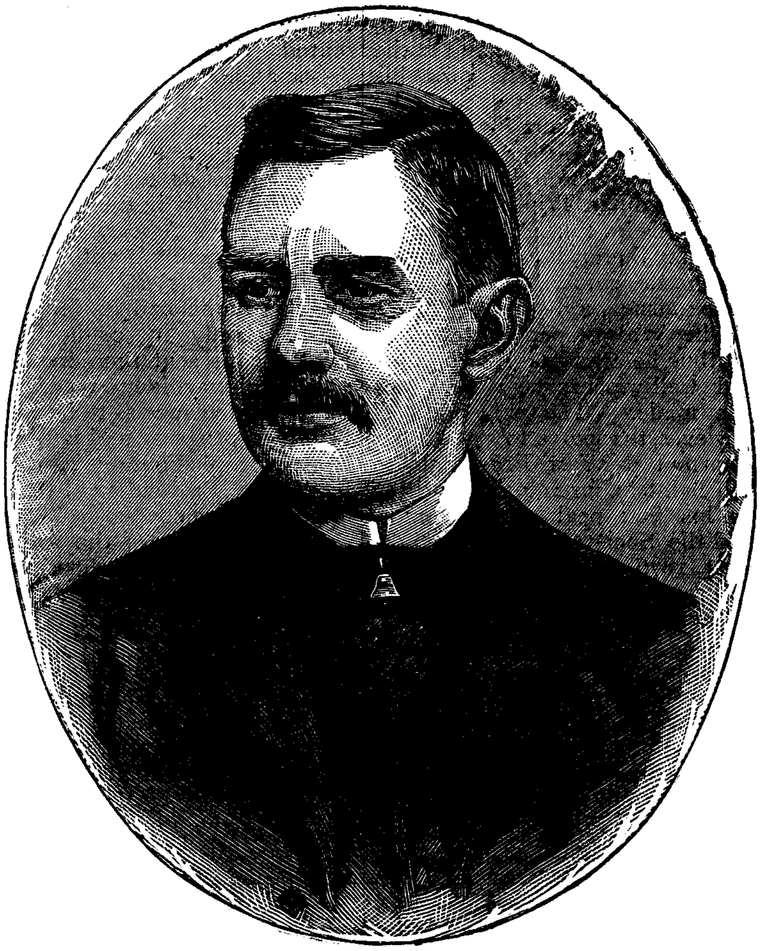
CHRISTMAS SUPPLEMENT

TO

The Bell News and Ringers' Record.



MR. JOHN CARTER, OF BIRMINGHAM;

Member of the Ancient Society of College Youths; the St. James's Society of London; the Midland Counties' Association; the Birmingham Amalgamated Society; the Birmingham and District Association; the Devonshire Guild; the St. Saviour's Society of Walthamstow, etc., etc.

THE historic renown enjoyed by the Midlands—at any rate so far as the production of clever men in the Ringing Exercise is considered—does not appear to be losing its ground in the present day. The exponents of the art in the town of Birmingham have certainly among them men who are worthy successors of those whose talents gained for them such lasting honour. The distinguished ringer and composer who is pourtrayed above is certainly a worthy successor in the field occupied by such men as COOPER, LATES, THURSTANS, JOHNSON, and DAY, and we shall not be far wrong in giving expression to an opinion that, in steady perseverance in the practice of the art, he is equal to any of those who have gone before him. The number and quality of the performances in which he has taken a leading part, the skill displayed by him in overcoming many of the principal difficulties of the science, difficulties which are well known to exist, but which appal many from attempting their solution, eminently point him out as one of the clever ringers of the present generation. As a performer upon handbells there are very few, perhaps, able to compete successfully with him. Indeed, we may say he possesses many natural gifts which are not the common lot of every one; gifts of perception which enable him to grasp readily the true intent and requirement of everything he takes in hand. To these gifts are added a kindly-natured disposition, at once hospitable and courteous.

JOHN CARTER was born at the town of Darlaston, in Staffordshire, on the 30th day of April, 1854, so that he is now in his 33rd year, and is by profession a pistol manufacturer. In the month of July, 1873, he was led to enter the tower of Darlaston parish church, which visit ultimately led to his joining the local company, who had just begun to practice Stedman Triples. In less than seven months from his becoming a member he rang a date touch in this deservedly popular method at Willenhall, and at the same church on the 7th of July following, he rang his maiden peal—Grandsire Triples. The progress made by Mr. Carter being too rapid for the comfort of the bob-caller of the Darlaston company, that worthy pressed him to resign! In the teeth of such opposition, however, the conducting of the first peal of Stedman Triples ever rung upon the Darlaston bells fell to his lot thirteen years after. Matters not being comfortable there, he threw in his lot with the Walsall company, to which place he went twice a week, performing the journey, a distance of three miles each way, on foot. The Walsall people accorded him a hearty welcome, and thus he was enabled to enjoy practice among friends and well-wishers who were not jealous of the progress he made. The exigencies of business compelled him, however, to remove to some other spot, and having pitched his tent at West Bromwich he called Holt's Original at All Saints' church, on the 7th of February, 1876, this being his first peal as conductor. About this time he joined the Society of St. Martin's, Birmingham, and on June 1st, 1876, at the residence of the veteran, Mr. H. Johnson, he rang his first peal on handbells. This peal was conducted by his friend Mr. H. Bastable, and was the second peal ever rung in the Midlands on handbells. In March, 1878, he called Holt's Original upon handbells at West Bromwich, and in May of the same year he rang his first peal of Stedman Cinques at the church of St. Martin, Birmingham, to which town he migrated. From that date to the present his ringing career has been a series of successes. We may thus summarise his performances: Grandsire Triples 23; Major 12; Caters 18; Royal 1; Cinques 1. Stedman Triples 5; Caters 2; Cinques 1. New Grandsire Triples 6; Caters 1. Bob Triples 1; Major 2. Treble Bob Royal 2. Double Oxford Bob Major 1; in all 76 peals. He also has composed and conducted peals of 10,176 Grandsire Major and 6137 of Grandsire Caters on handbells, these being the longest peals in the methods. He rang the 2nd in the silent peal of Stedman Triples at Burton-on-Trent, so fresh in our memory; and has successfully taken part in the large number of twenty-seven handbell peals, conducting twenty-two of that number. Mr. CARTER'S knowledge of composition is extensive. He has composed peals in the Grandsire, Plain Bob, and Double Norwich methods, containing all the most musical qualities to be obtained. A 5003 Grandsire Caters, with the 6th the extent in 5-6 twelve courses alternately, also one in the inverted tittums position with the 6th in the same position; and the same number with the 6th twenty-four times wrong and right and the 5th twelve times right) which was supposed to be the first upon this plan); 6137, which was rung upon handbells, and contained the 6th twenty-four times wrong and right, and the 5th twenty-four times right, being the shortest with the above qualities composed up to the present time; 13,137 with the 120 course-ends without a 9-7-8 being called, and only five calls on 8-9; 10,752 Grandsire Major, with the 120 course-ends; also a 13,440 without a call at every lead, being the first composed on that plan with the tenors together throughout. He was the first to compose a 9600 with the tenors together every lead, and was the first to compose and ring a peal on that plan. He has some ten-part peals of Grandsire Triples which by some were thought impossible. His Double Norwich compositions need no comment, they speak for themselves, and he was the first to produce a peal in that method with only one call in each course.

