

ART. XVII.—*The Bells of Brigham, Cockermonth, Cros-thwaite, Distington, and Holm Cultram.* By the late REV. H. WHITEHEAD, Vicar of Lanercost.

BRIGHAM.

The ancient tower of Brigham church contains three bells :

No.	Note.	Diameter.	Weight.
1	F $\sharp\sharp$	22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.
2	D $\sharp\sharp$	23 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cwt.
3	D	27 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cwt.

The note of the middle bell, one would think, should be E ; but a competent jury has returned a verdict of D sharp.

The treble has round its shoulder, in Roman capitals and Arabic numerals, this inscription :—

A R \square 1711 ROGER FLEMING VICAR.

The tenor has

A R \square 1711 PEACE & GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Between the initials A R and the date, on both treble and tenor, is the stamp of a bell.

Mr. Roger Fleming, whose name is on the treble, son of Sir Daniel Fleming, of Rydal Hall, Westmorland, Kt, and brother of Sir George Fleming, Bart, bishop of Carlisle from 1734 to 1747, “ was born at Rydal Hall March the first 1670 and was inducted vicar of Brigham May the 1st 1705 ” (*Brigham Parish Register*). A memorial tablet in the vestry states that he was “ vicar of the parish 32 years and

and entirely beloved by his parishioners". He seems, from the way in which he kept the register and posted up the churchwardens' accounts, to have been a careful and methodical man. There is nothing further to notice concerning him except that he was the only one of four successive vicars who abstained from scratching his name or initials on the communion cup (*Church Plate in Carlisle Diocese*, p. 103). He took the more dignified course of handing down his name to posterity on a bell.

The initials and stamp on the treble and tenor are those of the celebrated founder Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester. The Gloucester foundry, when it came into his hands about the year 1684, had been in active operation for more than three centuries, and it was held by his descendants down to 1830, when it was fused into the foundry at Whitechapel (Ellacombe's *Devonshire Bells*, p. 62). Mr. Lukis, speaking of Rudhalls, says:—"Everything connected with their castings exhibits care and attention, and shews that the foundry in all its departments was well looked after" *Archæological Journal*, xxvii. 422). The tenor at Pilton, 52½ cwt., in D, by Abraham Rudhall, dated 1712, "is considered one of the finest bells in England" (*Devonshire Bells*, p. 63). The seventh bell at Pilton, also by Abraham Rudhall, has the same inscription as the Brighton tenor: PEACE & GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD. Mr. Ellacombe says of the Rudhalls:—"They must have been been of that class of Englishmen called good 'Church and State people', for nearly all their bells bear good wishes for the one and the other" (*ib.*, p. 62). Amongst other noble specimens of Abraham Rudhall's handiwork are the bells of St. Bride's, Fleet Street, for which church he cast a ring of ten in 1710, increasing them to twelve in 1718; on which "the first peals of nine, eleven, and twelve are said to have been rung" (*Bell News*, vol. ii, p. 423). In 1726 he cast twelve for St. Martin's in the Fields, Charing Cross; which, Buck-
ingham

ingham Palace being in the parish, have the honour of being "the first to proclaim any occasion of rejoicing in connection with the royal family" (*ib.* ii, 463). His epitaph in Gloucester cathedral runs thus:—"Abraham Rudhall, bell founder, famed for his great skill, beloved and esteemed for his singular good nature and integrity, died January 25; 1735, aged 78".

The middle bell at Brigham has round its shoulder—in Lombardic floriated letters, one of which (v) is upside down, and another (s) reversed, with a figure somewhat resembling the letter s reversed as initial or founder's stamp, and a diamond as intervening stop—the following inscription:—

[I SANCTUS - MICHAEL - ORA - PRO - NOBIS.

This is a brass bell, and of course mediæval. Edward VI's commissioners reported as belonging to Brigham church in 1552.

iij prche belles one santus bell.

