

Θεμελιον γαρ αλλοι ονδεις δυναται θειραι πασα τον
καιμερον, ος εστιν Ιησους Χριστος. 1 Cor. 3:11.

Annunte Deo Optimo Maximo
Guilielmi IV. Britanniarum Regis
Anno Regni quarto.
Lapis angularis hujus aedificii
in usum
Ecclesiae Reformatae instituti

a
Praefecto Promontorii Bonae Spei excelsissimo
Galbraitho Lourio Cole, CB. Equite honorabili &c &c &c.
Die XII ante Calendas Maii AD. MDCCCXXXIII
positus est.

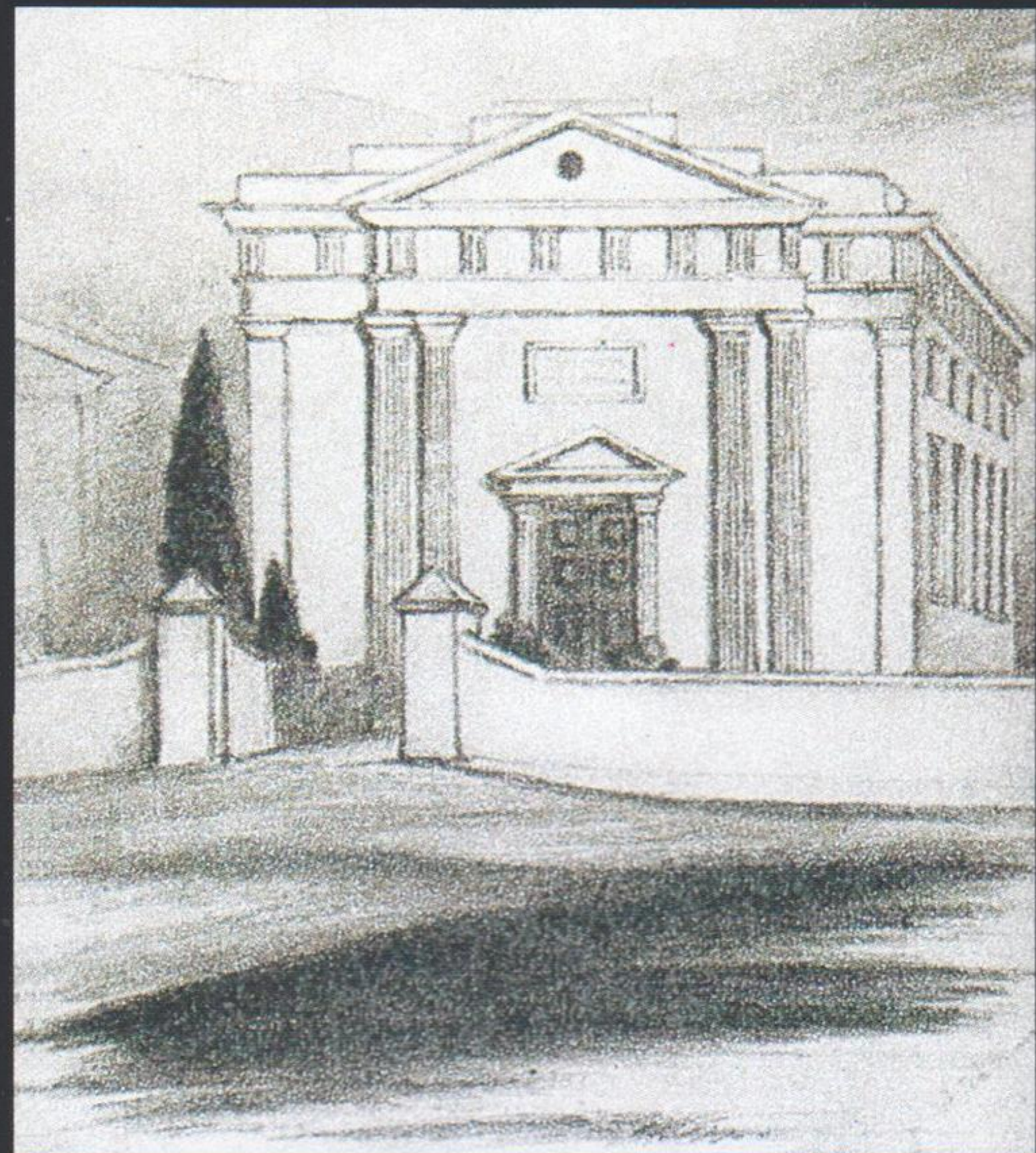
Johanne Wylde, LLD. Equite honorabili Iudice Primario.
Johanne Bell, CB. Scriba Provinciae principe.