We believe that it is mainly to his efforts that the two ringing societies known as the Birmingham Amalgamated Society and the Birmingham and District Association, came into existence. Opinions will differ perhaps as to the desirability of separate companies existing in a town like Birmingham, but it must be conceded that these two Associations have upon the whole, done as much to advance the art as any other and older body in the county. It is to be deplored that the Diocesan Association did not respond to the invitation to amalgamate with these societies.

Our friend is not only a ringer but also an inventor, and his name can be found many times in the Patent Office chiefly in connection with his business. He is at the present time engaged in the manufacture of a wonderful machine to record peals as rung. This ingenious contrivance is to be placed in the belfry while a peal is in progress, and will record the peal as it is rung, denoting any slight mistake, and pointing out the bell that made it. Particulars of this contrivance will no doubt appear in due course.

As a member of the local volunteer force he is well known at the annual shooting tournament at Wimbledon, where he has taken several prizes; and from which national meeting he very seldom retires without taking away some trophy or other.

JOHN CARTER is well known not only in Birmingham, but in many parts of England, and among his most intimate ringing friends is much respected; not only for his geniality and good nature, but for his readiness to impart any information. He always has a welcome for strange brother-strings who, when visiting Birmingham, should chance to give him a call, and is ever ready to do his best to oblige them by making the necessary arrangements for a peal.

MY EXPERIENCES AS A SAILOR.

A TERRIBLE VOYAGE.

THE 19th of November is always a busy day in the port of Quebec, for by the terms of insurance policies, all ships outward bound from thence must be clear of the port by the 20th, and the terms must be strictly adhered to, as it has been no uncommon occurrence for the river St. Lawrence to be perfectly open and free from ice at that date, and for a single night's frost in that remarkable climate to lock up the river with an impenetrable barrier, to be no more opened until late in April or early in May of the following year.

Very busy then upon this morning was the scene on board the steamship "Jutland," a large brig-rigged vessel loading for London. The stevedore's gangs of lumpers were crowded thickly at every hatch and cargo-port, some tumbling in the last few thousand bags of wheat, others stowing pine planks and cases of matchwood, in the after-hatch and lazarette; the more valuable products of the rich Canadian pastures in the shape of huge cheeses, each in its wooden envelope, and tubs of fragrant butter, were being carefully packed tier upon tier, under the watchful eye of the head stevedore himself; while some of the steward's people were packing barrels of choice apples into the unoccupied deck cabins, each barrel bearing an address to friends in the old country, being for the most part Christmas presents from prosperous Canadian settlers.

The incessant rattle of the steam winches, and clanking of chains and strops, made a sort of rough but appropriate music, while now and then the hoarse cry of the boatswain shouting an order to Jack who was aloft making things snug, could be heard above the babel of voices; voices many of them clear and musical, rolling out the sonorous patois of old Canadian French, others generally rather husky, the effects of much cheap whisky and plug tobacco, garnished with the quaint sayings and rich bronze of the first "gem of the sea," the honours of "lumping" in Quebec being about even between these two nationalities.

The sky is dark and lowering, already, three or four days ago, the first snow had come, and freezing hard, had made good sleighing; from the ship could be seen on the heights of Point Levis, cutters, buggies, and drays, slipping smoothly along on their runners, behind quick stepping horses, each with its arch of jingling bells surmounting his shoulders.

But the gaze of the smart chief officer, Mr. Stone, is now directed to the opposite shore, for, as it seems in the gloom, from the very foot of the frowning old fortress of Quebec itself, a boat is putting off, which, as it approaches the ship, is seen to contain in addition to the captain and pilot, some female forms: the word is passed therefore to the chief steward who stations himself at the gangway to receive the lady passengers, while the officer renders a similar courtesy to the captain.

Eager enquiries are made by the commander as he steps upon deck, as to how the preparations for sea are progressing, and upon being informed that all will be ready in half an hour, he gives the order to "heave short," and retires to his cabin with brokers' clerks and shipping agents to sign the last few papers; the passengers, each with the advice and assistance of several friends to see them off, are settling themselves and impedimenta into their cosy state rooms. The chief officer, with the carpenter, bosun, and several seamen proceeds to heave short on the anchor; the second officer with the quartermaster take a last look at the steering gear to see that that most important machine is in good order; the junior officer, with the remainder of the seamen, coil down ropes, set up derrick guys, and square up the decks generally; while in the depths below the engineers are at "stand by," the greasers are filling oil cups and firemen skillfully touching up the huge fires in readiness for the stroke of the telegraph gong ordering "ahead full speed."

All is now ready, passengers and their friends are clustering round the gangway making their final adieus, and as the last visitor steps into the shore boat, the captain, who is looking on impatiently at the long drawn partings, strikes the telegraph sharply, and in obedience to the signal the ponderous engines commence their lively motion, and away down the dark river dashes the stately ship, all on board anticipating with joy the prospect of Christmas at home.

The following night, off Father Point, the weather is so bad that it is very difficult to land the pilot, but Captain Johns is an "old soldier" as well as an old sailor, and knows that if that functionary is carried on it will be an expensive business for the ship, as he must be maintained and a stiff salary paid him until he can be returned to his home, a period of, possibly six months, so that the ship is dodged about and blue lights and port fires burned, until the boatmen ashore pluck up their courage and put off into the howling night, and with a lot of backing and filling manage to lay their heavy whale boat alongside, into which, amid many strange oaths in broken English and Canadian French, the pilot scrambles and his kit is dropped after him, snugly rolled up within which is a bottle of old Cognac, a present from the Captain, who is no niggard with his grog, but has a stern Medo-Persic rule that no pilot has so much as a nip on board of the ship while in the discharge of his duties.

All that night and next morning the weather continued rough, and none of the ladies had yet ventured to table, though most of the gentlemen had put in an appearance as hunger got the better of their qualms; towards night the breeze lessened, and at 11 p.m., the order was given for "half speed," to avoid reaching Sydney before daylight.

Sydney, Cape Breton, is a small dull town, the seat of a large coal mining industry, is three days nearer to England than Quebec, and being little out of the direct track, is often utilised at the latter end of the season as a coaling station, thus enabling steamers to start upon their dangerous winter navigation of the North Atlantic with a good supply of fuel. While at the wharf taking in four hundred tons of coal, a work of about twenty-four hours, many of the passengers and crew made visits to the town, several of the latter returning with live geese, and knitted woollen socks, which seem to be the only two commodities on sale in Sydney, and each purchasable for the same amount of coin, *i.e.*, one shilling sterling.