The late Mr. Isaac Fletcher, M.P., F.R.S., in his valuable and interesting paper on Brigham Church, says:—"The opening for the sanctus bell will be observed in the east gable above the string course" (*Cumberland and Westmorland Archæological Transactions*, iv, p. 157). He must mean the "squint" in the east wall of the tower, as there is no opening anywhere else apparently intended for a bell. The "iij prche belles", one of which must have been our "Sanctus Michael", were of course in the tower, and were probably placed there at the same time. When was that time? Perhaps we may find some clue to it in the history of the church. The tower, the lower part of which is "very strongly vaulted with stone, access being obtained to the chamber above by means of a narrow stair, reminding one in this respect of the fortified churches of the

the border" (*ib.*) is assigned by Mr. Fletcher to "circa 1220". No doubt, as soon as erected, it had bells; which, in addition to their ecclesiastical uses, served a very necessary secular purpose, as "fray bells", in a fortified Cumberland church. But whatever bells the tower originally contained doubtless disappeared when "in the year 1315 King Robert Bruce with the Black Douglas invaded and laid waste the whole district from Cocker-mouth to St. Bees, plundered the monastery at the latter place, destroyed the manor houses of Cleator and Stainburn, and laid violent hands on all the moveable property in the little religious establishment and church at Brigham, Askew's *Cockermouth*, p. 21). For a few years the church probably remained in a desolated condition. But "between 1320 and 1330 the south Norman aisle was pulled down without disturbing the arcade, and in its place a beautiful Decorated aisle was built, in which a chantry was founded by the then rector, Sir Thomas de Burgh" (*C. and W. Transactions*, iv, p. 160). This rector, Mr. Fletcher considered, was probably "a member of one of the ennobled families of Clanricarde and Mayo", and possibly identical with the Sir Thomas de Burgh mentioned in Burke's Peerage as appointed in 1331 Lord Treasurer of Ireland (*ib.* 151). He founded and endowed the chantry, which he dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, with the moiety of Brigham, given to him by Anthony, Lord Lucy, of Cocker-mouth, to whom it had been granted by the king for his valour in arresting Harcla, Earl of Carlisle, who was tried for treason and hanged in 1322 (*ib.*, 150). On the death of Sir Thomas de Burgh "in 1348 Thomas de Lucy with all formality appointed Sir John de Hooton chaplain to the chantry, and took proper security for the safe custody of the valuable property belonging to it" (p. 166). An indenture, in Norman French, preserved in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, made in 1348 between Thomas de Lucy and Sir John de Hooton, has been translated

lated by the Rev. T. Lees, F.S.A. It "witnesseth that these things underwritten were left in the chapel by Sir Thomas de Borough the founder thereof in honour of God, and his sweet mother, there to remain for ever" (p. 173). From the "things underwritten" it appears that the chantry was very richly endowed with all manner of ecclesiastical furniture, of which the following are but a few items:—

A chalice of silver gilt a chafing dish of gilt copper a bell of good silver of XXXs weight two silver cruets one silver censer a brass bell a pome in the aumbry well hooped with a gilt plate with settings of emeralds pearls and diamonds with a chaplet of coral with the gaudays of silver gilt an Agnus Dei a crown for the head of our lady of silver gilt with xvij great pearls two sappires vj great diamonds.

The "bell of good silver", of course the sacring bell, rung at the elevation of the host, would be in the chantry. The "brass bell," doubtless bearing the name of Virgin Mary, to whom the chantry was dedicated, would be in the tower. But Sir Thomas de Burgh, who gave it and so much other valuable property to the chantry, would be sure to take care that the tower was provided with other brass bells for the use of the church: one of which would bear the name of St. Bridget, the church's patron saint. We seem, then, to be able to account for two of the "iij prche belles" found here by Ed. VI's commissioners; and the third would be the brass bell, dedicated to St. Michael, which still remains in the tower. At Greystoke, where there was an altar in the church to St. Katherine, there was and still is the bell "Katherina" in the tower. There may have been anciently an altar to St. Michael in Brigham church. But, whether there was or not, if the name of a third saint was wanted for one of the bells, we need not be surprised that the choice fell on St. Michael. Mr. Venables, in his paper on "Church Dedications in the Diocese of Carlisle", says:—"The dedication to St.
Michael

Michael is one of the most frequent in England and Wales. It has been asserted on competent authority that there are more churches dedicated to St. Michael than to any other saint in the calendar. It stands high in the list in this diocese with no fewer than 27 churches" (*C. and W. Transactions*, iv, 133). This bell, if put up by Sir Thõmas de Burgh, is about 560 years old ; which estimate of its age is quite in accord with its appearance and character.