Johanne Henrico a Mangero, VDM. } Ecclesiae Pastoribus
Abrahamo Faure, Jac. fil. VDM. }

Paulo Roux } Senioribus.
Petri Johanne Pents }

Johanne Tobia Jurgens }
Johanne Henrico Hofmeyr } Diaconis.
Johanne Samuele Fredrico Botha }
Rynone Johanne van der Riet }
Petrus Johannes Grove, Architectus.

Bayly Dyason, Sculpsit.



A Foundation Stone "Hoard" het Nuwe Kerk, Cape Town 1833

Dr. Frank Mitchell

Hoards play a very important part in the elucidation of numismatic history. Whether Macedonian gold and silver buried in an earthenware jar in Pella by some wealthy merchant, or the savings of a Jacobite landowner hidden in a pot as he prepared to run from Cromwell's army, a hoard is finite. One can be sure that the pieces in that hoard were recognised as valuable by their owner at the time they were hidden: that they were probably current in the district where they were hidden, at the date of their burial.

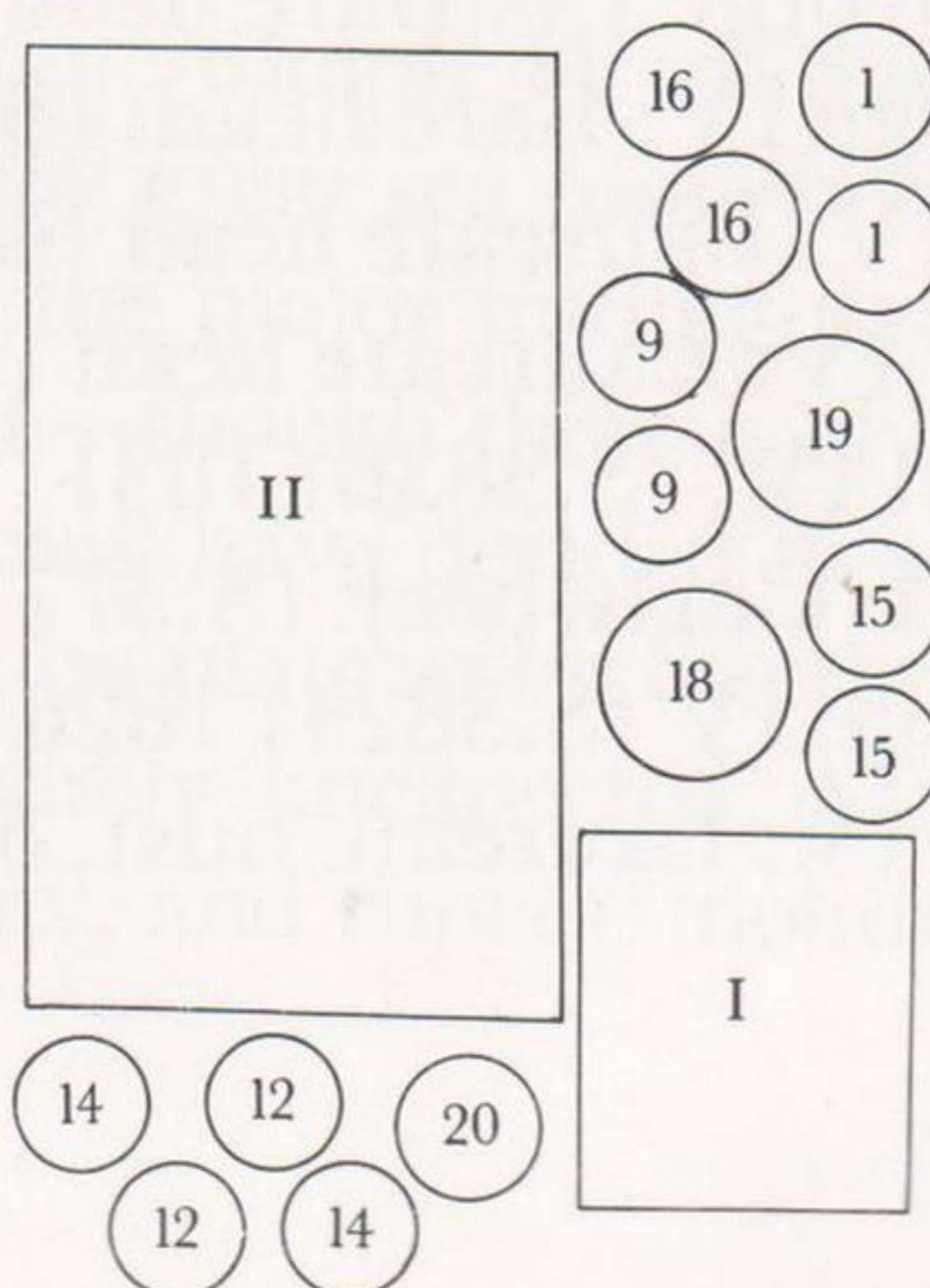
Of course, the larger it is, and the greater the variety of coins included in it, the more important it will be, and the more definite the conclusions which can be drawn from it. No matter how small the hoard may be, however – even a single V.O.C. "1 Gulden" piece of Utrecht ploughed up in a Constantia vineyard – it may represent a vital link in the numismatic story. It follows that every coin collector who aspires to the title of "Numismatist" has a grave responsibility to posterity, the responsibility to ensure that every coin "find", no matter how uninteresting it may at first appear, is properly recorded.

