

THE POETRY OF STEEPLES.



IN the different countries of Europe more than ordinary interest is attached to the history of bells. In England few subjects receive more attention from the antiquarian than the bells of old churches; for every bell has its history, and every clanging note that is sent out from the old towers, as it quivers through the air and falls on the villager's ear, recalls some time-honored tradition told and retold at his father's fireside, and comes fraught with sweet associations of home and kindred. The English were really the first to make general use of bells in churches. Their affection for them in some instances amounts, even in the present age, almost to superstitious veneration. The matter-of-fact, critical, yet enthusiastic antiquary encourages the cultivation of this sentiment by haling out from the dusty lumber-rooms of the past the long-forgotten stories of the iron-tongued singers, reviving them with the warm and kindly touch of a loving hand. His

"fouth o' auld nick-nackets,
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,"

his

"Parritch-pats and auld saut-buckets
Before the flood,"

have a fascination for the "collector of valuables that are worth nothing, and recollector of all that Time has been glad to forget." He will sit all day "in contemplation of a statue with ne'er a nose," and will listen in his dreams to the ditty that was made "to please King Pepin's cradle." But the cracked bell in the campanile of the hamlet church, the ancient peal in the village kirk, the chime in the cathedral tower, have a charm for him that far transcends the pleasure he feels in studying the tales his museum treasures tell him. The bells sang to his fathers' fathers away back generations ago; they welcomed the coming and sped the parting guest; they rang jubilant peals in honor of the bride, and tolled many a sad requiem as the mourners bore to the grave the body of their dead. How rich in associations of memories of the past are those English

bells—his bells! They are curious, mayhap, in form, and bear strange inscriptions; but he never tires of studying them and talking of them to whomsoever will listen. He carries his hearer back to far-distant ages, when bells were first used, when the priests of the Temple wore them on their garments, and performed the functions of their sacred office to the accompaniment of their silver tinkling. He quotes from Hieronymus Magius, and describes the *tintinnabulum*, and the *petasus*, or hat-shaped bell, which invited the ancient Greeks to the fish market and the Romans to their public baths; the *codon*, with which the Greek sentinels were kept awake, and which was the prototype of the signal which our bell-wether carries around its neck; the *nola*, which was appended to the neck of pet dogs and the feet of pet birds; the *campana*, the first turret bell; the *Dodona lebetes*, or caldrons of Dodona, by means of which, according to Strabo, the oracles were sometimes conveyed; down to the *squilla*, of which Hieronymus seems to have known nothing save that it was a little bell. Our antiquary will interlard his discourse with many a choice quotation from the classic writers of antiquity, and will further vary the monotony of his learned recital with quaint stories handed down by the chroniclers of former ages. How, for instance, the gallant army of Clothaire II. was frightened from the siege of Sens by the ringing of the bells of St. Stephen's Church; how, in the year 900, Pope John IX. ordered that bells should be used in the churches as a defense against thunder and lightning; and how, and under what embarrassing circumstances, the first set of tunable bells was raised to the tower of Croysland Abbey in 960; and how, when the seven bells, Guthlae, Bartholomew, Betein, Turketul, Tatwin, Bega, and Pega, were all safely hung, they rang out together, as Ingulphus says, "*Fiebat mirabilis harmonia; nec erat tunc tanta consonantia campanarum in tota Anglia*" (Making a wonderful harmony; nor was there such a concert of bells in all

England). Then, if he be not insensible to the sweet and tender influences surrounding his subject, he will tell how the heart of the great Napoleon was stirred when he heard at Malmaison the tolling of the village bell that brought back to him the memories of the first happy years that he passed at Brienne. Then he will repeat, perchance for the hundredth time, the "Legend of the Bells of Limerick."

The old bells that hung in the tower of the Limerick Cathedral were made by a young Italian after many years of patient toil. He was proud of his work, and when they were purchased by the prior of a neighboring convent near the lake of Como, the artist invested the profits of the sale in a pretty villa on the margin of the lake, where he could hear their *Angelus* music wafted from the convent cliff across the waters at morning, noon, and night. Here he intended to pass his life; but this happiness was denied him. In one of those feudal broils which, whether civil or foreign, are the undying worm in a fallen land, he suffered the loss of his all; and when the storm passed he found himself without home, family, friends, and fortune.