The chantry "bell of good silver of xxxs weight" had evidently disappeared before 1552, the Brigham inventory for which year (6 Edward VI) presents a remarkable contrast to that of 1348. Some of the items are torn off from the original MS., now in the Public Record Office ; but whatever the missing items may be supposed to have been, the goods were few enough :—

Benghame	{	Itm one chales of silver . . .
		vestements ij tunycles ij . . .
		ij prche belles one santus bell

The Act for the dissolution of chantries was passed in 37 Henry VIII, 1545 ; but was only partially carried out during the short remainder of his reign, as he died January, 1547-8. But what Henry began, his son, or his son's advisers, fully executed ; and if the goods of Brigham chantry did not go into the treasury of Henry VIII, they certainly found their way into that of Edward VI, and in one of the earlier years of his reign.

The "santus bell" would survive even the confiscations of 7 Edward VI, 1553, from the operation of which the "saunce belles" were expressly exempted, and would disappear, as a "monument of superstition", in the reign of Elizabeth.

The "brass bell" of the chantry, hanging in the tower, and therefore doubtless regarded as one of the "prche (parish) belles", would escape confiscation under the Act for dissolution of chantries ; and, for reasons which we
have

have explained in previous papers, would remain, together with its two companions, unmolested by the commission of 1553.

They all three probably remained in the tower until the incumbency of Mr. Roger Fleming; to whose posting-up of the churchwardens' accounts we are indebted for much information concerning the bells and other matters relating to Brigham church. This duty he began to discharge in 1709, not gratuitously, however, but for a well-earned recompence, as shewn by the following annually recurring entry:—

Paid Mr. Fleming for Drawing Presentments Copying the Register washing the Surplices and other Lening and taking and Booking these Accnts, 00 10 0.

In the year 1710-1 we have these entries:—

	£	s.	d.
Itm one day meeting about the Bells	00	00	6
Itm for helping down with the Bells	00	01	0
Itm pd Joseph Midleton towards the Bells.....	01	00	0

The first two of these items are repeated six times, once for each of the churchwardens representing the six townships of the parish; from which it would seem to have been the duty of the churchwardens to help in taking down the bells. Similar entries, however, are often found in old churchwardens' accounts, relating to work of a kind in which it is unlikely that each of several men of different occupations could be of any use whatever. It is not improbable, then, that such items indicate a sort of perquisite to churchwardens for looking on whilst someone else did the work. The man who was employed to take down the Brigham bells was evidently Joseph Middleton, and the wording of the item "*towards* the bells" is explained in the accounts for the following year, 1711-2, when Joseph Middleton, being himself in that year churchwarden for Brigham township, records:—

Itm

Itm to John Kendal Matt Ashley and myself wch was in arrear for carrying to Kendal 2 Bells to be cast, bringing them againe and hanging them and yt at home in whole wheels, 5 15 0.

No doubt they had previously been rung, or rather chimed, with half wheels, as all bells were chimed before the introduction of change-ringing at the beginning of the 17th century. Here let us note that the two bells taken to Kendal were not taken there, as Mr. Fletcher says, "to break" (*C. and W. Transactions*, iv, p. 169), but "to be cast", and that Joseph Middleton speaks of "bringing them againe"; from which we gather that the present treble and tenor contain the metal of two of the three ancient bells. The reason why they were recast, with other information, is supplied in the following entries:—

	£	s.	d.
Paid the Bellfounder for Casting two Bells....	16	09	7
For his coming over to see the sound one	01	00	0
To the Saxon at Kendal	00	01	0
For Stepps to the Bells	01	00	0
For six days working about the Bells	00	09	0
That day the Bells was hung up	00	10	6

From the mention of the third bell as "the sound one" it is to be inferred that the two other bells were recast because they were cracked. But if the note of the "sound one" was then as now D sharp, why did not the bellfounder, having come over to see it, recast the two cracked bells as C sharp and E, instead of D natural and E sharp? The probability is that the original note of "Sanctus Michael" was E, and has since 1711 been changed to D sharp by a slight crack, now perceptible in the waist of the bell.

