

ART. XVIII.—*The Secular Bells of Carlisle. Communicated at Caldbeck, Aug. 22nd, 1883.*

PREFACE. By the EDITOR.

LARGE books have recently been published on the subject of church bells, but no one has yet dealt with secular bells, and their functions. And yet there must be many interesting bells scattered up and down the country. Every market town must have had one, which would be rung at the commencement of the market to let people know when they might safely buy and sell, and when *market overt* commenced. A long list of curious uses might be drawn up to which secular bells have been and are put.

In the archives of the Corporation of Carlisle, we find several bells mentioned. The “market bell” appears in the bye-laws of 1561.

Itm that noe outman shall sell any corne to any forenor to such tym as the market bell be rounge on payn of forfitor

But we have also in those bye-laws the watch bell and the common bell.

That all the gaites of the citie shall nyghtly be locked Immediately, the comon bell rounge

That noe Scotts man nor woman shall walk w<sup>th</sup>in this citie after the watch bell be rounge at thare perill, unless etc

As the watch was set half an hour after the locking of the gates, the common bell and the watch bell were probably one and the same, or, if they were different, were rung on the same bell at half an hour's interval. In the Chamberlain's Accounts we find the common bell and the curfew bell mentioned.

1602-3 Itm unto henry Warwicke for curfeu bell xiii<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup> ringing  
Nov 1608. Itm the 16 daie for a lether unto the cheine of the comon bell at M<sup>r</sup> Maior co. xii<sup>d</sup>

1613-14

1613-14 ffor ye Ringinge of curfeu & 4 o'clock. xxvi<sup>s</sup> viii<sup>d</sup>.

1614-5 Item to Ralph Kidd for Ringing 4 of ye clok xx<sup>s</sup>

Item ffor Ringinge 8 of ye clocke xiii<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup>.

These hours afterwards became 5 and 9. I omit entries which refer to the Cathedral bells, and the chimes which the Mayor and Corporation maintained during the Commonwealth.

We thus have in Carlisle the market bell, the common bell, the watch bell, the curfew or the 8 o'clock, and the 4 o'clock. Of actual bells, Carlisle has two.

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#### NO. I.—THE MARKET BELL OF CARLISLE.

BY R. S. FERGUSON.

The old market bell of Carlisle, which for nearly 300 years proclaimed the opening of Carlisle market, now reposes in the Museum in Finkle Street. It is a high-waisted bell, one foot in diameter across the mouth, and measures ten inches from the shoulder to the skirt. It has undergone much ill-treatment : its canons are broken down, and its sound bow has large pieces chipped out of it. This damage is due to the *gamins* of Carlisle, who, in days when there were no police, and the bell hung unprotected, delighted to heave half a brick or a cobble stone at the bell. A successful hit proclaimed itself, like a bull's eye on a ringing target, and if, in addition, a bit was knocked out of the skirt of the bell, the larrikin who did it was a hero among his fellows. Spite of this rough usage, the bell is still sound, and if the canons were repaired, is, I believe, a better bell than that which replaced it over the Town Hall. It has an inscription round the shoulder,

: I' S' MAIORE : T' V' I' S' BA : 1584 :

and below is

I' I,

which will be the maker's mark. The letters correspond with the date, Roman letters, the A's being topped, and the

the I's are a little contracted in the waist with a mark across their middle. At present there is no means of ascertaining who were the Mayor and Bailiffs of Carlisle in 1584. There can be little risk in guessing that the senior bailiff was Thomas Vyccars, who was a member of the Taylors' Guild, and who signed the bye-laws of 1561 on their behalf; but I cannot make any such happy conjecture as to the mayor and junior bailiff. I.S. are a common set of initials in Carlisle, either then or now. The books of the Chamberlains of Carlisle do not go back beyond 1603, so that nothing has at present been raked up as to the cost of this bell, or where it was made. The learned in bell stamps may be able to make something out of the I.I stamp.

That this bell is the market bell there is no doubt, for it was rung regularly as such, until a few years ago, when it was superseded by another (a new) bell. I should not be surprised if it was also the common bell, the watch bell, and the curfew bell of the 17th century, for the bell next to be described would be too big, one would imagine, to be rung, *i.e.*, swung, on ordinary occasions.

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## NO. II.—“THE MUCKLE TOUN BELL O' CARLILE.”

BY R. S. FERGUSON AND W. NANSON.

