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THE BELL:

ITS

ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND USES.

The death occurred on Tuesday of the Rev. Dr. Gatty, Vicar of Ecclesfield, near Sheffield, since 1839. Dr. Gatty, who was in his ninetieth year, was the author of several publications. He was the father of the late Mrs. Ewing, writer of stories for the young.

Remove your cap a little further if you please : it hides my bauble. And now each man bestride his hobby, and dust away his bells to what tune he pleases. I will give you for my part—

The crazy old church clock,
And the bewildered chimes.

CHARLES LAMB.

THE BELL:

ITS

ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND USES.

BY THE REV. ALFRED GATTY, M.A.,
VICAR OF ECCLESFIELD.



LONDON:
GEORGE BELL, 186, FLEET STREET.

1848.

CC

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G22b

TO HER
WHO FOR LONG HAS HEARD THE BELL WITH ME,
AND
SHARED IN ITS GAY AND GRAVE ASSOCIATIONS;
THE COMPANION OF MY LIFE
AND PARTNER OF MY FORTUNES,
THIS SMALL VOLUME IS, WITH ALL AFFECTION
INSCRIBED,

A. G.

731896

P R E F A C E .

The following anecdote occurs in one of Bishop Latimer's quaint and spirited sermons—

“ I heard of a bishop of England that went on
“ visitation, and as it was the custom, when the
“ bishop should come, and be rung into the
“ town, the great bell's clapper was fallen down,
“ the tyall was broken, so that the bishop could
“ not be rung into the town. There was a great
“ matter made of this, and the chief of the
“ parish were much blamed for it in the visitation.
“ The bishop was somewhat quick with them,
“ and signified that he was much offended. They
“ made their answers, and excused themselves
“ as well as they could : ‘ It was a chance,’ said
“ they, ‘ that the clapper brake, and we could not
“ get it mended by and by ; we must tarry till

“we can have it done: it shall be mended as
“shortly as may be.’ Among the other, there
“was one wiser than the rest, and he comes me
“to the bishop: ‘Why, my lord,’ saith he, ‘doth
“your lordship make so great a matter of the
“bell that lacketh his clapper? Here is a bell,’
“said he, and pointed to the pulpit, ‘that hath
“lacked a clapper this twenty years. We have
“a parson that fetcheth out of this benefice fifty
“pounds every year, but we never see him.’”

The foregoing anecdote has been quoted as an excuse for intimating that the clapper of the writer's pulpit has not been silent—or, in other words, that the following little work was undertaken as an occasional relaxation from professional composition. It has proceeded from the worn pen of an habitual sermon writer.

“The Bell” originally appeared in the columns of a provincial newspaper,* in a neighbourhood in which bell ringing being much practised as an amusement, there seemed to be an opportunity of connecting the pastime with some solid information and useful reflections. Two hundred copies were subsequently published in a mean

* The *Sheffield Times*.

pamphlet form : and they soon disappeared. The present edition has been prepared with a hope of amusing the general reader ; and if it should turn the attention of the antiquarian into a channel of interesting inquiry, the writer will be glad to have been the means of eliciting a profounder essay on the subject : as he is well aware that he himself has not “ borne away the bell ” by his treatment of it. He hopes, however, that he has not become entitled—like the winning horse of old, who bore away the prize-bell from the race-ground on his forehead—to have any tintinnabulary appendage as a head-ornament, on account of his having dwelt so long on the trivial illustrations with which his work has been expanded.

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THE BELL:

ITS ORIGIN, HISTORY, AND USES.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY OF BELLS.

“Mighty things from small beginnings grow.”

DRYDEN.

MANY articles in general use are of very ancient invention, and some of them retain, to a considerable degree, that primitive form in which they were originally constructed. Nor is this difficult to account for, inasmuch as whatever is indispensable to general convenience would be likely to be soon discovered, and being designed for the common purposes of social life, the united ingenuity of men would quickly invest it with a

simple shape adapted for permanent usefulness. Thus the bell may be reckoned amongst the oldest specimens of human contrivance ; and, though its form in the course of centuries has been modified from the broad basin-like proportions of barbarous discovery, to the graceful pendulous shape, which nature herself may have suggested in the pretty wild flower of the same name, a bell is very much what a bell has ever been. At any rate, if, as Walter Scott observes, " it is one of the most valuable objects of antiquarian research to trace the progress of society by the efforts made to improve the rudeness of first expedients," we should say, in reference to the bell, that the advancement of social life is more palpably indicated by the variety of uses to which this vehicle of sound has been extensively applied, than by any radical transformations in its shape or structure. The bell, which about eight hundred years ago was the signal for extinguishing light and fire in every English home at eight o'clock, now summons at the same hour a multitude of persons to take their seats in the railway train, for a demon-like scamper across half-a-dozen counties, through the storms and darkness of a winter's night !

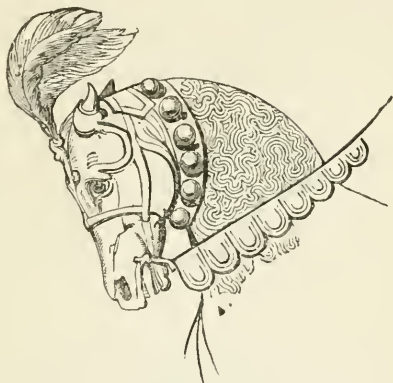
The word " bell " is thought to be derived from

the Latin term *pelvis*, a basin, or more properly a foot-pan—being compounded of *pes* (a foot) and *lavo* (to wash); and this, if correct, would at once determine the hollow shape. We suspect that bells were at first merely small pieces of concave metal, producing a tinkling sound when struck by the hammer within; that they were adapted for purposes of ornament rather than general usefulness, and probably existed in this diminutive form for ages before they were brought into either civil or religious service, as the usual means of public assembly or announcement. In the writings of Moses—the oldest literature extant—“bells of gold” are mentioned as suspended to the robe in which the High Priest performed his duties in the sanctuary (Exodus xxviii. 32, 35), and their ringing intimated his presence to the congregation, when he was hidden from their sight within the veil. In the prophecy of Zechariah (xiv. 20) “the bells of horses” are spoken of as an ordinary part of their caparison, although the Septuagint version does not admit any mention of them. Who, then, with this authority for their antiquity, dares affirm that even Tubal Cain, the sixth in descent from Adam, “an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron,” may not have scooped

the sounding metal into some rude species of bells?

Schoettgenius, in his treatise on ancient vestments, shows that these small bells were attached to the garments of Hebrew women, virgins, and boys, as well as to the pontifical robes—that they were appendages also to the royal costume of the ancient Persians; and Æschylus and Euripides say they were concealed within the hollow of the shields of Grecian heroes and military leaders. They were also Bacchic, as may still be seen in the ancient marbles; and Mystic too; and it was from their use in the celebration of the Mysteries that Plutarch endeavoured to show that the Jews worshipped Bacchus. They were employed to detect and prevent the escape of the unhappy Xanthians, as we also learn from Plutarch, who says, in his Life of Brutus, that when the city of Xanthus was besieged, and some of the inhabitants tried to escape by swimming and diving through the river, nets with small bells attached were let down to catch them, and by the ringing sound each capture was announced. We find that in later times the chief men and civil officers of the Germans had them on the skirts of their garments, belts, and shoulders; and not only have horses,

but mules too, and asses, been more or less decorated with these baubles, in all ages and countries



of the world. The leaders of the flock or herd have, time out of mind, carried them in the solitudes of the mountain or the valley, and they have rung through the air in the trained flight of the falcon and the hawk. But from the dignity which it had obtained, and the prodigality with which the little bell was used, this ornament, in its most diminutive form, is now degraded; and it has become ridiculous—almost confined to being a toy for the infant or the fool. It jingles on the baby's rattle, or the jester has yet more desecrated its ancient honours, by making it the conspicuous furniture of his motley garb and cap. As we proceed with the sub-

ject in hand, which, in treating of the larger kinds of bells, is capable of considerable dilation, it will be shown that, like an empty-headed fool, the bell has grown bigger, without growing wiser—that it has often used a long tongue, when it had better have remained silent—that it has sometimes assumed honours to which it was not entitled—and that it has been no less the unconscious promoter of error and superstition, than the herald of incalculable blessings and joys.

The several Classical and Latinized names of bells, enumerated by Hieronymus Magius, in his work *de Tintinnabulis*, are as follows:—

1. *Tintinnabulum*, a little bell. This word is probably derived from *tin*, *tin*, the tinkling sound which it makes ; or from *tinnitus*, ringing.

2. *Petasus*, a larger-sized bell, so called from its resemblance in shape to a broad-brimmed hat, which the term signifies. This seems to have been the instrument by which the ancient Greeks were invited to their fish-market, and the Romans to their public baths and general business. It was probably suspended, and struck externally with a hammer, like a gong.

3. *Codon*, the Greek term for what we should commonly call a hand-bell. The word signifies

the wide orifice of a trumpet; hence the open-mouthed form of the bell is expressed. These bells were carried by the sentinels in Grecian encampments and garrisons, who used them to keep the soldiers on guard attentive at their watch. They were hung as ornaments and emblems on triumphal cars, as on that which conveyed the body of Alexander from Babylon to Egypt, described by Diodorus Siculus; and were introduced for some domestic uses, and to summon the guests to feasts. They were also fastened round the necks of animals, and particularly of sheep, to attract the ear of the keeper when they strayed from their pastures.

4. *Nola*, a bell similar in size to the one just mentioned, though the term was also applied to the smallest kind of bells, such as were appended to the necks of dogs, the feet of birds, and the housings of horses. It took its name from Nola, a town of Campania, in Italy, where it has been supposed by some that bells were first invented; but this could only apply to the larger kind. The abbot of old seems to have used the *Nola* in the refectory, to give a variety of signals respecting both lectures and meals.

5. *Campana*, properly a large bell made of brass, and suspended in a turret, for the purpose

of summoning people to church. Pliny gives an account of bells on the tower of Porsenna, but these were probably not large ones. The word *Campana* is derived from Campania, in which country bells were first brought into use in the Latin church.

6. *Dodonæi lebetes*, caldrons of Dodona, because at Dodona, in Epirus, was a temple dedicated to Jupiter, at which the most ancient of the Grecian oracles delivered predictions by means of large brazen kettles suspended in the air near a statue, which held a wand in its hand. When the wind blew strong, the statue with the wand came in contact with the nearest kettle; and this being set in motion, communicated with the rest, when a discordant din was produced, from which the artifice of the priests drew responses for the ignorant inquirers who resorted to their shrine.

7. *Squilla*, a word probably of Italian origin: it occurs in the writings of the Italian poets, and it means a little bell.

In tracing the origin of the bell, we must certainly look to a period anterior to that of either Romans or Greeks: to the Egyptians, for instance, by whom ancient Greece was colonized, and to the sacred records of the people of God.

Search ought also to be made into the records of Assyria, perhaps of Etruria too, and China ; into those of China especially, as bells may have existed there at a very early time in a much larger form than in either of the other countries, or indeed in any part of ancient Greece. We have shown that very small bells were in use amongst the Israelites ; and this people being skilful workers in metal, having furnaces in which they smelted different ores for casting pots and various domestic utensils, we naturally inquire whether the sound produced by a stroke on these hollow vessels never gave occasion to their making bells of larger mould, for public convenience. Indeed, the mere reading of the “flesh-hook of three teeth” being “struck into the caldron” for the benefit of the priest, (1 Samuel ii., 13, 14,) creates the fancy that a notion must have been suggested by the ringing sound, of forming a large bell fitted for convocation. But this does not seem to have been the case. Trumpets were anciently used both in Israel and Egypt on all occasions of assembly and alarm. The trumpet summoned the people to the solemn meetings of religious festival ; and the watchman blew his trumpet on the citadel when danger from the enemy was apprehended. For a series of

ages, and even to the present day in some countries, it is certain that such bells as are now commonly fixed in churches, were unknown. What may be called gongs and cymbals, and other loud instruments of music, supplied their place. The caldrons of Dodona must have closely resembled the Indian gong, and, as we have seen, were of very ancient construction. A well-known line in the Georgics of Virgil shows that the tinkling of bell-metal and the clang of cymbals were familiar to the Romans:—

“*Tinnitusque cie et Matris quate eymbala circum*”—
“Make a tinkling, and shake the cymbals of Cybele round about.”

Broad plates of iron, like the felloes of a cart wheel, were sometimes struck together to produce a clashing sound; and in Tournefort's Voyage to the Levant, in which there is an account of these miserable machines, it is said that the monks who reside there still make use of them for lack of bells. The Greeks formerly used a piece of hard wood that was beaten with two hammers; and the Turks have never admitted bells into their country. Their feast of Beiram is now announced by firing of cannon at sunset; and signals respecting their fast of Ramadan are conveyed in the same manner. The call to prayer

is proclaimed by the voice of the muezzin from the minaret; and Lord Byron says that “on a still evening, when the muezzin has a fine voice, which is frequently the case, the effect is solemn and beautiful beyond all the bells in Christendom.” The Turks, too, who are very taciturn, summon their servants by clapping of hands.

In short, research into this matter leads us to the conclusion that the small sorts of bells, which were wanted for ornament or private convenience, are of great antiquity; but that with regard to the larger kinds, many substitutes—especially the trumpet—were adopted in their place for a long period of time; and the construction of them at last we are inclined to connect with the change which, soon after the establishment of Christianity, took place in the architecture of Europe. The straight lines and flat roofs of classic building had no convenient niche for the suspension of bells; but when towers and turrets broke this chaste formality, a *locus habitandi* seemed to have been created for the noisy monster, and inquiry into the subject disposes us to believe that the rise of what is called “Christian architecture,” and the invention of turret or church bells, were nearly coeval events.

