold in river beds by hand has not yet disappeared.



Doing There?) is the famous German student's song, "Wer Komt Dort Von Der Hoeh?", in another guise.

In the well-known ditty, "Vat Jou Goed en Trek, Ferreira," Doctor Th. Schonken, a leading authority, sees an allusion to the Great Trek of 1835, though it is claimed on the part of an old lady in the Transvaal, Mrs. Maloney, that she wrote it in far more recent times.

Many odd little customs survive in South Africa's villages.

At auction sales (even in the cities) a flag is hoisted and a native stands outside the door of the mart ringing a bell, as has been done for over 200 years.

Funeral notices are sometimes posted up on trees, and this mediaeval form of announcement survives in parts of Pretoria, with its population of 100,000.

In the Western Cape Province the cult of the "water-melon feast" flourishes widely. The luscious cool fruits are devoured in immense quantities at special picnics, to which farmers ask the boys from the towns. Cases are on record of a band of healthy college lads finishing an entire wagon-load over a week-end.

Elders in the Dutch Reformed Churches customarily wear special black frock coats on the Sabbath. Not long ago a national controversy was caused by the proposal of a Bloemfontein congregation to abolish this custom, which is nearly a hundred years old, and which is linked with the clause in the old Transvaal statute that Volksraad or Parliament members must wear black coats and white ties.

New Year (not Christmas) is the principal festival in the South African rural areas. This, too, is a survival of Calvinist usage from Holland. Only in recent years has the Yuletide spirit begun to penetrate to the farms, and have children been given the same kind of presents they might expect in the towns.

From Dingaan's Day, December 16th, until after New Year, the villages virtually suspend business. Attorneys close their offices, the courts only sit in matters of great urgency, and everybody concentrates on holidaying.

A pleasant life, with a flavour of the good old times, may be lived in the small South African towns. The Magistrate and the Bank Manager, the Dominee, (as the Dutch Reformed Minister is called) the School Principal, and the Station Master, will be among the leaders of society.

World troubles seem a million miles away as one looks out into the veld from the last house in Main Street.

## Chapter Three.

### OLD CUSTOMS IN SOUTH AFRICAN CITIES.

**W**HEN the Senate of the Union of South Africa, the country's Upper Legislature meets, the clerk in charge intones a sonorous prayer, the very same that Jan van Riebeeck, the first commander at the Cape of Good Hope, addressed to the Almighty 284 years ago.

In its stately old Dutch phrasing it shows hardly any variations from the form in which it was written down on the high seas, before the "Reijger," the "Dromedaris," and the "Goede Hoop," South Africa's equivalents of the American "Mayflower" and "Speedwell," dropped anchor.

Only a few expressions, which lost their significance, such as those applying to the "wild and brutal people of the Cape" and "the greatest interests of the Dutch East India Company," have been struck out.

Nor is this the only direct link with the days of the original settlement maintained in the country's oldest town. The chair on which the Mayor of Capetown sits is generally believed to have been the very one Jan van Riebeeck used in his time at "The Fort Called Good Hope."

As for the Mace of the Union Parliament, the box in which it is kept is made of a famous old tree known as "van Riebeeck's Thorn." When the first settlement was launched at the Cape, the tree was estimated to be 80 years old, which would make it contemporaneous with William Shakespeare. It



grew and flourished and was carefully preserved many generations after the coming of the white man. When Capetown had already stood a century and a half it was still there, and threw its shade on the former Colonial Houses of Parliament.

Late in the 19th century it was blown down in a great gale. With a sense of the fitness of things, the Legislative Assembly ordered that its wood be worked into a case for the preservation of the Mace.

Even more venerable are the famous "Post Office Stone" relics, the earliest of which is believed to carry an inscription from a French expedition out of Dieppe in 1526. Beneath these crudely-carved slabs of slate the seafarers of the period preceding permanent settlement hid their letters, safe from inquisitive Bushmen, Hottentots, or wild animals. Justifying its title of the "Half-Way House to India," the Cape, or rather Table Bay, was regarded as a place where ships bound for the East stopped and mariners stowed their correspondence, to be collected on the homeward voyage by travellers on other vessels.

Some of these post office stones are walled into the General Post Office at Capetown, while a considerable collection is preserved, along with portions of "padraos" or stone crosses, set up on the African coast by the first Portuguese navigators, in the South African Museum in the city.