In the meantime the wind had freshened into a stiff breeze, and the ship had hardly cleared Sydney harbour when she was in the midst of a gale that lasted about two days, and wound up with a very heavy squall; then came a lull, and though a heavy sea was still running, most of the passengers had been tempted to come out to view the glorious fiery sunset. Quite a merry party assembled at the tea table that evening, and one lively young lady, Miss Racer, caused amusement by dealing out sweethearts, husbands and wives, and large fortunes, to all and sundry, according to the various forms assumed by the "grounds" at the bottom of the tea cups; one of her prophecys to the effect that "company was coming to-morrow," being received as the best joke of all, the ship being then many hundreds of miles out on the stormy ocean. But while at breakfast on the following morning, the officer of the watch sent word to the captain that there was a sailing vessel in sight showing signals of distress, and shortly after the "Jutland" was stopped as near to the unfortunate barque as possible, and the port lifeboat manned by the chief officer "Chips," and four A B's, was struggling through the heavy seas to the rescue of their brethren in distress. After two hours battling with the waves, during which time they had traversed a distance not exceeding two miles, the lifeboat regained the steamer, bringing with her the captain, five of the crew, and a small terrier dog, all that remained on the barque "Mendoza" of Greenock, which had been waterlogged for several days, and had the larger portion of her crew taken off by a boat belonging to another sailing ship two days before, but during a tremendous squall the other ship had been driven away out of sight, leaving the poor mariner on the barque in a state of dreadful uncertainty, both as to their own ultimate fate and that of their comrades, who had been overtaken by the squall before reaching the rescuing snip.

Miss Racer gained much prestige as a prophet from this incident, and was presented with the rescued terrier by the captain of the Mendoza, as a souvenir of her remarkable tea cup prediction.

The mercury in the barometer had been slowly falling ever since leaving Sydney, and there now burst a most terrific westerly gale, accompanied with a fearful sea, which gathered in strength and destructiveness for many days. The "Jutland" had a very long bridge house amidships, under which were berthed the deck and engine officers of all grades, and contained in addition mess rooms, closets and store rooms of various descriptions, in all about ten rooms on each side; these rooms began to give way before the furious battering force of the heavy seas shipped on board, and the occupants had transferred their gear to the engine-room, where nearly all hands now resorted for shelter, for it was utterly impossible to live in the forecastle or even venture on the fore deck; short sail was made upon the ship to keep her before the wind, but was blown away bit by bit, until but about one half of an upper fore-top sail alone remained; the whole of the boats, six in number, were either carried away or smashed into matchwood, and the huge davits broken off short like carrots. These davits were of iron five inches thick, from which some idea of the force of the seas may be formed. Immense seas swept through the galleys, and for many days no particle of cooked food was available, no drinking water could be obtained from the ordinary source, the deck pump being destroyed, but fortunately the water-tanks could be reached through a trap in the engine-room bulkhead, so that by means of a dipper a supply of the life-sustaining fluid was obtained.

During daylight two or three men would watch a chance, and in a momentary lull make a rush aft, where all was yet secure, the strong deck houses of teak and cabin skylights being securely battened down, from the stores there the adventurers would get supplies of biscuits and tins of cocoa paste, stowing these in their jumpers they would again seize the moment of a lull to regain the shelter of the engine-room, and for many days biscuits, spread with cocoa paste was the only food that sustained the weary crew in their fight with the fearful gale. The first life was lost upon this service, a fine young seaman, Frank Ashurst, having ventured at night, the moment after he had left the engine-room hatch, an immense sea overwhelmed the ship, which must have carried him overboard, for poor Frank was never more seen.

The situation in the engine-room was critical in the extreme, the salvation of the ship depended upon the speed of the engines being kept up to the highest possible point; six hours watches were set, thus throwing fifty per cent more labour upon all hands. being closely battened for so long, in spite of which every sea that came over the ship, and they were legion, sent heavy showers of water down on engines and boilers, raising volumes of vapour for which there was but little outlet, the atmosphere became horribly oppressive, ranging to an height of 140° to 150° Farenheit, and all were wet and soddened, and miserable; moreover the excessive labour, coupled with insufficient food and want of sleep, began to tell upon the firemen, and it was with great difficulty that some of them could be kept to their post. One or two did in fact leave their work in despair, and commenced praying instead, rendering it necessary for the chief engineer to admonish them somewhat roughly, that they should have done their praying before they came to sea, or at least to defer it until the gale was weathered.

On the bridge the scene was truly frightful, and enough to cow the heart of any but the staunchest of seamen; the shrieking and howling of the gale, the terrifying, overwhelming crash of the huge mountains of water that repeatedly buried the ship, hour after hour, and day after day, four seamen lashed to the wheel, the Captain and officers lashed to the bridge stanchions, or main-top-mast stays; Captain Johns declared this to be by far the worst gale he had ever encountered in his thirty-five years' service of crossing the Atlantic.

Fears were entertained that the funnel would carry away, a crowning disaster, as several of the guy bolts were torn through the deck, and the funnel itself even dented by the furious impact of the waves, and the waste steam pipe, a huge tube of copper, actually bent and crushed. Owing to the whole of the bridge boats being carried away with their chocks and gear the bridge was left clear of anything in the shape of bulwarks, and life-lines were stretched to the few available stanchions.

It must be understood that the ship had been running before the gale, and about the sixth morning, when the wind had somewhat abated, was in even more danger than at any other time; this may seem inexplicable to a landsman, but is to be explained thus: As long as the wind has a much higher velocity than the sea, the ship can, by the help of its canvas, be kept before the wind, but when the wind lessens the seas still for days after runs with great velocity and force, and running faster than the ship can go, poops her, the most dangerous form in which a ship can be struck by a sea. This then is nearly what happened to the unfortunate "Jutland." About 2 p.m. the chief engineer had ventured to the companion to have a look out, and was speaking to Mr. Stone, who was saying cheerily that "it," meaning the gale, "was all over," when at that moment the engineer saw an enormous wave. seemingly higher than the main top-sail yard, breaking over the starboard waist; dashing to the companion cover he held on to the doors for a space of time that seemed terribly long, but was really but a minute or so, during which time the ship was fairly submerged; upon the water ceasing to pour through the cracks of the doors he again looked out, expecting that the chief officer had been carried away in the terrible deluge, but that official had luckily become entangled in a winch and so saved. While in the act of congratulating him upon his providential escape the boatswain came running along the bridge shouting that the Captain was gone overboard. which, alas, was but too true. Captain Johns had just stepped forth from the chart room, which structure, strange to say, escaped all damage, and was standing close by the funnel, when the huge wave dashed over the ship and swept him away into eternity.

Of course nothing could be done but to keep running as hard as possible, the gale was dying out and less frequently the heavy seas broke on board, but about 9 p.m. the same night the worst occurred: a fearful crash, accompanied by masses of water pouring down the stoke-hole, a long, heaving, sickening lurch, told the tale to the people in the engine-room of the ship having having broached to, and it was with great difficulty that the firemen could be restrained from deserting their posts, in the belief that the ship was foundering. After a few most anxious minutes the voice of the second officer was heard calling from above for an engineer to fix the after steering gear, the carpenter whose duty it was being laid on the floor of the engine-room with broken ribs, having thus suffered early in the gale. The second engineer and a trusty fireman started with tools to render the required assistance, and so impressed were all with the close proximity of death, that the chief and second engineer, old friends and comrades in many a scene of peril, wrung each other by the hand, never hoping to meet again in this world.