There are still many gaps in the numismatic story of South Africa. "What coins", one is asked "have been used at the Cape since the first European settlement in 1652?" or "What coins did the Voortrekkers take with them when they set off North with their wagons in the 1830's?" There is still no final answer to these questions, no full and final or comprehensive list of coins to be found in the market place of 17th, 18th or 19th century Cape Town, in the days when our embryo city was "The Tavern of the Seas".

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| (1) Sovereign: George IV:
Laureate head (S.3800) 1822 | (14) 2-stuiver (Dubbeltje):
Holland: (V.56.4) 1791 | (18) 1-Riksdaler: Sweden:
Gustav Adolf IV: (C89) 1797
obverse (reverse see page 64) |
| (9) Farthing: George IV
Laureate bust draped
(S.3822) 1826 | (15) 1-stuiver
(Bezemstuiver): Zeeland:
(V.94,8) 1791 | (19) Half-Pagoda: Silver:
English East India Co.:
"Temple Type" 1807-
1812. (See reverse page 64). |
| (12) 1/8 Dukaat or Pietje:
Zeeland (V.87.4) 1788 | (16) 1/4 Gulden: (Kwart
scheepjesgulden):
(Batavia) (V. 202.3) 1802 | (20) 2-Reals: Lima:
Charles IV of Spain C.45)
1792. Obverse (reverse page 64). |

I Die Nuwe Kerk, circa 1833, the Dutch Reformed Church situated in Nuwe Kerk Street, Cape Town (demolished in 1967).

