vidence send to-day for him and his little ones? After waiting an hour or two, when his time to move off *does* come, to what sort of a tune will he have to drive his cab? He may have to trot away for sixpence, or he may do business to the amount of as many shillings. Brimble, it is plain, must regard the Stand as very speculative ground; and it need not be wondered at if with him and his congeners there should be prejudices and predilections in regard to lucky and unlucky Stands, as we have good reason to know there are; nor need we marvel that, weary of the fortune of some unpropitious Stand, Brimble, recalling to mind his hungry family, dashes out of the Stand in despair, and, albeit it is contrary to the regulations, commences crawling the road for customers, and competing with the omnibuses along their routes.

Meanwhile, it is time we should pull up, and come to a stand ourselves.

CHIMES UPON THE BELLS.

Few more forcible pictures have been drawn than the one by Cowper, representing the solitariness of the shipwrecked Alexander Selkirk, cast on an uninhabited island:—

> "But the sound of the church-going bell,
> These valleys and rocks never heard;
> Never sigh'd at the toll of a knell,
> Or smiled when a Sabbath appear'd."

Still, there may be a "church-going" people without a bell to summon them to its porch, being quite unable to procure one. This was the case for half a century or more with many of the Episcopalian emigrants to the Trans-Atlantic colonies, who provided themselves occasionally with odd or incongruous substitutes. In some parish accounts of the date of 1711, an entry occurs, which has at first sight a puzzling appearance. "For the minister £50; for *beating the drum* £1; for the clerk £1." But the lines of a local rhymer of the time explain the discordance:—

> "New England's Sabbath-day
> Is heaven-like, still, and pure;
> Then Israel walks the way
> Up to the temple's door.
> The time we tell,
> When there to come,
> By *beat of drum*,
> Or *sounding shell*."

But the most curious substitute for a bell, of which we ever heard, belongs to Old England, and originated with the inventive genius of a parish-clerk in Wensleydale, Yorkshire. That district, from which a recent peerage has its title, consists of wild moorlands and a thin sprinkling of population. Its condition was primitive in the extreme half a century ago. There was a small church, very solitary and very ruinous, to which a handful of peasantry gathered from miles round on Sundays. The breezes found ready entrance, likewise the rain and the snow, through broken panes of glass and gaping holes in the roof. A rotten door fell from its hinges, and a thorn bush was substituted for it to keep out the sheep. The bell dropped from its perch, and was hopelessly disabled. But, not to be conquered by difficulties, the official in attendance hit upon the expedient of poking his own head out of the belfry window, at the appointed time, lustily bawling *ding-dong, ding-dong*, imitating the hushed voice of the charmer.

Pleasant and soothing is the sound of bells, heard at a distance in the still calm eventide. Moore, in some well-known lines, refers to the peal of Ashbourne Church, Derbyshire, to which he often listened with delight in his cottage garden, while residing at the neighbouring village of Mayfield.

> "Those evening bells! those evening bells!
> How many a tale their music tells,
> Of youth, and home, and that sweet time
> When last I heard their music chime."

An evening bell, the curfew, or *couvre-feu*, is famous alike in the story of our social life and in our literature. It was rung at sunset in summer, and about eight o'clock in winter, as a signal for the people to put out their fires and go to bed, in order to diminish the risk of extensive conflagrations at a period when houses were almost entirely built of wood. It has been commonly asserted that William the Conqueror introduced the custom into England, with the view of more effectually enslaving his new subjects. But it was known before his time as a common police law in Europe, designed for the object stated, as well as to prevent nightly conspiracies; and the Norman sovereign only enforced its stricter observance. By a statute of Edward I. persons were forbidden to be in the streets after *couvre-feu*. Our poetry abounds with pleasing allusions to the usage. Thus Gray writes:—

> "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
> The lowing herds wind slowly o'er the lea,
> The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
> And leaves the world to darkness and to me."

Milton has a sonorous and musical couplet on the subject:—

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

A suggestive poem also, by Longfellow, deserves notice:—

> "Solemnly, mournfully,
> Dealing its dole,
> The curfew-bell
> Is beginning to toll.
>
> "Cover the embers,
> And put out the light;
> Toil comes with the morning,
> And rest with the night.
>
> "Dark grow the windows,
> And quenched is the fire;
> Sound fades into silence,
> All footsteps retire.
>
> "No voice in the chambers,
> No sound in the hall!
> Sleep and oblivion
> Reign over all!"

Dante, in the "Purgatorio," makes the curfew weep for the day that is dying. It is not known when the practice ceased as a legal observance; but at present "the knell of parting day" is rung wherever there are funds to pay the ringer. No law against nightly locomotion being now in force, it is common after dark, in the northern capitals, during the reign of King Frost, to hear

"The sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically swells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells!"

But return we from the sledges to the steeples.

