

Christmas, 1884.

CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT
TO
The Bell News and Ringers' Record.



MR. JOHN COX,

Member of the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths ; the St. James's Society ; the Waterloo Society ; etc.

THE celebrated ringer and composer whose portrait is here given, was born in London on the 9th of December, 1813, so that he has just completed his 71st year. At a comparatively early age Mr. Cox became associated with bells, about the same period that Mr. JAMES HEWETT, the son of Mr. Cox's then employer, began also to identify himself with ringing matters. Not only ringing, but the theory of composition attracted the notice of the subject of this memoir very soon after he had become a practical ringer, for while he was considered only a "colt" by his seniors, he had produced a peal of Stedman Caters, a task at that time not so lightly esteemed as now. On the 7th of October, 1833, he joined the Cumberlands, and rang his first peal—one of Grandsire Triples, at St. Mary, Islington, the same evening, and from this time it may with accuracy be stated, that his progress in the Exercise has been one long-continued success.

Those ringers who are resident in London, and who frequently mix with the elders of the metropolitan companies, are now

and then treated to a relation of incidents, many of them humorous, which have from time to time occurred, in which such veterans as Mr. Cox and his contemporaries have taken part: Many of these anecdotes occur to our mind as we write this sketch, and we would fain tell them, were we not prevented by the space at our disposal. In the practice of the art, Mr. Cox became an acute observer, and became one of the most capable at "picking up" a peal, when through the temporary aberration of the conductor its performance had become doubtful. This qualification, viz.: that of conducting as separated from mere bob-calling, Mr. Cox possessed in an eminent degree, and we know no member of the London Exercise, with the exception of Mr. MATTHEW WOOD, whose abilities in this direction have stood so high as those of Mr. Cox. Another great example of his skill lay in taking a peal off as it is being rung, while outside the tower, though in this instance the honours must be divided with Mr. H. W. HALCY; the idea that either of these celebrated ringers may possibly be within earshot during the progress

of a peal would certainly act as a wholesome deterrent to a bob-caller who was determined to "make a peal somehow."

In the year 1835, Mr. Cox joined the Ancient Society of College Youths, and in the December of the following year rang a peal of Stedman Caters with that company at St. Saviour's, Southwark. His next peal was one of Stedman Cinques at the same church, the first peal of Cinques in that method on the bells; and he continued ringing peals with this company till 1851, in which year a peal of Stedman Caters was accomplished in hand. On the 22nd of February, 1853, he again joined the Royal Cumberland Youths, and with them rung many peals in hand, which performances have duly been recorded in the various ringing books. The last peal he took part in was a 5001 of Stedman Caters at St. Margaret's, Westminster, which brings the number of peals rung by him to 222, ranking next to Mr. M. A. Wood in point of number of peals.

A worthy feature of Mr. Cox's nature, and one that ought not to be omitted even in so brief a sketch of him as this, is his willingness on all occasions to give instruction and counsel in the most intricate questions connected with the science; to prove a peal for a young composer, and in doing so to point out the proper basis upon which the structure of a peal should be reared. An admirer of Mr. Cox says:—"No person wanting to ring a peal need long be kept waiting if he properly consults Mr. Cox's convenience. We remember our first attempt at ringing Stedman Triples; we took the 6th bell, had a mighty dread of the slow work, although eager to dip into the fray. While anxiously looking and expecting, the touch was brought round and we found no slow work! such was the Master's skill and ingenuity." The eminence of Mr. Cox as a composer is well-known, we apprehend, to all, and we need not dwell upon his abilities in that respect. When the production of the sixty courses of Stedman Caters, with the treble a fixed bell, engaged the attention of all the celebrated composers of the day, Mr. Cox entered the field, and in our humble opinion the peal of 6701 in that method produced by him is the one entitled to the greatest merit among those possessing the above-mentioned properties.

As a handbell ringer Mr. Cox is second to no man living. He rang 3-4 in the first peal of Stedman Cinques ever rung in hand; in the same way he has called a peal of Stedman Triples and Holt's Original; and he rang 1-2 in the peal of Stedman Triples performed without any signal of the calls being given. About eight years ago we were called upon as umpires to witness Mr. Cox attempt to chime a 720 of Norwich Court Bob Minor, and this he did without the least mistake. While in his prime as steeplekeeper at St. Bride's, he would amuse himself by chiming Cambridge, Superlative, and Imperial Surprise Minor, besides several of the easier Treble Bob and Plain methods. An excellent double-handed ringer, able to ring almost any two bells to Stedman Cinques, any two to Caters, he has rang four bells while calling Stedman Triples. It is not only in London that his abilities are known, for he has rang peals in other towns, and has travelled a great part of the continent. In Paris he called Holt's Ten-part peal of Grandsire Triples with his friends on their return home from a long tour.

In the year 1876 his friends presented him with a significant testimonial of the value of about £45, and if anything more be wanted to shew the high appreciation in which this prominent ringer is held amongst his friends, it will be found in the fact that at the close of his Ringing Jubilee they subscribed the very handsome amount of upwards of £70 sterling for the purpose of procuring him creature comforts in the evening of his life. Mr. Cox, we regret to add, is not likely again to commence peal-ringing, but he still holds on to his post as steeplekeeper of St. Bride's, Fleet Street, and we sincerely trust the authorities may not only keep him there, but render the duties of the office as light as possible, and refrain, on the ground of economy, from adding any thing to them.

FOUND.—The key to the trunk of an elephant. A hair from the head of a river. A dozen feathers plucked from the "wings of the wind." A drop of blood from the heart of a stone. The nail from the finger of scorn. The diary of the "man in the moon." A boot from the foot of a mountain. The owners are requested to call, prove properly, pay expenses, and take them away.

THE LOST PEAL-BOOK.

THE Abbey society of change-ringers was established at Slowborough early in the last century, and had once comprised a large number of members, some of whom were first class ringers in their day. It had however gradually dwindled down until, at the time we are speaking of, it numbered only about a dozen members and a few honorary ones. An old wooden box in the room at the "Crown and Mitre," where the society met, contained all that was left to them of bygone days, consisting of a few musty papers, some old minute and account books, a copy of the *Campanologia*, published in 1706, a members' name-book, and a crumpled and torn certificate. The block from which the latter had been struck had been lost at the printers some fifty years back, and the society had long since ceased to grant certificates to its members on joining. There had once been a peal-book, but this had long since disappeared no one knew where, although Colt, the oldest member of the society living, said he remembered it when he was a lad of eighteen, and that he believed it contained about a dozen peals. One thing he said he was certain of, and that was that the last peal entered was a 5088 Kent Treble Bob Major rung in June, 1815, on the arrival of the news of victory at the battle of Waterloo. He remembered this well, he said, for in those days he used to cover with the tenor when they rang Grandsire Triples, and he was very indignant at the time because they managed to make up a Treble Bob party and he had to stand out. But Colt was now eighty-six, and rather hazy in his memory sometimes, and some of the present company considered his reminiscences about the peal-book as pure romance. Although the society had long ceased to exist as anything more than a local company, the members still held their annual meeting for the purpose of electing a Master and passing accounts. The Master's election was however only a matter of form. The whole management of the society was in the hands of the Secretary, who, by the way, was also Treasurer. This double office had for many years been held by Mr. John Trippels, who was a man who dabbled in public offices. Not only was he Treasurer and Secretary to the society, but he was also conductor of the ringing, (i.e. he called the touches, which rarely much exceeded 1000, but he never knew much about anybody else's work except his own). He was also head verger at the Abbey, and he held the steeple-keeper's office as well (i.e. he took the salary for it, and had a deputy to do the chiming and other work when he was engaged elsewhere). Mr. Trippels was also collector of the vicarial tithes, deputy-clerk to the local board, and mathematical master to the choristers' school.