But thanks be to God for all his mercies, that last frightful sea was the beginning of the end of our troubles, and truly it had done great havoc; the entire steering gear, with the two poor fellows who were lashed to it, the engine-room telegraph, the fiying bridge, an erection of iron stanchions as thick as a man's arm, the huge iron ventilators for supplying air to the furnaces, the side lights, all had gone, and the chief officer who was lashed found himself hanging by the waist to a broken stanchion when the sea had passed over the ship.

She was now much quieter, head to sea, and at daylight it was seen that that the last awful sea had stove in the main hatch and the deck close around it, and besides torn away about fifty feet of the iron bulwarks on the port side, this latter, no doubt having been her salvation, otherwise the immense weight of water must have foundered her.

The following morning being comparatively fine, and the broken hatch and deck repaired with planks, the ship was put on her course, and it was with thankful feelings that St. Agnes, the Scilly Islands, was sighted. The stock of coals were rather low, but the two chiefs, mate and engineer, after consultation, agreed to push on for London, for had they gone to Plymouth for coals, the Board of Trade officials there would not have let her out again, such a wreck as she was, without heavy repairs.

Getting a pilot at Dungeness, the story of the feartul voyage was carried ashore by the pilot boat, and telegraphed to London, and on entering the Albert Docks, many friends of the crew were were waiting on the dockhead. A sad scene ensued when the friends of the lost ones learned their bereavement, while on the other hand the survivors were welcomed as if they had returned from the dead, and so ended the terrible voyage of the good ship "Jutland."

It may be added that the first portion of the crew of the "Mendoza" were landed at Queenstown, some few days later, by the barque, "Ruby," of Quebec, who had rescued them.

THE MAN IN THE BELL.

In my younger days, bell-ringing was much more in fashion among the young men of ——— than it is now. Nobody, I believe, practices it there at present except the servants of the church, and the melody has been much injured in consequence. Some fifty years ago, about twenty of us who dwelt in the vicinity of the Cathedral, formed a club, which used to ring every peal that was called for; and, from continual practice and a rivalry which arose between us and a club attached to another steeple, and which tended considerably to sharpen our zeal, we became very Mozarts on our favourite instruments. But my bell-ringing practice was shortened by a singular accident, which not only stopped my performance, but made even the sound of a bell terrible to my ears.

One Sunday, I went with another into the belfry to ring for noon prayers, but the second stroke we had pulled showed us that the clapper of the bell we were at was muffled. Some one had been buried that morning, and it had been prepared, of course, to ring a mournful note. We did not know of this, but the remedy was easy. "Jack," said my companion, "step up to the loft, and cut off the hat;" for the way we had of muffling was by tying a piece of an old hat, or of cloth (the former was preferred), to one side of the clapper, which deadened every second toll. I complied, and mounting into the belfry, crept as usual into the bell, where I began to cut away. The hat had been tied on in some more complicated manner than usual, and

I was perhaps three or four minutes in getting it off; during which time my companion below was hastily called away—by a message from his sweetheart, I believe—but that is not material to my story. The person who called him was a brother of the club, who, knowing that the time had come for ringing for service, and not thinking that anyone was above, began to pull. At this moment I was just getting out, when I felt the bell moving; I guessed the reason at once—it was a moment of terror; but by a hasty and almost convulsive effort, I succeeded in jumping down, and throwing myself on the flat of my back under the bell.

The room in which it was was little more than sufficient to contain it, the bottom of the bell coming within a couple of feet of the floor of lath. At that time I certainly was not so bulky as I am now, but as I lay it was within an inch of my face. I had not laid myself down a second, when the ringing began.—It was a dreadful situation. Over me swung an immense mass of metal, one touch of which would have crushed me to pieces; the floor under me was principally composed of crazy laths, and if they gave way, I was precipitated to the distance of about fifty feet upon a loft, which would, in all probability, have sunk under the impulse of my fall, and sent me to be dashed to atoms upon the marble floor of the chancel, a hundred feet below. I remembered—for fear is quick in recollection—how a common clockwright, about a month before, had fallen, and, bursting through the floors of the steeple, driven in the ceilings of the porch, and even broke into the marble tombstone of a bishop who slept beneath. This was my first terror, but the ringing had not continued a minute, before a more awful and immediate dread came on me. The deafening sound of the bell smote into my ears with a thunder which made me fear their drums would crack: there was not a fibre of my body it did not thrill through. It entered my very soul; thought and reflection were almost utterly banished; I only retained the sensation of agonising terror. Every moment I saw the bell sweep within an inch of my face; and my eyes—I could not close them, though to look at the object was bitter as death—following it instinctively in its oscillating progress until it came back again. It was in vain I said to myself that it would come no nearer at any future swing than it did at first; every time it descended I endeavoured to shrink into the very floor to avoid being buried under the down-sweeping mass; and then, reflecting on the danger of pressing too weightily on my frail support, would cower up again as far as I dared.

At first my fears were mere matter of fact. I was afraid the pulleys above would give way, and let the bell plunge on me. At another time, the possibility of the clapper being shot out in some sweep, and dashing through my body, as I have seen a ramrod glide through a door, flitted across my mind. The dread also, as I have already mentioned, of the crazy floor, tormented me; but these soon gave way to fears not more unfounded, but more visionary, and of course more tremendous. The roaring of the bell confused my intellect, and my fancy soon began to teem with all sorts of strange and terrifying ideas. The bell pealing above, and opening its jaws with a hideous clamour, seemed to me at one time a ravening monster, raging to devour me; at another, a whirlpool ready to suck me into its bellowing abyss. As I gazed on it, it assumed all shapes; it was a flying eagle, or rather a roc of the Arabian story-tellers, clapping its wings and screaming over me. As I looked upward into it, it would appear sometimes to lengthen into indefinite extent, or to be twisted at the end into the spiral folds of the tail of a flying dragon. Nor was the flaming breath or fiery glance of that fabled animal wanting to complete the picture. My eyes, inflamed, bloodshot, and glaring, invested the supposed monster with a full proportion of unholy light.