Superstition early seized upon the belfries, and attributed to them great potency in driving away sprites and evil spirits, while allaying the storms and tempests they were supposed to brew. An eminent ritualist affirmed that "the church, when a tempest is seen to arise, rings the bells, that the fiends, hearing the trumpets of the eternal King, may flee away, and cease from raising the storm." But we will let the metal speak for itself upon the subject, by the monkish jingles commonly inscribed upon it in the middle ages.

"Vivos voco—Mortuos plango—Fulgura frango."
"I call the living—I mourn the dead—I break the lightning."

"Funera plango—Fulgura frango—Sabbato pango."
Excito lentos—Dissipo ventos—Paco cruentos."
"I mourn at funerals—I break the lightning—I proclaim the Sabbath.
I urge the tardy—I disperse the winds—I calm the turbulent."

Many parish accounts have entries respecting bread, cheese, and beer provided for the ringers during thunderings. But in the year 1718, during a dreadful storm on the coasts of Brittany, in France, the lightning seemed to enter a protest against the superstition, and shook popular faith in it in that locality. It was noticed that some of the churches which made the greatest uproar were struck, while those discreet enough to hold their tongues were spared. As high towers are specially in danger, while bell-ropes, moistened by the humid atmosphere, are capital conductors, the practice of bell-ringing in thunderstorms led to many fatal casualties. A German *savant* of the last century calculated that, in the space of thirty-three years, 368 towers had been injured, and 121 ringers killed. Hence, the King of Prussia interfered to prohibit the usage in his dominions; the same was done in the Palatinate; and in 1844, the prefect of Dordogne, in France, repeated the order. But so recently as the year 1852, the Romanist bishop of Malta ordered all the church bells of the island to be rung for an hour in order to quell a violent gale.

A wild story of the middle ages relates how the good city of Prague was delivered from a whole army of ghosts by the great bell of the cathedral. Thus Longfellow poetically records it:—

"I have read in some old marvellous tale,
Some legend strange and vague,
That a midnight host of spectres pale,
Beleaguered the walls of Prague.

"Beside the Moldau's rushing stream,
With the wan moon overhead,
There stood, as in an awful dream,
The army of the dead.

"White as a sea-fog, landward bound,
The spectral camp was seen,
And with a sorrowful, deep sound,
The river flowed between.

"No other voice nor sound was there,
No drum, nor sentry's pace;
The mist-like banners clasped the air,
As clouds with clouds embrace.

"But when the old cathedral bell
Proclaimed the morning prayer,
The white pavilions rose and fell
On the alarmed air.

"Down the broad valley fast and far
The troubled army fled;
Uprose the glorious morning-star—
The ghastly host was dead!"

Many a terrible conflict with demons had St. Anthony, as the legends say, during his long eremitical life; and he is commonly represented in the figures drawn of him carrying a bell in his hand, or suspended from his staff. The foolery was exposed by Latimer in very happy style at the Reformation. "I tell you," said he, "if the holy bells would serve against the devil, or that he might be put away through their sound, no doubt we would soon banish him out of all England: for I think, if all the bells in England should be rung together at a certain hour, there would be almost no place but some bells might be heard there, and so the devil should have no abiding place in England."

The passing-bell grew out of the superstition noticed. It was rung when persons lay a-dying, in order to chase away the evil spirits, supposed to be hovering near the bed-side of the patient, waiting to take captive the liberated soul, and ready to engage in a fray with good or guardian angels, for its possession. Scenes of this kind seem pictorially displayed in some of the oldest remains of Etrurian if not of Egyptian art. Dissociated from its original purpose, the passing-bell was retained for some time after the Reformation, and tolled to excite the living to pray for the person about to depart. Often must its tone have sounded sadly upon the ears of the party most directly concerned in the event, with those of friends and relatives. But instances of remarkable composure are on record. In 1567, when Lady Catherine Grey was dying in the Tower, she overheard the governor say to an attendant, "Were it not best to send to the church for the bell to be rung?" and immediately replied herself, "Good Sir Owen, let it be so." The usage has long been abandoned; and belfries are confined to the announcement, either that a death has actually occurred, as in the instance of the notable, or that a funeral is in process. We make room for a verse from Schiller.

"From the steeple
Tolls the bell,
Deep and heavy,
The death-knell!
Guiding with dirge-note—solemn, sad, and slow,
To the last home earth's weary wanderers know."

No mistake can be made by the toll sepulchral, like that which occasionally, though rarely, attended the passing-bell. Old Fuller relates the very curious case of two divines, who, while in health and strength, agreed that the survivor should preach the other's funeral sermon. An apparently mortal illness seized one of them, and the bell was set a-going. The other remarked to a visitor, as an excuse for leaving him, having mentioned the compact, "Hear how the passing-bell tolls for my

dear friend Dr. Felton, now a-dying; I must to my study," to ruminate upon text and sermon. But though nigh unto death, the sick man rallied, and actually lived ten years after, preaching the funeral sermon of him who had listened to his passing-bell.