Now the date of the commencement of our story is the 21st of December, 18—, and on the evening of December 26th the society had held its annual meeting for the last forty years. The society had rung for the festivals of Easter, Ascension Day, Whitsuntide, and Trinity; they had commemorated the birthday of Her Most Gracious Majesty on May 24th, and her Accession on June 20th; they had rung for the Mayor on November 9th; and now they were about to celebrate the Festival of St. Thomas, to whom the Abbey was dedicated and which was always observed as a ringing day at all the churches in the town; and then the Christmas ringing would finish the list.

On the morning of the 21st Mr. Trippels was up betimes, and shortly after 7 o'clock he hoisted the flag from the Abbey tower. About 8 o'clock the company began to assemble. There had been a meeting on the previous evening, so the bells had been left up ready. By five minutes past 8 there were seven men assembled.

"Where's Snapper?" said Trippels, "late, as usual, I suppose."

Just then Snapper entered. "Co-om, co-om!—This is a nice time to get here," said Trippels.

"Well, I got here as quick as I could," said Snapper. "I had a large cylinder in a cast last night, and I was compelled to go and dig it out, and knock the runners off this morning. I war'nt sure as it was all right neither."

Snapper was a moulder by trade, and worked at Messrs. Bott and Skimmer's foundry.

"Do you ever make 'wasters?'" enquired Trippels.

"Sometimes,—not very often, I'm happy to say."

"Talking of 'wasters,'" said Pinram, another ringer, "I know a good story about that. Some time ago when I worked at Manchester I was—"

"Here, I say, none of that, let's get to work, we've no time for stories now," said Trippels, stamping his foot on the boards with his heavy nailed boots, which he was famous for always wearing, and taking the 7th rope in his hand.

The ringers then got into their places, and after ringing a few rounds they went for a 700 of Grandsire Triples, which they accomplished in about half-an-hour.

"Bit of good striking that, I wish we could always tap 'em in like that," said Colt. "By-the-bye, where do we meet next?"

"St. Swithin's next, at ten; I shall want five of you with me there. I've got a class of young cubs to take down at the school till nine, and then I must get my breakfast and meet you up there," said Trippels.

"It's our annual meeting on Thursday night, and you'll have to find that lost peal-book, old man," said Moldsworth, a young ringer, addressing Colt.

"Gar-on wi-er, boy!—you're always at me about that, I know now't about it," said Colt. The rest of the company then went to breakfast, and Trippels made his way to the choristers' school. But we will anticipate him a little.

The choristers were already assembled before Trippels arrived. "I say, Montie," said Hugh (a younger boy), to Montague Raye (the senior boy), "shan't we get over our Euclid nicely to-day? It's St. Thomas's day, and old 'Trip' will want to be off ringing again directly."

"I don't know," said Montague (a conceited-looking boy with his hair parted in the middle, and wearing dandy kid boots). "The old humbug gets into a fearful 'wax' sometimes when he's in a hurry."

"I can't think however they came to have such an old cad to teach us mathematics," said Aleck (another boy). "I know Dr. Swishem doesn't like him, and he'd get rid of him if he could—only old 'Trip' is all 'hand and glove' with the trustees."

Further conversation was prevented by the arrival of Mr. Trippels himself, who had donned a cap and gown, which he had no real right to, not being a member of any university. He was soon standing in his place with a row of boys before him, all dressed in Eton jackets and wearing broad collars. The usual lesson on week days generally proceeded with a good deal of blundering on the part of the boys, Mr. Trippels passing the time in making sundry facetious remarks, and in clouting boys' heads and pulling their ears, and other such agreeable pursuits. The proposition in Euclid generally proved a failure before it was said half through, and Trippels settled the matter by making the whole class stay in and write it out six times, especially on a Wednesday, which was a half-holiday. This was his usual practice in case of failure in a lesson, as it involved no further trouble on his part. Had he simply made the boys stay in and learn it, he would have had to come again to the school later on to hear it; but in the other case he would not attend there again till the following Saturday, and then he would just glance at what the boys had written, and tear it up. Mr. Trippels soon took his departure, and left the choristers to go to church with Rev. Dr. Swishem, the resident head-master, who fortunately understood boys better than he did.

Trippels now made his way to St. Swithin's. Here he found five more waiting, and they ascended the tower without delay, and were soon standing in a small dark chamber about ten feet square, nearly all one side of which was occupied by a huge clock-case. Having hitched off the clock hammers, they proceeded to raise the bells. This being done, after altering the tucking of one or two of the ropes, they went for a 720 of Bob Minor, which was nearly accomplished when two countrymen, apparently farm labourers, entered the ringing chamber, talking loudly.

"Now then! never mind them," roared Trippels to one of the younger ringers. "Here! you and me in the middle; make seconds and lead—fourth!"

The touch proceeded, but the compass was spoiled. In a few more rounds it came out with a single. "Stand," said Trippels. "Now then, you old duffer! don't you know better than to come blundering in here in a peal?" added he, addressing one of the new comers.

"I ax yer' pardon, gents," said the man, "but me an' my mate here is ringers at Muckton, an' bein' in town, we thought as how we'd like to have a pull with yer, hif so be as you've no objections."

"But I have the very strongest objection," said Trippels.

"Well, mister, you might jest let us have a few rounds and a change or two wi' yer, up at the Abbey. Jest to say we've had a pull there."

"Look here," said Trippels, "when I want Churchyard Bob men here, I'll send for them. We are now going for a bit of Treble Bob at the Abbey, and at noon we shall be at St. Clement's; meanwhile, if you want a pull, you can go down to St. Michael's, the new church on the Didlington Road. There you'll find a peal of three nice little ting-tangs, and I have no doubt if you go to Binks, the sexton there, and talk pretty to him, he'll let you have a pull at them, and make one with you himself for a peal."

This speech was received with laughter on the part of the Slowborough company, and the round-ringers looked somewhat disconcerted. At length one of them said—

"All right, mister, never you come to Muckton to ring then, that's all."

"When I've nowhere else but Muckton to ring at I'll give over," said Trippels dryly. "Now then, gentlemen," added he, speaking to his own company, "let's be off back to the Abbey, Sluggerridge said he'd be there at half-past ten and if he is, we can go for a bit of Treble Bob."

The whole of the company then left St. Swithin's belfry and proceeded to the Abbey, and the round-ringers left them. On the way there was some further discussion about the lost-peal-book. What

had become of it will appear hereafter. As soon as the Slowborough men arrived at the Abbey they met Sluggerridge, a ringer from Didlington, who had been expected to make one for a touch of Treble Bob.

"Kent, I suppose?" said that gentleman, mounting the seventh box. "Nonsense! Oxford," said Trippels, taking the tenor rope in his hand.