It would be endless were I to merely hint at all the fancies that possessed my mind. Every object that was hideous and roaring presented itself to my imagination. I often thought that I was in a hurricane at sea, and that the vessel in which I was embarked tossed under me with the most furious vehemence. The air, set in motion by the swinging of the bell, blew over me, nearly with the violence, and more than the thunder of a tempest; and the floor seemed to reel under me, as under a drunken man. But the most awful of all the ideas that seized on me were drawn from the supernatural. In the vast cavern of the bell hideous faces appeared, and glared down on me with terrifying frowns, or with grinning mockery still more appalling. At last, the devil himself, accoutred as in the common description of the evil spirit, with hoof, horn, and tail, and eyes of infernal lustre, made his appearance, and called on me to curse God and worship him, who was powerful to save me. This dread suggestion he uttered with the full-toned clangour of the bell. I had him within an inch of me, and I thought on the fate of the Santon Barsisa. Strenuously and desperately I defied him and bade him begone. Reason, then, for a moment resumed her sway, but it was only to fill me with fresh terror, just as the lightning dispels the gloom that surrounds the benighted mariner, but to show him that his vessel is driving on a rock, where she must inevitably be dashed to pieces. I found I was becoming delirious, and trembled lest reason should utterly desert me. This is at all times an agonising thought, but it smote me then with tenfold agony. I feared lest, when utterly deprived of my senses, I should rise—to do which I was every moment tempted by that strange feeling which calls on a man, whose head is dizzy from standing on the battlement of a lofty castle to precipitate himself from it, and then death would be instant and tremendous. When I thought of this, I became desperate. I caught the floor with a grasp which drove the blood from my nails; and I yelled with the cry of despair. I called for help, I prayed, I shouted, but all the efforts of my voice were of course drowned in the bell. As it passed over my mouth, it occasionally echoed my cries, which mixed not with its own sound, but preserved their distinct character. Perhaps this was but fancy. To me, I know, they then sounded as if they were the shouting, howling, or laughing of the fiends with which my imagination had peopled the gloomy cave which swung over me.

You may accuse me of exaggerating my feelings; but I am not. Many a scene of dread have I since passed through, but they are nothing to the self-inflicted terrors of this half hour. The ancients have doomed one of the damned, in their Tartarus, to lie under a rock, which every moment seems to be descending to annihilate him—and an awful punishment it would be. But if to this you add a clamour as loud as if ten thousand furies were howling about you—a deafening uproar banishing reason, and driving you to madness—you must allow that the bitterness of the pang was rendered more terrible. There is no man, firm as his nerves may be, who could retain his courage in this situation.

In twenty minutes the ringing was done. Half of that time passed over me without power of computation,—the other half appeared an age. When it ceased, I became gradually more quiet, but a new fear retained me. I knew that five minutes would elapse without ringing, but, at the end of that short time, the bell would be rung a second time, for five minutes more. I could not calculate time. A minute and an hour were of equal duration. I feared to rise, lest the five minutes should have elapsed, and the ringing be again commenced, in which case I should be crushed, before I could escape, against the walls or frame-work of the bell. I therefore still continued to lie down, cautiously shifting myself, however, with a careful gliding, so that my eyes no longer looked into the hollow. This was of itself a considerable relief. The cessation of the noise had, in a great measure, the effect of stupifying me, for my attention being no longer occupied by the chimeras I had conjured up, began to flag. All that now distressed me was the constant expectation of the second ringing, for which, however, I settled myself with a kind of stupid resolution. I closed my eyes, and clenched my teeth as firmly as if they were screwed in a vice. At last the dreaded moment came, and the first swing of the bell extorted a groan from me, as they say the most resolute victim screams at the sight of the rack, to which he is for a second time destined. After this, however, I lay silent and lethargic, without a thought. Wrapt in the defensive armour of stupidity, I defied the bell and its intonations. When it ceased, I was roused a little by the hope of escape. I did not, however, decide on this step hastily, but, putting up my hand with the utmost caution, I touched the rim. Though the ringing had ceased, it still was tremulous from the sound, and shook under my hand, which instantly recoiled as from an electric jar. A quarter of an hour probably elapsed before I again dared to make the experiment, and then I found it at rest. I determined to lose no time, fearing that I might have lain then already too long, and that the bell for evening service would catch me, This dread stimulated me, and I slipped out with the utmost rapidity, and arose. I stood, I suppose, for a minute, looking with silly wonder on the place of my imprisonment, penetrated with joy at escaping, but then rushed down the stony and irregular stair with the velocity of lightning, and arrived in the bell-ringers' room. This was the last act I had power to accomplish. I leant against the wall, motionless and deprived of thought, in which posture my companions found me, when, in the course of a couple of hours, they returned to their occupation.

They were shocked, as well they might, at the figure before them. The wind of the bell had excoriated my face, and my dim and stupified eyes were fixed with a lack-lustre gaze in my raw eyelids. My hands were torn and bleeding; my hair dishevelled; and my clothes tattered. They spoke to me, but I gave no answer. They shook me, but I remained insensible. They then became alarmed, and hastened to remove me. He who had first gone up with me in the forenoon, met them as they carried me through the churchyard, and through him, who was shocked at having, in some measure, occasioned the accident, the cause of my misfortune was discovered. I was put to bed at home, and remained for three days delirious, but gradually recovered my senses. You may be sure the bell formed a prominent topic of my ravings, and if I heard a peal, they were instantly increased to the utmost violence. Even when the delirium abated, my sleep was continually disturbed by imagined ringings, and my dreams were haunted by the fancies which almost maddened me while in the steeple. My friends removed me to a house in the country, which was sufficiently distant from any place of worship, to save me from the apprehensions of hearing the church-going bell; for what Alexander Selkirk, in Cowper's poem, complained of as a misfortune, was then to me as a blessing. Here I recovered; but, even long after recovery, if a gale wafted the notes of a peal towards me, I started with nervous apprehension. I felt a Mohammedan hatred to all the bell tribe, and envied the subjects of the Commander of the Faithful the sonorous voice of their Muezzin. Time cured this, as it does the most of our follies; but even at the present day, if, by chance, my nerves be unstrung, some particular tones of the cathedral bell have power to surprise me into a momentary start.—*Tales from Blackwood.*

A RINGER'S DREAM.

Ne'er by day did reason's mint
Give my thoughts a clearer print,
Of assured reality.
Than was left by phantasy,
Stamp'd and colour'd on my sprite,
In a dream of yesternight.

