

BELLS AND BELL-RINGING.

Beds Association of Change-ringers.

On Saturday, the 16th ult., a District Meeting of this Association was held at Woburn. Prior to the ringing at Woburn, the Bedford contingent visited Husborne Crawley, and by the kind permission of the Rector, the Rev. R. Shepherd, rang two 720's, one being in the KENT TREBLE BOB method and the other equally complex. The tone of these bells was much admired by all who attended. After ceasing the bells in peal a move was made for Woburn, two miles distant, in a downpour of rain. The eight bells of the Mortuary Chapel were soon in motion. Touches of BOB MAJOR, GRANDSIRE TRIPLES, and KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR, were rung. Tenor, 13 cwt., in good going order. The day was the anniversary of the birthday of the Duke of Bedford, of Woburn Abbey, who, in 1878, added the two trebles to the ring of six, which were then being used for the practice of half-pull ringing, and which is gradually extending in this county.

Surrey Association.

A QUARTERLY MEETING of this Association was held, by the kind permission of the Vicar, at the Church of Immanuel, Streatham Common, on Monday, the 18th inst. The attendance was fairly good, as some fifty members were present altogether from the following parishes:—Beddington, Benlilton, Croydon, Kingston, Mitcham, Christ Church, Streatham, Wimbledon, and a few from London. During the afternoon and evening the following methods were practised:—GRANDSIRE, UNION, and STEDMAN TRIPLES, BOB and TREBLE BOB MAJOR in the Oxford and Kent variations. At six o'clock forty-five members sat down to an excellent meat tea at the 'Beehive,' after which the usual business was quickly despatched. Several new members were elected. It was decided to hold the next District Meeting at Richmond, on November 27th, and the Quarterly Meeting at Camberwell, on January 10th.

ARTHUR B. CARPENTER, *Hon. Sec.*

Lancashire Association of Change-ringers.

THE Annual Meeting of the above Association was held in Bolton on Saturday last. About a hundred members took part in the proceedings, those belonging to Bolton being connected with the Parish, St. George's, Holy Trinity, and All Souls' Churches; while there were also representatives from St. Peter's (Halliwell), Deane Parish Church, and St. Bartholomew's (Westhoughton), Manchester, Worsley, Walkden, Eccles, Pendlebury, Ramsbottom, Heywood, Rochdale, Ashton-under-Lyne, Oldham, Garston, Ratcliffe, Farnworth, and Liverpool. Changes were rung at intervals during the afternoon at various local churches. A special service was held in Holy Trinity Church, commencing at half-past three o'clock. The pulpit was occupied by the Rev. Canon J. D. Kelly, M.A., rector of St. Matthew's, Campfield, Manchester, who founded his discourse upon part of the first verse of the 81st Psalm, 'Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.' The service was brought to a close by the singing of a hymn, followed by the Benediction. An excellent tea was served in the upper room of Holy Trinity Schools at five o'clock, the company numbering nearly a hundred and twenty persons. After the repast a business meeting was held, presided over by the Rev. Charles Lowe, there being also in attendance the Rev. Canon Kelly, the Rev. S. T. Williamson, M.A. (curate of Holy Trinity), Rev. J. G. McCubbin, B.A. (curate of the Bolton Parish Church), Mr. A. E. Holme, M.A., of Manchester (hon. corresponding secretary of the Lancashire Change-ringers' Association), Mr. Joel Redford, of Bolton (hon. ringing secretary), Mr. H. W. Jackson (hon. treasurer), with other officers and the members of the Committee. Mr. Holme read the Committee's Report, which stated that during the past year the number of honorary members has increased from forty-three to fifty, and the ordinary members from 208 to 223. 'We have, however,' reason to believe that, with a little canvassing on the part of present members, these figures might be considerably increased. Five more peals of 5000 changes have been rung this year than last, but the number of short peals recorded has diminished from fifty-five to twenty-six. Nearly all the above peals, however, have been rung by three or four companies, the rest being unrepresented. This want of activity on the part of some of our members is to be deplored, inasmuch as Lancashire is second to no other county in the skill of its ringers. The Treasurer reports a balance of 6l. 2s. 6½d., which, though satisfactory in some respects, would be larger if all the members had paid their subscriptions. In conclusion, we would urge on the local secretaries the need of using their best endeavours to promote the interests of the Association, not only by making known its advantages to outsiders but by rousing the members in their districts to greater activity and enthusiasm. The Treasurer's financial statement for the past year, which was also read by Mr. Holme, showed the total receipts (including a balance in hand of 5l. 16s. 6½d.) to be 25l. 10s. 0½d., the expenditure being 19l. 7s. 6d., leaving a balance of 6l. 2s. 6½d. The election of officers for the ensuing year was then proceeded with. Upon the motion of Mr. Scott (Manchester), seconded by Mr. J. Millett (Heywood), the Rev. Charles Lowe, vicar of Holy Trinity, Bolton (who is one of the Vice-Presidents), was unanimously elected President, in succession to the Rev. T. A. Turner, M.A. Mr. Redford and Mr. Jackson were also reappointed Secretary and Treasurer respectively (Mr. Holme not retiring this year). Messrs. W. Davies and W. Booth (Liverpool) were elected Auditors. Two members of the Committee whose term of office had expired were reappointed, namely, Messrs. S. Wood, of Ashton-under-Lyne, and A. E. Wreaks, of Manchester. A resolution was adopted for increasing the Committee by two members, and Messrs. J. W. Parker, of Blackburn, and H. H. Nutter, of Ramsbottom, were selected. Another alteration in the rules was made, by which non-residents of the county are to be admitted members of the Association by payment of a subscription