"Oh, it makes no difference to me. Shall you go for a fourteen-forty?"

"Aye, let's have a fourteen-forty, we never do have any lengths of anything here," said several voices.

"Look here," said Triples, "we'll have something short and sweet, that's my motto, I don't care for long lengths, I once rang a five thousand and forty of Grandsire, when I was in Yorkshire, you know, but I'll never do it again." Beside, you know we shall not have time to get a long length done before service.

The truth of the matter was that Mr. Trippels could only call one or two bits of Treble Bob, and the longest of these was 704, and this he knew the work of almost by heart, and he always rang the observation bell when he called. He was never tired of reminding the rest of the company that he had once rang a 5040 in Yorkshire.

"Well, what are we going for?" said Snapper. "Why, a seven hundred and four, of course," said Trippels, stamping his foot as a signal for all to get into their places.

Thereupon they got to their bells and the touch started, the striking was very fair. Somehow or other Treble Bob is generally well struck if it were not it could never be done at all, Trippels certainly did attempt to conduct as well as call, he was always very particular to remind the man in thirds to make thirds and go behind; that is, if he himself happened to be making fourths over him; otherwise he said nothing at all. He also repeatedly called to the trebleman to dodge him in when he was going into the slow, although the latter was always fully prepared to do so. The touch went on and came out "fair and square" (or rather "fair and round").

"What's the next performance?" said Moldsworth, as soon as the bells stopped.

"Clement's next, after service, five of you, for Doubles, while we, who were there this morning, go to St. Swithin's," said Trippels.

They all left the belfry and below they met a tall middle-aged gentleman, just entering the Abbey for service, who was none other than the Mayor of Slowborough.

"Hallo, Trippels!" said he, "what's that you've been ringing, a Grandsire-treble-bob-major-royal, eh?"

"I fear your worship is joking, and that you have taken a few campanological terms at random wherewith to perplex us," said Trippels, rubbing his hands and smiling.

"Well, never mind about that," said the Mayor, "I was going into service, and hearing you ringing, was coming up if I had'n't seen you. I just remembered that I had'n't paid you my annual subscription yet, and I know it will be your annual meeting on Boxing day, so here it is (handing Trippels a guinea), and here's a couple of shillings to spend, to have a glass of ale all round when your day's ringing is over."

The company thanked the Mayor; and Mr. Trippels promised to send him a proper receipt for the subscription next day. After attending Divine Service the company divided, five going to St. Clement's and the rest to St. Swithin's. But as it will not interest our readers to follow them, we will leave them and just take a look in at the choir school again. Morning service was over, and about half an hour intervened before the school dinner would be ready, so Dr. Swishem said.

"Montague! you and Aleck can just take a walk down to the stables at the 'Crown and Mitre,' and tell Dobbs that I shall want a fly to-morrow evening at 6 o'clock to drive to Slopsbury."

"Yes, Sir," said the boys, and off they started. Now it so happened that Potts, the barman of the above mentioned inn had had orders to clean out the room used by the Abbey change-ringers, so as to be ready for the evening meeting on December 26th. He had taken time by the fore-lock, and had got all the furniture turned out into the yard, amongst it being the society's box before alluded to. The box was not locked, simply because there was nothing inside it which was considered of any value. The two boys having arrived, and seeing the barman moving about the furniture,

"Hallo, Potts! what are you up to? what's in that queer old box there?" said Aleck. "Here Montie! I vote you and I open it and see," added he to his companion.

"Now you let that box alone, young gentlemen, or you'll get into a row," said Potts, but before he could interfere the boys had got the box open and the first thing they saw was the old torn certificate.

"What a rum picture!" said Montague, "I say, Aleck, I've seen one down at my uncle's at Cribbingford; he said it used to belong to my great grandfather, and had something to do with some ringers he belonged to when he was alive; and he has got a queer old book, as

big as a church Bible, with a lot of writing in it all about Grandsires; and Treble Bob Majors, and things I don't understand. I saw it when I was there last holidays."

"What rum fellows bell-ringers are, Montie," said Aleck, "nobody but themselves can understand what they talk about, but I say, couldn't you borrow that book next holidays and bring it back to school? it might amuse old 'Trip' and keep him in good humour all next term if we lend it to him."

We must now go back and see what the ringers were doing while these two boys were thus occupied. The two parties having finished ringing for the time at St. Swithin's and St. Clements, went home to dinner, Mr. Trippels inviting Mr. Sluggerridge to come home and dine with him, and on their way they just dropped in at the "Crown and Mitre" for a glass before dinner, and happened to be passing down the yard just at the moment the two choristers were examining the box. The boys did not see them till they were close upon them. Trippels had heard their conversation about the book, and his first impulse was to sharply reprimand them for meddling with the box, and then to ask for further particulars about the book, which he felt sure must be the missing peal-book. He, however, decided afterwards to appear indifferent about the matter, so having scolded the two choristers for meddling with the box he demanded their business there. On being told, he bade them deliver their message and return to the school, which they did; and he and Sluggerridge went to dinner. On arriving at Mr. Trippels' house his house-keeper informed him that a woman had just been and wanted a death-bell passing for some man who had just died at the other end of the town.

"Did she leave the fee?" inquired Trippels.

"No," said the house-keeper, "she said she'd call again in half-an-hour."

"Bother it! why didn't you tell her to come to-morrow morning? you know I never pass death-bells on ringing days or festivals," said Trippels. "The old hag gets worse and worse," added he to Sluggerridge, alluding to the house-keeper.

During dinner the subject of the lost peal-book was freely discussed, and it was agreed that Mr. Trippels had better lay before the society on Dec. 26th what he had overheard that day from the boys. As they were leaving the house after dinner the woman who had called in the morning came again to request Trippels to pass the death-bell.

"Seven-and-sixpence is the fee," growled the latter; "I always take the money before I swing the 'tailer,' that's my plan."

The woman slowly produced a half-crown, a florin, 2 shillings and two sixpences, and placed them in Trippels' hand, and requested him to pass the bell at once, and said that the friends of the deceased wished the funeral to take place on the following day but one at 3 p.m.

"I'll see about passing the bell. You should see Diggs, the cemetery sexton, about the funeral. But never mind, I'll see him and tell him if you like," said Trippels.

On their way to the Abbey, where they were to meet first that afternoon, they met Diggs, the cemetery man, just coming out of the "Toad and Pickaxe," a low public-house.

"Now then, you old sinner!" said Trippels, "You were drunk last night, I know by the look of you."

"No I war'nt, master," said Diggs.

"Well, I don't know about that for certain, but you look about three-parts 'on' now. But just attend to me, there's a funeral the day after to-morrow at three, a man from Queen Street, so have the grave ready. You can 'rattle the pan' a quarter, it's all right, it'll be paid for. I've got my fee for 'swinging the tailer.'" ("Swinging the tailer," a slang term—passing a death knell. "Rattling the pan," ditto—tolling the cemetery bell.)

When they arrived at the Abbey, Trippels managed to strike out thrice three blows on the sixth bell without falling her. He then pulled her off a few times, setting her each time, and then gave nine strokes together. He arranged this in starting, so that the last blow should come on the hand-stroke, and so he managed to "swing the tailer" without falling the bell; the whole performance occupying about five minutes. The ringers waited a short time, and then got into their places and went for a 336 of Grandsire. They then visited the other two churches, and after a short pull at each, they ceased the bells. Returning to the Abbey they rang a short touch there also, and ceased the bells and went home to tea. Thus ended the ringing for St. Thomas' day, and many who read this veracious history will consider no doubt there was enough of it.