With reference to our theory, that the first

casting of large bells was closely connected with an alteration in the rules of architecture, the following passage may be quoted from the preface to Grose's *Antiquities* ; since, although it can only apply to the case of church bells in England, there is no doubt we had them in this country very soon after their introduction into Europe : —“ Towers at first,” says Grose, “ scarcely rose higher than the roof, being intended chiefly as a kind of lantern for the admittance of light. An addition to their height was, in all likelihood, suggested on the more common use of bells.”

In what country large bells did really originate, it must be confessed is still involved in some obscurity ; for Thompson, in his learned work “ *Etymons of English Words*,” says, under the article “ Bells,” —“ apparently long before known in Europe, bells were used in Hindoo temples to frighten away evil spirits ;” and he would derive “ *larum*” from “ *lay*,” because it was supposed to have power to lay these demons. But, notwithstanding this conjecture, we think that only the smaller bells were known to the Hindoos ; for the architecture of their temples bore so strong a resemblance to that of the ancient Egyptian edifices, that the styles seem to be identical ; and we know that the latter had no bells suspended

in them of the larger sort. The common superstition that bells have an exorcising virtue, may indeed have been borrowed from the Hindoos—for it is worthy of them ; but we cannot yield to them the honour of the primary invention ; and this may seem important to some persons, since on this point hangs the question whether, in first undergoing baptism, bells were regarded as converts from heathenism, or of purely Christian derivation !

Our utmost inquiry, then, leads us to the conviction that church bells were invented by the Christian Church herself, and not at a very early period of her existence ; for it is obvious that the primitive Christians were not summoned to congregational worship by any public signal whatever ; as, in consequence of persecution, they could only meet by stealth, and chiefly at night, at the tombs of their martyrs. And it is shown by Bingham, that after the causes of these fears had in a measure subsided, trumpets were used as of old, for convoking Christian congregations, both in Egypt and Palestine ; and the wars and distractions which prevailed in Europe for about three hundred years after the death of Constantine, may have assisted to delay the introduction of church bells. To Paulinus, Bishop

of Nola, (A.D. 400,) the invention is generally attributed; but as he described his church most minutely in an epistle to Severus, without taking any notice of either tower or bells, and as no contemporary or immediately subsequent writer has mentioned them, this silence has been justly considered as a strong argument in favour of the Bishop's ignorance of the subject. Pope Sabianus (A.D. 604,) is the next claimant to the honour of introducing bells into churches; and with him, or at least with his age, it must rest. At the end of the seventh century, Bede mentions their being in England; in the tenth century, St Dunstan hung a great many in our churches; and from that time the bell has spoken out for itself. From its eyrie in the belfry it has gradually become an inspector and registrar-general of all the principal occurrences of human life. At feast and at festival—at mourning and at meeting—its iron tongue has now always something to say. No heir can be born, but the bell must take notice of his arrival;—no marriage can be solemnized, but the bell must pour forth its noisy congratulations;—human breath cannot quit the body, but the bell must intrude its notes of mock condolence;—nor is the worship of God attended without a summons from the bell. In

the well-known monkish couplet, no vain boast was put forth :—

*“ Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, congrego clerum,
Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro.—*

“ I praise the true God, call the people, convene the clergy,
I mourn the dead, dispel the pestilence, and grace festivals.”

And, in addition to these offices, we can presently show, on the part of this busy instrument, a monopolizing interference with the minor affairs of the world which may surprise those who have not fully considered the subject.

CHAPTER II.

CHURCH BELLS AND THEIR BAPTISM.—MODE OF CASTING BELLS.

The original sin of a bell would be a flaw in the metal, or a defect in the tone, neither of which the priest undertakes to remove.

SOUTHEY.

Redder now the pipes are glowing—
Mark, this rod I forward urge ;
And the metal must be flowing,
Should the rod glazed o'er emerge.
Comrades, quick explore ;
Prove the molten ore—
If the yielding and contending
To a good result be blending.

Translation from SCHILLER.

THE first notice which we shall give of the duties of the bell, will be of its services in “the Church of the middle ages,” when it swung in the “old grey turret high” of the monastery. In the Excerptions of St. Egbert, A.D. 750, it was decreed “that all priests, at appointed hours of day and

night, do sound the bells (*signa*, signals) of their churches, and then celebrate the sacred offices to God, and instruct the people." If the canonical hours of prayer were in that age the same as are now authorized by the Church of Rome,* the ringing must have occurred eight times in the twenty-four hours, or every third hour throughout the day and night. We shall notice only some of these occasions.

Of the *Ave Maria* bell, a note in Sir T. Browne's *Religio Medici* speaks thus:—"A church bell that tolls every day at six and twelve of the clock; at the hearing whereof, every one in whatever place soever, either of house or street, betakes himself to his prayer, which is commonly directed to the Virgin;" and the quaint old writer makes the following comment:—"I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell without an elevation; nor think it a sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in all, that is in silence and dumb contempt. Whilst, therefore, they direct their devotions to her, I offer mine to God, and rectify the errors of their prayers, by rightly ordering mine own."

* The canonical hours are as follows:—Laudes at 3 a.m. Prime at 6 a.m. Tierce at 9 a.m. Sext at noon. Nones at 3 p.m. Vespers at 6 p.m. Complin at 9 p.m. Matins at midnight.

The *Vesper bell* was the call to evening prayer. Byron, in paraphrasing a passage in Dante's *Purgatorio*, thus alludes to it :—

“ Soft hour, which wakes the wish and melts the heart,
Or fills with love the pilgrim on his way,
As the far bell of vesper makes him start,
Seeming to weep the dying day's decay.”

The *Complin bell* summoned people to the last religious service of the day ; and, if we remember rightly, it greeted Slawkenbergius, when that “gentle stranger” made his ludicrous entry into Strasburgh, as related by Sterne.

The *Sanctus bell*, though now only a hand-bell used in the Roman Catholic services to call attention to the more solemn parts of the mass, was formerly hung in a small turret outside the church, as may still be seen in some of our old churches. It was always rung at the words, “*Sancte, sancte, sancte Deus Sabaoth*”—“Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts ;” and whoever heard it was expected to prostrate himself.

The *Passing bell* was so named, as being tolled when any one was passing out of life ; and it was ordered that all within hearing should pray for the soul of the dying.

“ Prayers,” says Donne, “ascend
To heaven in troops at a good man's passing bell.”

In course of time this bell had a deeper signification, being supposed to ward off evil spirits from the departing soul, as will be shown in our account of the baptism of bells.

The two bells which are still often rung in parish churches at six in the morning and at noon, are evidently continuations of the ancient Ave Marias; and they serve the good purposes of calling the labourer to his daily toil, and to his dinner. The passing bell is now tolled merely to inform the neighbourhood that a death has taken place, and at the end of the tolling, it is customary in some places to repeat a certain number of strokes, to intimate whether the deceased was a man, woman, or child.

The *Curfew bell* (*couvre feu*) was introduced into England by William the Conqueror from Normandy, or at least he first enforced it here. It was rung at eight o'clock in the evening, when every body was expected to extinguish fire and lights in his house; a very arbitrary law as it appears; but intended to prevent the conflagration of houses, at a time when they were merely built of wood and light materials: and it only lasted in full force during the reigns of the first two Williams. The custom of ringing at eight o'clock still prevails in very many churches; and,

when “the curfew tolls the knell of parting day,” the sound falls with a soothing influence on the ear of the meditative wanderer, and seems to shed a holy charm over the happiness of the quiet English home.

Excommunication, as practised of old in the Romish Church by “bell, book, and candle,” brings the bell again prominently before us. It was rung to summon the congregation to this awful ceremony, at which the priest read the service from a balcony; and when the anathema was pronounced, the candles were put out, as emblematical of the extinction of hope in the sinner’s soul. In *Marmion* we read—

“And call the Prioress to aid ‘
To curse with candle, bell, and book.”

The most extraordinary feature, however, in the career of bells has undoubtedly been their undergoing the whole exterior process of Christian baptism—including naming, anointing, sprinkling, robing, sponsorial engagements, and every initiative accompaniment which marks the admission of rational beings into the Gospel covenant. Not that bells, say the advocates of this system, are baptized for the remission of sins; but that they may receive power to “act as preservatives against thunder and lightning, and

hail and wind, and storms of every kind, and that they may drive away evil spirits." It is not very clear when this custom began: some say under Pope John XIII. (A.D. 970), but it must have prevailed long before his time, as in the capitulars of Charlemagne (A.D. 789) the baptism of bells is distinctly forbidden—"ut clocae non baptizentur." Le Sueur, an old French writer, who confirms our statement that Sabinian was the inventor of church bells, and who adds that he ordered them to be rung at the canonical hours and for the mass, declares that the imposition of the name, the godfathers and godmothers, the aspersion with holy water, the unction, and the solemn consecration in the names of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, exceed in ceremonial splendour what is common at baptism, in order to make the blessing of bells the more highly regarded by the people. "Real baptism," he remarks, "may be administered by all kinds of persons, and the rite is simple; but in what is done to the bells there is much pomp. The service is long, the ceremonies are numerous," (the monks first blessed the fused metal in their foundries in the monasteries,) "the sponsors are persons of quality, and the most considerable priest in the place, or even a bishop or arch-

bishop officiates." Pope John XIII. himself baptized at Rome for the Lateran Church the largest bell which at that time had ever been cast; and he named it "John," with the customary forms. Southey in his "Doctor" says, that this ceremony has been revived in France, and that the Bishop of Chalons recently baptized a whole peal, calling it a "happy and holy family," and delivering on the occasion an edifying discourse upon the duties, virtues, &c., of each particular bell.

After all this, the reader will be disposed to award due honour to the subject of our history; and will patiently endure, we trust, the offer of a conjecture or two on the origin of this singular superstition.

Bells are blessed and christened, we are told, to render them effectual in driving away evil spirits. Now this idea is very ancient, and possibly of heathen extraction; but the rational interpretation of it is undoubtedly to be found in the virtue and avail of prayers to the Deity, which the sound of the bell is intended to draw forth. The 67th canon of our own Church countenances this supposition, for it says, "whenever any is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the minister shall not then slack to do his last duty:" and "a com-

mendatory prayer for a sick person at the point of departure" is provided in "The Visitation of the Sick," which we suppose it would be the minister's duty in that crisis to offer. Custom, or rather necessity, has caused our passing-bell to be tolled only after death has taken place. Up to the time of Charles II., however, the tolling of the passing bell formed one of the inquiries in all Articles of Visitation ; and in the "Fasts and Festivals," by Nelson, who died in 1714, it is said of the pious Christian's death, that, if his senses hold out so long, he can hear even his passing-bell without disturbance.

With regard to the efficacy of bells in dispelling storms, we presume that they may possibly afford a natural but no spiritual aid, although the latter has certainly been attributed to them. The vibration produced in the air by the ringing of large bells, may very possibly affect any clouds hovering above them, which happen to be charged with electric matter. In the *Teatro Critico*, the following event is related to have occurred in France, in the year 1718 :—"On Good Friday, there arose a most violent tempest on a part of the coast of Brittany. Twenty-four churches were struck by lightning. And what is very remarkable is, that the lightning

fell only on the churches in which the bells were ringing, without touching many others in the neighbourhood in which the custom of not ringing on Good Friday was observed." The writer imagines that the storm-cloud was opened by the various sounds which ascended vertically; and through the apertures thus made, the destructive element descended in an equally straight direction. But his faith in the *physical* virtue of bells was only confirmed by this untoward accident; for he concludes, that if rung before the clouds had united and condensed, the bells would have had the good effect of dissipating them, and thereby preventing any discharge of electricity. Churchwardens, in their share of the custody of parish bells, ought perhaps to look to this; and to be ready, when a storm threatens, with a good lusty peal!

Before introducing any description of the homelier rite now generally administered in England, in place of the religious ceremony of baptizing bells, we would mention the following anecdote, on the credit of Cardinal Baronius:—
“When Clotaire II., King of France, A.D. 615, was at Sens, in Burgundy, he heard there a bell in the church of St. Stephen, the sound of which pleased him so much that he ordered it to be

transported to Paris. The Bishop of Sens, however, was greatly displeased at this ; and the bell so sympathized with him, that it turned dumb on the road, and lost all its sound. When the King heard of this, he commanded that the bell should be carried back to its old quarters ; when, strange to relate ! as it approached the town, it recovered its original tone, and began to ring so as to be heard at Sens, whilst yet about four leagues distant from it." This is said to have happened about eleven years after Pope Sabinian invented bells ; which renders it doubtful whether the subject of this miracle had ever been baptized, and therefore leaves us a hope that so wonderful an event is not the less likely to occur under the profaner usage of modern times !

It is not every one who has witnessed what has superseded in England the baptismal ceremony already described, and from which our ruder service is obviously derived. We believe that church bells are seldom hung without some sort of celebration, which is generally more jovial than religious in its character : and what our own eyes have seen we will briefly describe.