of 3s. 6d. for the first year. Thirty-three new performing members were admitted, including several from Bolton churches, the others belonging to Oldham, Milnrow, Rochdale, and Ramsbottom; the Rev. R. W. P. Circuit, rector of St. Luke's, Heywood, was admitted a life member, and the Rev. W. Armour, B.A., curate of the Parish Church, Rochdale, was admitted as an honorary member, making a total of thirty-five new members.

Votes of thanks to the Rev. C. Lowe for the use of the church and schools, to the organist and choir, the ladies, and all others who had rendered services in connexion with the annual meeting, were carried unanimously, and after the Chairman had acknowledged the honour conferred upon him by his election as President of the Association—the reverend gentleman expressing a hope that he might be able to be useful to them in connexion with that most valuable institution—the proceedings were brought to a close.

Reopening of Old and Dedication of New Bells at Prestbury, Gloucestershire.

On Wednesday, the 13th inst., the old six bells of St. Mary's, Prestbury, were reopened after rehanging, and two new trebles, making a ring of eight, were dedicated to the service of God. There was a celebration of Holy Communion at 8 a.m., the Rev. F. Gurney, Vicar, being the celebrant. At ten o'clock a well-attended service of dedication was held in the church, the service being that formerly published in *Church Bells* for use on such occasions, and inserted in the *Change-ringers' Guide*. Besides the Vicar, the following clergy walked in the procession: Rev. C. D. P. Davies (Master of the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association), Rev. Canon Wigram, Rev. F. E. Robinson, Rev. J. U. Todd, Rev. A. D. Hill, Rev. H. A. Cockey, Rev. G. F. Coleridge, Rev. P. A. H. Du Boulay. Service was choral, and during the singing of the hymn, 'Now at length,' the Vicar, churchwardens, and parish ringers, proceeded to the tower, where the Vicar consecrated the two new bells, and the parish ringers rang the first few rounds on the complete ring of eight. Rev. F. E. Robinson delivered an excellent address, founded on the words, 'They will go from strength to strength,' (Ps. lxxxiv. 7.) At 2.30 a public luncheon was held at the 'Bee Hive,' to which a goodly company sat down. In the course of the few and short speeches which ensued the Vicar heartily thanked the churchwardens, together with Mr. Phillott and all others who had worked so well in the cause of the bells, at the same time reminding the company that a considerable debt still remained to be defrayed. He also expressed the pleasure—indeed, comfort—that it gave him to see so many of his brother-priests around him at a time when fresh troubles seemed to be hanging over the Church in his parish. (With regard to the latter we may perhaps be allowed to add, that the general feeling is one of sympathy with the Vicar, and indignation at those that are 'troubling Israel.') The clerical band were unfortunately not successful in obtaining a peal that day, and, much to the disappointment of all, the Rev. A. D. Hill was compelled to leave early the next morning. But a peal (reported below) was afterwards obtained, with seven priests and the changing bells, G. H. Phillott, Esq., ringing tenor. The rehanging has been done with the greatest excellence and thoroughness by Messrs. Day & Son of Eye, Suffolk.

