

BELLS AND BELL RINGING.

Ringin' in the New Year, 1871.

[A FACT.]

THE moon shines on the snow,
The snow lies on the moor,
The wind has ceased to blow,
And closed is every door:
The hamlet is asleep,
The church upon the hill,
Like sentry, seems to keep
Watch o'er the standing mill.

It is a lovely sight—
Beneath the moon's pale beam
A valley clothed in white,
Woods, and an ice-bound stream;
The ancient church on high
Shading the dead below:
The starred and silvery sky,
And everywhere the snow.

I watch that wondrous scene
Where silence deep as death
Rules, as had never been
Or human foot or breath;
But suddenly I scan,
With footstep quick and light,
A young and active man
Pass to the belfry height;

And there six ringers true,
Himself, their pastor, one,
Ring in the year that's new,
Ring out the Old Year gone;—
It seems—so glad the sound
Breaking the silent air—
As if a world, new-found,
Were call'd to life and prayer.

Ye Bells, ring out the war,
Ring in the time of peace,
Ring to the hamlets near and far
That strife and bloodshed cease;
Ring to the heavens above
To bless the earth beneath;
Ring in a year of love,
Ring out the year of death.

ALFRED GATTY, D.D.

ST. JOHN'S WATERLOO SOCIETY OF CHANGE RINGERS.—On Thursday evening, Dec. 23, 1870, eight members of this Society rang at St. John's Church, Waterloo Road, a muffled peal, containing 5040 changes, in three hours and one minute, as the last mark of respect to the late Mr. Henry Read, a member, who died on the 26th of November, aged thirty-one years. W. Baron, treble; W. Green, 2nd; W. Howard, 3rd; J. Mansfield, 4th; W. Coppage, 5th; G. Harvey, 6th; R. Rose, 7th; A. Hayward, tenor. Conducted by Mr. W. Baron.

We are informed that on the eve of the New Year five members of the Ancient Society of College Yard very kindly amused the inmates of the Westminster Workhouse with their handbells, under the superintendence of the Chaplain, the Rev. P. Smith Duval, and that the whole party assembled enjoyed a very pleasant evening.

RINGING OUT THE OLD YEAR, AND RINGING IN THE NEW.—On the 31st December, 1870, and the 1st January, 1871, a band of ringers from the old parish church of St. Chad, Rochdale, who had been deputed to ring the new peal of bells of St. Alban's Church, ascended the tower of the latter, and rang Mr. Holt's ten-course peal of grandsire triples, which was brought round in good style in two hours and fifty-two minutes, the ringers being stationed as follows:—Treble, Mr. Thos. Marcroft; 2nd, Mr. Thos. Ashworth; 3rd, Mr. Samuel Stott; 4th, Mr. Thos. Bamford; 5th, Mr. Joseph Taylor; 6th, Mr. William Butterworth; 7th, Mr. Josh. Butterworth; tenor, Mr. Edward Hey; conducted by Mr. Joseph Taylor. Weight of tenor, 18 cwt. Key of E natural. This is the first true and complete peal that has been accomplished on these bells, which were accomplished on the first of August last, in commemoration of the twenty-first anniversary of the wedding-day of Mr. Jonathan Neild, J.P. by whom the entire cost of the bells has been defrayed.

STRETTFORD NEAR MANCHESTER.—Recently a special service was held at the parish church, Stretford, to celebrate the opening of a new peal of bells, the generous gift of Mr. Henry Hayes, a member of the congregation. The Lord Bishop of Manchester preached the sermon, and there was a very large attendance. A collection was made, which will go towards defraying the expenses incurred in altering and preparing the church tower for the reception of the bells. After his address, the Bishop said he had come among them for a very pleasing object—to congratulate the parish upon having among them a gentleman who had exhibited great liberality. Mr. Hayes, at his own cost, repewed the church a year ago, and he had now added to that gift another in the shape of a beautiful peal of bells. At the conclusion of the service, a well-attended meeting was held in the school-room, at which an illuminated address was presented to Mr. Hayes by the Bishop, on behalf of the congregation, expressing their deep sense of gratitude for his many acts of liberality. The proceedings were appropriately brought to a close by the giving of three hearty cheers for the Bishop and Mr. Hayes. The bells rang out merrily during the evening, and were proved to be of excellent tone. The cost is about 350*l*.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