Mr. Fletcher is doubtless right in saying that "half a guinea 'the day the Bells was hung' clearly points to a copious libation in celebration of the event" (*ib.* iv, 169). He may also be right in suggesting that the fee of one shilling

shilling "to the Saxon at Kendal" was "a complimentary donation from the churchwarden for showing him over Kendal church during his visit" (*ib*), except that Joseph Middleton was not yet churchwarden when he took the bells to be recast at Kendal.

It may be asked: How came the initials and stamp of Abraham Rudhall of Gloucester on bells cast or recast at Kendal? The explanation is this: that in those "old times of bad roads and few means of conveyance, when a bell had to be recast, it was often found easier and cheaper to bring the founder to the bell than to send the bell to the founder" (Tyssen's *Sussex Bells*, p. 45). Of course it is unlikely that Abraham Rudhall came himself to Kendal on this occasion. No doubt he sent one of his foremen. Perhaps he had several orders to execute for Cumberland and Westmorland, and chose Kendal as a central place, where to set up a temporary foundry. It may have been his custom to send a man occasionally into this or that distant country, and to cause it to be made known that a foreman from the famous Gloucester foundry would be ready for a few weeks or months to execute any orders that might be sent to him. A passage in Mr. Moser's paper on Kendal Parish Register may throw some light on the reason of Mr. Rudhall's choice of Kendal as a centre for his operations in these countries:—"It appears that in olden times Kendal Church had certain workshops and outbuilding connected with it. . . . Amongst other things it possessed a bell house, which was let out (when not required for church purposes) to one of the parishioners. The house was used for repairs of the clock and bells" (*C. and W. Transactions*, iii, 57). This, in all probability, was the place to which the two Brigham bells were taken by John Kendal, Joseph Middleton, and Matt Ashley, to be recast in 1711.

Matthew Ashley was appointed parish clerk in 1715, the churchwardens and inhabitants agreeing "to collect for

for him the sum of twopence a Reek or family, about Easter for his wages, so long as he performs his duty therein as he ought to do". He was also at the same time appointed sexton, and had to "keep the church clean and decent, and the churchyard free from stones". His name occurs in connection with so many matters that it is rather strange he never rang the bells. On one occasion, however, in 1757-8, he is reported as mending them.

His predecessor as clerk, Edward Wilson, had been one of the ringers, and was succeeded in 1715 by William ffawcett, whose mates for several years were John Dodshun and John Grindal. Their wages rose gradually from 6s. in 1711-2 to 13s. 4d. each in 1714-5. In 1716-7 there occurs for the first time an entry of this kind:—

Ale for the Ringers upon Rejoicing days, 00 02 00.

In the next year, 1717-8, there is no such entry. But in 1718-9, John Grindall being then one of the churchwardens, it reappears; from which it would seem as if Grindal came in on the question of drink for the ringers. Once in, he managed to stay in for five successive years. He was the warden for Brigham township, and, as such, according to what seems to have been the rule at that time, should have received the balance due to the incoming wardens, and acted as treasurer; but, for some unexplained reason, during his five years of office, the balance was always handed over to the warden of one of the other townships. To restore to the Brigham churchwardenship its lost precedence required the interposition of no less a potentate than the parish clerk. Accordingly, 1723-4, Matthew Ashley ousted Grindal, succeeding him as warden of Brigham township, and receiving the balance. On the expiration of his year of office, having restored the old order of things, Mr. Ashley gracefully made way for
John

John Middleton, handing over to him the balance of £3 14s. od. Grindal, however, who had only been scotched, not killed, regained his position as churchwarden in 1726-7; at the end of which year, as if exhausted by this last effort, he finally disappeared, not only from the office of churchwarden, but also from the belfry, and even from the parish. "Long lost to view at length our man we trace" in the Brigham register:—

1750:—John Grindal of Goose Taile in the parish of Workington, ffarmer, April 30, buried.

Meanwhile, as Lord Beaconfield used to say, "many things had happened". Matthew Ashley had been five more times churchwarden, taking precedence and receiving the balance even when elected, in 1731-2, for Whinfell township. Mr. Roger Fleming had been succeeded by Mr. Joseph Dixon: successive ringers had come and gone; but one thing still went on:—

1750, Ale for ye Ringers 6 states day ringing, o 4 o.