The reader is, of course, aware that, by the law of the land, the parishioners are bound to

supply “bells with ropes;” the fulfilment of which duty, notwithstanding the great expense attending it, is generally popular, for the people like to have a good peal in their old parish church. Here and there, however, a churl may be found to echo the sentiment contained in the following stanza:—

Persécuteurs du genre humain,
Qui sonnez sans miséricorde,
Que n’avez-vous au cou la corde
Que vous tenez en votre main;

which may be translated:—

Disturbers of the human race,
Your bells are always ringing—
I wish the ropes were round your necks
And you upon them swinging!—

Mr. Mears, then, receives an order to replace the old set, which has dwindled into three or four cracked tinklers, by a full peal of eight prime bells. The fine venerable tower is explored by the chiefs of the parish,—not such a tower as in modern days has been often reared, and which would stagger under the vibration of a tenor bell, weighing 30 cwt.,—but a solid piece of masonry, already at least three hundred years old, and able to withstand the besieging tempests of five more centuries. The rooks and

the martins are disturbed in their ancient haunt—a sober owl is with difficulty dislodged—accumulated rubbish, sufficient to *guano* some acres,



is cleared away, and the explorers remark what a grand bell-chamber they have got, what a glorious view there is through the loop holes—and as the wind whistles through them, and takes the breath away from the bold gazer over the champaign outside, a feeling of pride and affection for the old church is kindled. The joiner, under directions, has, in due time, completed his work, the bells are “advised” as arrived at the railway station, a few miles off—a staunch churchwarden volunteers to con-

duet them to their destined home, and a triumphal reception is determined on. Two waggons decorated with boughs of evergreens, and drawn by teams of grey horses bedizened with ribbons, set out for the merry peal, and return in the fine afternoon with their welcome load. The shouts of the multitude greet their arrival, and at the ancient public-house on the village green the procession comes to a stand. Then commences the profane christening. In one of the bells, which has been inverted for the purpose, mine host mixes a motly compound of beer, rum, &c., which is liberally dispensed to the good-humoured bystanders. The bell-founder's representative is busy on the occasion, and in the treble has a more delicate mixture, from which he offers a libation to the more distinguished persons in the company. Thus the festival proceeds, and if timely arrested, no evil can arise from it—indeed, the bells ascend in due course to their lofty settlement, with more hearty good wishes from the people than if it had not taken place; and we see nothing in all this to make us sigh after the faith of our forefathers, “who,” says, Aubrey, “did not entirely trust to the ringing of bells for the dispersion of tempests, for in 1313, a cross, full of reliques of divers saints, was set on St.

Paul's steeple, to preserve from all tempests." Peace to their childish credulity!

Bell metal is compounded of copper and tin, in the proportions of three of copper to one of tin. Some persons talk as familiarly of sweetening the tone of bell metal, by the introduction of a little silver, as they would speak of sweetening a cup of tea, or a glass of negus, with a lump of sugar; but this is a dream. It is, however, a very popular error, and has led to many speculations on the great value of our old church bells, which have been supposed to contain large quantities of the more precious ores. The mistake has, no doubt, arisen from the ancient custom of casting a few coins into the furnace, which have become melted in the glowing mass; but no bell founder can be deluded on this point, for silver, if introduced in any large quantity, would injure the sound, being in its nature more like lead, as compared with copper; and therefore incapable of producing the hard, brittle, dense, and vibratory amalgum, called bell metal. There are, nevertheless, various little ingredients, which the skilful founder employs to improve his composition; but these are the secrets of the craft, and peculiar to every foundry.

In founding a bell the fundamental principle

is the construction of its shape or form : as on the due proportions of its several parts, the harmony of the different vibrations altogether depends : and, as a bell may be considered to consist of a succession of rings of metal, producing different sounds, these must form a perfect chord in tone, or the good effect would be lost. Various theories have obtained in different countries as to what are the best proportions. We offer the following scale as being very near the point of perfection. Taking the thickness of the “sound bow or brim,” that is, of the part where the clapper strikes, a bell ought to measure as follows :—In diameter at the mouth, 15 brims ; in height to the shoulder, 12 brims ; and in width at the shoulder, $7\frac{1}{2}$ brims, or half the width of the mouth. Still, beyond this general rule, there are minor proportions which conduce to make up the niceties and mysteries of the art ; but we will take this rule as sufficient for our purpose, and the first step is to design the bell on paper, according to the scale of measurement required.

When this is done, what is technically called “the crook” is made, which is a double compass of wood, the legs of which are respectively curved to the shape of the inner and outer sides of the

intended bell—a space, of the form and thickness of this bell, being left betwixt them. The compass is made to move on a pivot in a stake, which is driven to the bottom of the casting pit, and is impelled by the hand of the moulder, defining of course in its rotation the form of the bell which is about to be cast. The “core,” or inner mould, is then built up of brickwork round the stake, a hollow being left in the centre of it for a fire, and a small space also betwixt the solid masonry and the circuit of the compass, in which soft clay is plastered ; and on this the lower leg of the revolving compass defines the interior shape of the bell. This inner mould is then baked by the fire, which is lit in the centre of the brickwork, and when sufficiently hardened it is greased or sprinkled with tan-dust, and coated over with more clay ; and on this fresh substance the outer compass performs a circuit, giving it the exact shape of the cup of the intended bell. When this mould is sufficiently dry, the “crown” or head of the bell is fitted to the top of it, making the model complete. The whole is then baked by the fire in the “core,” and, when quite cooled, inscriptions, or any intended ornaments are moulded and placed upon it, and upon this the “cope” or outer mould is formed. Having

been made of a material which is easily consumed, the clay *fac simile* is then destroyed, leaving the "core" and "cope" with clear impressions of the bell. When both the "core" and "cope" have been examined and finished off, the one is fitted over the other, like an extinguisher on a candle, with an exact vacuum reserved betwixt them for the metal to run in. The pit is then rammed up with earth, so as to bind the entire mould perfectly tight in its place; when a channel having been cut in the ground from the furnace to the orifice of the mould, the fused metals, which

" Like a hell broth boil and bubble,"

are let loose, or "tapped," as it is called, and they glide swiftly into every chink of the aperture.

When cool, which occupies a long time in a large casting, the bell is dug out, and is quickly hauled out of the pit into the finishing department, where it undergoes the process of turning by a machine, should the requisite note be imperfect. If too sharp in tone, it is turned thinner: if too flat, its diameter is lessened in proportion to its substance, by the edge of the bell being cut. If the quantity of metal be not

in due proportion to the calibre of the bell, the power and quality of its tone will be lost ; and only a *panny*, harsh, ironlike sound can be produced from it. For instance, if you try to get the note E out of a quantity of metal which is only adapted to sustain F well, the F in that case would be far preferable to the E intended. In casting a set of bells the object of the founder is to get the same temperament of tone in each. When all, as is sometimes the case, turn out to be in harmony, they are called “ a maiden peal.” This, however, is a most rare occurrence ; many sets of bells have the credit of being “ maiden,” without deserving it, and a great many, for the honour of being considered such, are left decidedly out of tune. In the far-famed foundry of Messrs. Mears, of London, and of Gloucester, several hundreds of bells are annually made, and it is their practice to cast many at one time, so that they have not uncommonly as much as thirty tons’ weight of metal molten in one furnace.* The whole operation of founding and

* When the great bell for Montreal Cathedral was cast, on the 20th February, 1847, about 25 tons of metal had been faced for the purpose. The metal was twelve minutes, after “ tapping,” in filling the mould ; and several days were allowed for the cooling. The weight of this bell is about 13½ tons.

equipping bells, from an ounce up to many tons in weight, may be seen at their establishments, which are of titanic dimensions, and have been conducted for more than a century by the same family. That at Gloucester, was formerly in the possession of the celebrated Rudall—and the present proprietors, we have pleasure in recording, are as obliging in disposition, as they are eminent for their skill. The value of bell metal, when formed into a new bell, is, we believe, about six guineas per cwt.; for old metal, received in exchange, about four guineas are allowed by the founder, *silver* included !

CHAPTER III.

ASSOCIATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE SOUND OF BELLS—STATISTICS OF CELEBRATED BELLS.

—How many a tale their music tells
Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
When first we heard their soothing chime.

MOORE.

THE bells of a church are under the joint guardianship of incumbent and churchwardens. The latter are not to suffer them to be rung “without good cause to be allowed by the minister and themselves;” and the consent of the former is necessary, he having the power to limit the times of ringing, and the ringers being subject to his orders. It would, nevertheless, seem that on particular occasions at some churches, the incum-

bent has not always the power to prevent their being rung. For instance, it was often matter of stipulation in covenants, &c., that bells of churches should be rung in honour of the arrival at the place of bishops, abbots, &c., and neglect to ring them, when these visitations occurred, was an offence for which the incumbent was liable to a penalty. But his general authority over the peal appears to be implied in the custom at induction to the benefice; for "the inductor having opened the door, puts the person inducted into the church, who usually tolls a bell, to make his induction public and known to the parishioners" (Burns): and there is an old saying, that the number of strokes given on the occasion will correspond with the years the incumbent is to hold the living. Our clerical friends ought to remember this on being presented to a valuable piece of preferment!

Returning to the early uses to which church bells were applied, we must not omit to remark that they were very soon employed to measure out the hours of the day. Clock bells, we are told, were in general use in the monasteries of Europe in the eleventh century. But even in the writings of Lucian, who died A.D. 180, reference is made to an instrument, mechanically

constructed with water, which reported the hours by means of a bell. The ingenious may easily conceive how this might have been arranged: for, it being granted that the divisions of time were understood, there is no difficulty in imagining such an adaptation of sound to mark them. "Before the times of Jerome," (born A.D. 332,) says Brown, "there were horologies that measured the hours, not only by drops of water in glasses, called *clepsydra*, but also by sand in glasses called *clepsammia*." It was the *clepsydra* to which Lucian alludes. When the water, which was constantly dripping out of the vessel, reached a certain level, it drew away, by means of a rope connected with the piston in the water vessel, the ledge on which a weight rested; and the falling of this weight, which was attached to a bell, caused it to strike. This perhaps was the earliest kind of striking clock.

In order to enjoy the grateful sensations produced by the strokes of the clock bell at the present time, we would recommend a stroll in the quiet environs of a town, not too far distant, of course, for the various church clocks to be heard, as they announce with their chimes the different hours and quarters of the day. To be fully sensible of this charming influence, a person ought certainly to retire from the turmoil of

the streets ; and, if he seeks the gentle river's bank for his ruminating walk, the enjoyment will be heightened.

We know no place like Oxford for an indulgence of this kind ; especially if a portion of our earlier years were spent within its classic bowers. It matters not what road the steps may have subsequently taken. Ten or fifteen years after the dawn of manhood, must necessarily create strange alterations in the character and feelings of any man ; so strange, indeed, that whilst we remain at a distance from the scene of these early associations, neither the studies nor pastimes of the days gone by can be realized ; nor will a return to the spot itself do more at first than develope the wondrous change that has taken place within us. Indeed a sight of the old buildings, of the old shops, of the old faces grown so much older, only seems to widen the separation of what we were and are—"the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty" will not re-blossom at their presence. But in a stroll in Christ Church meadows, or from a skiff on the Isis, (which looks so much narrower than it did of yore !) what a resurrection takes place, when the soon-heard and oft-repeated and familiar chimes from the many church towers peal forth ! We drink again of the fountain

of our youth, and former feelings and associations are then palpably recovered.

We listen on, and by and by the chapel bell of our own college sounds, and there springs up an old sensation that the morning toilet must be hurried, or the evening party must be left. A dream comes around our spirit, and gown and cap are again worn by us—the badges of allegiance to academical authority. Anon, the silvery changes of the Magdalene peal are audible—they seem familiar as if not a day had intervened since we last heard them. We involuntarily recall the bright May morning, and the picturesque custom at that college of hailing the return of the season by a Latin hymn from the choristers, who ascend to the top of the magnificent tower at early dawn; and the opening stanza of Wilson's sweet poem on the scholar's funeral floats, like the ripple of the gentle river, across our mind:—

“Why hang the sweet bells mute in Magdalene tower,
Still wont to usher in delightful May,
The dewy silence of the morning hour
Cheering with many a changeful roundelay?
And those pure youthful voices, where are they,
That hymning far up in the listening sky
Seem'd issuing softly through the gates of day,
As if a troop of sainted souls on high
Were hovering o'er the earth with angel melody?”

Hark again, there is a funeral bell from one of the many churches—

“Death’s toll, whose restless iron tongue
Calls daily for his millions at a meal.”

And whilst we linger on the bank of our favourite stream, the clock of Carfax strikes eight, and immediately commences its nightly tolling, which forcibly reminds us of the lines of Milton; and only the more so, because Milton’s grandfather might have uttered them, as descriptive of his own nightly hearing of that very bell from the high ground of Shotover, when he was keeper of the forest there, and the river, often much swollen in winter, intervened :—

“On a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar.”

The curfew bell at Carfax was instituted, says Peshall, by Alfred, the restorer of the university on the original foundation of St. Frideswide. According to this authority, therefore, the Norman Conqueror could only have enforced generally in England what there is historic proof had previously existed on the Continent. But the curfew has ceased; and another bell of the same peal tells the inhabitants of the city what

is the day of the month which is gliding by, and recalls to our memory the same custom in our own village, when not interrupted there by the laziness of the sexton. We think it is now time to return from our meditative ramble; but, before we are housed in the ancient "Mitre," it is nine o'clock; and Great Tom, in his belfry over Christ Church gateway, gives 101 strokes, to record the munificence of our forefathers, who founded that number of scholarships in the college, for the benefit and example of their posterity.

We had not troubled the reader with this personal rhapsody, but in the hope of illustrating to him a singularly soothing pleasure, which any one of the least sensibility may enjoy, who listens afresh to the bells which in his youth he has been accustomed to hear. Indeed, so great is the power of bells to create emotion, that we doubt whether even the voice of a mother would so immediately subdue to tenderness the worst criminal in Norfolk Island, as the sudden sound of the peal of his native village! Not remonstrative in its tone, to stir the pride—not complaining, to wound anew the harassed spirit—but by its very unaltered sweetness and irrepressible revocations, utterly overpowering to his

guilt-laden heart. Cowper, in enumerating the causes of regret which embittered the solitude of Alexander Selkirk on his desert island, makes him pathetically and naturally complain that

“ The sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard ;”—

and the sternest bosoms have yielded to the mastering witchery of the same music, for Bourienné tells the following anecdote :—“ The sound of bells produced upon Napoleon a singular effect. When we were at Malmaison, and while walking in the avenue leading to Ruel, how often has the booming of the village bell broken off the most interesting conversations ! He stopped, lest the moving of our feet might cause the loss of a tone in the sound which charmed him. The influence, indeed, was so powerful, that his voice trembled with emotion while he said—‘ That recalls to me the first years I passed at Brienne.’ ” Who can imagine the contrast of feelings then excited in such a nature ; and what other sound could have produced it ? Yes, there must be some magic in bell metal, thus to transform in a moment the would-be tyrant of the world, into the once more dreaming, and how much happier, Cadet.