At half past seven p.m. Dec. 26th, the members of the society met in the room of the "Crown and Mitre." Mr. Trippels, as secretary, read over the balance-sheet of accounts. The funds appeared to be in a flourishing condition, there being a balance of £5 17s. 8d. to the good. Mr. Snapper was elected Master for the ensuing year, and several new members were elected, among were Mr. Sluggerridge and several other change-ringers living in the outlying district, which had been rather an unusual thing of late years. A vote of thanks was

proposed to Mr. Trippels for the very excellent manner in which he had managed the business of the society during the past year, and he was unanimously re-elected.

Mr. Trippels rose to respond, and after thanking the members for their kindness, he said: "And now, gentlemen, a matter has transpired to-day which I think will interest us all. You have doubtless often heard our worthy and venerable friend, Mr. Colt, speak of the existence of a peal-book in this society in his younger days—well, I think I heard something yesterday which may possibly enable us to find that book. Mr. Colt, do you remember Thomas Raye being secretary of this society?"

"Remember him?—remember Tom Raye, I should think I do. He ain't been dead above fifty years.—Ah! he died while he was secretary, I helped to ring a muffled peal for him. Our party was very weak then, we could ring nowt but Doubles with six-seven-eight covering. Now I come to mind, I never saw that peal-book no more after Tom Raye died."

"Thank you," said Trippels, "that clears up another point. Do you remember whether Thomas Raye had any sons?"

"Yes, he had two," said Colt, "one went to America and we never heard no more of him; the second son settled at Cribbingford and died some years ago. Lawyer Raye, who lives there now, is his son, and Tom Raye's grandson."

"Ah! I have it now," said Trippels; "Lawyer Raye's brother died in London only a year or two ago, and left a widow and one boy without a penny to live on. Since then lawyer Raye has been keeping the widow, and the boy, Montague, was sent to our choir-school here, out of charity. From what I heard to-day I imagine that Lawyer Raye has got our peal-book in his possession." Trippels then related what he had heard from the boys that day.

"Well, gentlemen," said Pinram, rising, "I propose that Mr. Trippels takes the earliest opportunity of paying a visit to Mr. Raye, of Cribbingford, and that Mr. Colt accompany him, and that they take the old minute-book and the copy of the old certificate with them and find out all they can. Perhaps we might find our old certificate plate there as well."

"Hear, hear!" on all sides, "and I propose the society guarantees travelling expenses, and that they take the boy with them," said Snapper.

"Nonsense! I shant take that cockey young cub with me, what use would he be?" said Trippels.

"Suppose we get the peal-book back again," said Moulsworth, "do you think we shall ever have anything to enter in it any more?"

"Well, gentleman," said Sluggerridge, "if you should ever care to make up a party for a five thousand, I'm sure any of our company at Didlington would be glad to assist you if you should not have enough of your own."

"Humph," said Triples, "I dont care for long lengths: but I should not mind making one for a 5040 if Haulethro would come over and call it, for I can't." Mr. Trippels had never been known to make such an admission before, and he was lustily cheered, which he didn't seem to relish. It was ultimately decided that Trippels and Colt should go over to Cribbingford the very next day and do the best they could in the matter of the peal-book. The meeting then terminated and all went home.

On the following morning Trippels and Colt started on their journey by the first train and arrived at Cribbingford about 10 a.m. They had no difficulty in finding the residence of Mr. Raye, solicitor, and finding that gentleman at home, they soon explained their errand. Mr. Raye looked somewhat suspiciously at them at first, but Colt was able to tell him enough about the book to convince them as to who were the rightful owners thereof. As it was of no value whatever to him he gladly gave it up.

"And how is Montague, my nephew?" said Mr. Raye, as they were about to take their departure.

"He's getting on capitally, he's the best boy we have in the school. I always was fond of that boy, I could do anything for Master Montague," said Trippels.

"Then you seem to have rather a peculiar way of shewing your fondness for him, according to his account," said the lawyer, dryly. "But just look after him a bit, will you?" added he, placing half-a-sovereign in Trippels' hand.

Trippels smiled and thanked Mr. Raye, and he then mentioned the lost block of the certificate, and asked if he could give any clue as to its whereabouts.

"Well, I hardly know," said he, "but I should advise you to apply to Mr. Chase, the printer, in West Street. He always did my father's work, and probably my grandfather employed his father before him. He might know something about it."

Trippels and Colt then took their leave, and arriving in West Street they saw over a corner shop the name of "Chase, Bookseller and Stationer," and on the wall between two upper windows the words

"Printing Office." They entered the shop and seeing Mr. Chase behind the counter, Trippels began to explain their errand. Mr. Chase was inclined to be crusty about it, what did he know? what *could* he know about a plate which might or might not have been sent there fifty years ago in his father's time, when he was but a baby. "It was ridiculous to trouble him about such a thing," he said. Trippels however, managed at last so far to get over him as to induce him to send for Mr. Pye, his compositor, from the printing office.

Mr. Pye said he certainly never remembered seeing such a block about the place as the one in question, but added that if Mr. Trippels would accompany him he would not mind looking round in a few likely places. Thereupon they both adjourned to the office, leaving Colt in the shop.

After searching diligently for some time in all likely and unlikely places, they found the missing plate (a fine steel one), at the bottom of a cupboard with a couple of old ink-balls, which had long been discarded for more modern appliances in the shape of composition rollers, on the top. It was so completely clogged up with ink as to be hardly recognizable, but a good scrubbing with pearl-ash water soon worked wonders, and restored it to something of its former appearance. Mr. Trippels was so pleased that he left the plate with Mr. Chase, with orders to print off 100 certificates from it for the society, so that all the present members should have one, and that he also should have some in hand. He and Colt then returned home with the peal-book, and were heartily congratulated on the success of their journey.

Little more remains to be told. The society grew and prospered, and with the help of Sluggerridge and a few outsiders the company were soon able to record another five thousand in their long lost peal-book.

A FEW THINGS GENERALLY KNOWN.

Mr. Dawe, the new town-clerk of Hull, is not Mr. Francis E. Dawe, the hero of "seventeen days and a bit."

Mr. Haley, of the College Youths, does not claim any relationship with the person of the same name who figures so conspicuously in that once popular novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The name of Mr. Henry Dains has nothing whatever to do with the church of St. Clement Danes, though the first touch he rang without any assistance was at that church.

Mr. B. T. Copley, of Bradford, is no relation to the family of the late Lord Lyndhurst; neither is Mr. Palmer of King's Norton anything to do with the present Lord Chancellor.

The various celebrated ringers who have borne the name of Booth would not, we understand, care to be spoken of as being any connection of General Booth.

Mr. Powell, of Waltham Abbey, is not the Member of Parliament who lost his life while ballooning.

Leonard Proctor, Esq., is never to be found at Doctors' Commons.

We believe the poet Dwight has, after the lapse of many years, nearly traced his connection with the celebrated theologian of the same name.