On Thursday, the 13th inst., at St. Mary's, Prestbury, in 2 hrs. 51 mins., by the St. James's Society and the Gloucester and Bristol Diocesan Association, Holt's Original peal of GRANDSIRE TRIPLES. Rev. F. A. H. Du Boulay, 1; Rev. C. D. P. Davies (conductor), 2; Rev. J. U. Todd, 3; Rev. Canon Wigram, 4; Rev. H. A. Cockey, 5; Rev. F. E. Robinson, 6; Rev. G. F. Coleridge, 7; G. H. Phillott, Esq., 8. Tenor, 13 cwt. This is the first peal in which all the changing bells have been rung by priests (some of those who rang in the peal of STEDMAN TRIPLES at Drayton being then deacons), and the first peal in which a Canon has taken part.

On the same day, at St. Mary's, Cheltenham, in 3 hrs. 17 mins., by the Gloucester and Bristol Association, a peal of 5035 STEDMAN CATERS, composed by Mr. Johnson of Birmingham. W. Morris (aged seventy-six), 1; G. H. Phillott, Esq., 2; F. Day, 3; Rev. G. F. Coleridge, 4; H. Roberts, 5; F. E. Ward, Esq., 6; Rev. F. E. Robinson (conductor), 7; W. T. Pates, 8; Rev. C. D. P. Davies, 9; A. W. Humphries, 10. Tenor, 23 cwt.

Opening of a Ring of Six Bells at Beckwithshaw, near Harrogate, Yorkshire.

On Wednesday, the 29th ult. (Feast of St. Michael and All Angels), the new church erected by H. Williams, Esq., Moor Park, and which has cost upwards of 8000l., was consecrated by the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of Ripon. A new ring of six bells has also been added to the sacred edifice, and the ringers from the parish church, Knaresborough, were deputed to ring the opening peal. They ascended the belfry before the time appointed for service, and rang a touch of 360 BOB MINOR, which was followed by another 360 and some short touches. After the Consecration service, 720 BOB MINOR (Holt's) comprising fourteen bobs and two singles were rung by T. Ledgway, 1; B. Pearson, 2; F. Thompson, 3; J. Hoy, 4; W. Swires, 5; M. Wood (conductor), 6. The bells are from the foundry of Messrs. Mears and Stainbank, Whitechapel, London, and are in the key of F., the work being superintended by Mr. Oliver of the above-named firm. Tenor, 14 cwt. On account of the size of the tower the bells have been hung in two tiers, but, owing to the skilful way in which they are placed, this in no way detracts from their utility, and they are rung as easily as if on one flat.

[We never heard of 720 BOB MINOR with only fourteen bobs and two singles. It is certainly not Holt's, which has no singles whatever.—Ed. C. B.]

The Restoration of Wragby Bells, Yorkshire.