But one other brief reminiscence. Hark ! the

clock in that old tower, which shoots high over the shops and thickly surrounding buildings in the modern Babylon, is striking the mid-day hour. A small crowd is round the church porch, and three or four carriages are waiting in the street. The church door is opened—the iron gates of the churchyard are flung wide apart with a clanging sound, and along the causeway, where inscriptions memorialize the unheeded dead, pass the two happiest of human beings with their gaily dressed friends behind. That fair girl, whose cheek is now paler than the white veil which half conceals her features, is a bride ; and tremblingly she leans on her new partner. The foremost carriage in the train receives them ; and as the fat coachman, with favour on his breast, gives the rein to his horses, and “ John ” swings himself on the foot-board like a monkey to the branch of a tree, a jolly peal breaks forth from every loophole in the belfry, stunning to every ear, but those of that young pair, whose sum of existence is contained within the half-drawn silk curtains of their speeding barouche. The breakfast—the change of dress, and the *adieux* follow—rattling posters, dusty roads, uncomfortable inns, and honeymoon succeed—and then commence for them all the possible realities of mortal life.

Strangest of human dreams, from which there is no awaking but to happiness or misery indescribable. Well is it when all continues to go

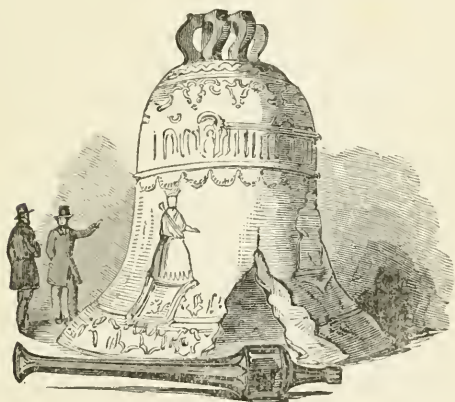
“Merry as a marriage bell”—

Alas ! we have known sequels to such a beginning, with which the knell had been more in unison !

We must revert once more to bygone times in the historical part of our inquiry. It is somewhat remarkable that the Greek Church has not adopted the use of bells, excepting in that branch of it which is established in Russia, where there are larger bells than in any other country of the world. The former fact seems unaccountable, unless it be that the Turks, who, as we have already noticed, entirely eschew these instruments, will not allow the Greeks to introduce them into their churches. At any rate, the Greeks convoke their religious assemblies by striking pieces of wood or iron together.

In Russia, the bells far exceed in size and weight, anything of the kind which has ever been cast in this country. At Moscow, in particular, there are bells of enormous dimensions. For instance, we read of a bell in the tower of St. Ivan's Church weighing 127,836 English pounds ;

of another given by the Czar Boris Godunof to the Cathedral, weighing 288,000 ; and of another said to have been given by the Empress Anne, and which is undoubtedly the largest in the world, whose weight is recorded as 443,772lbs. The height of this bell is 21 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; its circumference two feet above the extremity of the



lip, is 67 feet 4 inches ; its diameter is 22 feet 5 inches and one-third ; and its greatest thickness is 23 inches. The supposed value of the metal of which it is composed is £66,565 16s.—all uncirculating and dead money, for the bell has never struck a note. Think of this, ye money-mongers on “the Rialto.”

The monster lay for nearly two centuries an embryo in the pit, and partially buried in the sand in which it was moulded—an object of wonder to the traveller, and of deepest reverence to the natives, who visited it with pride at their festivals, and were extremely jealous of its being touched or measured by strangers. Many of the people fancied that it had fallen from a tower where it had hung, and they were strengthened in this opinion by a fracture which appears in one of its sides : but it has been decided by the judicious, that the bell was never in any previous situation. It was cast in an enormous cavern underneath the Kremlin, and the fracture was caused by water being thrown on it, when it was heated by a fire which had taken place in the building above. Though said to have been a gift of the Empress Anne, there seems to be no better foundation for this tradition than that the figure of a female is given in relief outside, which is quite as likely to be a representation of the Virgin ; and Augustine maintains, on probable grounds, that it was founded in 1653. The people on the spot affirm that the metal contains a large quantity of both gold and silver, which was contributed by the nobles and others, who threw in their

plate and coins when the bell was cast. Dr. Clarke, to whose Travels we are indebted for these details, admits that the piece which is broken off seemed of light-coloured and superior metal; but the watchful jealousy of the inhabitants prevented his testing it. The present Emperor of Russia, at great cost and with much difficulty, has had this bell lifted from its subterranean position. It is said that the tackle which was first employed to raise it gave way, and that the engineers paid the penalty of their awkwardness by a visit to the mines of Siberia. The Board of Admiralty at St. Petersburg subsequently undertook the exhumation of the bell, and it is now safely deposited on the *Place*.

It may be mentioned that the Moscow bells generally have a fine tone: that which is suspended in the lofty tower of St. Ivan's Church produces, when rung, a tremulous effect over the whole city, similar to what is experienced by any one who stands near a powerful organ when it is played.

The Chinese, again, have always been famous for having very large bells, which they are accustomed to hang in towers built for the purpose in all their cities. There are seven at Peking of enormous dimensions: one of these is described

by Magaillans as weighing 120,000 pounds—the height he gives as $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet, the diameter $13\frac{1}{2}$ feet, and the circumference 42 feet. They are used for denoting the five watches of the night. Although so very much larger than the bells in this country, and producing a prodigious sound, they are far inferior to our own in tone, and are struck outside by wooden mallets. They retain the old basin-like shape, too, being nearly as wide at top as at bottom.

We will give the reported weights of some of the most celebrated large bells, in order that the reader may judge of their real magnitude, by a comparison with those of this country.

	tons.	cwts.	qrs.	lbs.
The Great Bell of Moscow weighs	198	2	1	0
The Bell in the tower of St. Ivan's Church, at Moscow, weighs	57	1	1	16
Another bell in the same church, we believe, weighs	17	16	0	0
Another east in 1819 weighs	80	0	0	0
The Great Bell at Pekin weighs	53	11	1	20
One at Nankin	22	6	1	20
One at Olmütz	17	18	0	0
One at Vienna, dated 1711	17	14	0	0
One at Paris, placed in the Cathedral 1680, 25 feet in circumfereence	17	0	0	0
One at Erfurt, in Germany, and considered to be of the finest bell metal extant ..	13	15	0	0
"Great Peter," which cost £2000, was placed in York Minster in 1845, and weighs..	10	15	0	0

	tons.	cwts.	qrs.	lbs.
Great Bell of St. Paul's	5	2	1	22
Do. Do. before re-cast.....	3	13	3	1
"Great Tom," at Oxford	7	11	3	4
"Great Tom," at Lincoln.....	5	8	0	0
"Dunstan," at Canterbury	3	10	0	0

"Great Peter," "Great Tom" of Lincoln, and "Dunstan" were all cast by Messrs. Thomas Mears and Sons, of Whitechapel, London. The same eminent bell-founders have sent a bell to Montreal which weighs 7 tons 6 cwts., and they have since cast another bell for the Roman Catholic cathedral at Montreal, which weighs betwixt 13 and 14 tons.

The Great Bell of St. Paul's was originally cast in the reign of Edward I., and was hung at Westminster Hall gate to notify the hour to the Judges. It was first called "Edward of Westminster," and afterwards "Westminster Tom." William III. gave it to the cathedral of St. Paul, whither it was brought on new year's day 1699. Since then it has been twice re-cast with additional metal. It now measures 10 feet in diameter, and 10 inches in thickness of metal. The tone is very fine in the musical note A, concert pitch. The hour is struck on the bell by a large hammer, which is drawn up by a wire in the clock works, and falls on the

outside brim of the bell by its own weight. The clapper, which weighs 180 lbs. is only used to toll on the death of one of the royal family, or of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London, the Dean of St. Paul's, or the Lord Mayor.

"Great Tom," of Oxford, whose diameter is 7 feet 1 inch, height 6 feet 9 inches, and thickness $6\frac{1}{3}$ inches, was originally suspended in the magnificent abbey of Oseney, in the suburbs of Oxford. What became the see of Oxford was at first that of Oseney, and Robert King, the last abbot of Oseney, was its first and only bishop, A.D. 1545. This person gave "Great Tom" to Christ Church College, and in the year 1680 the bell was re-cast at the expense of John Fell, Bishop of Oxford. "Great Tom" of Lincoln was re-cast in 1835, with an additional ton of metal.

That previous to the Reformation there were much larger bells in England than any which we now possess is most probable. Such abbeys as Glastonbury, Fountains, &c., must have announced the hours of prayer by tollings to be heard far away over their scattered and thinly populated districts ; and, no doubt, like that of everything else in these monasteries, the quality

of their bells was very fine. They were, generally, gifts, or commemorations of pious rich persons ; and no expense was spared to make them excellent. Of course, they were all duly baptized, and some were appropriately inscribed, like one mentioned by Pennant, in a church in Flintshire, which was encircled with the following couplet :—

“ Sancta Wenefreda, Deo hoc commendare memento,
Ut, pietate suâ, nos servet ab hoste cruento.”

And below these lines was another :—

“ Protege prece piâ quos convoco, Virgo Maria.”

The worthy monks, who composed these inscriptions, knew as little of prosody, we fear, as of theology.

In the scramble which took place at the suppression of monasteries, the bells formed no mean item amongst conventual spoils. They were “gambled for,” says Blunt, “or sold into Russia, or other countries, though often before they reached their destination, buried in the ocean.” But it must not be supposed that any present comparative smallness of our bells is a symptom of barbarous retrogression, or a proof of our national indifference to the value of good church bells. On the contrary, we maintain, that our own church bells, both in size and

general quality, are superior to those of other times and countries, for all the best purposes to which ringing can be applied. We think that there is neither music nor sentiment in the one thundering note, which a bell of leviathan proportions may give out, when struck by the clapper or hammer. Such is but a rude effort of uncivilized power—a piece of contemptible magnificence, and utterly unworthy of comparison with the change-ringing on peals, practised in this country—a manly art so peculiarly national, that it has obtained for England the name of the “ringing island.”

That bells of such enormous size as those contained in the list above are far too unwieldly to be rung by a single man and rope, must be obvious ; and, though it is desirable for cathedrals and large churches to have a gigantic bell for striking the hours of the day, and for tolling on special occasions, it proves for general purposes only a heavy nuisance, which is shown by the fact that the great bell at York has never yet been what is technically called “raised,” though we understand that the strength of thirty men has been applied to it.

CHAPTER IV.

CHIMES, CARILLONS, AND PEAL-RINGING.

“Hark! now I hear them,—ding-dong bell.”

SHAKSPERE.

BEFORE describing our national method of ringing peals of bells, it will be well to show more distinctly the various ways adopted in other countries. Large bells, which are suspended like our own, but made stationary in their frames, are generally rung by hitting them outside, or by means of a rope attached to the end of the clapper, which a person pulls to him and releases, so as to insure a sharp stroke on the bell; whilst his arms and body move backwards and forwards, as if he were in the act of rowing. Sometimes, when several bells are hung together, the ringer stations himself within reach of them, and with

violence and great rapidity strikes them externally with a hammer. This is common in the towns of Russia, and may be seen by any one from the streets, as the bells are often placed in arches in the walls of the buildings; and a frightful discord is produced.

Chimes on the Continent are played by means of a barrel, like that in a hand organ, on which pegs are so arranged as to lift the levers in such harmonious succession that a tune is produced. Clockwork is also used, both here and abroad, for the same purpose.

The *carillons*, which are so prevalent throughout the Netherlands, are played like a piano-forte, by keys connected with the bells by bands or rods. A great number of bells are required for this strange music, having a complete series or scale of tones and semitones; and the *carillonneur* employs both hands and feet in executing the sprightly airs which charm the inhabitants of the cities of the low countries. The pedals communicate with the larger bells for the bass: and the keys on which the treble notes depend, are struck by the hand edgeways; the little finger of the player being defended by a thick leathern stall. It requires considerable strength, as well as celerity and skill in the player; for unless a

violent blow be given to the key, only a weak sound would be produced ; and Dr. Burney says, that from the want of something to stop the vibration of each bell, the notes of one passage perpetually run into another, and become so inarticulate and confused, as to occasion a very disagreeable jargon,

“ Like sweet bells jangled.”

Nothing, in short, which can be done with bells is to be compared with our old English mode of ringing peals and musical changes.

The date of the origin of this custom, it must be confessed, is involved in much obscurity. We know of no regular peal being hung in England before the year 1456, when Pope Calixt III. sent a peal of five to King's College, Cambridge, where they hung for about three hundred years, and were considered, for some time, the largest peal in the kingdom : the tenor weighed 57 cwt. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, eight bells were hung in a few of the principal churches ; and, as an interest in the subject of ringing gradually increased, there appeared in the year 1668 a work called “ Campanalogia, or the Art of Ringing,” which was highly esteemed by Dr. Burney, as containing every possible change in

the arrangement of diatonic sounds from two to twelve.