The ringers of Eccles are tired of being congratulated upon having so much Cash among them.

Mr. H. Johnson, of Birmingham, does not, we believe, claim any kinship with Dr. Johnson, though both these great men were born in the same city; and we have not been able to discover whether John Holt was any relative of the Lord Chief Justice of that name.

At Little Heath, Essex, Pye and Porter will be in great demand this Christmas.

Though learning to ring, the ringers of Beaconsfield are very partial to good Tapping.

One or two of the company of Hyde, Cheshire, are Wilde, but at Slough there is one Wilder.

The patronymic of the Master of the Gloucester and Bristol Association must not be taken to indicate that he belongs to the Blue Ribbon Army.

The late Mr. William Hudson of Sheffield had nothing whatever to do with Hudson's Soap.

Mr. Parker, of Farnham Royal, is not a descendant, so far as we have been able to ascertain, of the ringleader of the Mutiny at the Nore.

The occupations of the Brothers Shepherd, of Exeter, are not pastoral.

Mr. Gordon, the celebrated musician of Stockport, should not be confounded with General Gordon.

At the "faithful city" of Worcester, which in years gone by boasted of a Trout and a Griffin, and more recently of its Rice, will be found a W(h)ale and a Pheasant. At one time there was a Weaver, a Mason, a Smith, a Turner, a Taylor, a Barber, and a Brush.

The Buttery at Leicester is amply supplied with its utensils by a pair of Coopers.

The statement that the steeple-keeper of St. Martin in the Fields goes every day to Westminster Abbey to admire the monument of Lord Mansfield, is not in strict accordance with fact.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF AN ANCIENT TENOR.

BY AUDITOR TANTUM.

"Phew! what a genial, fair, and pleasant change from that stifling pit!"

So are fitly expressed the first feelings of which I have any distinct recollection. I found myself landed safe in the yard of Master Thomas Church, "Belleyoter," of the famed old town of S. Edmund's Bury; the Founder and his men stood around me, and with them good Master Thomas Bayly of Rahselton, who had come to fetch me home to the tower of Elander Church.

The Foundry stood at the corner of Brentgovell street, and through the gates I could see, beyond the open space called "Angel Hill," the noble Abbey Church, where for more than five hundred years the corpse of the martyred Edmund had received the homage of the faithful. At the western end of the building was the great campanile, whence from time to time came the boom of mighty bells.

Being young and foolish, and hearing that I was destined for the mother church of a mere market-town, I almost split with envy of the proud position of the Abbey bells, yet I am still safe and sound after 370 years; while within twenty-five years came the great political storm which laid low so many superb ecclesiastical fabrics. The King's Commissioners soon defaced the great shrine, scattered the bells, and reduced the grand Abbey to a mere collection of shapeless ruins. For it was in the lull before the storm, in the summer of 1514, that I was standing all new and bright, waiting for Master Bayly's wain, with his four strong horses, to take me home.

We crossed the river Lark by the Abbot's bridge, and passing through the east gate proceeded along the great Norwich road: thanks to the long summer day we made our way as far as Scole Inn before night, and on the next day I was placed safe at the foot of the tower of Elander Church. I was fain to admit that since leaving S. Edmund's Bury I had seen no finer steeple.

It is now time to give the gentle reader some idea of my personal appearance: I stood as a maiden fifty-six inches high, my diameter was fifty-one inches, my weight little short of 24 cwt., and my voice was allowed by all to be perfect. On my crown, three times repeated, was my founder's shield, a crowned bell with crossed keys. Above were crossed arrows in token of my birthplace; and below, a cannon belching forth a ball, to show that Master Thomas Church could cast guns, if any lacked them.

As Elander Church was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, so (as befitted the tenor bell of that church) I bore the legend,

"Mary, Star of the sea, of thy great affection help us!"

My complexion was smooth and without flaw: the comparative dulness of the copper, of which I was mainly composed, was brightened by a due admixture of the purest tin, and I may without vanity say that I was in every sense a belle.

The joy of our congregation at the happy issue of their great undertaking was shown by the attendance of crowds at the ceremony of my benediction. My Lord Bishop of Norwich presided, and with his own hands anointed me with holy oil; other stalwart arms were applied to the tackle, and I was gently lifted to my place of honour in the middle of the steeple.

So much of our happiness depends upon the nature and disposition of those with whom we have to dwell, that from the first, I had looked forward with anxiety to the time when I should make the acquaintance of my new companions. From what I had heard below, I knew that they were four in number, but I knew no more. By the treble, 2nd, and 3rd, I was received with a hum of admiration which was at once most musical and most gratifying to my feelings: I felt that these at any rate were congenial spirits, and claimed them as sisters from the first: but this agreeable sensation was soon interrupted by a groan from No. 4, who rudely proceeded to ask me a number of questions, and to treat me like a "new girl" at school. As the other three, however, took my part, No. 4 soon subsided into sulky silence. Meantime I had discovered that No. 4 was hopelessly out of tune, not only with myself, but also with the others, she was a great sprawling thing nearly one ton in weight, and whereas No. 3 was a pretty F, and I a fine E flat, No. 4

was a very flat E; indeed she seemed to be a mixture of several discordant notes, and for that reason was seldom sounded; this neglect had soured a disposition which from the first had been anything but sweet, and I looked forward with pleasure to the day when she would be removed from our company.

As for the rest of us, our duties were divided as follows: at early dawn the treble was made to sound, this was the "Angelus," to remind all to repeat the Paternoster and Ave Maria; again at night-fall the treble reminded all to repeat the "Ave." Then before breakfast the 2nd bell called the folk to Matins, and Matins ended, the 3rd bell called them to Tierce and Mass. At the Ter-sanctus in the Mass I was sounded thrice, that those who were outside and hindered from coming to church might then bow the knee and partake in the worship. I was also tolled for the dying, and again for the dead. Each of us was hung from a massive head-stock, on the top of which a lever was fixed; and so we were all chimed on the swing, for wheels were not yet.

When I was forty years old they no longer chimed me in the Mass, but before the sermon: for now the Reformation had come, and many things were changed. Doubtless many superstitious uses were well swept away, but methinks we threw overboard too much of the old faith: now-a-days folk say "seeing is believing," but this is not the lesson taught to S. Thomas.

"Twas in the reign of Great Queen Bess that we were rid of number 4. It had become the custom to chime all the bells together for service on Sundays and Holydays, and number 4 did so spoil our concert, that our churchwardens were moved to change her for a better bell. Then as bad luck would have it the 2nd bell was slatted, and money was wanted to have her new run. It chanced at that time that the good folk of Scole would have a big bell for their church, so we sent them our number 4, and had from them in exchange a fair bell of eight hundredweight and £6 in gold, whereby the charges of new running the split bell were defrayed. For an obligation was forthwith made with Master Thomas Draper, of Thetford, to run our old 2nd bell with some new metal that she might be a tunable major third above me, the tenor of the ring. The night before our sister was lowered, I bade her note well what befell her in the way, that on her return she might delight us with the tale of what she had seen: for although we bells soon hear from some neighbouring tower the tidings of any great event, yet being fixtures, and as it were bed-ridden, we love to discourse with one who has seen more of the world than is visible from our chamber windows.