This is not the place to describe relics of a purely "souvenir" nature, though the Union can take pride in having, in direct line of descent, the oldest postal system in the Southern Hemisphere and one of the most ancient in the world.

Capetown Castle, located almost on the site of the original fort of van Riebeeck, is still the centre of military government at Capetown. On a certain evening in November, 1910, the keys, which had been in British hands almost continuously since 1795, were formally handed over by General Cartet, of the Imperial Army, to the Officer Commanding the Union's own troops.

From its ancient walls salutes to visiting royalty and other guests of international importance are still fired, as they were in the 17th century, and despite its uselessness from a strategic point of view, it remains the heart of the Cape Defence Force administration. Its barracks have been occupied without a break since the days of John Milton and Dryden, by Dutch, British, and South African troops.

Another ancient feature of the town's geography is the Grand Parade, on which auction sales have been held for more than a hundred years, and

which sometimes serves the purpose of a review ground, as it did when troops carried muskets into battle.

Capetown is so full of strange old oddments that it would be easy to fill a booklet of this kind merely with an account of these—the window-pane on which Captain Cook scratched his name with a diamond, the signboard at the Grand Hotel, Muizenberg, which belonged to its forerunner, "Farmer Peck's Hotel," the strange pond at Kirstenbosch Botanic Gardens, built in the shape of a bird because it belonged to a Captain Bird, the recently-discovered tunnel at Groot Constantia, the world-renowned homestead on the wine farm, which linked up with a treasury in the garden, the river Liesbeek, in the suburb of Rondebosch, which still reminds us, by its name, of the brook near Amsterdam, the strange manners and customs of the Cape Malays, and the exemption granted them in the matter of eating crayfish by the late Sultan, in his capacity as Commander of the Faithful.

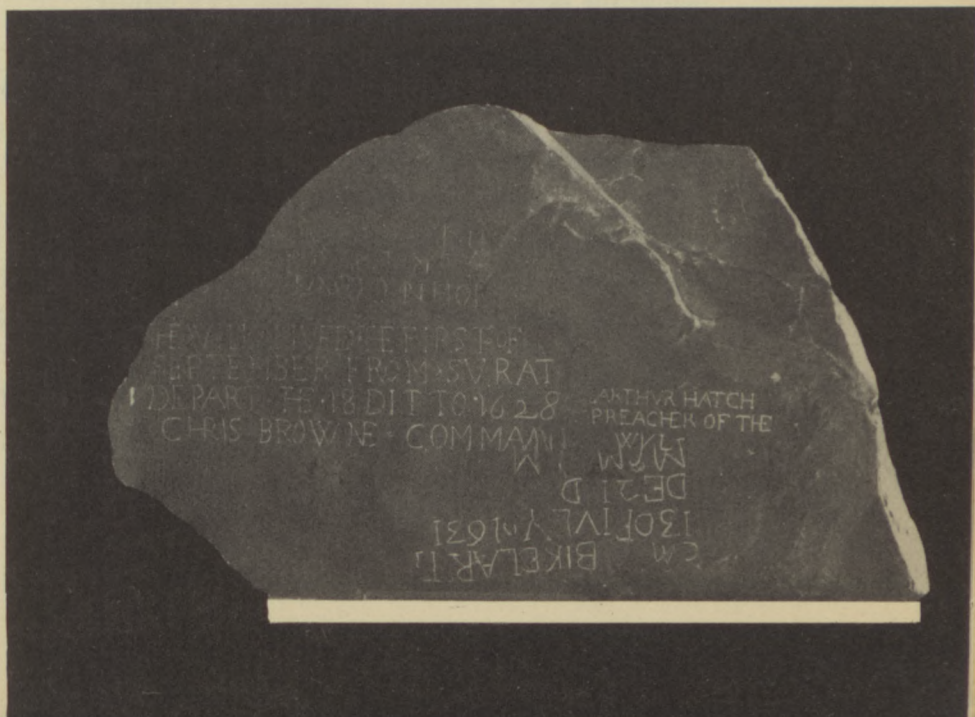
So, too, there is the Good Hope Masonic Lodge, which dates back to 1720 and is the most ancient in the Southern Hemisphere. Indeed, there are not many older ones in the world.

