

CHURCH BELLS OF LONDON.

ST. DIONIS' BACKCHURCH AND ALL HALLOWS, LOMBARD STREET.

By J. ARMIGER TROLLOPE.

The tower of All Hallows' Church, Lombard Street, which has just been pulled down, contained a ring of ten bells. What is to become of them seems at present undecided, for they are not to go to the new church of All Hallows', Twickenham, which is being built to contain the fittings from the demolished building.

This is not the first time that these bells have had to find a new home, for they hung at first in the steeple of St. Dionis' Backchurch, which was pulled down in 1878.

St. Dionis' Backchurch stood in Fenchurch Street at the corner of Lime Street and separated from the former by a row of houses whence it got its name. It was rebuilt in the reign of Henry VI. and in Stow's time (late sixteenth century) it was a 'fair church.'

The inventory taken in 'The yere of oure lorde god 1552' gives '1 owlde bell clapper. Item V belles in ye stepvel and j saunce bell and I payre of great orgens. Item, sowlde ij sanctus bells, iiij. Item pd. for j great bell rope of 47 li to take ye beame downe.'

Burnt in the fire of 1666, the church was re-erected under the designs of Sir Christopher Wren between 1672 and 1677, the steeple being added ten years later. It would seem that, in the meanwhile, the old tower was still standing, for one of the first things done was to replace some of the bells. In 1674 £50 5s. 10d. was paid to James Bartlet, the founder, and £10 to Mr. Allen, a bell hanger. Robert Williams gave £25 for a treble bell.

In 1686 there was a ring of six bells cast by Bartlet and hung by Joseph Gadsden, the cost of which was defrayed by voluntary subscription from Sir Robert Jeffrey, some time Lord Mayor, Captain Samuel Hankey and other parishioners, the parish property in Lime Street being also mortgaged by the rector and churchwardens by order of the Vestry.

Another benefactor to the church was Sir Henry Tulse, who gave a marble font and pavement and steps leading up to it. Tulse was alderman, Lord Mayor in 1683, and Master of the College of Youths in 1684. He died in 1689 and on September 12th was buried in his own vault in the north chancel, where also four years later his widow was laid.

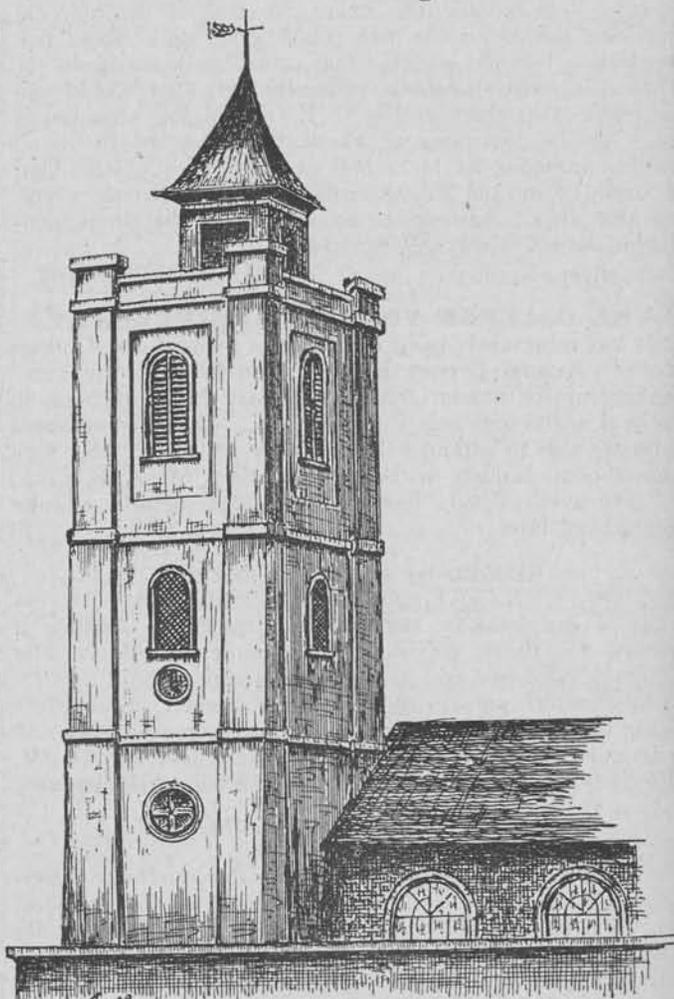
When the church was pulled down the stone which covered the vault was removed to the courtyard, which marks the site of the old churchyard. The inscription was recut by the Ancient Society of College Youths in 1937.

In 1726 the bells of St. Dionis' Church were found to be much out of order and at a vestry meeting, held on August 28th, it was debated whether to restore them at an estimated cost of £110, or to provide a new and tunable ring at a cost of not more than £250. The question was formally put whether the present set of six bells, with the old frame and appurtenances, should be exchanged and eight new bells with complete new frame and appurtenances be put in their room, and answered in the affirmative.