II This engraved silver plaque on the foundation stone under which the Hoard was found, proclaimed in Latin that it had been laid by the British Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, C.B. on the 20th April 1833.



The coins illustrated are pieces similar to those found in the "hoard". Included are coins of the Dutch Netherlands, Britain, Sweden, Spanish America and the English East India Company. (See details on pages 62 & 64).

In recent years coins in significant numbers have been recovered from at least ten shipwreck sites off the Cape Coast. Some of these “wreck-hoards” have been reasonably well recorded (see Note 1), others are still being investigated. From them we have gained much valuable information, but the majority of coins found were either part of a consignment from some European merchant company – Portuguese, Dutch or English – being sent to their trading stations in the East, or they represented soldiers’ or professional persons’ savings being taken “home” from the East, to Europe. Coins recovered from wrecks on our coast do not, therefore, provide conclusive evidence that similar pieces were current ashore.

From time to time parcels of British sovereigns or silver coins of the Union of South Africa of the 1920’s or 30’s have been brought in by Africans after having been retrieved from hiding places in the dung floors of their huts, but these can hardly be regarded as hoards. More interesting was the find in the late 1950’s of a quantity of British silver near Lake Arthur in the Cradock district. Most were shillings, with a few half-crowns of George IV and William IV, in uncirculated though corroded state. With them were a few pieces of the last coinage of George III, which had seen some circulation. The latest pieces were shillings of William IV dated 1836. It was assumed when the hoard was found that these coins represented soldiers’ pay which had been hidden in time of crisis by some military paymaster during one of the many Frontier Wars. Unfortunately no detailed record of this hoard was ever made.

I recently had the opportunity to re-examine the contents of a “hoard” of a different kind – a collection of coins which had lain hidden under a foundation stone in Cape Town for a hundred and thirty years. In 1967, Die Nuwe Kerk, a church building of the Dutch Reformed Church (Die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika), situated in Nuwe Kerk Street, Cape Town, was demolished – having become too small for its expanding congregation. An engraved silver plaque on the foundation stone proclaimed in Latin that it had been laid by the British Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, Sir Galbraith Lowry Cole, C.B., on the 20th April, 1833, in the fourth year of the reign of King William IV, and in the presence of the Chief Justice, the Secretary of the Colony and Church dignitaries.

When the foundation stone was raised during the demolition, a collection of 20 coins was found, together with certain other contemporary articles such as a newspaper. At the time, I had the opportunity of only a brief look at this interesting little “hoard”, and could do no more than make a preliminary list. Recently I was delighted to find that my advice had been followed, that the collection had been kept together and was being preserved. More important, I have now had the opportunity to examine the collection closely, and therefore to put the find on permanent record.

This was the collection as found:— (illustrations on page 60 and 64 are of similar pieces which I have since acquired.)

BRITISH COINS

1. Sovereign: George IV: Laureate head: (S.3800) 1824 (page 60)
2. Half-sovereign: George IV: Bare head: (S.3804) 1826
3. Half-crown: George IV: Bare head: (S.3809) 1826
4. Shilling: George IV: Laureate head (second reverse S.3811) 1824
5. Sixpence: George IV: Laureate head (second reverse S.3184) 1824
6. Sixpence: William IV: (S.3836) 1831
7. Penny: George III: Cartwheel: (S.3777) 1797
8. Half-penny: George IV (S.3824) 1826
9. Farthing: George IV: Laureate bust, draped (S.3822) 1826 (page 60)

COINS OF THE NETHERLANDS

10. Skilling or 6-stuiver: (Scheepjesschelling) Zeeland: (V.93,4) 1791
11. Skilling or 6-stuiver (Rijderschelling): Nijmegen: (V.23.3) 1791
12. 1/8 Dukaat or Pietje: Zeeland (V.87.4) 1781? (date defaced) (page 60)
13. 2-stuiver: (Dubbeltje): West Friesland: (V75,4) 1787
14. 2-stuiver (Dubbeltje): Holland: (V.56.4) 1791 (page 60)
15. 1-stuiver (Bezemstuiver): Zeeland: (V.94,8) 1789 (page 60)
16. 1/4 Gulden: (Kwart sloopjesgulden): (Batavia) (V.202.3) 1802 (page 60)
17. 50-stuiver: Louis Napoleon, Kingdom of Holland (V.192.5) 1808