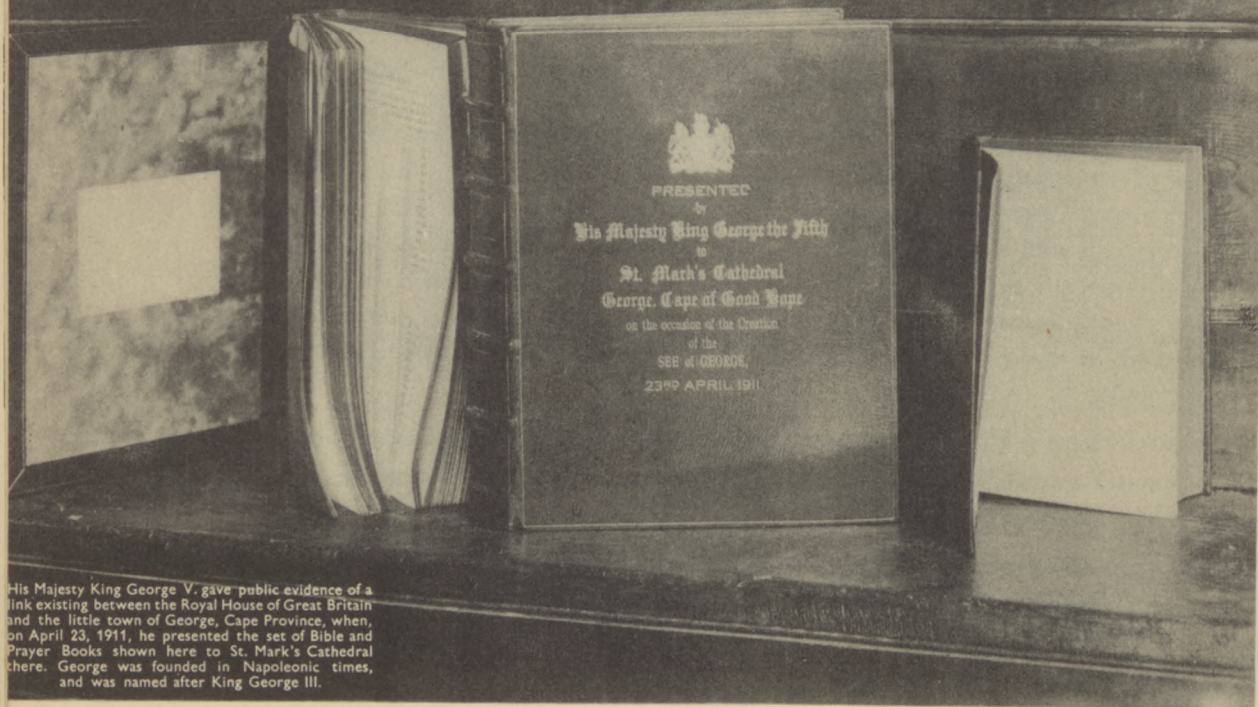
But we must turn our attention to some other parts of the country.

As we go through the Union we should not omit to take note of the national flag, in itself a revival of the celebrated old "Prinsenvlag," flown by the Netherlands in the days of Holland's greatest glory and carried on the ship of William of Orange to England, when in 1688 he ascended the throne with Queen Mary.

On account of its associations with the history both of the British and the

Beneath inscribed stones such as these, some of which are walled into the fabric of the big General Post Office at Capetown, the passing mariners of the 16th and 17th centuries left letters, to be collected by seamen on other ships. Vessels bound for India from Europe would deposit their mail here, "to be called for" by homeward vessels, and so their correspondence reached destinations overseas six months sooner than it could otherwise have done. On this stone, still to be seen, the names of several Indiamen may be read. "Hereunder look for letters" was a common inscription. Wild animals and Hottentots often wrought havoc with the mails.





His Majesty King George V. gave public evidence of a link existing between the Royal House of Great Britain and the little town of George, Cape Province, when, on April 23, 1911, he presented the set of Bible and Prayer Books shown here to St. Mark's Cathedral there. George was founded in Napoleonic times, and was named after King George III.