The convent had been razed to the ground, and the *chef-d'œuvre* of his handiwork, the tuneful chime whose music had charmed his listening ear for so many happy days of his past life, had been carried away to a foreign land. He became a wanderer. His hair grew white and his heart withered before he again found a resting-place. In all these years of bitter desolation the memory of the music of his bells never left him; he heard it in the forest and in the crowded city, on the sea and by the banks of the quiet stream in the basin of the hills; he heard it by day, and when night came, and troubled sleep, it whispered to him soothingly of peace and happiness. One day he met a mariner from over the sea, who told him a story of a wondrous chime of bells he had heard in Ireland. An intuition told the artist that they were his bells. He journeyed and voyaged thither, sick and weary, and sailed up the Shannon. The ship came to anchor in the port near Limerick, and he took passage in a small boat for the purpose of reaching the city. Before him the tall steeple of St.



OLD-TIME BELL-RINGERS.

Mary's lifted its turreted head above the mist and smoke of the old town. He leaned back wearily, yet with a happy light beaming from his eyes. The angels were whispering to him that his bells were there. He prayed: "Oh, let them sound me a loving welcome. Just one note of greeting, O bells! and my pilgrimage is done!"

It was a beautiful evening. The air was like that of his own Italy in the sweetest time of the year, the death of the spring. The bosom of the river was like a broad mirror, reflecting the patines of bright gold that flecked the blue sky, the towers, and the streets of the old town in its clear depths. The lights of the city danced upon the wavelets that rippled from the boat as she glided along. Suddenly the stillness was broken. From St. Mary's tower there came a shower of silver sound, filling the air with music. The boatmen rested on their oars to listen. The old Italian crossed his arms and fixed his streaming eyes upon the tower. The sound of his bells bore to his heart all the sweet memories of his buried past: home, friends, kindred, all.



“THE BOATMEN RESTED ON THEIR OARS TO LISTEN.”

At last he was happy—too happy to speak, too happy to breathe. When the rowers sought to arouse him, his face was upturned to the tower, but his eyes were closed. The poor stranger had breathed his last. His own *chef-d'œuvre* had rung his “passing-bell.”

Never insinuate to the fond enthusiast who relates these stories that there is a possibility that his legendary lore may be defective in chronological data. If you detect anachronisms, keep them to yourself.

In this age the Netherlands claim precedence among the countries of Europe in belfry music. There are more chimes or carillons in that country than in any other. A great number of bells are required for this strange kind of music, which is sometimes of a very elaborate and intricate character. The *carillons à clavier* are played like a piano-forte. The keys are handles connected with the bells by rods or cords. The *carillonneur* employs both hands and feet in executing the airs which charm the inhabitants of the Low Countries. The pedals communicate with the larger bells for the bass. The keys on which the treble notes depend are struck with the hand, which is cased in a thick leathern stall. It is recorded that a *carillonneur* of Bruges was so expert he even executed fugues on those famous bells that hang in the cathedral of that ancient city.

The rapidly developing æsthetic taste of our people is gradually bringing the use of chimes and peals into our American churches in the place of single bells. In New York there are three sets of chime bells—those of St. Thomas's Church, on Fifth Avenue and Fifty-third Street, the chimes of Grace, on Broadway, above Tenth Street, and of Trinity, on Broadway, opposite Wall Street. The bells of St. Thomas's, ten in number,

were cast at Meneely's, in West Troy, and put up in the beautiful tower two years ago. They are the finest in tone and tune. Their music is wondrously beautiful. The bells of Grace, also ten in number, have a united weight of 10,300 pounds. The largest bell, called the Rector's Bell, or the tolling bell, weighs 2835 pounds. This splendid chime cost \$6000. If you wish to enjoy a new sensation, go up into the bell tower of Grace Church when Mr. Senia, the *carillonneur*, is practicing. He does not dance about amidst a forest of ropes, pulling one and then another and another, as the old-time bell-ringers of England did; but he plays on his *carillon à clavier* as they do in Holland. There they are, ten chime-ringing levers ranged in a row like the keys of a piano-forte. Those huge keys require the whole strength of his arm and hand to move them. To each of the levers is attached a rope, passing through the ceiling to the tower above, where it connects with its particular bell. Up in the light, airy, latticed tower, far above the roofs of the tallest houses, hang the ten huge wide-mouthed messengers of sound, that only await the master's touch to fill the air with melody.