OTHER COUNTRIES

18. 1-Riksdaler: Sweden: Gustav Adolph IV: (C.89) 1797 (obverse, page 60, reverse page 64)
19. Half-Pagoda: Silver: English East India Co.: "Temple Type" 1807-1812 over-struck on cutdown Spanish American 8-Real (C. 126) (obverse page 60, reverse page 64)
20. 2-Reals: Guatemala: Charles IV of Spain: (C.45) 1795 (obverse page 60, reverse page 64). (The coin illustrated is of a similar piece of Lima of 1792.)

DISCUSSION

It seems obvious that the coins in this collection were selected with considerable care. The British coins were obviously chosen as a "set" from sovereign to farthing. Only the crown is missing. The only duplication is the inclusion of two sixpences, the second the then new issue of King William IV. These pieces – including the 35 year-old cartwheel penny – are exactly the British pieces one would have expected to find in Cape Town in 1833. It seems fair to conclude, therefore, that all the coins so carefully placed under the stone were pieces which were familiar, and presumably in circulation, in Cape Town at that time. This "hoard" therefore lends strong support to the conviction I have long held that the six-, two- and one-stuiver pieces of the various provinces of the United Netherlands remained in circulation long after the Second British Occupation of the Cape of 1806. The quarter-sloopjesgulden was also to be expected. We have long had evidence that General Sir David Baird put the minor denominations of the Sloopjesgulden series – coins he had found stored in the Castle – into circulation immediately after the Second British Occupation. I must admit to being a little surprised that the "Pietje" was included in the collection. I know of no previous evidence that any of the coins of the "dukaats" series circulated here.

The major surprise among the Dutch coins, however, is the 50-stuiver piece of Louis Napoleon, King of Holland. Placed as a puppet on the throne of conquered Holland by his Emperor brother, Louis Napoleon was an enemy of Britain in 1808 and it seems strange that his coin should have been welcome in Cape Town less than two decades after the end of the Napoleonic wars.

Surprising too, is the Riksdaler of Gustav Adolph IV of Sweden. We have long claimed that at this Tavern of the Seas on the great sea route between West and East, merchants of the Cape handled coins of all the major trading nations. It is interesting that we may now include Sweden in the list – though there is always the thought that perhaps a passing Swedish ship's Captain may have decided to attend a service in the Church and dropped this piece in the collection plate as his Sunday contribution!

The half-pagoda of Madras was not entirely unexpected. Many ships homeward bound from India rested awhile in Table Bay, and rupees, mohurs, and pagodas were

(2) Half-sovereign:
George IV: Bare head
(S.3804) 1826



(3) Half-crown: George
IV: Bare head;
(S.3809) 1826



(4) Shilling: George IV
Laureate head (second
reverse S.3811) 1824



(5) Sixpence: George IV
Laureate head (second
reverse S.3184) 1824



(6) Sixpence: William
IV (S.3836) 1835



(7) Penny: George III:
Cartwheel: (S.3777)
1797



(8) Half-penny: George
IV (S.3824) 1826



(10) Skilling or 6-
stuiver:
(Scheepjesschelling)
Zeeland: (V.93,4) 1791



(11) Skilling of 6-
stuiver
(Rijderschelling):
Nijmegen: (V.23.3)
1791



(13) 2-stuiver:
(Dubbeltje): West
Friesland: (V75,4)
1787



listed in local official notices establishing rates of exchange. Gold two- and one-pagoda pieces and the silver quarter pagoda, of the same type, showing the famous Kappalishwar Temple of Madras, were found at the wreck-site of the "Fame", which ran on the rocks at Sea Point in Table Bay in 1822. As is usual on these half-pagodas, the piece found shows traces of the original Spanish-American portrait dollar from which it was made.