In the entries relating to this matter there is nothing particularly noticable, except in those for the year 1746-7, which are given with exceptional fulness of detail:—

	£	s.	d.
2 Quarts of Ale for ye Ringers at Jno Sibsons	0	0	6
Ale to ye Ringers at Jno Harris	.....	.....	0 2 0
Ale to ye Ringers at Tho Whites	.....	.....	0 2 6

From which it appears that the ringers, their ale being paid for out of the church rate, had to be careful not to allow any one ratepaying publican to enjoy a monopoly of their patronage; on which point Mr. Ellacombe quotes ringers as saying: "We never could give satisfaction to the publicans: if we went to the Red Lion we offended the

the landlord of the White Hart" *Devonshire Bells*, p. 467). It may be thought that John Sibson would be likely to take offence at only two quarts of ale being drunk at his house, while as many as eight quarts were drunk at the house of John Harris, and that even John Harris may have wanted to know why two quarts more were supplied to the ringers by Thomas White than by himself. But, if the ringers favoured White to the detriment of Sibson, and though to less extent, of Harris, the churchwardens stepped in to make things exactly square between Harris and White, nevertheless offending both by superior favour accorded to Sibson :—

	£	s.	d.
Ch: Wardens at Jno Sibsons	0	3	0
Ch: Wardens again at Jno Sibsons	0	3	0
Ch: Wardens meeting at Tho Whites when distributing ye Poor Money being ye 3rd of feeb	0	3	0
Ch: Wardens meeting at Jno Harris when choosing new Ch: Wardens	0	3	6

One result of the "meeting at Jno Harris," which must have been the Easter vestry meeting, was that Thomas White and Joseph Harris, presumably a relative of the landlord, were among the churchwardens elected for the ensuing year. What consequences, on the ale question, resulted from this election we are unable to trace, since never again do the accounts supply the necessary data for examining in detail the distribution of patronage. A considerable acquaintance, however, with the churchwardens' accounts of other parishes enables us to state that in many places it was formerly a common practice to hold vestry meetings at a public house, and that the house varied according as this or that publican figured among the churchwardens. It was not merely the amount of ale consumed at vestry meetings that was the prize to be won. It was rather that the house where they were held became during

during the landlord's term of office the centre of parochial life.

But to return to the belfry, in which at the end of the last and the beginning of the present century signs appear of some disorder, now and again only two bells in use, a ringer absenting himself for a year or two, then returning, and finally in 1808-9 disappearing in company with another of the ringers; whereupon one of the churchwardens, Jonathan Harryman, who had been warden for Brigham township ever since 1799, as if tired of the vagaries of the ringers, takes to the belfry himself, at first associated only with John Brown, who had kept steadily on since 1781, but reinforced in 1815 by a third ringer in the person of the parish clerk, Jonathan Faulder. There is no mention in this century of "ale to the ringers"; but, on the other hand, during the reign of Jonathan Harryman, who remained churchwarden until 1819, their wages rise from 15 to 20 shillings per man. When Jonathan Harryman ceases to be churchwarden he also retires from the belfry, where his place is taken by Jonathan Owen. It is to be remarked, by the way, that formerly in Brigham parish an astonishing number of men bore the name as Jonathan.

With few exceptions, the most notable of which was Matthew Ashley, the Brigham parish clerk for the time being has been one of the ringers. The present excellent clerk, Mr. Richard Case, who told us the other day that he has sung in the choir, man and boy, for fifty years, is not one of the exceptions. "Until about 25 years ago", says Mr. Cass, "the treble used to be chimed as the congregation left the church on Sunday morning, that the folk at home should be warned that it was time to take the dinners out of the public oven". This scarcely seems to have been a good arrangement, as a sermon of unusual length might spoil the dinners. A better plan was described in our hearing, many years ago, by an old dissenting minister, who said that whilst preaching his first sermon