Trinity chimes are, perhaps, next to those of Christ Church, Philadelphia, the oldest in this country. But, strange to say, almost nothing is known of their history. Even Mr. Ayliffe, the accomplished *carillonneur* who has rung the changes on them for nearly twenty years, can tell but little about them. The church-wardens and rector of Trinity parish confess to almost total ignorance on the subject. From various sources, added to the inscriptions on the bells, I have learned that five of the bells were cast in London by Mears prior to 1845. As the second Trinity Church was built with a handsome steeple in 1788, it is more than



THE CARILLON À CLAVIER.

probable that at least one of the bells came over from England about that time. At any rate, when, in 1845, the church edifice was taken down to make way for the present beautiful structure, there were six old bells in the steeple. The largest of these was cracked, and so it was sent to Meneely, in Troy, to be recast, and at the same time four more were ordered to complete the chime. The largest bell weighs 3081 pounds, the smallest 700. The ten bells have an aggregate weight of about 15,000 pounds. They are hung in a frame-work of wood so heavy as to deaden the sound to a great extent; and the vestry are now deliberating as to the necessity of having them remount-

ed and rehung. As they are somewhat out of tune, owing to the constant striking of the clappers in one place, it will be found necessary, likewise, to repair the parts worn away, if that be possible. The bell chamber is not, as many suppose, near the top of the steeple. It is rather nearer the bottom. The bells hang very near the rough floor, and all the machinery for ringing is rude and primitive compared with that of Grace or St. Thomas's Church.

Several years ago a gentleman from Georgia went up into the steeple of Trinity Church late in the afternoon. He climbed up the three hundred and eight steps to the observatory under the tapering spire. En-



LISTENING TO THE TRINITY CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

chanted with the magnificence and extent of the bird's-eye view, he lingered until the shadows of twilight began to obscure the landscape. He found the staircases very dark as he descended, and the darkness deepened every moment. When he reached the bell chamber he could not find the next descending staircase. He groped around a long time, and finally gave up, and spent the night lost among the bells.

There are two sets of monastery bells in New York. A peal of four in the German Capuchin fathers' Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, in Pitt Street, the largest of which weighs 1423 pounds, and the four together 2850 pounds; and a half chime of six bells, weighing about 12,000 pounds, in the steeple of the Church of the Most Holy Redeemer, in East Third Street, sometimes known as the Redemptorists' Church. The four bells of the Capuchin church and the two largest of the Redemptorists' were cast in West Troy by Meneely in 1868 and 1869. Four of the Redemptorist bells were cast at Constance, in Switzerland, prior to 1869. All

of them bear figures cast in bass-relief. On the largest, which unfortunately has been cracked, is a figure of Jesus in the attitude of benediction. This is called the Redemptorist Bell. It is also the tolling bell which strikes the hours. Surrounding the figure of the Redeemer is the legend in relief, "*Redemptori sacrum Signum, S. Smo.*" This bell weighs 5274 pounds. It is over five feet in height and between four and five in diameter. The second bell is called the Immaculata. It bears on its side in relief the image of the Virgin Mary, encircled by the inscription, "*B. V. M., Conceptioni Immaculate sacrum Signum.*" The other four bells are named for St. Michael, St. Alphonsus Liguori, Raphael, and Gabriel. Each bears on its side the figure of the archangel or saint after whom it was christened, and on the opposite side appropriate inscriptions. The view from the bell chamber of the Redemptorists' Church is more picturesque than that from Trinity steeple, although not so extended or varied. The ascent to the chamber is dark, difficult, and dangerous. Brother Gabriel, the lay brother who answers the door-bell, was very unwilling for me to make the ascent.

"No, you must not go up; your head will get dizzy, and you will fall. Father Rector says he don't care to have our church advertised in to-morrow's newspapers as the scene of a dreadful accident."

Finally, however, I prevailed on the carpenter to show me the way up. When I returned, covered with dust and flushed with the pleasure that accomplished enterprise always brings, Brother Gabriel threw up his hands and exclaimed, "Holy Mary! and you did go up? I would not have believed it! It's a miracle that you came back alive!"

In St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, in West Forty-ninth Street, hang three bells, whose united weight is 2387 pounds; and in Trinity Chapel, in West Twenty-fifth Street, are also three bells. They were formerly in the steeple of old Trinity, and were probably brought from England. St. Ann's Church, on Twelfth Street, has a fine peal of four bells, intended as the foundation of

a chime. They were cast at West Troy in 1870. The largest is dedicated to the Blessed Trinity, and bears the legend, "*Gloria in excelsis Deo.*" It weighs 1519 pounds. The second is dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament. Its legend is, "*Lauda Sion Salvatorem.*" On the third bell, which is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, is the inscription, "*Sub tuum presidium confugimus Sancta Dei Genitrix.*" The fourth, dedicated to St. Joseph, bears on its side the legend, "*Sanctissime Joseph, protector noster, ora pro nobis, nunc et in hora mortis nostræ.*" These four bells weigh 2930 pounds.