The 2-Real piece of Charles IV from Guatemala is another coin which provides useful confirmation. It is well known that the "portrait-dollars" of Mexico and the other Spanish-American mints, the famous "pieces-of-eight", figured large in the commercial life of Cape Town in the early part of the century. The British troops in the garrison were paid in "Mexican Dollars", and it is believed that this dollar was established as the unit of betting when horse-racing – the sport of Kings – was started on Green Point Common. My opinion has been queried in the past, however, when I have suggested that the subdivisions of the dollar – the four-, two-, one- and half-real pieces – also circulated here. This 2-real piece helps support my theory.

CONCLUSIONS

Since seeing this interesting small collection, I have been stimulated to acquire a similar set. It has not been easy, and has taken time – but it has certainly been fun. I cannot claim that every coin here illustrated bears the same date as the similar piece in the Nuwe Kerk collection, but they are all otherwise identical. They have certainly provided a new impetus to my interest in the coins of the Early Cape. I wonder if Piet Retief and his friends had similar pieces in their pockets when they took off on their Great Trek in 1837?

Frank Mitchell, retired Medical Officer of Health of The Divisional Council of The Cape, has been a member of our Society for almost 40 years. He has served a number of terms as President and was one of the first to be elected a Fellow. He initiated our original "Newsletter", which he edited from 1948 to 1964. In 1964 he started our "South African Numismatic Journal", acting as Hon. Editor of No's 1, 2 & 3. Interested from early childhood in the numismatic history of South Africa, particularly over the first 200 years of European settlement from 1652 to the reign of Queen Victoria, he has sought to ensure that every snippet of numismatic information concerning our country coming to his attention was committed to print for the benefit of posterity. His contributions to a wide range of publications cover not only coins, but also military and commemorative medals, tokens, and numismatic aspects of artefacts recovered from shipwrecks off our coast.

◀ *Right hand column top to bottom:*

(17) 50-stuiver: Louis Napoleon, Kingdom of Holland (V.192.5) 1808 (obverse).

(18) 1-Riksdaler: Sweden: Gustav Adolph IV: (C.89) 1797 reverse (obverse see page 60)

(19) Half-Pagoda: Silver: English East India Co.: "Temple Type" 1807-1812 reverse – over struck on cutdown Spanish American 9-Real (C.126) (obverse see page 60).

(20) 2-Reals: Guatemala: Charles IV of Spain: (C.45) 1795 (The coin illustrated is of a similar piece of Lima of 1792.) (obverse page 60, reverse page 64)

REFERENCES:

Note 1

1. F K MITCHELL, "The Coins from the Wreck of the "Fame" " South African Numismatic Journal, No. 4, 1967
 2. F K MITCHELL, "Sea Treasure from the Wreck of the "Meeresteijn" Ibid., No.7, 1972
 3. LALOU MELTZER, "The Treasure from the Shipwreck "Reigersdal" " Bulletin of the South African Cultural History Museum, No. 5 of 1984
- C = WILLIAM D. CRAIG "Coins of the World" 1750-1850 Whitman Publishing Co., Wisconsin 1966.
 S = ED. PETER SEABY & FRANK PURVEY, Standard Catalogue of British Coins – Coins of England and the United Kingdom (Volume I 20 Edition), London 1984.
 V = PIETER VERKADE, "Muntboek bevattende de namen en afbeeldingen van munten, geslagen in de zeven voormalig vereenigde Nederlandsche Provinciën, siet den Vrede van Gent tot oopenzen tijd. – Schiedam 1848.

The Spanish Peseta:

1.



2 & 3



4 & 5



6



7



8



9



10



Right hand column:
 (11) Bottom two illustrations
 (12) Top two illustrations.