sermon, at a chapel to which he had been appointed minister, he heard a horn blow, whereupon most of the congregation at once left the chapel. "Why did that horn blow?" he afterwards asked one of the deacons; "and why, on hearing it, did so many persons get up and go out?" The deacon explained that the horn was the baker's signal that the dinners were ready. At Cocker-mouth one of the church bells is still rung after Sunday morning service. Mr. T. North, speaking of this custom as by no means obsolete, says that in some places it is understood as a notice that there will be evening service; but in other places the bell so rung is called the "pudding" or "dinner" bell, "being supposed to be rung in order to give the cook warning that service is over, and so dinner may be prepared"; sometimes called the "potato" bell, "because on hearing this bell the people at home put their potatoes in the pot for boiling" (*Bedfordshire Bells*, p. 93). It is, he adds, "probably the survival of the 'knolling of the Aves', mentioned in the Injunctions of 1538 as being sounded after the service, and at certain other times", and ordered to be "thenceforth left and omitted" (*ib*).

The Messrs. Lysons, writing in 1816, spoke of Brigham church as having "the only ring of bells in the county except the cathedral and Crosthwaite" (*Magna Britannia*, vol. iv, p. 39); a very curious statement, seeing that Cocker-mouth, only two miles distant from Brigham, had in 1816 a ring of six. One must think that they mistook Cocker-mouth for Brigham. Yet, even so, they might, with very little inquiry, have heard of Penrith and Workington, each with its ring of six, to say nothing of the four at Greystoke, and three at Dacre, Caldbeck, and Kirkoswald. Besides these we doubt whether in 1816 any other Cumberland church had as many bells as Brigham. Since that time half a dozen new rings of six have been added to the county stock of bells, two of eight, and two old

old rings of six have been increased to eight. There are not many more church towers in Cumberland which could hold even six bells. But the massive tower of Brigham church is certainly one of them. If at some future time it should be proposed to furnish it with a ring of six, the present tenor might serve as third bell in a ring with tenor in A. The Whitechapel ring at Thursby will nearly indicate what else would be required :—

		cwt.	qrs.	lbs.
Treble	F $\sharp\sharp$	3	3	9
No. 2.	E	3	3	21
No. 3.	D	4	1	18
No. 4.	C $\sharp\sharp$	5	0	0
No. 5.	B	6	0	11
Tenor	A	7	0	16

These weights are taken from the founders' invoice, and may therefore be relied on as accurate. Our estimate of the Brigham weights, reckoned from the diameters, is only approximate, and probably least correct in the case of the mediæval bell, which, from its shape, may be heavier than a modern bell of the same diameter. But its note? Well, if its crack be as slight as it seems, its original note should not be beyond recovery, if there be any truth in a story told by a German writer on bells, translated and quoted by Mr. Ellacombe, describing an operation performed upon a cracked bell, weighing 40 cwt., belonging to the church of St. Matthias at Treves. "Indescribable was the joy of Herr Devora when it was proved that . . . it sounded as if it had never been cracked" (*Devonshire Bells*, Supplement, p. 449). Whether the present treble would be of any use in a ring of six it is for experts to say. In any case, for the sake of Roger Fleming, it would be a pity to let it go out of the parish. It might be transferred to the schoolroom, or to one of the district churches of Brigham. As for the mediæval bell,
it

it should on no account leave the parish church, where it has done good service for more than 500 years, but should ever be preserved with care, even if altogether past work, and regarded with affection, as one of the most interesting monuments in one of the most interesting of Cumberland parish churches.

COCKERMOUTH.

The period dealt with in the following paper will be confined to that of the oldest extant book of the Cocker-mouth churchwardens' accounts; which begins at the year 1668, and ends at 1702.

The churchwardens in 1668 were Christopher Peile, John Peile of the Swan, Anthony Plasket, and Peter Allonby. Again, in 1674, we find John Peile of the Swan among the churchwardens. Meanwhile no other churchwarden's residence is specified; nor ever again until 1742, when another John Peile is described as "of the Kirk-gate", evidently to distinguish him from a namesake, who was also one of the churchwardens in that year, styled John Peile de Buck, whatever that may mean. The former of these two wardens was probably the son or grandson of "John Peile of the Swan"; which is situated in Kirkgate. Doubtless in 1668, as in 1742, there was more than one John Peile in Cocker-mouth, and it was necessary to adopt some way of informing posterity which of them was the churchwarden. It was not because of its importance, then, that the Swan is mentioned as his abode.