Our company had met together one evening late in autumn for a peal of Treble Bob. I had agreed to make one of the band, but at the last minute a brother ringer from a neighbouring town appeared unexpectedly and I resigned my rope to him. I was tired that night in mind and body, and, to confess the truth, it was with a feeling of satisfaction that, having locked the church door on my comrades to secure them from interruption, I made myself comfortable by the fire in our club-room, and prepared to sit out the peal. To pass away the time I took up "Standard Methods," and began to puzzle myself with Mr. Snowdon's diagrams of that inscrutable method known as London Surprise. In an hour's time I had forgotten my name, and found myself beginning to question my own identity, so to clear my head again I put on my coat, climbed the long newel staircase in the corner buttress, and stepped out upon the roof of the tower. A fresh south-west breeze was blowing, and some heavy masses of cloud were looming up in the southern sky, but overhead the stars were still shining brightly and peacefully. I leaned upon the battlements and looked out over the country which lay around in a dark circle, broken only by the light which streamed from the west window of the tower, and shone on the white gravestones in the churchyard a hundred feet below. The solid floor of lead and timber upon which I stood softened down to music the voices of the bells. The tenor had just taken up the slow work, and as I listened to the changes the booming of her deep rich note dwelt upon my ear till I gradually lost consciousness of every other sound, and then, soothed by the warm night wind and the gentle rocking of the tower, I fell asleep. Immediately I had a strange and vivid dream. It seemed to me that our tower hung high in space and that far below me the whole world revolved, and showed me, as in a great panorama, scene after scene of the toil and the sorrow of human life. Giddy at the sight for a moment, I shut my eyes. When I opened them a crowded city was passing beneath me. I saw through the window of a room the form of a once strong man wasted with disease tossing wearily on his bed. Beside him sat a woman trying with loving words to give him rest, and at the bed knelt a little girl holding his hand in hers and looking wistfully in his face. And just as the scene passed away I saw a smile upon that face, worn with pain and restlessness, and I knew that the sufferer had heard the music of our bells, and that they had brought him peace. When I looked again it was grey morning. The wind had risen to a gale, and below was a vessel struggling in a furious sea, a full-rigged ship trying under double reefed topsails to weather out the storm. There were two men at the wheel, a tall, big-boned, blue-eyed Swede, and a sturdy Scotch lad. The skipper in a peajacket, and sou' wester, stood on the weather side of the poop, and the watch, in their oilskins, were grouped to leeward of the mizen mast, for there was no safety forward where the green seas were curling over the bulwarks and thundering down upon the deck, sweeping all before them. The skipper, a thickset, round-shouldered little man, cast from time to time an anxious glance upwards at the two narrow strips of canvas upon which his life depended, but I saw a look of quiet confidence on his face as if some echoes of our peal, full of memories of home, had reached him through the bellowing of the gale, and given him fresh courage for the fight. But ship and ocean passed away and again I looked down upon the life and turmoil of a great city. I saw a student surrounded by his books, a man worn down by hard thought, grey before his time, with an unsatisfied longing in his eyes as if with all his learning he had come to no knowledge of the truth, and as the sound of the bells was borne in through the open window he started, moved, I thought, by some strong memory of a past, when no haunting doubts disturbed the peace of a pure childhood's faith. Then far away to the west I saw a little clearing in a boundless forest of grey poplars. A rough log hut stood in a corner, and by it was a little patch of garden ground, but the rest of the clearing was strewn with trunks of fallen trees, which lay half buried in a dense and matted undergrowth. A man was leaning on his axe wiping the sweat from his face and resting a moment in his fiery struggle with nature for his bread. And as the air around him was filled with the music of our peal, he took new heart and strength, and raising his axe worked on with redoubled vigour to prepare a home for wife and little ones left waiting in the old country beyond the sea. And now another ocean stretched before me and on a nameless coral island I saw the figure of a lonely man, the survivor of some one of these many untold tragedies of which the story of the great deep, could we but read it, is too full. A tall, gaunt man clad in rags with matted hair hanging over his shoulders, a face wasted with the sickness of hope deferred, and eyes haggard with straining for the first glimpse of the sail that never came. But as the voices of the bells were borne to him across the sea his eyes filled with tears, and the yearning look left his face as if with the sound peace had entered into his soul. Then there was a long interval of oblivion, only from time to time there came up a confused murmur of sounds which blended strangely in my dream with the coursing of the bells, and made me half conscious of the life of a busy world below. At last I roused myself again and looked down upon a mighty continent glowing beneath the rays of a torrid sun. And I saw that this land, bathed as it was in glorious light, was darkened by an awful curse. Along a hot and breathless valley there wound slowly one of those ghastly processions with which Livingstone and Gordon, Felkin and Nachtigull, and a score of other writers had made me too familiar—a slave caravan. I thought that I had before me the actual reality of a scene which had often haunted my dreams, the white-robed evil-hearted Mohammedan merchants with their brutal following of armed ruffians, the long files of wretched men yoked together like beasts, and staggering under their burdens, weary and despairing women, little children doomed to shame and misery, from the very thought of which they should have been tenderly shielded. One figure in that sad train riveted my attention—the figure of a little boy fastened by a cord round his right wrist to the left arm of a villanous-looking Arab, who slouched along with an old muzzle-loading rifle over his shoulder. The boy could not have been more than twelve or thirteen. He had been better cared for than the rest, or perhaps had but just been taken. Bare from head to foot he might, for symmetry of limb, have stood for any painter as a model of childish grace and beauty. But across his back from shoulder to shoulder stretched a cruel scar, which showed that even his tender years had not saved him from the driver's lash. My boy plodded bravely on, keeping as far from his companion as the length of the cord would allow. Once I saw his face; there was little of the African type about it, but there was a look there of conscious helplessness, of yearning for that love which was his due, of dread of a dark and unknown future which would have moved a heart of stone. My dream had become a nightmare, and sick with horror I turned away. When I dared to look again I saw upon a hill slope, not twenty miles from that dreadful valley, a Christian church, a humble building, but above it flew a flag which bore the ensign of our faith. And outside the church, looking up into the sky, stood a white man, a missionary, weary and disappointed, he seemed to be, with the burden of that lonely struggle with the powers of evil and the brute forces of nature. But suddenly there burst upon him the full music of those triumphant bells, sweeping from his heart every doubt and fear, bringing him a pledge of light for Africa, an assurance of victory as though Armageddon were already fought and won.

Thrilled by the scene I started out of sleep. My dream was over. I was alone in darkness and driving rain on the tower top. The bells were still ringing, but before I had groped my way down the stairs they had ceased, and the peal was over. The cheerful light and cheerful talk of the club-room did much to restore my spirits, but my brother ringers must pardon me if they found me poor company as we trudged home through the mud that night, for the form of my African boy haunted me, and haunts me still. JACK HODGE.

MRS. BROWN AMONG THE RINGERS.

Now of course I'm not a ringer myself, though as I've heard say there was one ringer a many years ago who made his wife get up out of her warm bed in the cold winter's morning to ring the kerfew at Soreditch, while her husband, drat him, lay asleep in bed. And so would I; I don't think. Very likely this was always through his keeping late hours with them there Cumberlings, as I made a bargen with my 'usband before we were married that he should never go to ring only at our own parish church, where me and him were krisened, and brought up, in the parish, that is. Dear me; if men wants to ring why can't 'em ring at home, leastways at the church they belongs to, and not be galliwanting all over London at all hours of the night. Brown comed it once or twice, this stopping out late, and when I blowed him up about it the next morning, he had the imperence to tell me he was Master. Master indeed! though I must say he explained to me later on what he meant—that he was Master of the Collidge Youths. Well I never thought Brown ever went to Collidge, though I dare say them Youths wanted a Master over them now and then, and as Mrs. Jones—whose 'usband, so I heard, rings St. Paul's tenner, tells me, there is nice goings on at that ere Collidge. Though Jones, like Brown and all the rest of 'em, never blows the gaff, wulgarly speaking, as to their doings at Collidge. But, dere hart! the langwidge they talk. We don't have any wisiters, but Jones is werry fond of company, and you may always see a parlour-full at Jones' a-playing of handbells. Not but what they play werry pretty, and when I do drop round to Jones's—Mrs. Jones being an old 'quaintance—and werry conwiwial, I don't mind heering such muzegit, though the way one man rings two bells and throws hisself about is orful, and quite makes one presfire. But sometimes they kick up such a row, hooting and hollering, that it soon becomes a noosance, and Mrs. Jones, who is a lady as knows er book, beckons me down stairs to have somethink. Why these ringers can't speak plane English is a poser to me. The langwidge, as I was sayin' is enough to make a respectable married ooman blush. I heard one man say the tother night "Bob, you made a shift." I thought if I were Bob's wife, I'd give him "shift" when I got him ome. I wonder a respectable-looking set of men aint careful of their langwidge. But lor! Mrs. Jones larfed at me when I told her, and as for Brown, I thought he'd go into sterricks about it. But I did'nt go again to Jones's for a long while, for I could'nt abear, as is a gentle'oman born, to be made lafter of.