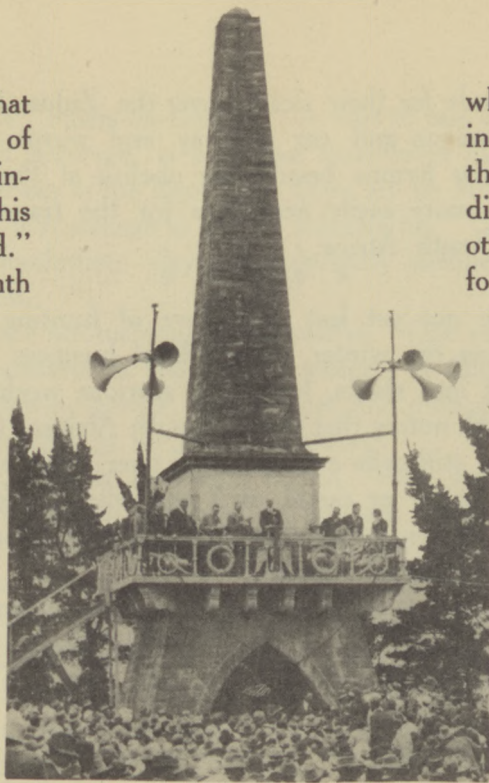
Dutch sections of the South African people it was felt, when the Union made a choice in 1927, that it would be a peculiarly suitable emblem on which to mount the other symbols of the country's history.

Young though the city is, Johannesburg has its own relics. Stuck away in certain side streets may still be seen a few hitching-posts, to which the pioneers tied their horses in the eighteen-eighties, before skyscrapers and radio-stations were thought of.

The word "stand," used on the Witwatersrand to describe a plot of urban building land, is another survival of which few South Africans know the origin. Originally, in the 'seventies, on the alluvial goldfields of Pilgrim's Rest and Lydenburg, every miner was granted his claim, as was the rule in California. When he worked in the river, washing out the precious metal, he needed a place on which to deposit his tools and on which to pitch his tent.

He had to place them somewhere. Consequently the Diggers' Com-

mittee arranged that he could hire a plot of ground which contained no gold, and this was called a "stand." Ten shillings a month was the usual rent payable. After Johannesburg and other Reef centres sprang into existence towards the end of the 19th century, the idea was taken over, and even when the "leasehold" system was gradually abandoned in favour of a "freehold" one, the word remained in use. Hence it comes that structures of 18 stories are to-day going up on plots



The ancient custom, which dates back to the days of the Vikings, of piling up stones, man after man, until there was a cairn to bear witness to an oath, was revived by the Transvaal Dutch, who gathered at Paardekraal near Krugersdorp in 1880, preparatory to recovering the independence of their Republic. Each year, on Dingaan's Day (December 16), there is a gathering of their descendants, who hold a service of thanksgiving and listen to speeches beside the memorial obelisk built over the cairn.

which, strictly speaking, were meant for the deposit of a gold digger's shovel and other gear. Racing for claims in the picturesque old way is almost extinct—but not completely so. The whole structure of South African mining is built up on the principle of "claim" units, originally meant for the humble digger, who dug for wealth in a single staked rectangle of 150 by 400 feet. Our huge gold companies still measure their holdings by claims, sometimes up to six or

seven thousand of them, but the standard size remains as in the good old days.

Paardekraal, near Krugersdorp, on the Rand, witnesses, on December 16 of each year, a remarkable reunion, which dates back to the Voortrekker days. Here, in 1880, farmers assembled and decided to revolt against annexation by Great Britain. Solemnly, in procession, they filed past, and in the ancient Norse manner, man by man, dropped their stones on to a cairn until there was a large heap to testify to their solemn oath. Later on, when peace returned, the mound was covered in and a monument built over it, vaulted so as to preserve it intact. There it remains for all time, and on December 16 (Dingaan's Day), the same anniversary which, in 1838, the Voortrekkers swore they would always devote to thanksgiving and religious

celebrations in gratitude for their victory over the Zulus, the South African of today comes by wagon and car to pray and picnic, to hear patriotic addresses, and to sing hymns beside the obelisk at Paardekraal.

Few places are more easily accessible for the traveller who wants to see a bit of older South Africa.

\* \* \* \* \*

Townsmen have not yet lost their love of hunting.

Each year, during the winter, hundreds of business men take off their lounge suits and get into slacks, for a few glorious weeks in the Bushveld. Incidentally, it is worth noting that many a South African, following his great-grandfather's custom, still calls a leopard a "tiger"; while to some farmers a giraffe is still a "kameel" or camel, as it was when zoology books were inaccurate, back in the sixteen-hundreds. And when the season is over the shops are full of biltong or air-dried venison.