I call to mind that it was mid-winter when she started, and on S. Valentine's Day she returned. One pang of envy I felt when I saw her in all her bright beauty, and glanced at my own sides stained by the storms of seventy-five winters: but when I heard her voice, and felt my whole mass vibrating in sympathy with her, I loved her more than ever; and when our Captain says that I am a fine bell, but that *she* is the finest of the ring, I do not feel the least prick of jealousy.

To hang our new sister, they called in honest Gorbald of Fressingfield, and bought half a horse skin, out of which the knacker made five baldricks that all our clappers should work fairly and well; and as my weight required more support, Tom Warde the blacksmith strengthened my hold on the stock with new straps. And now by the aid of our treble from Scole, we were a pretty tunable ring of five, and lived together in harmony.

As soon as we were all safely disposed, I called on the new beauty and said, "Dear Sister, I see you now bear a new legend, 'May God grant us Heaven's solace.' Tell us then how it fared with you in your journey."

She sweetly replied, "Sisters, I pray that if ever you must go to Thetford, it be not in the winter. The first day, it is true, we fared well, and reached Scole: our old companion looked down on me from the steeple where she hung all alone, and deplored her fate, but confessed that her solitary life was a fit reward for her former moroseness. But after passing Diss, we found that the road came to an end, and for four days we struggled through mud and mire, till at length the towers of Thetford were seen before us, and our troubles seemed at an end. But alas! the river Thet was swollen by heavy rain and melted snow, and the stream was so deep and strong, that the cart was overthrown, and I found a watery grave. By good luck the horses lost their footing, and struggled up the further bank; thus far I saw before I lost consciousness.

"How long I remained in this state, and what happened in the interval I cannot say; I recovered sensation with a sudden gasp; I was the same yet changed; I was full three stone heavier than before, and bright as a new pin; in fact, my dears I was as you see me." And here she made us a graceful obeisance.

"Thetford is a famed borough and market town, and has three fair churches. Master Thomas Draper, a venerable burgher, had his foundry in a messuage lying next to the churchyard of S. Cuthbert's, and was assisted in his work by his sons Thomas and John: the master delighted in his art, and lived in great happiness with Dame Margaret his wife and his son John; but Thomas had the ill luck to wed a shrew, as I was witness; for even while my cope was being broken off, and I was yet in the pit (it being then more than one hour past noon), I heard a young woman in vain urging Thomas Draper the younger to come home to dinner; but he would stay to see me drawn up out of the pit; thus my ascent was accompanied by a shower of abuse. As soon as I was safe on level ground, she dealt poor Thomas a stinging box 'o the ear, and said, 'Now come home, you scurvy knave;' Thomas exclaimed, 'A scold; A scold;' and the woman was seized and carried before the old master, who was an Alderman of Thetford. He ordered that the woman should be placed in the cucking stool, and be dipped five times. Off started six stout apprentices and brought two long beams and a solidly made chair; they fixed the chair tight between the beams, yet so that it did swing freely, and always remained horizontal, so that one might sit conveniently in the chair whether you raised it or let it down. Next they bound the scolding quean in the chair, and raising her aloft on their shoulders, set off for the river Thet hard by: here they fixed the beams on two posts on the very brink of the river, and five times did they plunge the woman into the cold water, and thus cooled her immoderate heat.

"Master Draper, with much foresight, took pains that in my return journey I should not again fall into the Thet; a week of fair weather had lowered the water in the river and bettered the track; yet still it was three days after leaving Thetford ere we drew up at Scole Inn. Next morning, as we passed near the tower of Scole Church, our poor old number 4 greeted me with a kind 'God be with ye, pretty sister.' Surely misfortune is a rare school-master, and sweet are the uses of adversity."

Soon after this we were all made to sound merrily for the dispersion of the Great Armada; and indeed our old second bell (now the sixth), to this day bears on her shoulder the date of that famous year, 1588. Fifteen years after this, we were muffled in memory of the death of Great Queen Bess; and two years later burst out into peals of joy that the vile Gunpowder Plot had been frustrated. I well remember that a brief while before this, our levers had been removed and wheels affixed to our headstocks; our ropes were tied to the tops of the wheels, and there were no ground-trucks, yet the ringers used to swing us above the level of the frame, and one would cry to another "Hu'll her up, James Barley!" This new and increased motion quickened our pulses and filled us with exhilaration and joy; but our number four with the pretty F was much worn at the sound bow, and one day when being "hu'll'd up" with more than wonted vigour, she was split. It would take too long to tell all her adventures, suffice it to say that she went to Thetford and came back weighing near 18 cwt.: she was by no means tunable with the rest of us, and was sent back to Thetford to be run again; and at last came back to us just over 16 cwt. neat bell metal, and a good bell, though somewhat too short and small in the barrel.

Next there was a humming in the air, and sad tidings of strife and civil war were wafted on the wind: ere long it was ordained that bells were Romish and Papish, and ornaments of the scarlet lady, and many were broken up and run into guns, big and little. Those which escaped this fate ran the risk of being disfigured by the file of the Iconoclast. Not far from us, at Bressingham, they in 1644 paid John Nunn four shillings to destroy the letters about the bells, and in many places all the ornamental crosses, and the beautiful letters used for the names of the Saints were cut off. When we heard of these doings, we felt, gentle reader, as you would feel on hearing that the fair face of a pretty cousin or neighbour had been out of malice marred by vitriol.

These spoilers indeed came very nigh us, and our friends in Pulham steeple still bear the scars they made. But *Benedicto Benedicatur!* we were spared, and in 1660 rang out heartily and joyfully for the restoration of Church and State.

I have told how our pleasures were increased by the use of wheels: presently, in 1677, I was much honoured by being hung on the sally. Mr. Sam Gilpin, foreman to Mr. Edward Tooke of Norwich, came over and did the work; never shall I forget how my heart fluttered when I first was swung through the whole circle and came to the balance, mouth uppermost. Howbeit my feelings were not all joy, for I knew (though I could not make Mr. Gilpin take note thereof), that my gudgeons were now near two hundred years old; and although they were made of good stuff, yet they had not been designed for such dances as those in which I was soon to take part.

The ringers were so pleased with my voice when I was rung out that they rested not till my four companions were also hung on the sally. Then sang James Barley:

"I saw five birds all in a cage,
Each bird had but one single wing,
They were an hundred years of age,
And yet did fly and sweetly sing.

The wonder did my soul possess
When I beheld their age and strength,
Besides as near as I can guess
Their tails were forty feet in length."

Soon after this I experienced another new pleasure: one bright day in 1716 instead of being struck always in the same place after my comrades, I found myself being deftly guided by a skilled hand down to the lead; my companions were being handled in the same clever fashion, and before we again stood still we had struck out all the 6-score changes of which we five were capable, not a bell out of place, and no change repeated. Reader! it is difficult for me to explain to you our sensations on this occasion: imagine the feelings of a pack of lively girls dancing a waltz with good partners at their first ball, and you will have some notion of what I mean. We learnt presently that a band of able change-ringers from Norwich had come over, having heard the fame of our ring. They were the great composer John Garthon, Thos. Melchoir, Thos. Barret, Robert Crane, and a youth named Cris. Booty; several of these heroes a year or two later, helped to ring the first peal of Grandsire Triples on the old ring of eight at St. Peter's, Norwich. They all mightily praised me and my comrades, but said nothing much could be done with us till another treble was added to make us six. Now our ringers were desirous of learning to ring half-pull changes, and the parishioners did not consent to be surpassed by their neighbours at Pulham, who were talking of making their ring six by buying a treble from Thornton, of Sudbury. So a subscription was made and nigh £50 was soon collected. Mr. John Stephens of Norwich cast the new treble; Mr. Reader made the new frame for her; William Collings hung her, and Mr. Harp supplied her rope.