There seems to be no end to the relics of past days that are in the possession of the Corporation of Carlisle, forgotten in the Police Office, perishing in the stone-yard, or dust-covered in the cock-loft over the Town Hall. A late Mayor recently amazed the citizens by airing the noble halberts, which of old were always carried before the mayor. His present worship would probably still more amaze the citizens if he went about at night preceded by the huge lantern, by which his predecessors were lighted home, or if he paraded the ancient cannons possessed by the Corporation, for the old six-pounders (six-pounders they seem  
to

to be), which for long were daily fired morning and evening to announce the opening and closing of the city gates, now rot, rusty and trunnionless, in the mud in Dacre Street. But we are not going to write about these cannons now, or the city lantern and its pole.

Some time ago one of the writers drew up an account of the market bell of Carlisle, now in the Carlisle Museum, and dated 1584. The writer had no notion that the Corporation possessed a bell near 200 years older than that, bigger and finer in every way. In fact it had never occurred to him to inquire on what the town clock struck the hours, a coil of wire for all the writer knew. However, Mr. C. W. Parker, to whose exertions local campanologists are so much indebted, informed him that the town clock struck on a large bell, which had an inscription on the shoulder. This Mr. Parker has since made a rubbing off, and it turns out to be—

✠ RADULPHUS COMES : DE WESTMORLAND : EFECIT ME FIE  
RI,

running round the bell in one line, except that the last two letters are put below the others for want of room. The initial cross is plain, but not precisely the same as that on any other bell yet discovered in Cumberland. The intervening stop, three roundlets, is the same as on the Scaleby tenor and on the fifth or "Maria" bell in the Cathedral. The letters are stately floriated Gothic capitals, very like, but not identical with, those on "Maria." The initial letter in "Westmorland" is a Gothic U. The bell, like the cathedral "Maria" and the pair at Burgh-by-Sands, is long-waisted—a sign of antiquity. Its diameter at mouth is 26 inches; weight, therefore, about 4 cwt., exceeding that of the market bell (diam. 1 ft.) by about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cwt., and only falling short of that of the Cathedral treble (diam.  $28\frac{1}{2}$  in.) by about  $1\frac{1}{4}$  cwt. It has three canons for suspension; no clapper, but a ring on the  
under

under side of the crown to which to attach one. The clock hammer strikes on the outside of the sound-bow.

“ Radulphus Comes de Westmorland ” is Ralph Nevill, fourth Baron Nevill of Raby, 1st Earl of Westmorland, a K.G. and Earl Marshal of England. He was born about 1365; and in the 9 Richard II. (1385-6) when barely of years of discretion, was appointed by that king joint governor of the castle and city of Carlisle, and a commissioner for the guardianship of the West Marches: these honours were renewed in him in the 12 Richard II. In the 21 Richard II. (1397-8) he was appointed Constable of the tower of London, and was also created Earl of Westmorland, and had a grant of the honour of Penrith from Richard II. On the landing of Henry of Lancaster he deserted his benefactor, and became one of Henry's chief adherents, fighting for him against the Percies, and by gross treachery getting into his power Archbishop Scrope and other partisans of Richard. By Henry IV. he was appointed governor of Roxburgh, and had a grant for life of the fee-farm rent of Carlisle. He accompanied Henry V. to France, and was one of the victors of Agincourt. He died 21st October, 4 Henry IV. (1425), and was buried in the quire of the collegiate church of Staindrop (which he had founded and endowed), under a stately monument, whereon were the figures of himself and his two wives, Margaret of Stafford, daughter of Hugh, Earl of Stafford, and Joan Beaufort, daughter of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, whose portrait, by the way, is in the east window of Carlisle Cathedral. He was thus brother-in-law of Henry IV. His eldest son, by his second wife, was Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, who had also a grant for his life of the fee-farm of Carlisle, and was the father of Richard Neville, the great Earl of Warwick, commonly called the King-Maker. His youngest daughter, Cecily, married Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, and of this marriage there were some  
twelve

twelve children, two of whom ascended the throne of England, namely, Edward IV. and Richard III. Another daughter, Phillippa, married the owner of Naworth, Thomas de Dacre de Gilsland.

The Corporation have some other relics of Ralph Nevill besides his bell. There still exist six acquittances or receipts given by him to the Mayor and bailiffs for the fee-farm rent. These acquittances are written on small slips of parchment, from ten to twelve inches long, and from two to four inches broad, and attached to each was once a splendid seal, now almost entirely broken away. The seals are all of red wax, round in shape, and must have been nearly two-and-a-half inches in diameter. They are attached by a single tab of parchment running through the centre of the seal. By comparison of the remaining pieces it is still possible to make out a shield bearing the arms of Nevill, gules a saltire argent, surmounted by a helmet covered with rich mantling, and bearing a cap of maintenance from which rises the crest, a bull's head, while on either side of the helmet are two greyhounds as supporters. The legend which was round the edge of the seal has almost entirely disappeared. The acquittances are for the 4th, 6th, 7th, 11th, 12th, and 13th years of Henry IV., and each is for £80, or one year's rent. In one of them the earl styles himself Marshal of England and Warden of the West Marches against the Scotch.