On Saturday, the 25th ult., eight members of the Wakefield Society of Change-ringers, being also members of the Yorkshire Association, visited Wragby to open the church bells, after restoration by Messrs. Mallaby and Sons, of Masham. The bells, six in number, the tenor weighing 10 cwt.,

are a very musical peal, and were cast by Messrs. Mears and Co., of London, and placed in the tower in 1786—just one hundred years ago. Their dilapidated condition having been pointed out a short time ago by Mr. Hollis of Wakefield, the Rev. E. H. Sankey, the Vicar, considered the present year, being the centenary of their erection, most appropriate for the work of restoration to be carried out. Consequently the work was placed in the hands of the firm above named. The Wakefield ringers were met at the church by the Vicar, who accompanied them into the tower, when the bells were raised and several touches were rung, including two peals of 720 KENT TREBLE BOB. An adjournment was afterwards made to the 'Spread Eagle Inn,' where the Wakefield and Wragby ringers were entertained by the Vicar and Churchwardens. After tea an interesting statement was made by the Vicar and Mr. Rhodes, from which it appeared that through the liberality of Lord St. Oswald and other gentlemen of the parish only a small sum remained to clear off the cost of rehanging the bells. The Vicar also stated that a ring of bells existed in the tower before the present ring was put in, but he could not gather much information concerning them. The following statement concerning the present bells and the sale of the old bells may be of interest:—'Wragby bells, 1786—To new bells, 221l. 10s.; to new clappers, 5l. 8s. 9d.; to six bell-ropes, 1l. 9s.; to hanging of bells, 47l. 10s.; expenses allowed for freight, 10s.; total, 276l. 7s. 9d. Received by subscription, 106l. 10s. 6d.; by sale of old bells, 113l. 3s. 4d.: 219l. 13s. 10d.; balance paid out of Church rate, 56l. 13s. 11d.' From the above account it appears that the old bells realised the handsome sum of 113l. 3s. 4d., which went a long way towards defraying the cost of a new ring. The ringers returned to the church and rang touches in the TREBLE BOB and GRANDSIRE methods, after which they returned home, being well pleased with their outing, and the kind reception accorded to them by the Vicar and Churchwardens of Wragby.

CHANGE-RINGING.

At St. Mary's, Walter Belchamp, Essex.

On Sunday, the 26th ult., the following mixed band of change-ringers, after the afternoon service, rang a peal of 5088 KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR in 3 hrs. C. Sillitoe (Sudbury), 1; W. Howell (Sudbury), 2; W. Gridley (Foxearth), 3; J. Bird (Melford), 4; G. Garwood (Glemsford), 5; H. Harper (Sudbury), 6; S. Slater (Glemsford), 7; G. Hammond (Melford), 8. Composed by the late Mr. T. Day of Birmingham, and conducted by Mr. G. Hammond. Tenor, 11 cwt. It contains the 6th the extent each way in 5-6, and had never been previously performed.

At the Cathedral, Manchester.

On Tuesday, the 28th ult., ten members of the Lancashire Association rang a peal of 5021 GRANDSIRE CATER in 3 hrs. 12 mins. J. Eachus, 1; T. Thorpe, 2; T. G. Downs, 3; J. E. Pollitt, 4; G. E. Turner, 5; W. J. Sevier, 6; S. West, 7; J. Thorpe, 8; A. E. Wreaks, 9; J. Parkinson, 10. Composed by Mr. Knight of Chesterfield, and conducted by Mr. Wreaks. Tenor, 25 cwt. in E flat. This peal was rung with the bells half-muffled as a last token of respect to the late John Withers, steeple-keeper at the Cathedral, who was interred at Philip's Park Cemetery, Manchester, on the previous Saturday. All the above are of the Cathedral company.

