

**THE BOOK OF CARRIAGES; OR, A
SHORT ACCOUNT OF MODES OF
CONVEYANCE, FROM THE
EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT
TIME**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649076055

The Book of Carriages; Or, a Short Account of Modes of Conveyance, from the Earliest Period to the Present Time by The Committee of General Literature and Education

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THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION

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PUBLISHED UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING
CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.

TRADE

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;
SOLD AT THE DEPOSITORY,
GREAT QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS;
4, ROYAL EXCHANGE; 16, HANOVER STREET, HANOVER SQUARE;
AND BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1853.

Transport. lit.
 S. 13.33
 28032

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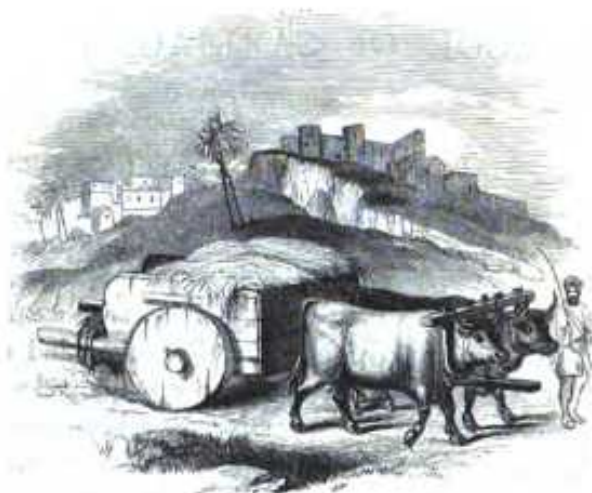
THE
BOOK OF CARRIAGES.

CHAPTER I.

THE first and most simple form of vehicle adopted on land, either for the conveyance of persons or goods, would naturally be a kind of raft or sledge, suggested by those employed on the waters of rivers and streams, which were, doubtless, the earliest modes of conveyance ever employed, and from such sledges Goguet ingeniously traces the origin of wheel carriages. "The use of rollers," he remarks, "must also have been an early discovery, and when men had both these inventions, they began to reflect that if they could join the sledge to the rollers, without impeding

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their turning round, it would greatly lessen their labours; and by such steps they at last reached the discovery of wheels. At first, these wheels were without spokes, being made of a solid piece of



wood; but from the machine thus constructed still requiring a great expenditure of animal labour, particularly when heavily laden, fresh improvements were from time to time suggested, until the wheel, with its spokes, naves, and felloes, came into existence."

In the improvement of these two-wheeled vehicles, man would not long be idle; gradually the form became more elegant, ornament was added, and some of the beautiful results have been handed down to us in the specimens of the antique cars used by the Greeks and Romans, for the purposes of pleasure or of war.

The earliest records of wheel carriages are to be found in the Old Testament, though as their use only is mentioned, without any description as to their structure, we have no very clear idea on the subject of their form. The chariot and the wagon are both named in Genesis; Joseph rode in the second chariot of Pharaoh, which was doubtless a state carriage of the same form as the war chariots, but differing from them, in having less complete military accoutrements, although even in these the case of arrows is not wanting.

Wagons are also mentioned in Genesis as being despatched from the court of Egypt to convey thither the wives and little ones of the family of Jacob, and "when Jacob saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived." With some few exceptions,

it may be said, that wheel carriages are not now generally employed in Africa or Western Asia; but that they were anciently used in Egypt, and in what is now Asiatic Turkey, is attested not only by history, but by existing sculptures and paintings. One of our earliest Egyptian paintings represents a person of quality arriving late at an entertainment in his curricule, like all Egyptian chariots, drawn by two horses. He is attended by a number of running footmen, one of whom hastens forward to knock at the door of the house, another advances to take the reins, a third bears a stool to assist his master in alighting, and most of them carry their sandals in their hands, that they may run with the more ease.

When Samuel addressed the people of Israel in reply to their request for a king to rule over them, he alludes to this custom. "He will take your sons and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots."—1 Sam. viii. 11.

A kind of cart or drag, used by the Jews for the purpose of threshing, is also mentioned in Scripture. This was supported on low thick