Ringling bells, by the pulling of a rope, is, no doubt, a fashion of very great antiquity. It was thus that the single bells in our old churches were swung to and fro in their gable turrets : this part of the process, therefore, was not novel, when peal and change-ringing were successively introduced. But what is worthy of scientific admiration in our church bells is their adaptation to give out, with mechanical precision, a succession of musical notes : and what constitutes the art of ringing is, first, the power to ring the peal distinctly and firmly round, and secondly, to alter the course of the sounds, by all the endless varieties of change-ringing.

In a work called “*Campanalogia*,” and written by William Shipway, Warner of the Society of Cumberland Youths, there is the following account from Parnell, of the probable invention of these changes :—

“The earliest artist and promoter of change-ringing we have any account of, was Mr. Fabian Stedman, born in the town of Cambridge, 1631. He introduced various peals on five and six bells, printing them on slips of paper (being by profession a printer). These, being distributed about the country, were soon brought to London ; but what progress the art had made in the metropolis at this time does not appear.

The Society of College Youths,* in the summer of 1657, on a visit to Cambridge, were presented by Mr. Stedman with his peculiar production on five bells, since called Stedman's Principle, which was rung for the first time, at St. Benet's, Cambridge; and afterwards at a church on College Hill, London, where the society at that time usually practised, and from meeting at which place they obtained their name. It appears from this account that change-ringing must have been much earlier than 1657; as, before those curious and cross change peals were discovered, single changes were universally practised—*i. e.*, only changing two bells at one time; whereas the improved plan of double and triple changes, &c.—*i. e.*, every bell to change at one time,—appears to have taken place long before 1657, by Mr. Stedman having produced such a complex method of ringing as his Principle. In 1668, he published a book, entitled 'Campanalogia, or the Art of Ringing,' which before 1680 had gone through three editions."

When we regard the discovery of this gentleman, "great," may we say with Dr. Southey, "are the mysteries of bell-ringing!" The very terms of the art are enough to frighten an amateur from any attempt at explanation—*Hunting, dodging, snapping, and place-making: plain bobs, bob-triples, bob-majors, bob-majors reversed, double bob-majors*, and even up to *grand-sire-bob-cators*. Heigho! who can hope to translate all this gibberish to the uninitiated?

Nothing, therefore, is to be done, but to convey

* This appears to be the most ancient society of ringers. They are said to have been established in the sixteenth century; and a book, containing memorials of that society in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, after escaping the ravages of the fire of London, has been unaccountably lost.

the reader up the dark, narrow, winding and worn stairs of the church-tower, into the bell-chamber itself, where eight stout young men, stripped of coats and waistcoats, are standing in a circle, rope in hand, ready for a merry peal. What a neat and nervous effort is that, by which each straight stripling in his place handles his rope, like a well accustomed plaything, and shows by a stroke or two that he is master of his bell ! The ropes hang through holes in the bell-chamber ceiling ; and when touched by the ringer's practised hand, the brazen monsters groan in their airy loft above, as they begin to swing on their gudgeons. It is like the first growl of the lion, when the keeper stirs him in his den—but there is no use in their resisting. One moment more, and the ringer has dropped his bell one-half pull, and set her the next—all eight are now fairly raised—hand, ear, eye, and heart of every ringer are intensely strained and engaged in the work : yet, cool withal, no flurry or disorder appearing—and through the whole tower there begins to ring a glorious din, which, with the creaking of the wooden bell frames, and a shaking of the very building itself, much reminds one of the noise and recoil of a battle-ship, when she opens her broadside fire.

Now is the moment for the spectator to hurry up the broad ladder into the belfry, to watch the wild summersets, performed at intervals, by every bell in the peal. For a moment the bell rests against the slur-bar, turned completely upwards; and the next it swings down, and is immediately turned up again on the other side,—the clapper striking as it ascends. Poor fellows! see how they whirl upon their axles. The gazer almost sickens as he watches their extraordinary revolutions and tossings: but the ringer's heart is merciless—and when you look at the wretched bell, as at “a thing of life,” and almost expect it to drop motionless and dead on the stocks, a “cannon” is suddenly struck on all eight at once, as if to rouse them afresh for the course of seemingly interminable changes which immediately follow. Henceforth the bells appear to roll about in frantic disorder; and, stunned by the noise, chilled by the draughts of cold wind, and shaken in nerve by the reverberation, the spectator descends with careful steps from his tyro-visit to the belfry.

Eight bells, which form the octave or diatonic scale, make the most perfect peal. Ten and twelve bells are very often hung, and of course increase to an almost incalculable extent the

variety of *changes*. This term is used because every time the peal is rung round a change can be made in the stroke of some one bell, thereby causing a change in the succession of notes. The following numbers are placed to show how three bells can ring six changes :—

1	2	3
1	3	2
2	1	3
2	3	1
3	1	2
3	2	1

Four bells can in the same manner be shown to ring four times as many changes as three, viz., 24. Five bells five times as many as four, viz., 120. Six bells six times as many as five, viz., 720, and so on. And in this way it has been calculated that it would take 91 years to ring the changes upon twelve bells, at the rate of two strokes to a second; and the full changes upon twenty-four bells would occupy more than 117,000 billions of years.

Reader, has it ever been thy lot to be within close ear-shot of a ringing match, at which eight or ten sets of ringers contended for a silver cup, or a purse of gold? We were awoke at day-

break one fine summer's morning, by a steady course of plain bobs, which induced for a time a delicious reverie, in the midst of which we soon relapsed into sleep—a sleep broken, nevertheless, by sounds and not unpleasing phantoms, as if the wand of Prospero had been waved over us. We rose early, determined to combine an enjoyment of what we ascertained was a ringing match with our usual study avocations; but we found that we were not steady as usual at our work, and as time went on we became less so. Two, three, four hours elapsed, and it was noon; and still those changes, without change, rang on. Another hour passed, and we became nervous and irritable; and we resolved to ride far away into the woods, and to be at peace. With some difficulty the impression of the sounds was removed, and we returned in the early evening in the hope that the match would have been over; but before the church was in sight, the peal was again audible; and when we were re-housed, even at long intervals there was only a short respite. Night came; but locks, bars, and shutters did not exclude the sound—bed curtains could not shut it out. No hope arose from inquiry, for the Darfield and the Silkstone sets had still to ring. The din became awful,

the monotony insufferable—every round in the peal was like a fresh revolution of Ixion's wheel, or the return of the stone of Sisyphus. Our slumber, induced by exhaustion, was feverish, restless, and often still conscious of the ringing ; and when we awoke in the small hours, and the bells had ceased, we could scarcely for a time realize the stillness. A little while and we had again relapsed into unconsciousness, but will it be credited that daylight had scarcely broken in the east, before the ringers were again at their task ? From this point all dates and patience were lost, and it was only by a palatable mixture of entreaty and authority that we obtained a release from our nervous suffering before the following noon. This was indeed having “ too much of a good thing,” a very surfeit of dainties that would have sickened Victor Hugo's Quasimodo himself ; and we have resolved to go from home at the ringers' next jubilee.

Yet far are we from disliking the sound of bells in moderation, and at proper times : nay, we love them, particularly on all old festival occasions, although they may break our sleep ; and we quite agree with our friend Charles Lamb that “ of all sound of all bells—(bells the music nighest bordering on heaven)—most solemn and touching

is the peal which rings out the old year." All ancient customs, again, such as the noon-bell on Shrove Tuesday, are especially dear to us. "A pancake for Shrove Tuesday," says Shakspeare, and the bell rung at mid-day, is the old signal for putting it on the fire. Indeed we could listen to a little ringing on Allhallows' Eve,* without fear of bringing back either Pope or Pretender. Give us, in short, any of these interesting mementos of antiquity, be they of local or of general practice ; but may the Fates preserve us evermore from the worrying tedium of another ringing match ! Still we do not

* The supression of the custom of ringing bells through the night of the vigil of Allhallow took place by a particular edict of Henry VIII., addressed to Crammer, Archbishop of Canterbury. "Forasmuch," says this document, "as that vigil is abused as other vigils were, our pleasure is, as you require, that the said vigils shall be abolished, as the others be, and there shall be no watching nor ringing, but as be commonly used upon other holidays at night." By an injunction of Edward VI., it was ordered in respect to the conduct of the Church service, that "all ringing and knolling of bells shall be utterly forborne during that time, except one bell in convenient time to be rung or knolled before the sermon." Bells, prior to the Reformation, were used on numberless religious occasions, and together with lights accompanied the carrying about of the Mass. Indeed they have in all times been very pet articles. No other baubles, perhaps, have proved such acceptable gifts to savages from their civilized discoverers or visitors as small bells ; which the Indian Chiefs of North America still proudly wear fastened to their head dresses on days of special festival.

quarrel with our own parish peal, on account of a single extravaganza : for we owe it some thanks for divers gratulatory ringings, one of which, especially, is not to be forgotten. “The lords of the *bell-chamber*,” it is probably known, are accustomed to take notice of the domestic affairs of the parsonage, which, deeply bosomed amongst trees, and under the solemn shadow of the old church, might seem to be a quiet uneventful dwelling, whose inhabitants were not likely to be visited by those inspiriting occurrences which set the bells a-going. Happily, however, for our age and country, the *célibat* and tonsure are not essential parts of these secluded homesteads. Pitiable indeed is the system wherein such things continue to prevail ; let us then at least resist, with all our power, the creeping cant of false brethren amongst ourselves—unmanly critics of blessings which they are not worthy to partake—who are beginning to affect a monastic horror of the nursery and the crib. The fair sex should certainly outlaw these unprotestant clerics, and the Pope ought to imprison them in one of his convents at the very first opportunity. But to our tale.

Our parsonage resounds with young voices and to the tread of little feet. We have to sit in

our study, like Maturin with the wafer on his forehead, and strive, by portentous frown, to keep the young intruders, stealing in for book or pencil, in endurable check. And these little ones have to come to us, in succession, as the dearest of God-sent blessings; and when one was recalled, it was difficult to define how such a loss could have been so much felt. And when the time came that we looked for a successor, with apprehension probably unknown to those who can say with Cæsar—

“Of all the wonders that I have yet heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should *fear*,”

we confess that the release from mis-giving, on its being announced to us that “a man was born into the world,” was an emancipation inexpressibly charming.

To disengage our spirits from the excitement of long suppressed anxiety, we were soon bounding along the road with lighter step than we had trodden for some weeks past; and, just as we reached the top of a hill, about a quarter of a mile from our dwelling which, with the neighbouring sanctuary, then came prominently into view, from the tower of the latter there seemed to burst spontaneously, and in full sympathy with our feelings, the most joy-laden peal that

had ever gladdened our ears. On, on we hastened by a winding and undulating path—the sound of the bells being occasionally hushed by the intervening ground ; and again it was borne up some valley, appearing to congratulate us from quite an opposite direction ; and, as the distance varied, from our pursuing a circuitous route, an effect as of different peals was thus repeatedly produced. When we turned homewards some masterly changes were being rung round ; and we can assure the reader, that Whittingham's ambitious hopes, as he sat on the milestone and fancied that he heard from the far-off belfry a summons to be Lord Mayor of London, were less enviable than the triumphant gladness of our heart on this occasion of domestic celebration. The *honorarium* to the ringers of course followed—a deodand in all such cases most freely bestowed.

It is worth mentioning that the word *belfredus*, signifying belfry, is derived by the learned from *bell* and *frede*, both Anglo-Saxon words, and respectively meaning “bell” and “peace.” This meaning is extracted from the custom in olden times of ringing the large bell of a town to summon the stout burghers from their peaceful avocations—men of few words and substantial

wealth and dignity—to confer on occasions either of commercial difficulty or hostile invasion. The *bancloche*, or district bell of the Germans, compounded of the words *bannus*, a district or borough, and *cloche*, a bell, was the same kind of signal for all the influential inhabitants of the borough to meet.

Bells were also hung at an early period in castles and fortresses, to give alarm when the enemy approached. Thus we find that when Macbeth had shut himself in the fortress of Dunsinane, and it was announced to him that Birnam Wood was moving onward to the castle—the dreadful solution of the witches' prophecy—his desperate order was—"Ring the alarum bell."

CHAPTER V.

VARIOUS USES OF CHURCH BELLS.

“Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings.”

SHAKSPERE.

WELL, reader, would it be if all we had to say of the bell's performances was, that its highest duties had been in the service of God's sanctuary; its ordinary employment to give notices of civil convocation or military alarm; and that its worst frolic had been the occasional stunning which it inflicted on a neighbourhood in the nuisance of a ringing match. But, alas! it has sometimes rung the summons to indiscriminate massacre;—its notes have helped to drown the dying shrieks of human beings, of all ages and both sexes, butchered unresistingly by the tools of

the religious bigot or the political schemer ;—it has sounded its horrid tocsin through an atmosphere reeking with the warm fumes of the life-blood of the innocent and the helpless ;—it has lent its hypocritical voice to trap the unwary to their devotions, and then to make them the prey of the murderer. Witness, ye vespers of Sicily—ye matins of St. Bartholomew ;—blood-spots on the pages of history, which time cannot obliterate ; carnage scenes in the world's drama, unparalleled for atrocity, dissimulation, and horror ; to be recalled only as humiliating proofs that human passions when roused are more sanguinary than those of the tiger ; and that man is the only animal which, without the excuse of hunger, can revel like a fiend in the death agonies of his own species.