As the honour and generosity of the parish had been fully expressed in the subscriptions for the organ that had lately been erected it was thought proper to raise the required sum of £250 by kind and voluntary con-

tributions, and the churchwarden, with such gentlemen as should be so kind as to attend him, was to wait upon the several parishioners with a subscription paper for the purpose.

At a vestry, held only a week later, on September 5th, the churchwarden reported success, and that several people thought proper to respond in a most handsome and generous manner. It was, therefore, decided to accept the estimate of Mr. R. Phelps, of Whitechapel, and to have chimes on the new ring.



THE TOWER OF THE NOW DEMOLISHED CHURCH OF
ST. DIONIS' BACKCHURCH.

The subscriptions totalled £479 18s. Articles of agreement were signed in the same month, between James Herbert and Charles Bell, the churchwardens, and Robert Phelps, for a new set of bells in exchange for the old; and so, in less than two months from the time the matter was brought before the vestry, the order was given for the new ring.

On November 3rd, 1727, Phelps received £359 11s. 6d. in full payment for eight bells and frame, two other bells and frame, a new floor for the clock, the chimes and all other accounts and demands whatever.

The parish records contain a certificate, signed by fifteen persons, stating that, having rung the ten new

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ANCIENT CUSTOMS.**THE RITES OF DURHAM.***To the Editor.*

Sir,—To add to the interesting notes on the ancient customs of the belfry, I venture to send the following, copied from 'the Rites of Durham, being a description of all the ancient monuments, rites and customs belonging to or being within the Monastical Church of Durham before the Suppression—written 1593,' with notes added in 1655 and 1691 [published 1903 by the Surtees Society].

These give not only interesting details of the bells but also the modes of ringing them. ERNEST MORRIS.

In the weste end of ye church in ye north allie and ovr ye galleley dour ther in a Belfray called the galleley steple did hing iij goodly great Bells wch was nev'r Rownge but at evy p'ncipall feast or at such other tymes as ye Bushop dyd come to ye towne. Ev' y Sonnday in ye yere there was a s'mo preched in ye galleley at after none from one of ye clocke till iij & at ij of ye clocke ye great Bell of ye galleley was touled ev'r Sonndaie iij qz'ters of an howre & rounge ye forth qzter till one of ye clocke, that all ye people of ye towne myght have warnyng to come & here ye worde of god preached. There was certayne officers pteynyng to ye said howse wch was allwayes charged when so ev' ye said Bells was knowlede to be redy for ye Rynging of theme, viz. ij men of ye kitching was charged wth ye Ringing of on Bell, & ye iij men of ye church that dyd lye allwayes in ye church was charged wth ye Ringing of ye third Bell—& vj othere was alwaies charged wth ye Rynging of the great Bell, viz. ij of the back howse ij of the Brew house & ij of ye kilne. And in ye latter dayes of Kyng Henrie the eighte ye house was suppress, & after that tyme ye said Bells was nev'r Rounge. Then Deane Whittingham p'ceyving theme not to be occupied nor Rounge a great whyle before his tyme, was purposed to have taiken theme downe and broken them for other vses (and make his p'fitt of them). Then Tho: Sparke the Bushopes Suffragaine lying at Durham & kepings howse there, at ye same tyme havinge Intellegence what ye Deanes purpose was, dyd sende into Yorkshire w'th all speade for a workeman & caused iij of ye said Bells to be taiken downe (ye iijth Bell Remaynes ther still & was nev'r Rounge synce yt was suspent) (ye other did remayne a longe season but yet after removed into ye Lantorne) & caused them iij to be hoong vpon ye newe worke called ye lantren & maide a goodly chyme to be sett, on ye said Bells, ye wch dyd coste lime in charges Thirtie or fortie pownds, wch chyme endureth to this daje, or els ye said Bells had bene spoyled & defaced.

But in ye yere 1650: this Abbey Church was made a prison for

CHURCH BELLS OF LONDON.*(Continued from previous page.)*

bells, they were of the opinion that the same ten bells are musical and tunable and that the said bells, and the whole frame and all the other work belonging or relating thereto are cast, set up and completed in a workmanlike manner.

I have several times thought of trying to get a sight of this document to see who the ringers were, but up to now have not had an opportunity. It might throw some light on the Society of London Scholars.

In 1732 Phelps recast the treble, which had been broken, and in 1750 the fourth and fifth also had been cracked. A vestry meeting held in January ordered that they should be recast, and this was done by Thomas Lester.

On October 10th, 1729, the first peal on the bells was rung by the College Youths—5184 changes of Grandsire Caters, conducted by Benjamin Annable from the treble.

The next peal was seven years later, when, on November 26th, 1736, the Eastern Scholars rang 6210 changes of Grandsire Caters. It was conducted by Philemon Mainwaring and was the longest ever rung on the bells. In 1752 John Holt, during the short time he was with the College Youths, called a peal of Grandsire Caters here. The first recorded peal of Royal was 5040 Double Bob by the same society in 1760, and the first peal of Treble Bob Royal was rung by the ancient Society of College Youths on December 27th, 1785.

ye Scotts and quite defaced wth in, for ther was to ye number 4500 wch most of them perished & dyed ther in a very short space & were thrown into holes by great Numbers together in a most Lamentable manner. But in ye yere 1655 ye Clocke & Chyme was repaired againe wch was taken downe & preserved from ye ruyne.

