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B. Morosi.

chuaana Agriculture.
AGRICULTURE.

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Matale is a country where extensive agriculture is undertaken when rain falls. Along time ago agriculture was undertaken on a big scale and the harverst was good year by year. Mealies, kaffircorn, water-melons, pumpkins, kaffir melons, sweet-reed and calabashes are grown. Tobacco was also planted. Crops were grown in various ways. People had mealies all the time, it was their staple food but where they got it from is not known. From time immemorial, affircorn was not food eaten by people, it was food for cattle only. This is how the people ot to know that it was food. There were two women who were wives of one man. The junior wife went into confinement. The senior wife ground kaffircorn and cooked porridge for her. She poured milk in it, her intention being to kill her. She noticed that the confined woman was getting very fat, she thought that she was swelling up and would soon die. In the end however, she did not die but continued to get fat. She then also began to eat the porridge and the taste was nice to her and she also got fat. She then told the people of the village that kaffircorn was food. They then began to eat and to grow kaffircorn. Our fathers and our grandfathers found it being grown. That is why wer hear the story being told that, Kaffircorn was food for the pigeon and the finch, they were making away with the cattle's food by wasting or eating it. The food which was meant for witchcraft turned into food for the people.

Pumpzins and kaffir melons and sweet-reed are things whose origin is unknown. They have always been the Tswana people's diet. esalies cannot stand against the sun yet it is grown to this day. Bards do not give it a lot of trouble,

they eat it when it is stripped. Mealies is nice when it is still green, it is planted in coarse ground so that its roots should reach the water. There are things which cause trouble by eating mealies. They are locust and corn cricket. Kaffircorn does not fear being burnt by the sun. It is ploughed in black ground. Birds cause a lot of trouble by eating it. As people knew things by observing them, they used to plant kaffircorn and mealies in January. Kaffir melons, water-melons, sweet-reed and pumpkins are planted together with mealies and kaffircorn. Kaffircorn is nice but it is not nice without milk and fat.

Kaffir beer is made from it. When there was an abundance of rain these crops were planted when the people saw the 'makhu' (species of thorn trees) blossoming and when the sun shifted towards the north. When people realised that ploughing time had come they first spoke with the chief and then it was said: "Let the Moduanas make a start or others who were known to be a family which created rain. Our fields are ploughed near the rivers and on the highlands and in the woody parts of the country where there is good ground and where there are no stones. Fields are not ploughed near the homes, they are ploughed in the veld away from the homes. If a person wants to plough on a big scale he can plough three fields wherever he likes. Each person (plkou) ploughs at his own place where he thinks that he will have a good harvest. This is the wife's field from which she could get green mealies during the autumn.

No person was allowed to have about three fields by reason of ploughing for his daughter or his son who was unmarried. The male children shared the field with their

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father. If a man had married two wives, he ploughed for each of them separately. They did not share the fields, in the same way as they did not share their houses. If a man ploughed another man's ground that had been left fallow without his permission, he was taken to the kgotla and was made to pay with goats and was told to plough during that year only. But when they started to have headmen appointed, they began to say that if a person did not plough his field for a period of three to five years another man could be allowed by a headman to plough it without giving the owner of such field anything.

The farmers know the ground that is suitable for ploughing just by looking at it with their eyes. They then plough and say it is either a temporary field or a waterless one. The field is first examined to see if it is suitable for ploughing. The examiners are men and women who know the ground that is suitable for mealies or kaffir-corn or pumpkins and water melons and kaffir melons. Pumpkins, water melons and kaffir melons are sown on ground which catches water even though it does not rain much because they cannot stand against the burning of the sun, especially the pumpkins. You just plough a field whether it is old or new. If a field is ploughed for the first time, the first thing to do is to cut down trees before the end of winter. The seed is then sown after the ploughing at the beginning of summer. The trees are dug up by men who pull them up with the roots. The plants are watered by rain only and if it does not rain, they reap nothing. The fields in this country have no wire fences, they are fenced round with branches of thorn trees, wormwood trees and wait-a-bit thorn trees to keep cattle out. After reaping, the cattle are not driven into the mealie stalks before the star burns up the blades to cause them to

dry up, because it is said they will form a habit and start eating up the people's crops. Kaffircorn of a field in the woody country is ploughed after the mealies is reaped, the stalks are cut down, if not, the cattle are driven in to eat the stalks, then ploughing is carried on without the ground being first broken up. The seed of the pumpkins and the water melons is kept in the porches after having been put in bags sprinkled or smeared with bewitching medicines. If old seed is to be sown, it must be washed with the milk of a white spotless goat; the milk having been mixed with medicines. These medicines are obtained from a doctor, they are bought with a head of cattle or goats. A person first pays £1 to undo the bag of medicines. When ploughing is to be commenced to-day, a headman gives the command. He says "It has now rained and you may plough". The seed is sown with the hand. A plough drawn by oxen did not exist. In the olden days we are told, the women did the ploughing. They took the picks and went to plough for the chief first. They sang as they ploughed and their hoes went down together. Their song ran thus.

The cultivated garden lies outstretched on women,
Go forward with your hoeing
Let us cover a large area, for an ox will be
slaughtered for us at the chief's place.

When they have finished the chief's field, they then go to plough their own.

There also, they worked in co-operation, they ploughed the field of the one member first and then they went on to that of the next and so on. They did combined ploughing and beer was made, sheeps were slaughtered and the people had a very pleasant time. It is said that when the big girls

ground kaffircorn for those who assembled for a combined ploughing, they used to sing thus:

Tshilo Kala! Kala nteta.

When beer was brewed that work was done by young girls of marriageable age as they were the ones with broad chests. When it was strained, that was done by women as they were the ones with wide aprons. When it was consumed, that was by men as they were the ones who wore large skin coverings. The people of the olden times worked in co-operation and all who belonged to a family circle and friends helped each other without payment. When kaffircorn begins to form grain, it is guarded by men women and children. At night, nothing will eat up the kaffircorn as it is all fenced up with branches. In other places it is being protected with magical medicines, so that the birds and locust should not eat the kaffircorn. Locust is driven away by fumigation. As for reaping, each one reaps as he desires. He invites people, that is his friends to come and help him. Kaffircorn is cut and the ears are put in the land to dry thoroughly. When they are dry, the people are called and they are threshed with sticks. The kaffircorn is then carted home in wagons. The owners of the wagons charge a fee of 10/- or a goat. Mealies is carried home without being shelled. It is hung up on pegs made of the thorn and wormwood trees until it dries. It is threshed in winter. It is threshed with pestles and sticks. The mealies is put in the bags and placed in the back yard or in the granary. In the olden times mealies and kaffircorn were kept in the granaries and threshing floors made in the garden. Sweet-reed was put in a hollow and covered with dry cow dung. Sweet-reed remained covered throughout the winter without getting dry. Kaffir melons are cut into thin slices and dried up. They are cooked into mash. Pumpkins are cut up into thin slices and dried. If

thieves go to steal in the lands people place medicines there so that they may be unable to walk. Medicines with which they are trapped are obtained from the Bakwena country and from the Kalahari. Their names are only known to the doctors, and they tell nobody the names of these medicines.

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