Well, as I was saying, them ere "Youths" sometimes wants a Master, and as mine was pinted to that posishun, I thort I'd try and see how he looked in his offis. So I managed to have a peep into the room one night—never mind how I got there—and there was the ringers, quite a spectable lot of gents, with Brown at one head of the table—all as quiet as a body of Methodises, and one werry nice gent, quite a family man, was reding a letter. I dunno what this letter was about, but I thort afterwards as it must be from some poor ringer, and I've seen a lot of em, who was hard up, because one of 'em in the room went round collectin' and gave what he gathered to the man who red the letter. Then another gent got up, and said he wanted to give notice of somethin' about a terrible mob at some church in Birmunsey, and then another gent, with a werry red face, wanted some Hamsher taters, at Fulham. Whatsoever they wanted to here about a mob I couldn't see for the life of me. Very likely it was a meeting of them Chartises as almost robbed the Bank of England once, if the Dook of Wellinton had not stopped their little game. And the idea of goin' to Fulham just to have taters from Hamsher. Well, these ringers are a funny lot, I thought. The man with the red face didn't meet with a werry good reception, with his taters and him, so he made a great noise, which quite upset the party. Now I thought if Brown does his duty he'll shut some on 'em up, specially the red-faced young man, who certingly was not used to perlite society. But all he dun was to say "gentlemen," "gentlemen," and it is a fact that all was quiet in no time, and this red-faced man looked just as if he had been sat on. Then the nice gentleman who read the letter had a bit more to say, and Brown got up and said that bisness was over. So I thought that I had better make myself scarce, as the sayin' is, but afore I could get down the stairs I was overtaken by the young man with the red face, who spotted me in no time, and shouted to Brown that the "old ooman" was come. I jest gave him a smart knock on is ed with my umbreller, as I always carries for convenience sake, and give him the length of my tong. "Who ar you calling old ooman, Mr. Sassbox," I said. "I'll teach you to be respectful to a married female." He umbly begged my parding, but I was not going to be smoothed over so easy, and it was a long time before I'd umble myself to have anythink with him.

Now I a'int going to say I want amoosed a bit the evenin' I went to have a spy at the ringers. Brown says he'll take me to Pulker's some time, which is that church at the end of the Hobun Wiadock, where they rings the bell when the convicts is agoing to be hexecuted at Newgate. Then I shall see the ringers in full fig, as Brown says, but I wants to know more about the ins and outs of it before I ventures up into a belfry. Mrs. Jones says she could'nt think of it. I don't see any arm whatsomdever, especially if I meet with such a nice lot of gents as I saw before at the meeting. It seems as how I made a error in thinkin' what I did about Chartises, for Brown says they ringers are stanch for church and stait, as the saying is, them 'ere Cumberlings as well. Ah! Well, they are a nice lot of gents after all. Brown says they ar all alike; and so I think I shall go to Pulker's the fust hopportunity. And when I do, Mr. Bell News, I'll let you know how I got on.

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On the occasion of the Jubilee of George III, says the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, October 25th, 1809, at Newcastle-on-Tyne, the day was ushered in by the ringing of bells, the flag was hoisted on the Castle, flags were also displayed upon some of the Churches, and also by the ships in the river. The Union society of change-ringers rang in St. Nicholas's belfry, a complete peal of Holt's Grandsire Triples, consisting of 5040 changes, in 3 hrs. 19 mins.

At a wedding at Scaynes Hill a few days ago, a peal of bells was improvised in a singular manner. The village blacksmith having obtained some old ploughshares, turned them to the diatonic scale. Eight of the residents were supplied with one each, together with a clapper in the form of a blacksmith's hammer. They then formed themselves into a circle, and played several peals in hononr of the bride and bridegroom.

The incumbent of St. Paul's, Sandgate, the churchwardens and congregation of which had forwarded a memorial to the Earl of Chichester asking him to grant a small piece of waste ground for the building an apse and organ chamber, have received a reply from his lordship declining to give the space asked for.

A TEN DAYS' TOUR IN MERCIA.

BY A GOSSIPING ANTIQUARY.

VERY reluctantly did we leave Deerhurst behind us, but the cruel captain of our expedition had little sympathy with our antiquarian fervour. Go thither by thyself O man, who lovest the ancient stones and the sacred shrines of hoar antiquity; take with thee only thy sketch book, and let thy pencil be sharply pointed, and if thou must have a companion, let it be a congenial soul, and not a young man, who thinketh mankind were created to be tobacco chimneys, and that there is more interest to be taken in a young woman's glances than in a real Saxon interlaced carving.

Pleasantly, however, did we float down the broad stream of the Severn. The non-antiquarians toiled at the oars, the archæological section meditated on what they had seen, and at length, after many a pleasant curve and sweep of the stately stream, we landed at Ashelworth. Worth is a commonplace name in Hampshire, where there are two parishes curiously enough named Bishopsworthy and Martyrworthy, though I never heard that either of them secured Prelate or Martyr for their incumbents. Ashelworth seems to point to a growth of ashes, and worth is probably connected with the word "warth"—the sea-edging of rough grass, part turf, part mud, near Clevedon, is locally spoken of as "the Salt Warths," and may be derived from "wertha," an old Teutonic word for valuable or useful—the compound signifying a spot valued for its ash plantation. Here we found a very interesting old church, with herring-bone work in the north wall; a curious rood-screen staircase, a quaint fresco painting of the Royal arms, and other features, which would have deserved more attention, but that the most picturesque and almost perfect Manor-house, close by, stole away our hearts. Old churches are frequent enough, but well-preserved "domestic work" is rare enough to be a fascination. Here the "Solar" is perfect, though the hall has been filled up with partitions.

But Ashelworth Manor-house is far too picturesque a spot to be described in words—one needs to have of it some of those exquisite little woodcuts which Llewellyn Juvitt used to produce about 30 years ago, and which are now unequalled. Under the fading sunset—which spread a golden sheen on the Severn—with the melodious chime of the oars, and the songs and glees which the young folks insisted on singing, whilst the old ones trembled at the thought of rheumatics! We saw the reflection of the Cathedral's tall tower falling athwart the stream. We at length floated down to the three-arched bridge at Gloucester, which replaces but poorly the ancient one with its gate tower as "seen in old views of Gloucester."