Cookery in the Union is the most distinctive found in any British dominion. This is because of the influence of the old Malay slaves, with their fondness for spiced Oriental dishes, as well as of the early Dutch, French, and German housewives.

Bobotie, a kind of curry pie delicious to the taste, sosaties, a meat dish baked in the embers on wooden sticks, kedgereë, a tasty form of minced fish, and scores of other specialities have given the Cape kitchens their renown. Many of the South African delicacies are baked in casseroles. Mosbolletjies are spongy buns, into the making of which goes "mos" or the half-fermented juice of the grape. Another dish strange to the overseas visitor is the penguin egg, with its transparent yolk and fishy taste.

Guy Fawkes is one of the festivals which has taken on particularly well with the coloured inhabitants of the Union. On November 5 it is worth going into Long Street, Capetown, to see the gaily-dressed troupes dancing for pennies and singing:—

*"Guy Fawkes to marry me,  
Pick me up and carry me,  
So early in the morning. . . ."*

Many other amusing antics are practised about this season, but still more resplendent is the turn-out at the "Coon's Carnival" at the Cape, celebrated on January 1, 2, 3—or until the money gives out. Hundreds of coloured men and women turn up with their banjos, as troubadours, Zulu chieftains, or what-not, giving the New Year an uproarious, but quite harmless welcome.

In Johannesburg the war dances staged at the mine compounds are not the only form of entertainment available for the black merry-maker. He has

the equivalent of a "Palais-de-Danse." A visit to one of these resorts, which is run with much decorum, is a unique experience for the stranger.

Incidentally, many of the steps done there are no longer in vogue with the white people; and it is strange to see a "schottische," "polka," or some other favourite of our forefathers' days, thunderously stamped out in these native places of recreation.

Many tribes are astonishingly conservative. One of the most remarkable instances is the costume of the Herero women in South-West Africa, who still maintain the flowing gowns, high collars, and mobcaps introduced to them by the first missionaries in the eighteen-sixties.

"Old-Time Survivals in South Africa"—the subject is so large that only selected examples can be given. They are found in every part of the country, among all classes of its people. We come to Pretoria and find that St. Andries Street does not really commemorate the Scottish Saint, but a joke perpetrated some seventy years ago—and resultant from the allegedly sanctimonious habits of President Andries Pretorius. The Transvaal still has a law forbidding the bugles of mail coaches to be blown on Sundays. South African students in New York gather each year to celebrate Dingaan's Day. So the tale goes on.

Young though the Union is, it has enough tradition by now to stand comparison with bigger and more populous lands. Pioneering conditions are still recent enough to bestow a certain dignity on many ordinary things that ordinary South Africans do.

Like good Moslems, the Cape Malays, descendants of slaves imported from the Java and other islands in the 17th century by the Dutch East India Company, the first white owners of the country, make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and set great value on the resultant title of "Haji." Most of them are highly respectable fishermen, grooms, or artisans to-day. This group was photographed at the Cape-town dockside, and shows a portion of the crowd leaving for the Prophet's birthplace in Arabia.



Long ago the old *St. James Gazette* in London printed some lines which give the true spirit of the land :—

*“ This is the song of the straining span, the tune of the tattered tilt,  
Of the slow essays in perilous ways, of the wagon stoutly built :  
The song that was sung in the ancient tongue, when the days of the world  
dawned grey,  
The creaking croon of the disselboom, the song that is sung to-day.*

*“ East and west and south and north, the first-born herdsmen spread,  
From the waters clear of the high Pamir, from the ancient Oxus bed ;  
On and on to the plains of Don their creaking wagons ran,  
And the disselboom showed out the doom that has given the earth to man.*

*“ Over the sands of the thirsty lands, under a brazen sky,  
Where the only law men bow before is the law of the assegaai ;  
Forth and forth to the dim far north, where the broad Zambezi flows,  
Still to-day in the ancient way the rumbling wagon goes. . . .”*

*“ Slow and sure the wagons go, by thicket and thorn and pool,  
But their thin path traced on the homeless waste the road of a coming rule.  
And in dread of the rack, the wild slinks back, and the thief and the beast  
give place  
To the farm and the field and the yearly yield of men of a newer race.”*



A GREAT UNDERTAKING IN THE REALM OF INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS IS TO BE STAGED IN SOUTH AFRICA during the period 15th September, 1936, to 15th **Empire Exhibition** January, 1937, when the Empire Exhibition will be held in the extensive and attractively-laid-out grounds of Milner Park, Johannesburg. Many countries will be prominently represented at the exposition, and all the important phases of life and activity of South Africa will be featured.