Full and partial chimes are now to be found in all parts of the country. Away off in Eureka, California, is a chime in the steeple of Christ Church. There are three chimes of bells in Troy, New York. The Church of the Good Shepherd, in Hartford, the gift of Mrs. Samuel Colt, has a chime. St. James's Church, in Birmingham, Connecticut, old St. John's, in Savannah, Georgia, and churches of various denominations in Indianapolis, Petersburg (Virginia), Cleveland (Ohio), Concord (New Hampshire), York (Pennsylvania), Rochester, and New Brunswick all have chimes. St. Ann's chimes in Brooklyn, St. John's in Newark, Grace Church and St. Patrick's in Buffalo, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Albany, St. Paul's in Reading, Pennsylvania, and the bell tower of Cornell University, all have sets of chime bells well worth mentioning.

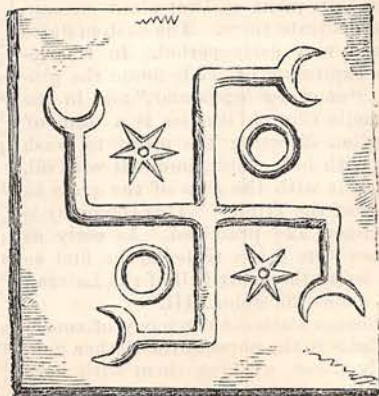
The only set of chimes to which historic interest attaches in this country is that which peals forth every Sunday morning from the steeple of old Christ Church, Philadelphia. Those bells were brought from England, a present from Queen Anne of blessed memory. During the Revolution, when the Quaker City was in danger of falling into the hands of the British, the precious bells were taken down and sunk in the Delaware by some patriotic members



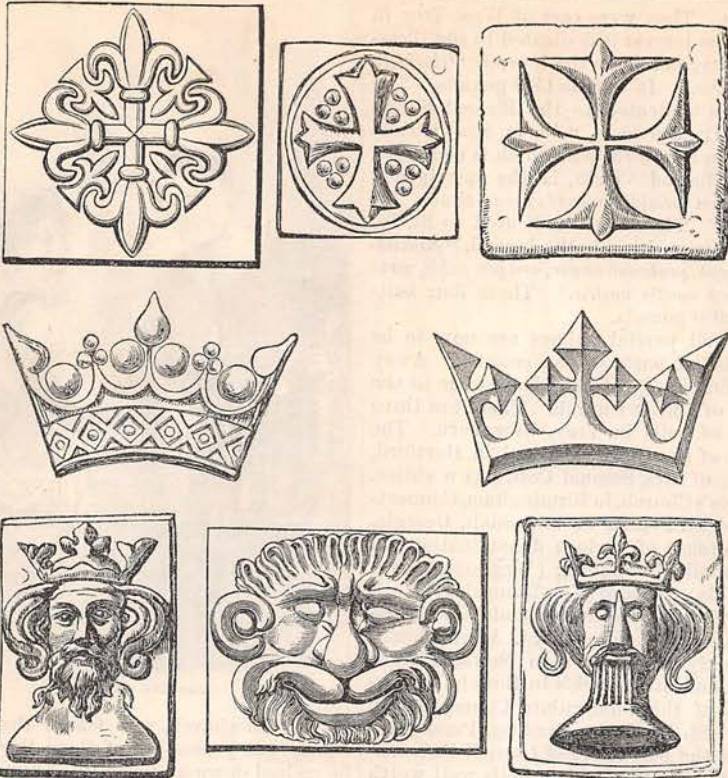
BROTHER GABRIEL.

of the old church, who feared that if the enemy got possession of them they would be melted down and cast into cannon-balls. Afterward they were drawn up from their watery bed and sent to Allentown, where they found shelter for a long time in the loft of an old Lutheran (?) church on the thoroughfare now known as Hamilton Street. When the war came to a close, the bells were removed to Philadelphia, and hung again in the old belfry, wherefrom on every holy-day and holiday they send forth their welcome notes of joy and gladness.

The half chimes and peals in the United States are very numerous. Outside of New



THE FYLFOT CROSS.



DECORATIONS ON OLD BELLS.

York, they are found in Jersey City, Newark, Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Rochester, Carlisle, Whitehall, Rome, Fort Wayne, Annapolis, Cumberland, Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, St. Paul, Buffalo, West Rockport, Troy, Erie, Milwaukee, Pittsburg, Cincinnati, Louisville, New Orleans, Mobile, and even down in Texas, at Castroville and San Antonio.

The custom of consecrating church bells is still universal among Roman Catholics, and it is not infrequent in Protestant communities to dedicate them. The custom dates back to a very early period. In Charlemagne's capitulary of 787 is found the prohibition "*ut cloccæ baptizentur*," and in the old Catholic Church litanies is a form of consecration directing the priest to wash the bell with holy water, anoint it with oil, and mark it with the sign of the cross in the name of the Trinity. This ceremony is still retained and practiced. As early as 968 names were given to bells, the first so marked being the great bell of the Lateran Church, named for John XIII.