The history of the “ Sicilian Vespers ” is briefly as follows :—The kingdom of Sicily, having been awarded for the state purposes of different Popes to various individuals in succession, passed from the hands of the family of Manfred, who was of Swabian origin, into those of Charles of Anjou, a Frenchman, who, according to the barbarity common in that age, about equalled his predecessor Manfred in tyranny and cruelty. Both he and his countrymen soon became unpopular

in his new kingdom; and conspiracies were formed against them, one of which was attended with dreadful success. John of Procida, so called from being lord of Procida, an island which lay off Sicily, having been deprived of his estate and banished by Charles on account of his attachment to interests adverse to the king's rule, at once contrived a scheme for releasing the Sicilians from French domination, which is as remarkable for the subtle adroitness with which it was carried on, as for the barbarity of its bloody fulfilment. John first applied to Peter, King of Arragon, who had married Constantia, the daughter of Manfred; and was therefore regarded by many as the rightful heir to the Sicilian crown, and to obtain it for him was the ground on which the conspirator laid his plan. At the court of Arragon he was, of course, well received; and at Constantinople and at Rome his object was as warmly seconded; for the Greek Emperor was anticipating an invasion by Charles, and Pope Nicholas III. had quarrelled with Charles over political differences. The chief men among the Sicilians were also easily enlisted. During the space of two years the plot was hatching, under the indefatigable management of John of Procida; but many events

occurred to postpone the crisis—amongst which was the death of the Pope, and the investiture of a successor favourable to the French dynasty, from whom, therefore, the conspiracy had to be concealed. But over all such difficulties the indomitable energy of John triumphed. No whisper of the coming blow escaped the lips of any one entrusted for this long period with the secret, although it was well known in Arragon, at Rome, at Constantinople, and, finally, to almost every Sicilian. The murderous purpose was cherished like a treasure in the hearts of thousands of individuals, until the day and hour appointed for its execution. On the third day of Easter, in the year 1282, at the ringing of the bells for vespers, or evening prayers, it was agreed that the massacre of the whole French nation which had settled in Sicily should take place.

Softly, then, as usual, swung the bells in their many turrets. From church and convent the peaceful invitation to prayer throughout the island of Sicily was rung. Men unarmed and unsuspecting — women accompanied by their families, and carrying their babes in their arms — composedly thronged at the agreeable hour of evening-prayer to their accustomed devotions.

But the wild beast was on their path. From cloak and scabbard flashed the knife and the sword. Neither sex nor age was spared. Home was no sanctuary—the publicity of the streets no safeguard—the altar itself no protection. Even the unborn infant tasted death before it was conscious of life. In the short space of two hours, the French of every condition and rank in the island, with the exception of Charles and his suite, who were in Tuscany, fell, to the number of 8,000, brutally butchered by John and his conspirators. Such is the history of the Sicilian Vespers.

We now turn to another page in the record of nations, which is no less imbrued with the sanguinary stains of deliberate carnage. In the year 1570, a treaty of peace was concluded between Charles IX., King of France, and his Protestant subjects, the Huguenots, who, under the royal family of Navarre, and often commanded in the field by the brave Admiral Coligni, had for several years been resisting all attempts of the government to make them conform to the Roman Catholic religion. Many battles were obstinately fought by them, with various success, in defence of their faith, when Catherine, the mother of Charles IX.—and the

harpy, in fact, who instigated their sufferings—finding that persecution only strengthened their cause, and made their power more formidable, resolved to accomplish by a stratagem the destruction of the whole party. Deputies were sent, therefore, from the French court to Rochelle, one of the cities which under the treaty had been assigned to the Protestants, and in which the chiefs of their faction resided, to make agreeable proposals of matrimonial alliances, and other offers of advantageous connection, and to invite the great body of Huguenot leaders to Paris, for the ostensible purpose of effacing all past animosities. Trapped by the seductive importunity of these ambassadors, King Henry of Navarre, then eighteen years of age, with the Prince de Condé, Coligni, and others, appeared at Paris in 1572, and on the 18th August in that year, King Henry was married to the Princess Margaret, sister of King Charles. This marriage was the gay mask behind which the scowl of murder was concealed. Four days after it, Coligni was wounded by a shot from a window, as he passed along the street, which the hypocritical court slurred over by apology and affected indignation, until the festival of St. Bartholomew, the 24th of the same month,

which had been fixed upon for perpetrating the basest breach of hospitality, and the most extensive cold-blooded massacre which the world had ever known. The signal for commencing this slaughter was the ringing of the bells of St. Germain l'Auxerrois for matins. The hour appointed by the church for the first daily services of God, was thus chosen by its members for breaking the most stringent of the divine commands. Midnight had scarcely turned—the poor Huguenot slept through the accustomed sound of that early bell—silence and darkness seemed to guard his rest—but only for a few seconds ; hurried steps ascended the staircase—lights flashed through the panels of the door, and it was violently opened. The work of death proceeded at the same moment in a thousand different chambers ; alarm bells rung in all parts of the city ; and the tocsin of the palace sounded strong and full to animate each assassin at his work. The corpse of Coligni was cast from the window, and the bravest and best of his party were similarly slaughtered and dishonoured. On the eve of St. Bartholomew, orders had been sent to the governors of provinces to exterminate the Protestants ; and, during the two or three days to which the mas-

sacre was prolonged, it is variously computed that 30,000, 70,000, and 100,000 perished.

Remember, reader, that under whatever guise or name such deeds as these are committed, Christianity *never* sanctions them; and when politically viewed, as the work of priestcraft or of regal ambition, they are found universally to fail in the object for which they were intended. Cruelty never stifled opinion, and is apt to create a reaction of fearful atrocity: if, therefore, you cannot convince by reason and kindness, you had better let your neighbour remain the ignorant fool which you think him, lest you drive him by persecution to become a savage, who will turn and rend you at the first opportunity. * * * *

Notwithstanding the nursery couplets—

“ Gay go up and gay go down,
To ring the bells of London town,” &c.*

* We do not see these couplets in the modern library of “ Young England;” and therefore insert them in full, so far as we know them, lest an old favourite should be altogether lost to the rising generation :—

Gay go up and gay go down,
To ring the bells of London town.

Halfpence and farthings,
Say the bells of St. Martin’s.

Oranges and lemons,
Say the bells of St. Clement’s.

which might lead one to expect that London and its environs had peals more eloquent and musical than all the world beside, we are not surprised that poets have preferred to sing—

“How soft the music of those *village* bells,”

and that the bells of the metropolis have seldom found a champion to proclaim their euphony and excellence. That many of them are excellent, there can be no doubt; we only complain that they are rarely heard at all—and much more rarely to advantage. We have known London well in our day, and the peals of Stepney, Bow, Shoreditch, and many other old and celebrated

Pancakes and fritters,
Say the bells of St. Peter's.

Two sticks and an apple,
Say the bells of Whitechapel.

Kettles and pans,
Say the bells of St. Anne's.

You owe me ten shillings,
Say the bells of St. Helen's.

When will you pay me?
Say the bells of Old Bailey.

When I grow rich,
Say the bells of Shoreditch.

Pray when will that be?
Say the bells of Stepney.

I am sure I don't know,
Says the great bell of Bow.

churches of that locality, have been as familiar to us as household words; but, to speak generally, we think that their best effect is lost in the tumult and distraction of the busy streets.

The two grimy figures* in the black recess of old St. Dunstan's tower—the wonder of our childish senses—are, alas ! altogether gone. How



often have we lingered shame-faced in their neighbourhood for five minutes and more, until, with arms and hammers mysteriously upraised, they struck their quarter or half-hour chimes.

* The clock and figures were purchased by the late Marquis of Hertford, and removed to his villa in the Regent's Park, where they probably still remain.

Occasionally, also, we have heard in our boat on the broad Thames, on fine summer evenings, while sundry craft moved silently at a distance by, and nothing else was audible save that

“On the ear dropp’d the light drip of the suspended oar,”

as we paused in our rowing, a clanging peal from the Chelsea side of the river; and again, as we passed old Lambeth, it became evident that the ringers were practising on the Surrey shore :

“A tuneful challenge rings from either side
Of Thames ‘fair banks,’”

and the tones came to us sweetly mellowed by the element on which we floated in fascinated reverie.

These are real and pleasing reminiscences ; and on Sunday the sweet effect of bells is naturally much heightened—

“The cheerful Sabbath bells, wherever heard,
Strike pleasant on the sense, most like the voice
Of one who from the far off hills proclaims
Tidings of good to Zion.”

But it is in the country where everything harmonizes, rather than in London, that we most delight to hear them. All the surrounding features are there in perfect unison. The cowslip-painted fields, streaked with narrow paths converging to the church—those old ways by which from time

immemorial the distant inhabitants of the parish have come to the house of God, and which no law can close, no churlish proprietor dares to stop—the solemn and umbrageous woods darkening the hill-side—the church tower rising above them, with its accustomed peal heard far off by the assembling congregation—the grassy cemetery around the holy building, whose green mounds mark the various spots in which

“ The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep”—

the brightness of the sky above, and the stillness of the earth around—all these combine to form a scene in exquisite accordance with the feelings of a soul piously released for one day in the seven from the cares and sorrows of life : and they are utterly wanting among the characteristics which mark a Sunday in London. The reader must have jarringly experienced the uncouth difference ; and therefore it is not on the day of holy rest that we can invite him to realize the sounds of London church bells.

But on certain festival occasions we have been forcibly impressed by them. For instance : go, reader, on Lord Mayor's day, or on the birthday of our gracious Queen, along the great thoroughfare which connects Westminster with the City.

Never mind the mob—for you have wisely emptied your pockets before you left home; nor care for the squeeze to which you will be subjected—for every one of the crowd is in good humour to-day. The police are what is called “clearing the streets;” which means that they are vainly attempting to confine all foot passengers to the pavements. Every shop window is closed, and all the house windows above are widely opened, and thronged by eager spectators. A single line of vehicles is still allowed to move cautiously along the street; cries of fear and shouts of joy are mingled as the multitude sways to and fro, like a great billow; and, whilst the most orderly disorder is maintained by the constabulary force, an irruption takes place from a side-street, which causes a momentary suspension of police vigilance, and a little extra tumult.

Were we called upon to choose a man to lead a forlorn hope—to head a charge of cavalry against squares of bayonets—or to spring a mine—we should select a London cab-driver for the requisite nerve and recklessness. Seated insecurely on one of those diminutive outside perches, which were placed on the off-shaft of the original cabriolets, a little Jewish-looking driver, having watched his time, bursts before a brewer’s pon-

derous dray “into the line.” The drayman heavily jumps from his barrels, and holds over the cabman his curling whip, as if he would divide his light antagonist with a stroke of it. But he has met his match. The cabman is instantly on his feet ; three times over his head he waves his short driving whip, with a lash sharp as a penknife attached to it ; and by a vow to lay open his threatener’s fleshy cheek, and with a look of assurance that he was in earnest, he maintains unscathed his boldly-won position in the line, which steadily moves forward, with a fresh cheer from the crowd.

But see—there approaches the procession ; Life-Guards, band, and a train of carriages in succession appear ; and off goes from every neighbouring church a clashing peal. Now the bells of London sound grandly indeed ! St. Mary-le-Bow—what strength of metal dost thou exhibit, with thy noble peal of ten ! St. Dunstan, in thy lantern tower—how sweet and fine ring the notes from thy new eight ! St. Clement and St. Martin—ye are not behind your brethren ; and though ye be all lost for a moment in the roar of the multitude, or in the stunning salutes of the Park guns, again your wild music breaks powerfully forth, animating with a strange spirit

of desperate joy the tens of thousands who cheer the gay spectacle below. And see—through the window of that huge gilt-panelled coach, the fair and not unthoughtful face of a young and graceful woman :—it is the Queen of mighty England, acknowledging the uproarious acclamations of her subjects with slight and serious greeting. Doubly the welkin rings with huzzas, poured forth with all the strength of human lungs ; and, in responsive sympathy, crash on crash follows from the united strokes of every bell in that fine old church before which the Royal *cortège* is at the instant passing.

What a dream is that pageant ! from which the mind turns in solemn contrast to the minute death-note tolled by the muffled clapper on the great bell of St. Paul's Cathedral, to announce that a king is mortal. We were not old enough when George IV. died to feel, as a man or a subject, much serious impression from the national loss ; what we felt, therefore, on that occasion, was exclusively from the effect inspired by the great bell of St. Paul's, which we had never before nor have since heard in like employment. The day that we recall was extremely sultry ; the atmosphere was heavy, and seemed charged with electricity ; the windows were thrown

wide open to catch any chance breeze from the river; and to be stretched in front of one of them, on a couple of chairs, with some book of very light reading, seemed the only practicable resource on such a day for the idle and thoughtless; and even so we complacently arranged ourselves. But not thus easily was the stern reminder of mortality to be eluded. With ponderous stroke the bell once tolled; and the sound spread like the angry rolling of distant thunder over the whole metropolis—a dull booming tone, which seemed to vibrate through every building and on every nerve. A minute passed, and the sound had died gradually away, when another tremendous stroke on the bell was heard, and the noise seemed to roll, as before, over the whole city, like the unfolding of a thunder cloud. At each repetition of the tolling, the impression from it became more powerfully awful. Bells generally stir, animate, and excite the feelings, and seem rather to fit them for active engagement and resistance than to depress and appal their energy. We have been awoke, for example, at the dead of night, by the peal in our own parish church, which was suddenly rung backwards, to announce that there was a fire, and to summon aid—(a fire-bell, by the way, is not uncommon); and

though the first effect of the unusual disturbance was alarming, it seemed immediately to brace the spirits for exertion. Not so, however, were we moved by the tollings of St. Paul's great bell. They seemed to be charged with a message of irresistible evil: they carried you involuntarily to the chamber of almighty death: they might have been the herald of national pestilence: you might have yielded minute after minute to their monotonous power, until you fancied the "crack of doom" was coming. Aided as it no doubt was by the peculiar state of the atmosphere, we own that we have never felt a more dispiriting influence from any earthly sound.