The four Bells that hung in the Gallilee Steeple, were first, the Great or Gallilee Bell, which was given by Prior Fosse; 2, St. Bede's bell; 3, St. Oswald's bell; 4, a Long bell, which was narrow skirted but well tuned bell, and was the last Bell that was left in the Gallilee Steeple untaken down. But in Febr. 1631/2 it was taken down, the other bells being taken down ye January before.

The Gallilee bell being hung in ye Steeple or Belfrey in the Lantern of the Church (which Belfrey was supposed to be built by Bp Skirlaw, who mostly built ye cloysters, and whose Coat of Armes in severall times in every of the cloysters sett & painted in the middle beams or (blank) in each of the said cloysters, tho others say that Hugh Derlington 14th Prior of Durham made the great Belfrey) it, vzt, the Gallilee bell was designed to be chipt into tune, but by chipping it was made so thin that it was not thought serviceable, so that one Thomas Bartle a plummer cast that Gallilee bell over again, and the said last standing bell, i.e. the long bell was broke into pieces, and the half of her among other things was put into Gallilee bell to be cast over again and the other half of ye said long Bell was put into other Bells which were cast. There were 4 bells in all that were cast in the Guest Hall, one of St. Michael, and the said Gallilee Bell, St. Oswald's and St. Bede's. At Candlemasse after Thomas Bartle had cast the said Bells, he dyed, and was buried in the Cathedrall Churchyard, and the said Gallilee Bell was rung out for him, and so the other bells. That of St. Bede hangs now in the Steeple or Lantern of the church towards the East part there, t'is called the Fifth and is circumscribed thus:—

Olim Campana Boni Bedæ Decanus et Capitulum Dunelm. refecerunt A.D. 1665.

The Gallilee bell hangs there towards the West and is called The Seventh Bell:—

Olim Campana D.D. Joh. Fosse et Joh. Hemming Prior Dunelm. Vuigo Gallilea quam refecerunt Decanus et Capitulum Dunelm. A.D. MDCXXXII.

The Church Coat of Armes upon it. Note that Dr. Spark Suffragan bishop to bishop Tunstall caused these bells to be carried out of the Gallilee Belfrey, which otherwise would have been broken and sold, and placed them in the Great Belfrey of the Cathedral.

The said Gallilee Bell which Bartle cast, is the great bell now hanging in the Lanterne, whose tongue was broke, ringing for William Willson, Sunday, Nov. 30th, 1690, the day his body was found and buried.

That of St. Michael hangs to ye North, & is called the 4th Bell, it is circumscribed:—

Olim Campana Sti Michaelis A.D. MDCXXXII Decanus et capitulu refecerunt

with the Churches coat of Armes upon it.

That of St. Oswald hangs to the South it was crackt ringing the Peel at the buryall of John Harrison Clerk of the Bow church the 25th of May 1638, and after it was cast ye 25th of September 1639 by one Robert Oldfield who came out of Lancashire, and he mistook in the casting it, wanting metal enough, and so cast it over again Novb ye 3rd 1639, and then afterwards was new and badly cast in the Bow Church in Decbr 1682 and recast again in March after by the self same person, to witt John Pattison, who was a Taylor, and son of Christofe Pattison. There was another John Pattison who after he had been Mayor of Durham, became Submaster of the plain Song & Writing School under Mark Leonard the Master thereof. There was writt about St. Oswald's bell

Olim Campana Sti Oswaldi, quam fieri fecit Robertus de Dunelm. Decanus et Capitulum refecerunt A D'm 1632, atque iterum 1639, et tertis 1682.

The churches Coat of Armes is upon it.

The Third bell i.e. ye six a clock bell hangs, it is circumscribed:—

Olim Campana Sti Benedicti, quam fieri fecerunt Decanus et capit. Dunelm Ao 1664.

The second bell hangs—has a Coat of Armes upon it, to witt quarterly 3 Lyons & 3 fl. de Lys, circumscribed thus in Saxon letters:—

Nomen Domini Sit Benedictum.

The first, to witt, the least bell hangs—and is commonly calld St. Margarettes bell.

The bells were all recast in 1693 by Christopher Hodson, of London. From the MS. of Bishop Cosin, 1620:—

In the lanthorne called the new worke was hanginge there 3 fine bells, which bells was runge ever at midnight at 12 of the clock, for the monkes went evermore to their mattresses at that houre of the night, there was 4 men appointed to ringe the said bells at midnight, and at all such other times of the day as the monkes went to serve god, two of the sd men apperteinge to the vestrye wch allwayes kept the copes with the vestments and fine paire of silver sensors with all such goodly ornaments ptaininge to the high Altar which 2 men did lye everye night in a chamber over the West end of the sd vestrye and the other 2 men did lye everye night within the sd church in a chamber in the north allye over against the Sextons Checker: these 2 men did alwayes sweepe and keepe the church cleanly in the morninge with cleane water before it came to be hallowed, and did lock in the church doores everye night.