The Roman Catholic ceremony of consecrating bells in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, washing them with holy water, and anointing with holy oil was prohibited in England at the time of the Refor-

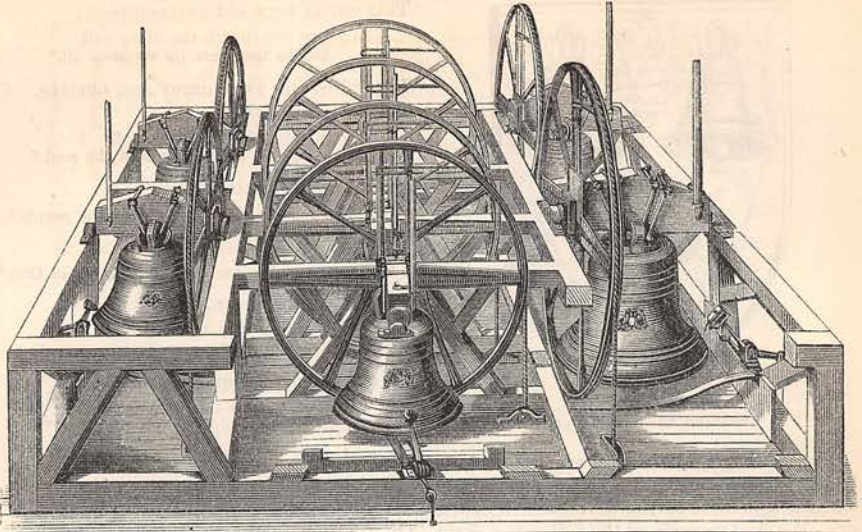
mation. In its place another ceremony was used, which partook of the nature of a Bacchanalian orgy. The bell was turned upside down, filled with punch, and baptized amidst the profane shoutings of a drunken rabble. In recent times, however, the bishops of Oxford, Salisbury, and other sees have set the example of dedicating the bells of their churches with a simple ceremony and the following prayers:

"Let us pray.—Almighty God, who by the mouth of Thy servant Moses didst command to make two silver trumpets for the convocation of solemn assemblies; Be pleased to accept our offering of this the work of our hands; and grant that through this generation, and through those that are to come after, it may continually call together Thy faithful people to praise and worship Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Grant, O Lord, that whosoever shall be called by the sound of this bell to Thine house of prayer may enter into Thy gates with thanksgiving and into Thy courts with praise, and finally may have a portion in the new song, and among the harpers harping with their harps in Thine house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Grant, O Lord, that whosoever shall by reason of sickness or any other necessity be so let and hindered that he can not come into the house of the Lord, may in heart and mind thither ascend, and have his share in the communion of Thy saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Grant, O Lord, that they who with their outward



ears shall hear the sound of this bell may be aroused inwardly in their spirits, and draw nigh unto Thee, the God of their salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Grant, O Lord, that all they for whose passing away from this world this bell shall sound may be received into Thy paradise of Thine elect, and find grace, light, and everlasting rest; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be all honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

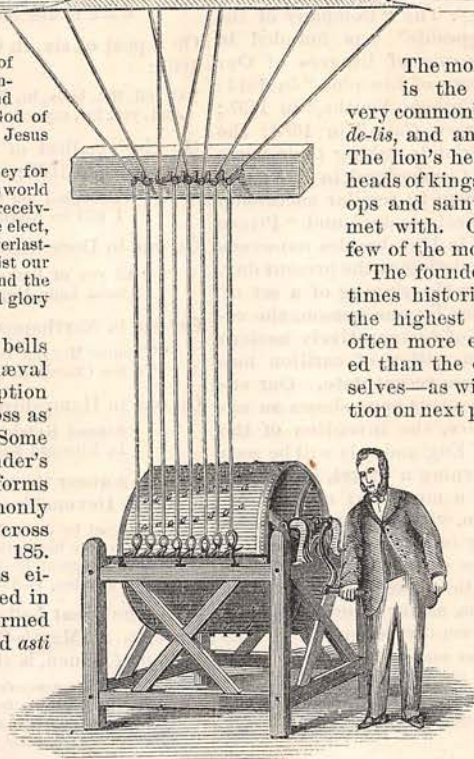
The consecration of bells in the early and mediæval ages led also to the adoption on bells of an initial cross as a part of the legend. Some think this was the founder's mark. Two familiar forms of what are commonly known as the fylfot cross are given on page 185. This mystic symbol is either four Gammas joined in the centre, or it is formed of the two words *su* and *asti*—"it is well." The form was used by the Brahmins and Buddhists, and is known in the mythology of the North as the hammer of Thor the Thunderer, and is sometimes called the thunder-bolt.