Doleful is the sound of the death-bell, yet is it the jubilant signal of everlasting joy to many a spirit. Let the passing-bell remind us of the shortness of time, and of the need of that Saviour, to hear the glad tidings of whose grace the church-bell has so often served as a merciful invitation!

Thus far chimes have been noted respecting unmistakeable bells—those of the visible, touchable, and ponderous class. Now for some relating to the invisible and impalpable.

Delighting in the marvellous, it pleased our ancestors to suppose, with those of other nations, that no startling event could come to pass without premonitory intimations of it; and among others, a warning bell is often mentioned, under circumstances where either no actual bell existed, or there were no hands to toll it. Thus the ballad devoted to a dark domestic tragedy says:—

"The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aërial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing,
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall."

Rogers alludes to the same fancy in lines on an "Old Oak."

"There, once, the steel-clad knight reclined,
His sable plumage tempest-toss'd;
And as the death-bell smote the wind
From towers long fled by human kind,
His brow the hero cross'd."

Uhland has a poem called "The Lost Church," which opens as follows, according to Lord Lindsay's version:—

"Oft in the forest far one hears
A passing sound of distant bells;
Nor legends old nor human wit
Can tell us whence the music swells.
From the Lost Church 'tis thought that soft
Faint ringing cometh on the wind:
Once, many pilgrims trod the path,
But no one now the way can find.

"Not long since deep into the wood
I stray'd, where path was none to see;
Weary of human wickedness,
My heart to God yearn'd lovingly.
There, through the silent wilderness,
Again I heard the sweet bells stealing;
Ever as higher yearn'd my heart,
The nearer and the louder pealing."

There is a tradition current among the Arabs of the Sinaitic peninsula, to which Uhland seems to refer, to the effect that a monastery once existed there, which suddenly disappeared, and has never since been seen, though the bells are often heard ringing as usual, at the canonical hours. How have such fancies originated? It is a matter of common observation, that in certain moods of mind the senses are apt to be imposed upon by the sounds of nature; and the misinterpretation of realities has doubtless given birth to many a phantom bell. In the very district named, there is the mountain of the bell, *Jebel Narkous*, so called from sounds being emitted by it, sometimes resembling musical glasses, and anon like two pieces of metal struck against each other. The probable explanation is, that there are interior caverns communicating with one another, or with the atmosphere, by means of small orifices, so that any considerable difference of temperature may occasion currents of air to pass through the apertures with sufficient velocity for producing sonorous vibrations. Humboldt listened to similar music from mountains on the banks of the Upper Orinoco. Nothing is more natural, in the dense woods of Guiana, than for a stranger to imagine a belfry at hand, or, finding none, be lost in wonderment, upon hearing the snowy-white bell-bird utter its note, sounding like the toll of the curfew every four or five minutes in the depths of the forest. Very possibly, also, actual bells have often suggested the idea of the supernatural, owing to their sound travelling to enormous distances under certain circumstances, as from the shores over an unbroken expanse of sea, in favourable states of the atmosphere. On one occasion, when seventy miles from the coast, the church-bells of Rio Janeiro were distinctly heard by a ship's company.

The "Lay of the Bell!" Such is the title of the greatest of Schiller's lyrics. A reference to it will form an appropriate close, especially as the centenary of his nativity has recently been celebrated, favoured with the brightest autumn weather, November 10, 1859. There were gatherings in almost all the capitals and chief towns of Europe in honour of the man; and in most the poem was either recited or sung. At Stuttgart and Leipsic, foundry-men guided a cart with a bell that chimed in the procession. The piece was composed about the commencement of the present century; but two years elapsed before the final touch was given to it. Often did the poet visit a neighbouring foundry, to make himself thoroughly master of the mechanical processes which he applied to ideal purposes. The "Lay of the Bell" is the lay of man's life, depicting with equal truth and splendour the casting, completing, and uses of the bell, and the birth, progress, and duties of the human being. Sir Bulwer Lytton and Lord Francis Egerton have produced translations of it. We give the opening and closing stanzas.

"Fast, in its prison-walls of earth,
Awaits the mould of bakèd clay.
Up, comrades, up, and aid the birth—
The Bell that shall be born to-day!
Who would honour obtain,
With the sweat and the pain,
The praise that Man gives to the Master must buy;
But the blessing withal must descend from on high.

* * * * * *

Slowly now the cords upheave her!
From her earth-grave soars the Bell;
Mid the airs of heaven we leave her!
In the music-realm to dwell!
Up—upwards—yet raise—
She has risen—she sways.
Fair Bell to our city bode joy and increase,
And oh, may thy first sound be hallowed to Peace!"

The prayer for peace was peculiarly pertinent at a time when one of the Napoleonic wars was wildly raging in Germany. Never again may the bells of our own land have to utter notes of alarm, or sound the pæans of victory, but be always jubilant of peace on earth and goodwill to men.