At St. John's, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

On Friday, the 1st inst., ten members of the Birmingham and District Association rang a peal of 5022 GRANDSIRE CATER in 3 hrs. 15 mins. A. Hobday (first peal), 1; W. Rea, 2; T. Albutt, 3; W. Brook, 4; G. Hughes (first peal of Caters), 5; H. Crump, 6; O. James, 7; G. Hayward (composer and conductor), 8; G. Morris, 9; G. Bourne, 10. Tenor, 20 cwt. W. Brook came from Birmingham, and G. Hughes from Tipton, Staffordshire, and he has only one arm; this is the first peal of GRANDSIRE CATER supposed to have been rung by a one-armed man. The peal contains the 6th twelve times wrong, and the 5th and 6th eighteen times at home.

At St. Sidwell's, Exeter.

On Saturday, the 2nd inst., eight members of the local Society rang Hollis's Five-part peal of 5040 GRANDSIRE TRIPLES in 3 hrs. W. Mundy, 1; E. Shepherd (first peal as conductor), 2; W. G. Goss, 3; E. Pist (first peal), 4; A. Shepherd, 5; J. Moss, 6; F. Shepherd, 7; T. J. Lake, 8. Tenor, 24 cwt.

At St. Peter's, Brighton, Sussex.

On Sunday afternoon, the 3rd inst., on the occasion of the Harvest Festival, eight members of the Sussex County Association rang a quarter-peal of GRANDSIRE TRIPLES in 46 mins. A. Piper, 1; G. Thwaites (first quarter-peal), 2; H. Weston, 3; A. Marshall, 4; J. Jay, sen., 5; G. F. Attree (conductor), 6; C. E. Golds, 7; D. Ross, 8. Tenor, 10 cwt. 2 qrs. 2 lbs. All the above belong to the St. Peter's Society with the exception of G. Thwaites, who belongs to St. Paul's Society, Brighton.

At St. Mary-the-Virgin, Putney, Surrey.

On Wednesday, the 6th inst., eight members of the Ancient Society of College Youths rang a peal of 5088 KENT TREBLE BOB MAJOR in 3 hrs. 12 mins. C. F. Winny, 1; W. Greenleaf, 2; W. W. Gifford* (Salisbury), 3; G. Mash, 4; B. E. Battrum,* 5; E. E. Vinen,* 6; E. Horrex, 7; J. M. Hayes, 8. Composed by Mr. York Green, and conducted by Mr. Hayes. Tenor, 16 cwt. [* First peal in the method.]

* * A CORRESPONDENT informs us that the new ring of bells at Ashby-de-la-Zouch will be dedicated on Thursday, the 28th inst., when a band of ringers connected with the Midland Counties' Association of Change-ringers (from St. Paul's, Burton-on-Trent) will handle the ropes.

* * Several communications are unavoidably postponed.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Bennett Memorial Service.

SIR,—Will you permit me to make a few remarks not so much on the wide (and endless) question of Prayers for the Dead, as on your lady correspondent's letter upon it, and some of her arguments, which are, I think, more pleasant to read than satisfactory to rest upon: if I may say so, without rudeness or offence intended, I would venture to characterise the letter as a pleasing specimen of a lady's logic. Not to go into the general question, which our Church *practically* has ruled for us (as concerning public celebration, not private devotions or sentiment, a province which our Church leaves a good deal at liberty), I would only say that Miss Saxby has an odd way of laying down a principle and expanding it beyond its real stretching power, making her conclusions from it somewhat like the 'crowd of angels dancing on a needle's point;' and again, of making a concession which she proceeds presently to revoke in practice: apparently quite happy in the results she establishes to her own satisfaction.