We have not noticed the ringing of bells in celebration of victories either by sea or land, but our older readers must be able to recall their inspiring effect. This was mournfully damped in the case of Trafalgar, when the clamorous peal and single tollings of the knell were strangely mingled. A friend thus describes the occasion:—"I was in my venerable native city, Chester, ill in bed, and knew not of the victory of Trafalgar. Suddenly there arose a joyous and deafening peal from the eleven churches—then came a dead stop, and one deep toll from the Cathedral sounded solemnly over the old city. Then there

burst forth the joyous peal again—then came the pause, and the knell for England's 'darling hero.' These contrasts of sound were alternately produced with an effect that was beyond expression striking and overpowering."

In dismissing the subject of church bells and peal ringing for some lighter notices, in conclusion of our task, we gladly pay a tribute of notice to the extraordinary enthusiasm which seems universally to animate all who are ever induced to take an interest in bells. There have been at various times, amateur ringers in the higher ranks of society who have attained considerable skill in ringing. One gentleman, at least, we have heard of, who built a tower in his grounds for the mere purpose of suspending a peal in it; and societies of ringers, including members who only admire, without practising the manly art, are still by no means uncommon. A well known society, said to have been established by charter, early in the seventeenth century, (in the year 1620,) still exists at Bristol in palmy condition; and a report of its proceedings at the annual festival displays a Pickwickian freshness that is perfectly charming. The members of this guild naturally cling to ancient associations, and their poet-laureate certainly

pictures in comic, yet graphic, verse, a former state of things, which, in some respects, puts present times to the blush. As to reverence for the Sabbath, we read—

“Then the folks every Sunday went twice at least to church, sir,
And never left the parson, nor his sermon, in the lurch, sir”—

And in regard to the security of property in those days, we have the following pleasing account :—

“Then our streets were unpaved, and our houses were all thatched, sir,
Our windows were all latticed, and our doors were only latched, sir ;
Yet so few were the folks that would plunder or would rob, sir,
That the hangman was starving for want of a job, sir.”

And yet though the Sabbath peal may now draw but few, comparatively, to the old church, and even the lead which covers its sacred roof may not be safe from the spoiler's fingers, the ringers themselves retain, nevertheless, all the pride and fondness for their art which have ever belonged to it. They may prove, indeed, an awkward set for the authorities to manage. Though living so much in the church, they may be the rarest

attendants at its services : and possibly they may sometimes revive their exhausted strength in the belfry by potations of ale immoderately deep. But for their devotion to their vocation they are most remarkable ; and, in a world too generally cold and heartless, highly to be commended. The subject of ringing is always one of intense interest to them. Whilst young and able, they will labour hard to attain skill ; they will go any distance to hear or partake in a ringing match ; and the superannuated ringer—his limbs cramped by rheumatism—the strained muscles of his arms exhibiting the powerless witness of his past exploits in the bell-chamber—will talk for hours over his cottage fire of the old peal, the old set of ringers, and what in old times they did, with as keen a relish as the veteran displays in recounting his “ hair-breadth ’scapes in th’ imminent deadly breach,” or the sportsman in detailing his achievements in the chace or on the moor. And when his turn comes for the knell to sound his death note, his former companions commemorate his departure with professional honours. For an hour or two before the interment takes place, the dreary tolling of the muffled bell is heard, and whilst the corpse

is borne towards the cemetery, a dumb peal rings its sad unearthly rounds. A compliment, alas ! unheeded by the dead, and like all funeral ceremonies, only serving to make death seem less awful to the survivors.

CHAPTER VI.

VARIOUS MODERN USES OF SMALL BELLS.

“For, though they do agree in kind,
Specific difference we find.”—BUTLER.

IN making our remarks on the various uses of bells in general, as distinguished from church bells, their almost universal introduction at every turn and scene of life renders it difficult to describe the amount of convenience which they afford, or to specify even a portion of their different services. Certain, however, it is, that whether we sit at home cogitating our wants and making arrangements for their gratification—awaiting the visits of friends, or the calls of creditors; or whether we start on our travels, either by sea or land, the bell holds an all-important and most prominent place in our ad-

ventures, and its voice is only not remarked by us on such occasions, because it is so constantly heard.

Now, in visiting an ancient residence, like Haddon Hall, for instance, which still vividly illustrates in its substantial remains the manners and customs of the "olden time," it is surely an interesting speculation to conceive how its once lordly tenants, with their rich and noble guests, inhabited the many chambers of that vast pile, and enjoyed all the sumptuous comforts of baronial hospitality, without the means of giving a single tintinnabulary summons to servant or retainer. And then to contrast the condition of our modern citizen, who rears his rural "box" within omnibus reach of the Exchange—a tenement occupying only a few square yards out of his estate of one quarter of an acre of land—and who would be the most wretched of mortals, without his front door bell, his back door bell, and his bell for every room in his diminutive mansion: besides his hand-bell on the table, to relieve him from the insupportable fatigue of stretching from his chair to the bell-rope which hangs down the wall by the fire-place. Let us examine, then, what changes in social convenience the bell has effected.

The Lord of Haddon, or his visitor, formerly arrived at the castle, and his advent was announced by a blast from a hunting horn. The citizen or his guest now conveys similar intelligence by a sharp tug at the more civilized bell. The park keeper with a fat buck on his shoulders, or the humble pilgrim at nightfall with his wallet and staff, respectively proclaimed their presence at the wicket of the castle by a stout blow on its oaken panel, or by rattling the large latch, for there were no lion-faced knockers, though a simpler piece of wrought iron sometimes answered the purpose; and now the butcher's boy rings the bell at the citizen's back-door until the cook appears. Notwithstanding, however, this balance in favour of modern convenience, the interior arrangements of the ancient "Hall" were such as precluded the possibility of a liveried Sambo's pantry soliloquy, "the more you ring, massa, the more I won't come;" for a household formerly lived as a family, and whether at meals, or in the intervening hours of indoor social life, some dependant was always ready to obey the orders of his lady or his lord. When the dinner was served, the owners of the mansion, with their family circle, sat in honoured, but only partial, seclusion on the raised *dais*,

whilst the body of the great hall was occupied with tables spread for the domestics and humbler guests, and the adjoining kitchen equally dispensed through the visible buttry hatch, its dishes of rude plenty to all. The family was first served, but the servants ate then and there also. Even when the mistress of such an establishment seemed to be alone over her spinning wheel or embroidery frame, in the large gallery, made comfortably habitable by a log fire and a small carpet spread over that portion only of the polished floor which she occupied, she was not without the means of immediate communication with her household. For at a respectful distance in the deep recess of one of the windows would be her favourite page, playing with a dog or falcon, or perhaps mending his fishing lines or net, and at her slightest summons he was ready to obey her behests. Constant usage relieved both parties from restraint and formality without confounding all degrees in the social scale ; and we believe that the bell more than anything has helped to define the up-stairs and down-stairs modes and habits of life, which at present exist among the great masses of our population ; and that if there be now comparatively little intercourse betwixt servants and those whom they serve, it is because

the latter have in this important little instrument the ready means of preserving their exclusiveness, without loss of accommodation. Indeed, it may be said that every worldly want which riches—the great boast of our age—can supply, is now connected with the ringing of a bell. In answer to the parlour bell the servant receives the expression of your wishes, and in consequence of the ringing of the out-door bell, you are made aware that they have been supplied.

Nor less do the sounds of bell metal now attract the attentive ear in out-door life. If you are going a journey, of course you must travel by railway, and a bell starts you on your rapid flight, and at every station accompanies your stopping. The very whistle, again, which shrieks in every tunnel, and whose scream is said to be odious to the Royal hearing, as it certainly is to your own tympanum, if you be not duller in sense than “the weed that rots on Lethe’s wharf,” is merely a small bell rung by a sharp volley of escaping steam. If you are going by sea to some distant point, still there is the dock bell audible, as the paddles begin to turn, or the anchor is being weighed; and the transit of time is agreeably marked on your monotonous passage by the half-hour watches, which are

struck on a bell. "It's twelve o'clock, Captain," is the seaman's report to his commander. "Make it so," is the authoritative reply; and over the broad wilderness, and perhaps silent expanse of waters, through which, "lonely but not lost," the vessel holds her course, the bell sounds cheeringly to all on board. And if you would make a submarine excursion to the realms of Neptune, to behold

"Wedges of gold, great anchors, heaps of pearl,
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scatter'd in the bottom of the sea,"

you must entrust your precious person to the interior accommodation of the diving *bell*.

To digress for one moment: we have heard how affectingly the pilgrim of the deep has sometimes been struck by the sound of church bells from some shore which he happened to be passing, and which was even too distant to be within sight. And we can imagine this. The emigrant, whose feet for the last time have pressed their native soil—the outward-bound passenger to climes remote and unhealthy, in which the flower of his life is doomed at least to expand, and probably to fade, would be likely to feel such tones as echo

"Of a land *he* shall visit no more;"

and we have noticed this impression for the sake of observing how very far such sounds sometimes travel over the sea; for we have been informed of a ship's company who were seventy miles off the coast of Rio Janeiro, distinctly hearing the bells of the town. The state of the atmosphere, and the direction of the wind, would mainly cause this effect; but it was supposed that the bellying of the sails assisted to hold the sound. The reader will probably remember the case of the sentry at Windsor Castle, whose life was in jeopardy for his having slept at his watch during the night. The soldier denied that he had been asleep, and maintained, in proof of the truth of his assertion, that he had heard St. Paul's great bell strike *thirteen* at midnight. Subsequent inquiry proved that it had been so; and the story concludes happily, after the approved fashion, with the acquittal of the sentinel.

Wherever there happens to be a collection of buildings, signals by bells are constantly to be heard. The gaol bell—the factory bell—the school bell—the yard bell of the inn—the dinner bell at the mansion; each too having their peculiar and easily recognised tone. We know not what innovations Police Acts may have created in the streets of London; but of yore they used

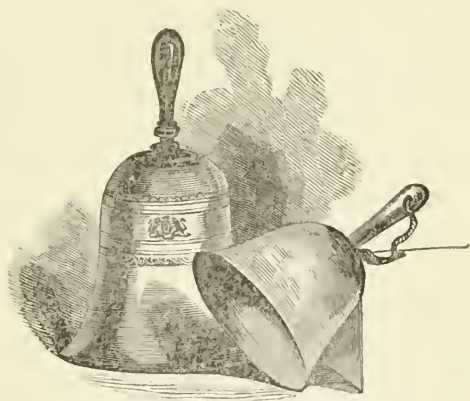
to resound at particulars times in the day with different intimations, all distinctly expressed by ringing of hand bells. There was the bellman crier, to be heard in the morning giving his three or four strokes on his highly-polished bell, preliminary to his announcement—"oh, yes! oh, yes! oh, yes! (*oyez*) this is to give notice," &c. This gentleman appeared at Christmas, in new cocked hat and laced coat, and made his round for Christmas-boxes, distributing at the same time "the Bellman's Verses," in the form of a sheet of seasonable carols. His office was probably the remaining vestige of the night-guardian's in Milton's day, thus spoken of by the poet:—

"Or the Bellman's drowsy charm,
To bless the doors from nightly harm."

He seemed to have "split the difference" with the old "Charley" with his rattle, whose voice we have so often heard, about midnight, huskily chaunting "past twelve o'clock, and a starlight night;" and he was possibly, too, the representative of that bellman in the time of the Plague, who preceded the "dead-cart, and called on the living to bring out their dead.

Then there used to be the Dustman's bell, also a matutinal sound, and sternly expressive

in its quickly repeated strokes of the necessary but annoying business on which it performed its perambulations. Who can have forgotten the



dust-cart, with its high shelvings, and its two phantom-like horses with their nosebags of oatless chaff? The two human attendants of the same, also, quite characters in their way; their leathern hats formed after the fashion of a fisherman's "sou'-wester," their dirty flannel jackets, black stockings, and short white gaiters. The one man—tall, long armed, and knock-kneed—who flung the dust by the bushel from the short ladder which rested against the cart-wheel; and his short stiff companion who bore the in-

exorable bell. In vain the cook strove by delays to escape her fate ;—the dust-hole was choked, and the cart must be stopped. The bell therefore ceased ; the horse-hair nosebags again tantalized each wretched Rosinante ; the dustmen with shovels and baskets descended the area steps ; and soon the whole scene became enveloped in a cloud of dust, thick as the vapour which burst from the bottle out of which Don Cleofas released Asmodens.

Again, there was the Postman's bell about five o'clock in the afternoon, which stopped at intervals whilst its bearer scanned the street, and gave time to writers to subscribe and seal their letters. And, lastly, the invitatory tinkling of the muffin-bell, a little later, by periodical suspensions, intimated a frequent sale of tea-table luxuries drawn from the clean wrapper in the basket where they had been packed.

In these reminiscences there is one bell, a notice of which must not be omitted. Reader, thou art in old Drury. Pit and gallery are filled, and boxes are filling. Doors are being unlocked ; seats are slammed down ; well-dressed persons are arranging themselves for an evening's entertainment. The two front rows of a box, four from the stage, are occupied by a party

amongst which we recognise an intelligent school-boy, whose father has brought him for the first time to see a play. From head to foot the lad is all excitement, and he is successively attracted by the various scenes and sounds which encompass him. As the orchestra begins to be occupied, he is amused by the tuning of the instruments, preparatory to the overture ; and when—

“ The leader of the clan
Reproves with frowns the dilatory man,
Then on his candlestick thrice taps his bow,
Nods a fresh signal, and away they go”—

his spirits seem to float in a new sea of delight. But the prompter's bell sounds ; the music stops, and up go the foot-lights. It rings again ; and the mysterious dark curtain, which hid enchantment from the youngster's eyes, slowly rises. The scene represented is a street—but to him a street in Utopia ; a single figure is on the stage—but to him that figure seems more than human. It is old Kean, as Richard III. ; and when every corner of the theatre rings with applause at the sight of its old favourite, and the practised actor gradually upturns his eye of fire, and those emaciated and rouged features on which, nevertheless, genius has stamped its indelible mark, and he deliberately pays slight but powerful ac-

knowledgments to his audience, our young friend is perfectly fascinated. His chin rests on his hands, which are pressed upon the cushion in front of the box ; and throughout the performance of that wonderful tragedian, he is conscious of a spell which he never felt before, and happily perhaps for him will never feel in like intensity again.