But this addition cost me dear, for the new bell was sharper than I, and to make me sharper they chipped me on the edge till I lost half an inch of my diameter, and much of that justness and perfection of figure and proportion of which I had been so proud. Our ringers set to work with might and main, and soon became a first-rate six-bell company, but the 3rd bell (she that was treble when I first came home) being a very ancient bell and much worn, soon cracked, and Mr. John Stephens recast her in 1718, and again I was chipped to make me agree with the new bell.

But worse was yet to come. Our ringers practised constantly, and my old gudgeons could stand it no longer, so one night near the end of 1722 when I was ringing for a dead man I fell down. I was caught and held between the bottom timbers of the cage and a huge balk. It is a marvel how I escaped being split, but for all that my situation was sufficiently bad. Having hung more than two hundred years on my gudgeons I had lost the power of standing or lying without pain, and those parts of me which rested on the timbers and bore my weight were not only bruised by the impact, but also suffered agonies of cramp, and for want of labour skilled enough to deal with a bell of my dimensions I had to lie thus till well-nigh into the new year. At last I was firmly replaced in my old bed, but it was years before I fully recovered from this fall, and to this day I can recall to mind those awful cramps.

The adding two trebles to make us a complete ring of eight having met with the approbation of the minister and chief inhabitants of the parish, a subscription was set on foot in 1736, and Mr. John Sawyer, the churchwarden, appointed sole manager thereof: who soon brought it to effect and raised £99. Now a year before this Mr. Richard Phelps, of London, had recast the big bell of Bow, and the fame of this work spread and reached us in East Anglia, so nothing less would satisfy Mr. Sawyer than that our new trebles should be cast by the founder of the Bow Bell. Moreover all and sundry said that the new third bell lately come from Norwich was of poor quality, so she was sent up to London town to be recast. In due season the new trebles and the newly run 5th bell (now lusty and strong), came home. Meantime John Regriffe had enlarged the frame and made two new pits, and Thomas Lemman provided two new wheels and stocks, and so the eight of us were accommodated.

About the same time our society of ringers was formally and firmly established, and from that day we have never lacked a good half-pull band. It is true that for about one hundred years the Norwich ringers were unapproached in the Eastern Counties, and at that time we could not rival them; yet we could hold our own with our good neighbours at Kenninghall, and Diss, and Dereham, and Framlingham, and Debenham. And when the great Norwich company fell to pieces, our men were ready to take the lead. Time would fail me to tell all the feats which we have achieved, suffice it to say that we have done wonders in Stedman, Double Norwich, and Superlative, not to mention Bob and Treble Bob, in which we reached five figures.

And here I must stop, and while for self and sisters I wish you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, I in return pray that you will wish

PROSPERITY TO THE BELLS OF ELANDER!

A RINGER'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

When Music, sweet maid, first came down from the spheres,
With eight sister muses—such coy little dears—
They dubb'd poor old Jubal in art a "great swell,"
But what were *his* notes to a good tenor bell?

Then ring, lads! till your sweethearts and sisters,
Vouch the truth of your peal by the size of your blisters.

Say, what that is earthly of bliss can compare
With theirs, who triumphant wind down the dark stair,
While the ghosts, whose brave doings adorn the old wall,
Re-echo the magical sentence, "that's all."

Long life to our sexton! a trump-card is he,
Who always *turns up*, just in time, *with* the key;
Tho' the thirsty old dog (just a word in your ear)
Seldom handles a rope-end without 'tis for *bier*.

A health to our captain, he's sure to shout "Go!"
When he means us to *stay* a few hours or so.
Most visitors think him a bit of a clown,
When they here him bawl "stand!" just before we sit down.

Our honest old hostess, good Mrs. Hob-Nob,
Says "she'd like to catch hold of that fellow called 'Bob,'"
She'd warn him, she would, to beware of our spite,
For we're never together but him we backbite.

My wife—bless her heart—oft attempts me to rally,
Because in my dreams I have whispered of "Sallie,"
I soothe her by owning I know the minx well,
But never, by any means, thought her a bell(e).

Some ape-loving sages propound us a plan
Which bids the poor brute "rub his shoulders" with man.
Well, "muttons" in ringing have practised for ages,
When they score a peal, I'll agree with the sages.

Hurrah for our science! a *Minor* in skill,
Toasts the vast *Major* part of her sons with good-will;
But may *Triple* labour those haulers requite,
Who *Cater* for Christmas with "Churchyard Delight."

Then ring, lads! till your sweethearts and sisters,
Vouch the truth of your peal by the size of your blisters.

Reading.

HENRY EGBY.

"THE TENOR BELL."

A VOICE FROM THE TOWER OF THE ABBEY CHURCH, PERSHORE.

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

Motto on tenor bell in Pershore tower.

Good people all, both great and small,
Who in poor Pershore dwell,
Sinner and saint, hear the complaint
Of your old tenor bell.

Full many a year have I hung here,
And this I know right well,
Few other chimes e'er saw such times
As I, your tenor bell.

From this old tower (built by John
Gower,
So some old people tell),
I've seen strange sights, both days and
nights,
As I'm a tenor bell.

What thousands lie around, whom I
Have summon'd to their cell:
Who once were young and hale and
strong,
And heard the tenor bell.

I recollect with due respect,
And many tales could tell
'Bout abbot's jolly, and monkish folly;
For I'm the tenor bell.

How shaven priests, here held their
feasts;
How superstition's spell,
Was call'd to aid the priestly trade
With candle, book, and bell.

How monk and friar, and knight and
squire,
Came here their fears to quell;
And how to mass they did all pass,
Whilst toll'd the tenor bell.

How priest and knave, and lord and
slave,
Before the altar fell,
And as they bow'd then peal'd aloud,
The solemn tenor bell.

How music's din, and chant and hymn,
Rose high with solemn swell;
How priests devout join'd in the shout
Which reach'd the tenor bell.

About old times, in my queer rhymes,
I very much could tell,
To make you stare; but I forbear,
Remembering I'm a bell.

When first plac'd here, they bade me
feared
A lie aloud to tell;
But speak the truth to every youth
Who heard the passing bell.

Thea bound around my body sound,
A motto known full well;
Which most have seen whene'er they've
been
To view the tenor bell.

"To church I all the living call"—
(And this it says as well)
"All young or old, to grave so cold,
Are summon'd by the bell."

But let this pass; alas! alas!
That I should have to tell
Of my sad fall—good people all—
A lie is on the bell.

Oh! I shall crack! pray take me back—
My clapper take as well,
And melt me down—for in this town
I'm done as I'm a bell.

For when, sometimes, with brother
chimes
We ring together well
A merry peal—oh! how I feel!
A lie is on the bell.

Unhappy me! why should it be?
Till lately all was well;
Why then the change? 'tis very strange,
This lie upon the bell.