Our Lord, she allows, 'never, as far as we know, said anything enjoining supplication for the holy dead,' but He said 'nothing to *discourage* it,' even on occasions when, she thinks, He might or would have done so; but the practice, if right, should rest on a less shadowy and hypothetical foundation than this (I am not speaking of sentiment, or private devotion), if it was to be of *authority* and for the *public use* of the whole Church. She admits that the Holy Scripture does, 'of course, not provide us with minute rules,' as to *everything* we are to do and not to do: but she thinks she gathers an actual or probable Bible instance of this practice, which she introduces and commends to you by this argument: 'there is no question of the spiritual life, which cannot be *safely determined*, by either the direct or the indirect teaching of the Bible, *though not, of course, according to each one's private interpretation.*' One is amused at the *naivete* which pronounces on the 'safety' of such determination, of any and every 'question in the spiritual life,' and does not rather, instinctively, ask, How then can it be, not merely 'safe,' but any 'determination' at all? Her Bible instance is the presumed case of Onesiphorus. It has indeed been concluded, 'not without some show of probability' (Bishop Ellicott), that Onesiphorus was dead: but it has also been shown (by such stale, old-fashioned, or prejudiced commentators and divines as Hammond and Taylor), that it does not at all follow that the doctrine (or the Romish doctrine) of prayers for the dead is confirmed by that admission. Onesiphorus's special merit, as towards the Apostle, seems to have been that he had *sought* (had to search for) before he *found* him, *i.e.*, in his closer and more painful imprisonment at Rome; and as Onesiphorus had ever had compassion on him, he characteristically prays that the Lord may have mercy on his household. Here Miss Saxby's ardour rather carries her too far for her logic: after correctly saying that the Apostle prays that God would grant mercy to *it* (the household), for the good man's sake, she goes on: 'This looks very much as if Onesiphorus were *dead*.' Possibly so: but it may be, that he is only *absent*; or it may mean simply, 'him and all his house.' It is at best an *uncertainty*; but Miss Saxby assumes the moot-point as a certainty, on her own side, and adds, 'yet St. Paul prayed for *him*.' St. Paul certainly does repeat the utterance, and even emphasizes it on the individual; but one is forced to ask, With what strictness is it to be called a *prayer* at all, in the sense of Miss Saxby's contention as to prayers for the dead? This pious wish and earnest ejaculation, couched in terms which evidently are a kind of formula—'May the Lord grant,'—but which fall some way short of a devotional utterance, and, at the best, must warrant a *great deal less* than the lady contends for.

I fear her other instance is equally shadowy and unsubstantial. 'Pray' without ceasing' is not limited, she says; not *qualified*, as to any interruption on account of death. I do not wish to be other than scrupulous; why should she mention (at that rate), no *other* limitations? 'without ceasing' surely means 'at all times and seasons': 'pray, and *never cease praying*,' she would have it understood; but why not mention, *e.g.* playing, eating, sleeping, as probable limitations, as well as her purely arbitrary one, interruption by death? not to mention a worse confusion still, for the Apostle's precept is for *living* people only, and what they are to do, not at all as to whom they are to do it for, so that it *cannot* include in its purview the state of the dead. In the same way, in the passage which she regards as a mere expansion of this: 'All saints' undoubtedly might better be rendered 'all the saints,' but there and elsewhere the Greek manifests that the contrast in the Apostle's mind is not at all between living and departed, but very distinctly between the *general* Church body; 'all the saints,' and *himself in particular*: 'for me,' mentioned in the next clause: so that the question is simply not touched at all, so far from being settled, or 'determined' according to any one's private interpretation. Miss Saxby has no right whatever to expand 'all saints' in that passage, or any other of Scripture, simply because our Prayer-book service for All Saints' Day draws attention, more or less markedly, to a topic *not contained at all in that Scripture*, however naturally the course of ages may have given it subsequent prominence, viz., the continued existence of the dead, and the ground of it.

These slight remarks are only intended to show the nature of the logic which Miss Saxby considers justifies her in affirming it to be beyond a doubt not merely that we may, but that we must, pray for the dead. To me, on the contrary, and to any one who will *consider*, if he has read, her letter, it will, I think, evince the very contrary. Such persons will perhaps think that a *weak* though earnest defence of the practice is worse than none at all. To be a defence it should rest on other arguments, advanced with more care, clearness, and consideration.

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