Some of the decorations on old bells are particularly elegant and beautiful in design; others, though more simple, are still highly characteristic and graceful in conception.

The most usual ornament is the cross. Another very commonly used is the *fleur-de-lis*, and another the crown. The lion's head, Tudor badges, heads of kings and queens, bishops and saints, are frequently met with. On page 186 are a few of the most noticeable.

The founders' marks—sometimes historical evidences of the highest importance—are often more elaborately finished than the decorations themselves—as witness the illustration on next page, which is supposed to be the mark of Richard Braysier, of Northwick.

Peal ringing is said to be a peculiarly English institution of great age. As early as 1550, when Paul Hentzner traveled in England, he wrote: "The people of England are vastly fond of great



THE MECHANICAL CARILLON.

noises that fill the ear, such as firing cannon, beating of drums, and ringing of bells; so that it is common for a number of them that have got a glass in their heads to get up into the belfry and ring the bells for hours together for the sake of exercise."



RICHARD BRAYSIER'S MARK.

Change ringing does not appear to have been invented until the latter part of the sixteenth or first of the seventeenth century. We find records of the following societies of ringers, established for the study of the art of ringing: The "Company of the Schollers of Chepeside" was founded in 1603; the "Companie of Ringers of Our Blessed Virgin Mary of Lincoln," in 1614; the "Society of College Youths," in 1637; the "Western Green Caps," in 1683; the Society of Cumberlands, taking their name from the Duke of Cumberland, in 1745; and a long list of others in regular succession down to "The Westminster" and "Prince of Wales Youths," in 1780, besides numerous modern societies existing at the present day.

Chime ringing, or the ringing of a set of eight bells or more by one person, the *carillons à clavier*, is of comparatively modern origin, and the invention of carillon machinery of still more recent date. Our engraving on the previous page shows an admirable contrivance, the invention of the Messrs. Warner, of England. It will be seen that by simply turning a barrel, larger but similar to that of a music-box or hand-organ, one person can, with faultless precision, chime eight or any other number of bells.

The inscriptions on old European bells are too quaint to be passed by. Some are epigrammatic gems, as, for example, this on a village bell cast centuries ago:

*"Gaudemus gaudentibus,
Dolemus dolentibus."*

"We rejoice with the joyous,
We sorrow with the sorrowing."

And this:

*"Laudo Deum verum, plebem voco, conjugo clerum;
Defunctos ploro, pestem fugo, festa decoro;
Funera plango, fulgura frango, Sabata pango;
Excito centos, dissipato ventos, paco cruentos."*

"I praise the true God, I summon the people, I assemble the clergy; I mourn the dead, I put the plague to flight, I grace the feast; I wait at the funeral, I abate the lightning, I proclaim the Sabbath; I arouse the indolent, I disperse the winds, I appease the revengeful."

This one is very old and common:

"I to the church the living call,
And to the grave do summon all."

The following are quaint and curious. On a bell in Derbyshire, 1622:

"I sweetly tolling men do call
To taste on meats that feed the soul."

On one in Wiltshire, 1628:

"Call a solemne assemble—gather the people."

On another, 1582:

"Be mec and loly toe heare the worde of God."

On one in Yorkshire, 1656:

"When I do ring, God's prayes sing;
When I do toule, pray heart and soule."

On a fire bell in Dorsetshire, 1619:

"Lord, quench this furious flame;
Arise, run, help, put out the same."

On a church bell in Wiltshire, 1619:

"Be strong in faythe, praise God well—
Frances Countes Hertford's bell."

On another, in Warwickshire, 1675:

"I ring at six to let men know
When to and from their worke to go."

On a peal of six, in Cambridgeshire, cast in 1607:

"Of. all. the. bells. in. Benet. I. am. the. best.
And. yet. for. my. casting. the. parish. paid. lest."

On the smallest of a peal of six, in Wiltshire, cast in 1666:

"Though I am the least,
I will be heard as well as the reast."

On one in Dorsetshire, 1700:

"All you of Bathe that hear me sound
Thank Lady Hopton's hundred pound."

On one in Northamptonshire, 1601:

"Thomas Morgan Esquier gave me
To the Church of Hetford frank and free."

On one in Hampshire, 1695:

"Samuel Knight made this ring
In Binstead steeple for to ding."

Here is a queer inscription, of a late date, on a bell in Devonshire:

"Recast by John Taylor and Son,
Who the best prize for church bells won
At the great Ex-bi-bi-til-on
In London, 1—8—5 and 1."