Information relating to the exhibition, or to South Africa generally, is obtainable, free of charge, from :

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P.O. BOX 1111, JOHANNESBURG, with offices at principal centres  
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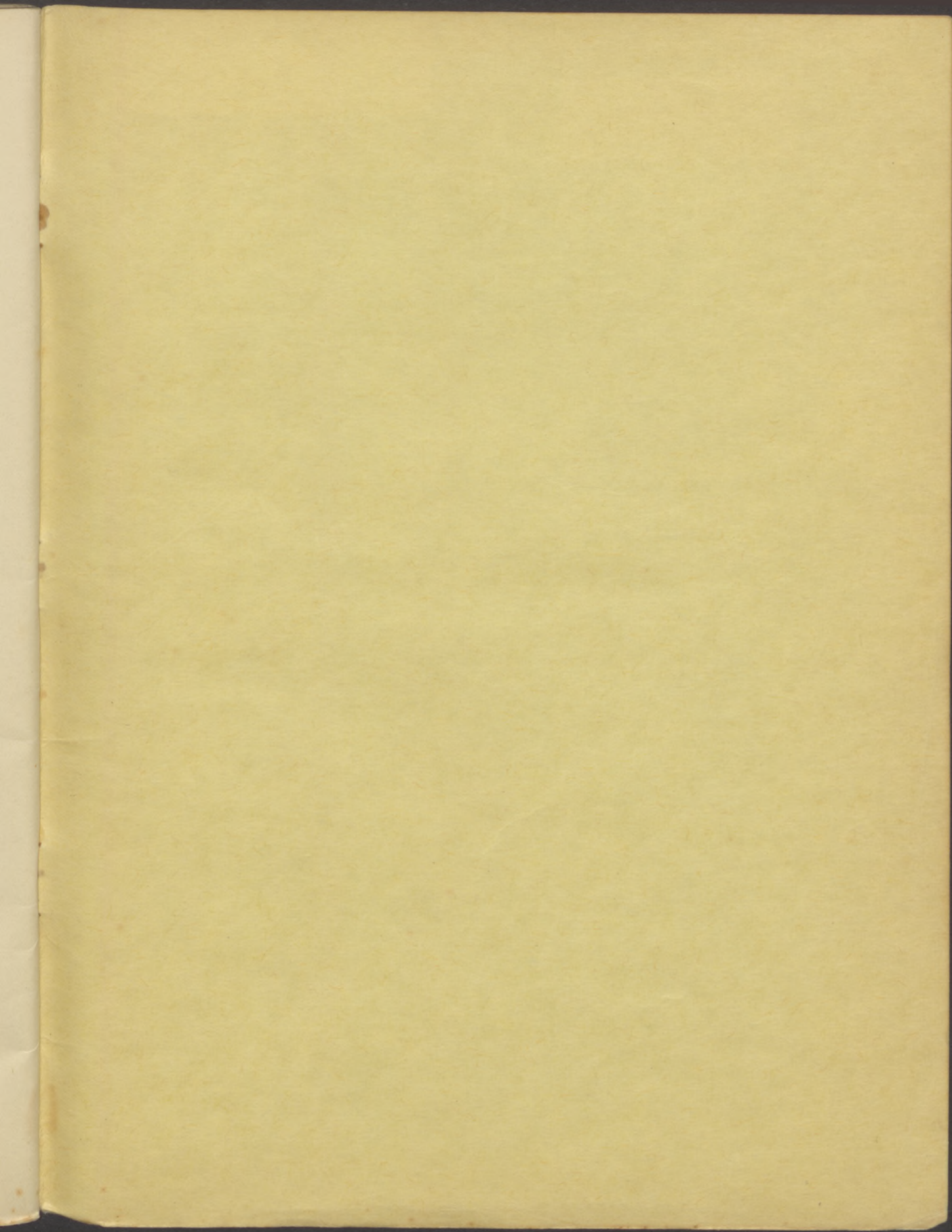


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