Sir David Brewster observes, that “ a friend who has been long absent will often stand before us as a stranger, till his voice supplies us with the full power of recognition.” Yet true as this is, the human voice is not to be compared to the bell for preserving its identity of sound. For years, nay for centuries, a bell will ring in a note in which time and age produce not the slightest perceptible variation. A person may quit his native spot in childhood, and not return again until he is an old man, and every bell noted by him in early years will be found to have preserved its original tone. But in the conversation of any old playmate, he will at once discover that

“ His big manly voice,
Turning again towards childish treble, pipes
And whistles in his sound.”

A something indeed which is recognisable in

the sound of the voice may have been left, but it will be little more than what may be observed in the expression of the features, which survives, after the features themselves have undergone a shade of alteration at every stage of life.

It is no doubt this invariable sameness in the sound of bells, which gives them their chief value for general usefulness. There is, however, a mystery connected with this fact, which we have never been able to clear up. We cannot imagine how it happens, that bells made for particular purposes, but, as must be the case, at a thousand different places, are always so like each other in tone. The Railway bells on the Great Western are just like those on the North Midland—every dustman's bell used to ring in the same key, whether it was purchased in Oxford-street or the Minories—the muffin bell of Queen-square was the same as that of Pimlico—each class of bells has always maintained its own characteristic peculiarity, which the mode of ringing alone will not account for or explain. This marked distinction is very important in large establishments, such as inns, where waiter, boots, chambermaid, &c., have certain bells to answer, in their respective departments. “Coming, Sir,” says the busy waiter, who never does

come so soon as he ought, in reply to *his* bell; and when the chambermaid's summons is rung, *she* is sure in course of time to appear with a piece of soap, which will no more lather than a pebble, and a towel too small and thin to dry more than half a face. Boots, again, knoweth *his* bell afar off.

A ridiculous instance of the familiarity with which these various summonses impress themselves on the mind, in connexion with the duties generally attached to them, occurred to ourselves not many years ago. We were in London for a night, and determined to sleep at the inn where the coach deposited us. It was the Golden Cross, Charing Cross. We did not return from the place at which we had spent our evening until after midnight. The inmates of the hotel had gone to bed. A small jet of gas burnt bluely in the deserted coffee-room—the chambermaid brought us a candle, and we desired the presence of boots. His bell was accordingly rung, and a sleepy sable-looking individual appeared. Without closely scanning the man, we asked for boot-jack and slippers: when, to our great amusement, he “clutched”—not the “air-drawn dagger,” but first from under one arm, and then from under the other, what he con-

ceived were the articles we wanted. Our loud laugh *awoke* him—for in the interim we perceived that he had been fast asleep all the while he had been going through his imaginary duties.

We might prolong, *ad infinitum*, our notices of different bells, with their respective gay or grave associations; and well we might enlarge, for instance, on the race bell* which sets ten thousand hearts leaping, or on the bell of Newgate, answered by the dreadful tollings from St. Sepulchre's steeple at eight o'clock, to announce the brutalizing exhibition of legalized manslaughter, in days when the sheep-stealer and forger were hanged. But we forbear, and shall only dwell, in concluding our subject, on one whose tones have often rung with grating harshness on our ear, and which is never heard by us without a sigh and a blush for the means by which energetic England struggles to become the "workshop of the world."

Before the lines of railway were completed, the traveller often suffered more inconvenience, anxiety, and fatigue, than when having hardened his heart to the endurance of a long journey by

* We believe that formerly a silver bell was the prize run for at races—hence the expression, "bearing away the bell." The prize is now a gold or silver cup. In fact, the bell turned upwards, and appealing to the mouth instead of the ear.

coach, he resigned himself to the snailsfoot conduct of that now obsolete vehicle. Some of our readers must be old enough to remember when the Birmingham “ rails ” broke off at Denby Hall, and some dangerous-looking, over-loaded coaches carried them forward to Weedon. They can recall, too, what troubles, detentions, and fears for person and luggage, pursued them until they reached Birmingham. And there how they were greeted by a cold, half-furnished refreshment-room : and what a tedious waiting there was for influxes of passengers from all quarters, until the Manchester train started—and how at last they were landed a grumbling company at the emporium of British commerce, each exclaiming to his neighbour, that “ as little time and less trouble would have brought them thither by coach.”

About nine winters ago it was our luckless fate to be called from London to the North of Yorkshire, through all the wearisome steps of progress just narrated. Cold, wet in the feet, and cheerless from solitude, we found ourselves at Manchester in one of those monstrous inns, now common in the country, which seem capable of accommodating for a night any number of the houseless, which confluent lines of railway hap-

pen to bring within their walls. A short toilet—a shorter dinner, with still shorter pint of bad wine—and a long pore over the newspaper, whiled away the evening ; and after tea with its muffin we ascended a little before twelve o'clock the interminable flight of stairs which led to our dormitory. “Be sure to call me at half-past four,” was our melancholy order to the chambermaid ; for alas ! for one who is habitually awake to hear

“The midnight bell,
Sound out unto the drowsy race of night,”

five was the hour at which the Leeds coach “put to.”

Reader, thy experience, for thou art not the Duke of Wellington, must have taught thee what it is to have only a short time for rest allowed, and to feel at the same time that thou canst not “lock up thy senses” at will. The room is strange, and curiosity awakens : the sheets are not white and pure as those of Dandie Dinmont, nor so lately pressed by the mangle, as by the corporal warmth of whom thou wottest not. Thy dressing gown is therefore drawn forth and envelopes thee, when, with a sort of shudder, thou creepest betwixt the blankets. Thine eyes are closed, but thy thoughts are broad awake : doors

are violently shut ; creaking shoes trample the passage at intervals outside : coaches and wagons now and then arrive : voices in the house and street are audible : a furious rattling of wheels passes along the causeway, as of an engine on its rapid journey. Thou thinkest of the possibility of a fire in the enormous labyrinthine building in which thou art “cribbed”—but there is silence abroad again—the engine at least was not for the house in which thou art lying : and, whilst thou art speculating on the unlikelihood of two fires in one night, and enduring a mental contest betwixt coming slumber and a dread of not awaking in time, a numbness gradually overpowers every sense, and the chains of Morpheus bind thee.

A more bitterly cold morning than that on which we left Manchester, the climate of England has seldom produced. Defended by every possible wrapper we took our seat on the box of the Leeds coach soon after five o'clock. The horses looked starved and spiritless as they stood in their rugs—the ostler for once in his life appeared in an old white great coat—the coachman grumbled at the scarcity of passengers and intensity of the frost—and we finally started at a very limping pace, our own face being buried nose-

deep in a well-aired comforter. Manchester did not strike us as being a very well lighted town, at least it did not appear to be so on the present grim morning; and when we reached its environs on our way to Oldham, a straight paved street of some miles in length, and most feebly illuminated, lay before us. If before we started the sky seemed doubtful whether it would rain or snow, it had now decided in favour of a sort of compromise: for a north-easterly wind began to dash against our face a sharp sleet, and the whole aspect of the weather displayed the most rigorous severity. It was only half-past five o'clock when the clanking factory bells became more or less audible on every side of us; and on the pavements of the long street in which the coach slowly travelled, began to appear the youthful victims of the jenny and the loom. Was the slumber of the opulent mill-owner refreshing, were his dreams placid on his couch of down, whilst under the walls even of his own mansion and of the many houses of which he was the envied proprietor, these infant builders of his fortunes crept shivering to their daily over-measured task? Children in years, but with premature and already half-faded womanhood, we saw them in sad

procession pass along. No parent accompanied them on their dark, cold walk—no clothing had they to shelter them from the inclement season, but the accustomed shawl pulled over the head—but there were earrings and necklaces to indicate that folly and vice had gone hand in hand with their misery and pains. There were small, comfortable, brick houses in gardens by which these girls passed, some of the upper windows of which reflected the warm fire which had been kept blazing through that piercing night, or the more subdued light of the cheering taper. What a contrast, if, with us, they noticed these signs of comfort and rest ! We heard the deep cough of consumption from some, proclaiming disease of the body ; we observed the low jesting of others, showing impurity of the soul : and all we witnessed in that spectacle assured us that trade, despite its copiousness of invention, skill in execution, enterprising energy, and magnificent results, does not in all respects advance the amelioration of our species. Tempted by its facilities for the accumulation of “filthy lucre,” we here beheld man forgetting his humanity, and drawing from woman’s exhaustion the means of his strength. We saw the being who is given by God to be man’s solace and

comfort, pass under the Juggernaut car of Mammon—in fact, the idol of life unnaturally converted into the victim and sacrifice, at an age when very pity should have averted such a fate. Thrice honoured amongst his fellows be the millowner, who in employing children, remembers that they have “organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions,” like his own offspring.

It is the common cant of the day to hold up a soldier as the incarnation of evil—his profession as the most brutalizing of all employments. Listen, reader, in charity, to the sequel of our journey. Daylight broke, and a fine morning spread over the heavens—the earth beneath remaining hard and slippery as frost could make it. When the horses were changed at the different stages, those which were taken out had coats as rough and innocent of all sweat as the harnessed tremblers which waited to succeed them; and for the passengers no wrapper seemed to be any protection from the piercing cold which continued to prevail. In climbing a hill in some high moorland country called Standedge, the coach overtook a large broad-wheel covered wagon, in the back of which, half-buried in straw, sat a young woman with her infant, and after them

walked a soldier in undress uniform. "Can you take the young woman to Leeds, coachman?" asked the soldier. The coachman assented, a small fare was paid, and with her baby and bundle, the mother took her seat behind the box. "Take care of the bairn, lassie, and I'll soon be with ye," were her husband's parting words, and we were soon out of sight of the wagon. Of the remainder of the journey, we have only to add, that the new passenger being very imperfectly clad, though she modestly denied feeling cold, we did all we could to protect her and the infant by drawing the tarpauling of the coach over them; and at Huddersfield we procured for her some warm refreshment, when she paid the fondest attentions to her fine, healthy-looking child. At Leeds, the coach entered the accustomed inn yard, when the soldier's wife gave her child to some one on the ground, while she prepared to alight; but with a shriek, she almost *fell* from the coach after her treasure, which she caught and hid in her bosom—for the child was *dead* from cold! We perceived, indeed, in the moment that it was absent from her arms, that its eyes were closed, that a blue pallor was round the mouth, and that a light vapour came from its body and hung for a moment in the frosty air,

but we knew not this was the last exhaling warmth of life. "Ring the bell," said the coachman with a voice somewhat choked by emotion at the painful scene. The yard bell sounded, and a cab drove up in which the mother bore off her child's corpse to wait her husband's arrival.

We know that quarrels and fightings are one day altogether to cease, but in our judgment the factory bell will never silence the war trumpet: and contrasting the amiable chivalry of the rough soldier with the indifference of the millionaire, who sleeps in his bed whilst a thousand famished children hurry to his factory, we say with Shakspeare, "look here upon this picture, and on this!" and who shall say which bosom holds the harder heart?

To us all the bustling indications of manufacturing energy are habitually familiar: and alas! how wearisome have they often seemed to us. The tall chimney vomiting forth its clouds of dingiest smoke—the incessant strokes of the unrelenting steam-engine—the densely populated houses, which are themselves so closely packed—the streets crowded by noisy carts bearing goods to the canal wharf or railway station, to be dispersed over all quarters of the globe;—and at the railway station itself, the

concourse of persons assembled on the platform prepared to enter the many carriages which are being linked into a train ; whilst the little clattering bell of the electric telegraph intimates the impatient conveyance of intelligence to distant localities, with almost the speed of thought, and with all the accuracy of verbal diction. Right well do we know all these things—these symptoms of the restless strife of men for “the gold that perisheth ;”—and we have often turned from them for mental refreshment to that oasis of the wilderness, that spot of sylvan seclusion, the most remarkable perhaps that is to be found in the vicinity of any large manufacturing town,—where of old the Dragon of Wantley performed his gambols, and Sir Thomas Wortley, more than three centuries ago, built a Lodge and retired to it from courts and crowds, “for his pleasure to hear the hart’s bell.” And, musing there on themes of endless speculation, we have felt how desirable for the worn body and weary spirit of the artizan is the opportunity of rural recreation, if health is to be preserved and a kindly spirit fostered in one whose life is constantly becoming more and more artificial, and who is being more and more abstracted from

the purpose of his Maker, even that he should “till the ground from whence he was taken.”

Reader, farewell ! our task is ended ; and we have some compunction at having employed so much time over so airy a subject as the Bell. If thou art disposed to reproach us for having robbed better things of thy attention, perhaps thou wilt retort on us the thief’s address to the bell in the anecdote which we will now tell thee. A man broke into a small church in Scotland, with the sacrilegious intention of stealing the communion plate. Hearing steps outside the building, and expecting that he should be discovered, he hurried to the end of the church, where seeing a long rope depending to the ground, he laid hold of it for the purpose of climbing out of sight. But it proved to be the bell rope, and his weight rang the bell which attracted his pursuers immediately to the spot. The man, of course, was caught, and thus wittily addressed the unconscionable cause of his detection—“If it had not been for thy long tongue and empty head, I should not have been in my present predicament.” READER, FAREWELL !

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