On the great bell of Rouen, France, presented to St. Mary's Church by George, Archbishop of Rouen, is this inscription:

*"Je suis nommée George d'Amboise,
Que plus que trente-six mille pois;
Et si qui bien me poysera,
Quarante mille y trouvera."*

"I am called George d'Amboise, who weigh over thirty-six thousand pounds. If some one would weigh me well, he would find me forty thousand."

One of three bells in Orkney, Scotland, cast in 1528, bears the following:

"Maid be master robert maxwell, bishop of Orknay, y^e second zier of his consecration y^e zier of God I^m V^e XXVIII, y^e XV. zier of Kyng James y^e V. be robert Borthyky; maid al thre in y^e castel of Edynburgh."

On the great bell in Glasgow cathedral is this:

"In the year of grace, 1583, Marcus Knox, a merchant in Glasgow, zealous for the interest of the Reformed Religion, caused me to be fabricated in Holland for the use of his fellow-citizens of Glasgow, and placed me with solemnity in the Tower of their Cathedral. My function was announced by the impress on my bosom: 'Me audito venias doctrinam sanctam ut discas,' and I was taught to proclaim the hours of unheeded time. 195 years had sounded these awful warnings when I was broken by the hands of inconsiderate and unskillful men. In the year 1790 I was cast into the furnace, refounded at London, and returned to my sacred vocation. Reader! thou also shall know a resurrection; may it be to eternal life. Thomas Mears fecit, London, 1790."

At Bakewell, England, is a peal of eight bells, each of which bears its own inscription, thus:

First Bell.

"When I begin our merry din
This band I lead, from discord free,
And for the fame of human name
May every leader copy me."

Second Bell.

"Mankind, like us, too oft are found
Possessed of nought but empty sound."

Third Bell.

"When of departed hours we toll the knell,
Instruction take and use the future well."

Fourth Bell.

"When men in Hymen's bands unite,
Our merry peals produce delight;
But when Death goes his weary rounds,
We send forth sad and solemn sounds."

Fifth Bell.

"Through Grandsires and Triples with pleasure men
range,
Till death calls the Bob, and brings on the last
change."⁹

Sixth Bell.

"When victory crowns the public weal,
With glee we give the merry peal."

Seventh Bell.

"Would men like me join and agree,
They'd live in tuneful harmony."

Eighth Bell.

"Possessed of deep sonorous tone,
This belfry king sits on his throne;
And when the merry bells go round,
Adds to and mellows every sound.
So in a just and well-poised state,
Where all degrees possess due weight,
One greater power, one greater tone,
Is ceded to improve their own."

The more modern inscriptions on church bells are commonplace dedications to the Saviour, the Virgin, the Trinity, or some one of the saints. Some bear simple expressions of praise, some expressions of loyalty, some commemorate public events, and others are embellished with lines of miserable doggerel

⁹ "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 grandstrebob-ators.* Heigh-ho! who can hope to translate all this gibberish to the uninitiated?"—*The Bell.* By the Rev. Alfred Gatty, Vicar of Ecclesfield.

done in the best style of the bell-founder's art.

In many of the old towers of English churches are found painted or written in old English script "Laws of the Belfry." For example. In St. Andrew's Church, Plymouth, is the following:

"Nos resonare libet Pietas, Mors, atq. Voluptas."

"Let awful silence first proclaimed be,
And praise unto the Holy Trinity,
Then Honour give unto our valiant King,
So with a blessing, Raise this Noble Ring.
Hark how the chirping Treble sings most clear,
And cov'ring Tom comes rowling in the rear.
Now up an end, at stay, come let us see
What laws are best to keep Sobriety.
Who Swears or curse or in an hasty mood
Quarrell or strikes, altho' they draws no blood;
Or wears his Hatt, or Spurs, or turns a Bell
Or by unskillful handling mairs a peal;
Let him pay Sixpence for each Single crime—
'Twill make him cautious 'gainst another time.
But if the Sextons fault an hindrance be
We call from him the double penalty.
If any should our Parson disrespect,
Or Wardens orders any time neglect,
Let him be always held in foul disgrace,
And ever after banished this place.
Now round lets go with pleasure to the ear,
And peirce with echo through the yielding air,
And when the Bells are ceas'd then lett us sing
God bless our holy church, God save the King.
Amen. 1700."