How time does fly? time was when I
Rang out my funeral knell,
For all indeed, whate'er the creed,
Of those who asked the bell.

And paid the charge, which was not
large,
All sextons this can tell,
None ever used to be refused,
Who paid to hear the bell.

There's my big brother, who hangs in
't'other
Old church, says he'll rebel;
Whoever plann'd it, he'll never stand it,
He won't, as he's a bell.

He sees no fun in Master B—nn,
Whose pull he knows so well,
Losing many a shilling, altho' he's
willing,
To ring the funeral bell.

I must confess we're in a mess;
Oh! if I dare but tell,
All that I know:—but then 'twould show
Bad temper in a bell.

There's Master Bl—ke who makes me
shake,
And rises me so well,
He comes sometimes and reads the
rhymes
Upon the tenor bell.

And looks so sad:—'twill drive me mad!
I'll roar and burst my cell!
I can't, I'm sure, I won't endure
That lie upon the bell.

It is a shame, but who's to blame
I know but dare not tell,
And yet I think it should, in ink
Appear to clear the bell.

'Twixt you and me, I think 'twould be
But just in me to tell
The truth to you:—and I will too,
As I'm a tenor bell.

Early one morn a tall thin' form,
Accompanied as well,
By brother sprite, a Puseyite,
Stood gazing at the bell.

I held my breath, kept still as death,
Then on their knees they fell,
And did proceed, each one, to read
The motto on the bell.

"Aha!" said one, "'tis here and done,
So plain, a child may tell,
But, never fear, we're masters here!
Hear this! old tenor bell."

And understand, 'tis our command,
Your solemn funeral knell
Must be denied to all, beside
True churchmen, tenor bell."

"Amen!" said 't'other, "and now, my
brother
I think we may as well
Forbid the praise, on marriage days
From every other bell."

In this old tower, and then, our power
I think we may as well
Extend to 't'other church my brother,
And silence every bell.

Except for those, who, we suppose
In our own pastures dwell;
Nor let a chime at any time
Ring out from any bell.

For catholics (they're heretics),
Dissenters too as well,
Must be denied, so we decide
They shall not use the bell.

I know the knaves, so o'er their graves,
Henceforth, no funeral knell,
For them shall toll—nor Mormon soul:
Rejoice at marriage bell."

"Right, brother, right!" said 't'other
sprite,
"My conscience doth full well
Approve the plan; whate'er I can
I'll do to stop the bell."

Just then, ting-tang, with noisy clang,
Set up a hideous yell,
For sexton Bl—ke had come to shake
A solo on that bell.

Up rose each sprite in wild affright,
And scampered off pell-mell,
I felt relieved, but oh how grieved
Was your old tenor bell.

I thought of times when we poor chimes,
Were under no such spell;
But when we rung for old or young,
And all creeds used the bell.

When old Lot Cope, and Henry Hope
Were here, I know right well,
No Puseyites, or priestly sprites
Dictated to the bell.

Churchwardens then, good meaning men,
Ruled church and tower as well;
But now they cower 'neath priestly
power,
And won't defend the bell,

Who rais'd the church? you only search
Its history, that will tell—
Catholics, term'd vile, built up this pile,
And purchased every bell.

And then, 'tis true, dissenters' too
Are forced church rates to swell
To help to pay repairs, yet they
Are all refused the bell.

Somehow or other, since all this pother,
The time I cannot tell,
I'm never right, by day or night,
Oh! I'm an ill-used bell!

Some cry out "shame!" Why I'm to
blame,
I really cannot tell,
The hammer strikes me when it likes,
Yet people blame the bell.

From this north corner, my old friend
W—rn—er,
Who did his duty well,
Has long been sent, because dissent
Must not touch clock or bell.

'Tis most unjust! I'd rather rust
Than ring another knell,
I won't be cowed, I'll publish loud,
A lie is on the bell.

Good churchmen all, you ought to call,
Upon your priests to tell,
Why they desire to make a liar
Of your old tenor bell.

'Tis bigotry most certainly—
Arise! and burst the spell
Of priestly power, this very hour,
Rise! and set free the bell.

Do this, I pray, without delay,
Or I, perhaps, may tell
Tales that would make some people
shake,
Known to the tenor bell.

Aye, aye, I know, and I could show
How charities, that fall

Into some hands: how cash and lands,
Are gone, as I'm a bell.

And I know where, aye, you may stare,
Poor people know, right well,
There's something wrong, and perhaps,
ere long,
They'll hear it from the bell.

Before I close, one word to those,
I've known so long and well,
Who meet so oft in belfry loft,
Beneath the tenor bell.

Ye jovial set of ringers, wet,
What tales I heard you tell
In this old tower, but now, your power
Is curbed o'er every bell.

Pray list to me—you all agree
(And mind you do it well),
To church some day all haste away,
And first buff every bell.

When this you've done, let every one,
Perform his duty well,
And ring, with zeal, a good buff'd peal
For those who stopped the bell.

Fear not their rules, be not their tools,
Do all you can to swell
The ranks of those who will oppose
This treatment of the bell.

Do this, and then you'll act like men
Who scorn the priestly spell,
Each friend of right you will delight,
And also please the bell.

Rate-payers too! a word to you,
Who in each parish dwell:
When next you meet, I trust you'll speak
Out plain about the bell.

And now, good friends, my tale here
ends
In bidding you farewell,
I will subscribe myself with pride,
Yours truly,—TENOR BELL.

A TOUCH ON CROYDON BELLS.

Those Croydon bells, those Croydon bells,
How many a tale their music tells!
Of peals attempted, left undone;
A sweeter tale to tell, my lines shall run.

Eight years they'd hung up in the grand old tower,
Inglorious but not mute, for several times,
Ringers of local fame had tried their power
And skill to bring forth music from their chimes.

The magnates of the church and town were vex'd,
And cast reflections 'pon the local bands,
Consider'd 'mongst themselves, but still perplex'd,
Whether to trust their bells to stranger hands.

At length decided requisitions sent,
To Campanologists of great renown,
Eight Youths of Cumberland, whose prowess lent
Some hope to rescue from disgrace the town.

For forty minutes these good Youths hard toiled,
And bravely strove a victory to gain;
Misfortune, sullen dame, their efforts foiled,
Fortune gave golden salve to ease their pain.

Still holding the idea "'twas to be done,"
The College Youths were called to make essay—
A company, whose world-wide fame had run
Centuries, for ringing peals, both grave and gay.

They came, these Youths (some old ones) tried their best,
For one hour rung some Stedman true and sound,
Got out, again they tried with added zest,
Defeat again then made them change their ground.

The third time, "magic number," victory crown'd
Their effort, for three hours the music sweet
Peal'd forth its grandest tones, making, when round,
A peal of Grandsire Triples, true, complete.

All honour to these Youths, who, spite defeat,
Sustained twice, by triumph gained renown,
Upholding England's maxim, "Ne'er be beat,"
Got gold themselves, gave joy to Croydon town.

PARISH CLERK (at a vestry meeting on the question of organ-blower's salary, the rector in the chair): "You see, air, it isn't as if it was only the hymns, but there's the comin' and goin' out, and the sponges and the prayers, and the Psalms take a wonderful deal o' wind."