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THE OLD-TIME DARKEY



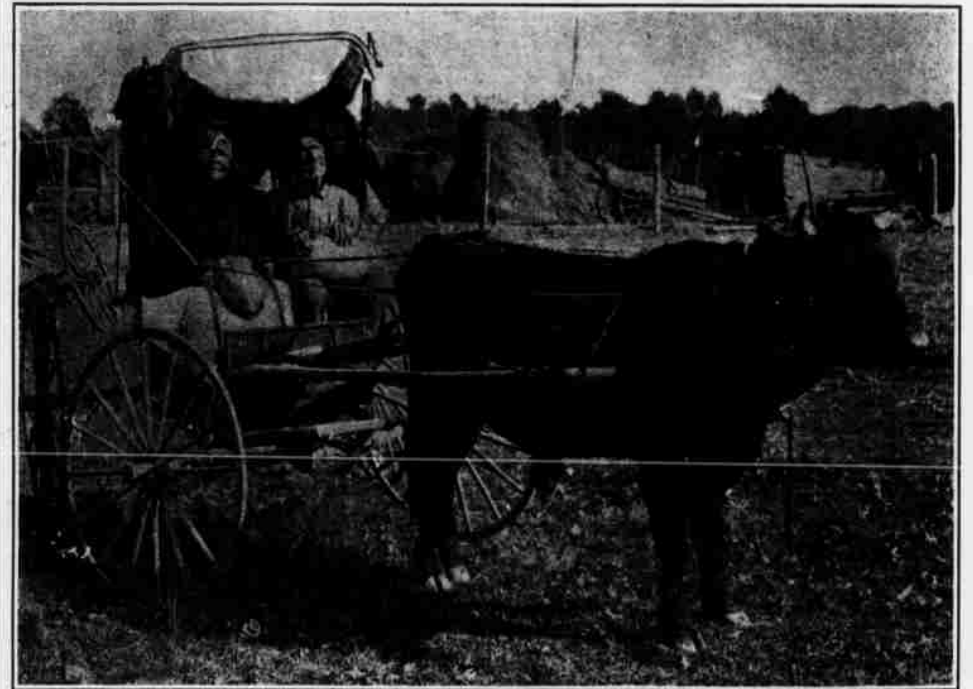
HE City of Raleigh offers many fine examples of the old-time or "before the war" type of Southern negro, which is rapidly passing from view. It is to this class that those who wish to study the negro as he was turn, and his fine manners, unswerving fidelity, deep affection, pride in family tradition, and absolute reliability are beautifully illustrated by the remaining few. It is but a natural consequence that Southerners love and cherish these old blacks and mourn their passing. To possess one as a servant is to be envied by all, and to call one a friend is a special privilege.

AUNT BETSEY AND AUNT JANE.

Of all the quaint old darkies who are seen here, Aunt Betsey Holmes easily takes first rank. She is over 93 years of age, but does not seem over 60, so fat and

He dates events from the time "when the stars fell," by this meaning the great meteoric shower of 1833, an event which filled the darkeys with dread for many, many years; from "Since the S-render," meaning the fateful day in April, 1865, when the Southern Confederacy ended its rather more than four years of stirring life.

I recall another type who yet wears the swelling hoops of fifty years ago, and who with great golden rings in her ears, and the brightest of bandana handkerchiefs concealing her mass of snowy wool, is wont, at intervals, to visit around among her white friends. She looks exactly as if she had stepped out of a picture frame, somewhere about 1860, and her gracious bow is quite worthy of the minuet. Such is "Aunt Jane," and she regards every member of the family of the lady who she nursed, as a baby, as her very own, although now



AUNT BETSEY HOLMES AND HER "AUTOMOBULL." Photo by Hayes, Raleigh.

jolly is she. Her smile is infectious, and her wave of the hand as she passes her friends, is something to be remembered with delight. She has a farm about four miles out from the city, and on this she makes a fair living, coming to town several times a week, in a vehicle which, if driven in any great city of the North, would simply stop business and lead to a call for the police reserves to clear the streets. It is a buggy, of a certainly not later date than 1860, and drawn by a black bull by the name of Joe, and the harness which Joe wears is as much of a relic and a study as the vehicle. Joe lies down between the shafts and contentedly chews his cud, while Aunt Betsey sells her "yerbs" and "squashes," spending two-thirds of her time saying things which make everybody laugh, and laughing as heartily as any one at her own funny sayings.

Aunt Betsey's husband is like some other husbands, a sort of "fifth wheel," something which could be dispensed with easily, but he is dignity impersonated, and seems to appreciate the honor of being the spouse of Aunt Betsey.

that lady is a grandmother. Every succeeding generation of children are "my chillun," and her love for them never abates.

STRANGE SUPERSTITIONS.

The old-time darkey has plenty of superstition; a fear of Friday and a very full belief in "hants," or "sperrits." There is also a belief among possum hunters, that the dogs see "hants" in the woods and "won't hunt no more arter they sees 'um." Many believe that the negro chicken thieves, who are so numerous and so daring, make themselves absolutely invisible by carrying in a little bag, held around the neck by a string, the last joint of the tail bone of a black cat; the particular virtue being obtained by throwing such a cat, which must not have a solitary white hair upon it, into a pot of boiling water while alive. I know personally a case of a negro convict who thus boiled a cat a little while, before his term of imprisonment ended, in order that he might use the bone after he was at liberty.

They also believe that ghosts may be