LAY HELP—THE CHURCH'S PRESENT NEED. By Rev. William Baird, M.A. (London: W. H. Bartlett).—The contents of this pamphlet, the preface states, have been read at more than one of the Conferences held under the auspices of the 'London Diocesan Association of Lay-helpers.' We are glad that Mr. Baird has acceded to the request to publish them, as we feel sure they will be useful wherever they are circulated. In all directions, and under different forms, we find Churchmen now seeking the co-operation of the Laity, and Mr. Baird's tractate deals with the question in a way that suggests the duty both of laic and cleric. The following describes the excellent, easy-going, well-to-do Churchman—so ready to 'catch at a proxy in religion,' whom most clergymen have encountered in their search for lay-help, though perhaps he may not have put forth his feelings quite so plainly:—

"If you want half-a-crown or five shillings, come to me; but don't ask me to leave my arm-chair after my Sunday's dinner, to go and teach in a close school-room. Let these lay-helpers, overlooked as they are sure to be most efficiently by the clergy" (for objectors of this kind are clad in an armour of impenetrable politeness and gracefully-fitting amiability)—"let them distribute our alms, but don't ask me to go up one of those dark creaking stair-cases—don't ask me to do violence to my nasal organs by sending me into a room which reeks with the combined perfume of soap-suds and beef-steak. My duty as a Churchman can never require this. I am an advocate for helping the poor, but this is going a little too far." Now there is a Book which it is the fashion to handle freely now-a-days, which seems to me to run entirely counter to the view which I have ventured to describe. I read there that "the Son of Man . . . gave to every man his work" (St. Mark, xiii. 34); and again an Apostle tells us, "Let every man prove his own work" (Gal. vi. 4); and in the last chapter of this same Book I find the saying, "Behold I come quickly; and My reward is with Me to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

As to the special work which individual laymen may do, the Paper sets it forth in the following well-chosen words:—

'Each of our lay-helpers should have his own definite work assigned. It never answers to stray over the whole field of possible work, and happily there is scope for every variety of natural temperament. One is fond of teaching—then there is the Sunday-school and the night-school. Another has from God the gift of exhortation—"let him wait on exhortation" in the Bible-class and the Prayer-meeting. Another is a "son of consolation," and has the precious gift of tender sympathy for the needs and sufferings of others, and for him the sick-room and the home of poverty are the ground on which he has to do his battle for his Master. As a district-visitor and an almoner there is plenty for him to do. Yet another has a very practical turn of mind, and likes—"business" after "business hours," and for him the penny bank and the provident fund afford a scope for the exercise of those talents which, equally with the others, he has received from God's hand. Thus, you see, there is scope for every one.'

And as to the direction of these individual workers, and their subordination to some corporate body, Mr. Baird thus pleads for a Parish Council of Communicants:—

'If the clergy give the laity work, they must also give them a voice as to the way in which that work is to be carried on. Theoretically the Vestry represents the voice of the laity, but no one will contend that it is an adequate representation, nor does it touch the particular points on which an earnest lay-worker would wish to take counsel with his spiritual pastor. What we want (it seems to me) is a sort of Council of Communicants—a kind of Kirk-session in fact—to interchange thoughts and take counsel with the pastor. I am convinced that, until we have some organisation of this kind, we shall have a constant repetition of those mistakes, which are often unwittingly made by the clergy from a non-appreciation of the honest difficulties of the laity. I cannot do more than touch this point, but I may perhaps be permitted to say that I pray to see the day when the Bishop shall take counsel