Another set of these rules, dated 1627, is from St. John's Church, Chester. It is as follows:

"You ringers all observe these orders well,
He forfeits 12 pence who turns ore a bell:
And he y^e ringes with either spur or hatt
His 6 pence certainly shall pay for y^e,
And he that spoil or doth disturbe a peale
Shall pay his 4 pence or a cainn of ale
And he that is harde to curse or sweare
Shall pay his 12 pence and forbear
These customes elsewhere now are used
Lest bells and ringers be abused
You gallants, then, y^e on purpose come to ring
See that you coyne alonge with you doth bringe;
And further also if y^e you ring here
You must ring truly with hande and eare
Or else your forfeits surely pay
Fall speedily, and that without delay
Our laws are old, y^e are not new,
The sextone looketh for his due."

The superstitions regarding submerged and buried bells have given many beautiful legends to the lovers of antiquarian lore. The tradition of the Inchcape bell, which was hung by the abbots of Aberbrothock on the Inchcape rock at the mouth of the Frith of Tay, has been repeated in song and story until it is familiar to every school-boy. The legend of the Jersey bells is not so hackneyed. It runs thus:

Many years ago the twelve parish churches of Jersey each possessed a valuable and beautiful peal of bells. But during the civil wars the states resolved to sell these bells to defray the heavy expenses of their army. Accordingly, the bells were collected and sent to France for that purpose; but on the passage the ship foundered, and every thing was lost. Thus Heaven punished the sacrilege. Since then, before a storm, the bells

ring up from the deep; and to this day the fishermen of St. Ouen's Bay always go to the edge of the water before embarking, to listen if they can hear the bells upon the wind; and if those warning notes are heard, nothing will induce them to leave the shore; if all is quiet they fearlessly set sail.

"Tis an ocean of death to the mariner,
Who wearily fights the sea,
For the foaming surge is his winding-sheet,
And his funeral knell are we:
His funeral knell our passing-bell,
And his winding-sheet the sea."

Four hundred years ago the old church of St. Andrew, standing about a mile and a half from Romford, England, was pulled down. Its site in the meadows is still known as the "Old Church." On this spot, says tradition, the bells may be heard every year on St. Andrew's Day, ringing right merrily in honor of the patron saint.

Near Raleigh, in Nottinghamshire, England, is a valley, said to have been caused by an earthquake many centuries ago, which swallowed up a village with all the people, their houses, and the church. It was once a custom for the people of the country-side to assemble in this valley on Christmas-day to listen to the ringing of the bells beneath their feet. The sound, they asserted, could be distinctly heard by putting the ear close to the ground.

At Kilginiol, near Blackpool, is a place called "The Church," where, on Christmas-eve, any one can hear the merry peal of the bells ringing away down in the bowels of the earth.

These superstitions regarding submerged and buried bells are not confined to Great Britain. I once listened in awe and wonder to some mysterious music that came floating over the waters of Pascagoula Bay. Any inhabitant of Mobile will corroborate this statement. There the sounds are called by the Mobilians mermaids' music. Those that

charmed my listening ear at Pascagoula were inexpressibly sweet, like that of "silver strings in hollow shells," and sad as the wail of a penitent siren.

"What do you think makes that music, Uncle Cæsar?" I said to the old African slave boatman that was rowing my boat.

"Deed, missis, dey say it are dat bell what done sunk out dar in a ship, leastways a wessel o' some kind or nudder. De bell was de cap'n's bell, an' he war a mighty weeked man, an' one night arter he had been ashore a-cuttin' up awful, he tu'ned in, an' afore de day done broke, de ship went down, an' was neber seed no moah. Sense dat day dat bell has been tollin' dat kine o' ghost music mos' ebery night in de warm wedder. 'Pears to me mighty singler, dat story. Kase de sound are not de sound of a bell. It's moah like a church orgin, playin' a mighty sollum kine o' tune too. Enty, missis?"

It was a truly good description that old Uncle Cæsar gave of it. It brought back a memory which, from the very dissimilarity of the sounds, gave rise to one of those mental comparisons we sometimes make. No untraveled American can appreciate it fully. It was the music of what Victor Hugo calls an opera of steeples. We give the description entire from his *Quasimodo*:

"In an ordinary way the noise issuing from Paris in the daytime is the talking of the city; at night it is the breathing of the city; in this case it is the singing of the city. Lend your ear to this opera of steeples. Diffuse over the whole the buzzing of half a million of human beings, the eternal murmur of the river, the infinite piping of the wind, the grave and distant quartette of the four forests, placed like immense organs on the four hills of the horizon; soften down with a demi-tint all that is too shrill and too harsh in the central mass of sound, and say if you know any thing more rich, more gladdening, more dazzling, than that tumult of bells, that furnace of music; than those ten thousand brazen tones, breathed all at once from flutes of stone three hundred feet high; than that city, which is but one orchestra; than that symphony, rushing and roaring like a tempest."



UNCLE CÆSAR'S EXPLANATION.