Another relic is a letter from Earl Ralph to the citizens of Carlisle, written on a piece of paper only  $11\frac{1}{2}$  inches long by  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide, but which, wonderful to say, has been preserved for nearly 500 years, more by good luck than by any care that has been taken of it. The ink is still black, and the writing is as clear now as on the day it was written. It reads as follows:—

Rauf Erle of Westm'land lorde  
Neville of Raby and of Midelham

Right dere and wellbeloued friends, We grete you wele, And for as  
mikel

mikel as we most make a certeine paiement nowe sone at London and for other chargeant occupacons yat we haue at doo also in otherwise, We most nedes be purveyed of some moneye namely of our

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ferme of iiiiijli, (*i.e.*, four times twenty, or eighty pounds) at Carlele due unto us at this fest of Michaelmesse next comyng of ye whiche some we trist to yow yat yhe will pourveye us at this tyme Wherefore we pray you hereby yat yhe will sende us ye same some be Sr Richard Drax berar of this ere makyng endenture betwix yow and hym of yat yhe deliuer hym And we shal make yhow trewly to haue oure acquitance at your terme, And yis wil yhe doo as oure trist is in yow And oure lorde god have yow in his keyping. Writen at Shirefhoton ye xviiij day of September.

[Endorsed]

To oure Right dere and wellbeloued friends ye Maire citezens and gode men of Carlele.

Sheriff Hutton is in the North Riding of York. The above letter presents the noble Earl to us in the character of a dun, with a little payment to meet in London. The Earl was probably Governor of Carlisle in 1392, when a fire broke out in Carlisle which destroyed fifteen hundred houses in Castlegate, Rickergate, and Botchergate. Rickergate and Botchergate are what we now call Scotch Street and English Street, and, though the number of houses burnt may be an exaggeration, the centre of the town and the north transept of the Cathedral were destroyed, including the seat of the municipal government, whatever that was then called, Moothall, probably, and the neighbouring chantry of St. Albans. It may be noted that the architecture of Redness Hall, formerly the property of the family of De Redness, and now called the Guildhall, points to its having been built shortly after the fire. If we knew what the Moothall, or Townhall, that preceded the present one was like, we should find it date from the same period.

To go back to the bell, the citizens impoverished by the fire of 1392 probably could not replace any bell which had been destroyed, or did not see the necessity of replacing it. But a Governor of Carlisle would see the necessity of a good

good big bell to alarm the town and the garrison, and that is why Nevill seems to have caused this fine bell to be made.

If such was his object, he was powerfully, though perhaps incidentally, assisted by William de Strickland, Bishop of Carlisle from 1400 to 1419, who in one of the earlier years of his episcopate raised the Cathedral tower "a medietate ad summum," and placed in it "quatuor magnas campanas" (*Leland*); the sole survivor of which, the aforesaid "Maria," weighing nearly 17 cwt., attests the efficiency of the four as "Fray bells." Their predecessors, the bells which took part in the cursing of Robert Bruce by Cardinal d'Espagnol in 1307 (*Hollinshed*), were probably destroyed, like the predecessor of Ralph Nevill's bell, by the fire of 1392, the reality of which fire, doubted by Hutchinson and others, but corroborated during the work of Cathedral restoration in 1856 (Purday's Lecture, p. 20), derives confirmation from the fact of new bells given by Strickland and Nevill in the very beginning of the 15th century.

Of the intermediate history of this bell nothing is known; a conjecture has been made that Earl Ralph gave it to the chantry of St. Alban's, of which the name survives in St. Alban's Row, and that the city got it when the chantry was suppressed in the reign of Edward VI. How long this bell has been used for its present employment we can't say, or how old the town clock is; a portion of the train is of considerable age, though a modern escapement has been added during this century.

It's long since this fine old bell was rung, but its tones must have sounded far and wide, even to Solport, if we can believe the old Border ballad—the "Fray of Suport"—for the farmer's wife, who laments that the Mosstroopers have harried her farm, announces the arrival of her friends thus—

Captain Musgrave and a' his band  
 Are coming doon by the Siller-strand,  
 And the muckle toun-bell o' Carlile is rung.