Now, kind reader, do nat fear that you are going to have a complete history of Gloucester, including its Cathedral and its vanished Castle, forced on your attention, for we know that most of our antiquarian friends have seen the noble church, which was monastic, but is now the Cathedral; but we are going to tell you of what is almost a discovery, at least I do not think the local guides and books give half enough prominence to the interesting fact that there still remain in Gloucester two desecrated churches, one of considerable size, which once belonged to the Grey Friars, and is situated near St. Mary de Crypt church. The other is more curiously concealed, having been turned into a house. This building was once over the church of the Domincians or Black Friars. They were the followers of St. Dominic, the wonderful Spanish "revivalist" of the middle ages. They reached England in the 12th century, and this establishment was founded in 1239. A good deal of it was destroyed, shameful to relate, within the last twenty years, but still part of the cloister plan survives; also the dormitory still remains nearly perfect. That such treasures of antiquity should remain neglected and unnoticed is a terrible disgrace to the culture of our age. These remnants of the past are simply of incalculable value, and they are left to decay unnoticed! Surely the Gloucester Architectural Society might take up the case of the still existing remains of the Grey Friars and the Black Friars, and they might be utilised for a museum or library. Many people would not notice the remains of this church, as it now forms a house, with windows and partitions, and chimneys, but a careful observation of the roof-lines shows the features of a cruciform church, with nave and chancel, north and south transepts. Perhaps some portions were shortened when the building was converted into a mansion-house by an energetic citizen, who attained a grant of the premises when the Friars gave it up in the time of Henry VIII. He gave the altered building his own name, and called it Bell's-place. The records of the Royal visitors about this Friary are still extant and very curious. The Black Friars seem to have been in debt to various tradespeople and citizens. The Commissioners complain of "the clamour" of the creditors. A second report, which was signed by the Mayor of Gloucester, is very amusing, it runs as follows:—

"This 28th day of July in the 30th year of our most dred Sovereyn, Lord Henry the VIII., to Richard Byschop, of Devon, and vesytor under the Lorde Privy Selle (seal) for the Kynges grace was in Glowsetur, and ther before the Meyar and Aldermen, in the howses of (the) Freers (Friars) ther at two tymeys in two days, putt the seyd Freers att ther lyberteys, whether they vold contynew in their howseys and kepe ther relygyon and injunctions, according to the same, or ellys gyff ther howseys into the Kyngs hands: The injunctions he ther declared among them the which was thowthe (thought) by the seyd May'r and Aldermen to be good and reasonabull: and also the sayd Freers sayd they war according to ther rewolys, *yet as the world ys nowe they war not abull to kepe them*, and leffe in ther howseys: wherefore voluntarilye they gaffe ther howseys into the Vesytors hands to the King's use: The vesitur seyd to them, thinke not, nor hereafter report not, that ye be suppreseyd, for I have no such auctoritye to suppresse yow, but only to reform yow; wherefor yff ye woll be reformed according to good order ye may continew for all men: they seyd they wer not abull to contynew; wherefore the vesytor took ther howseys and *charitably* delivered them and gaff them letters to vesyte their friends, or to goe to other howseys," &c., &c.

This curious report, which capitally illustrates the mingled craft and hypocrisy of the Royal Commissioners, is signed amongst others by "Master Thomas Bell, elder Alderman." He became the granter of the Black Friars property, and turned the buildings into a manufactory, where he employed 300 persons. This church, as we see, he sacrilegiously turned into his private residence. However, we must trust that his conscience gave him a few wholesome twinges, for he gave a house to St. Aldate's church, and also built certain almshouses. A few more particulars may be gleaned from his quaint epitaph, which is in St. Mary de Crypt's church, and on the margin of which we read "Dame Joan Bell, the wydowe of Sir Thomas Bell, Knight, hath caused this tomb to be made, and fynished this lyfe the 14th day of June, in this year, 1567."

Curiously enough this lady's name is still familiar in Gloucester, for a lane leading down to what was once a postern on the wall near the Black Friars is called "Lady Bell Gate." But we must first give the epitaph, and say more about the Gloucester Friars again:—

EPITAPH ON SIR JOHN BELL.

"Berefte this life here lyeth under stone
Syr Tomas Bell whylom a knyght of fame
Who lyvinge here gave food to many a one
And left behynd provision for the same
Hath laste in store for ever to be hadd
Among the poore that here in towne shall dwell
Of lyme and stone an Almes-house hath he made
For see poor folks and—the same full well
Here in this streat, fast by the southerne yate
And hath the same withe lyvelyhoode, endewed
That aye shall ask and never shall ——ee.

Thriese wt free voyce eke hath this towne allowde
This worthy man a mayor's rome to wealde
And thriese him cal'd in parlement to sytt,
Force wealthe of them in rest at home that dwelde.
And now hathe d(ea) the his worthy travayle quite
When he hate rune of fower sco(re yea)res the race
Whose spryte in maye, as pleased God prefyxe
The syve and twentie day, and yere of grace
And thousand fyve hundred threscore and syxe,
This tyer fled into the heavenly skye
Where he God graunt and everlastinge time
In joye may lyve, and never more to dye."

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A correspondent sends us the following letter:—

DEAR "BELL NEWS,"—Now that the silent system of ringing is getting into vogue, "we"—that is me and my three brother-ringers—think the ringing world would like to know the origin of it, "we" used to do it long before the Bethnal Green chaps did it. How it came about was this: we have a peal of four in our tower, and the way we rang our peal was this—every treble lead our conductor called "dodge," now this conductor's conduct in general was civil enough, but in the belfry he, or "we" fancied he, assumed a sort of superiority, which me and the other two did not much like, so we had a sort of "hole-and-corner" meeting about it, behind his back, you know, when we agreed to tell him *suaviter in modo*, that we thought the system of dodge calling "slow"; but who was to "bell the cat"? We cast lots, I am happy to say it did not fall on me. He luckily took it in good part, we started at first with the friendly nod, which we found useful, *vide* Percival Heywood, but in a little time we rang our peal without a dodge being called, a nod given, or any sign whatever; that, Sir, me and my three brother-ringers claim as the origin of the Silent System of Ringing. I am glad the system is coming into vogue as I, like some other ringers, take my "five days' ramble," and I find that "bob-callers," though in the main I believe good fellows enough, assume certain "airs" are all there. Now, Sir, the Silent System will take down a peg those conductors, those bob-callers, those ——, there, Sir, I must break off, I am beginning to lose my temper. QUAD.

BOXING DAY AND OLYMPIA.—The Railway Companies are making special arrangements for conveying visitors on Boxing day to Olympia, the new National Agricultural Hall, at Addison-road Station, to witness the first performances of the Great Hippodrome of Paris at 2 and 7.30 on Boxing Day.