All the same we may be quite sure that the Swan in the year 1668 was an important place: for

in many parishes it was formerly the practice to hold the vestry meetings in a public house, which varied according as this or that publican figured among the churchwardens; and, of course, the house in which the vestry meetings were held became during the landlord's term of office the centre of parochial life. (*Keswick Guardian*, April 11, 1885).

Whatever

Whatever there was, then, of interest to engage the attention of the good people of Cockermonth in the year 1668 would be fully discussed by the churchwardens, the parish clerk, the sexton, the ringers, and other parishioners, in the back parlour of the Swan.

There certainly was in that year something of unusual interest to talk about in Cockermonth; for it was in 1668 that, after an absence of several years from Cumberland, the famous George Larkham, the Commonwealth vicar of Cockermonth, who had been ejected at the Restoration, returned, not however to the vicarage, nor yet to Cockermonth, the Five-Mile Act being still in force, but at all events to Cumberland, and "sate down with his family at Egermond (Egremont) the 23rd of April" (*Cockermonth Congregational Records*). This perhaps was not sufficiently near to cause any commotion at Cockermonth. But it soon became known that he intended to hold a meeting with his Cockermonth friends, of whom he had many, on May 15th, at Embleton; on which day Mr. Robert Ricarby, who had superseded him as vicar, went over to Embleton, and "made a furious disturbance" (*ib*). We can easily understand that there was no love lost between Mr. Ricarby and Mr. Larkham. But their relations must have been still further strained by the circumstance that Mr. Ricarby was not only the successor of Mr. Larkham, but had also been his predecessor, and had been ejected during the Commonwealth. So there was great scope for discussion at the Swan when it became known that Mr. Larkham had returned to Cumberland, and was about to hold a meeting at Embleton; and if the ringers looked in to hear what Mr. Churchwarden Peile had to say upon the matter, it is probable that they, as part and parcel of the existing order of things, manifested no desire to celebrate Mr. Larkham's return by a peal in the church tower.

It is by no means certain, however, that Mr. Larkham,
even

even had he returned as vicar, would have cared to be welcomed by a peal; for he was a strict Puritan. He may not have had the same abhorrence of church bells as his old opponent, George Fox, the Quaker, had, who disliked even to hear a bell ring for service. "It struck at my life," said Fox. He thought it was just like a market bell calling the people together that the priest might sell his wares. No such hostility as this did the Puritans, whether Presbyterian or Independent, with some exceptions, exhibit to church bells. Some of them were even very fond of bells, like John Bunyan, who had himself been a ringer, and to the last retained his liking for them, though he regarded it as a weakness of the natural man, to be restrained and kept down; which perhaps was the prevalent attitude of mind of the Puritans, at all events towards peal-ringing; and doubtless Mr. Larkham, whilst vicar of Cokermonth, had discouraged "rejoicing peals".

But even if Mr. Larkham would have liked a peal, and the ringers had been ever so anxious to give him one, I doubt whether they could have done so; for there must have been something very wrong with the bells, seeing that for ordinary ringing in 1668 there seems only to have been paid one shilling. Yet, strange to say, in the same year we find

Pd ye 29 of May, November 5, & ye 30 of January,
for Ringing 00 06 00

How came it to pass that the payment for ringing on three days was six times as much as that for the fifty-two Sundays? The only explanation I can suggest for this anomaly is that the bells were probably in such bad order that they were not rung at all in that year. But how about the three extra days? Well, on such days the ringers were almost everywhere, sometimes partly, and sometimes altogether, paid in ale; and John Peile of the
Swan

Day". Clearly the "mending" had done no good; and the item of "beare for taking down the great bell" must mean that the churchwardens found that it was really past mending. So in the following year, 1673, there is an item which shews that the great bell, having been taken down, had not yet returned to the belfry:—

ffor taking the greate Bell out of the earth and removing
the old bell into its frame 0 5 0

The reason for moving the old bell, probably the middle one, into the frame of the great bell (tenor), is thus explained:—

To Jo Atkinson for making the clocke strike on the old bell 0 2 0

Not much ringing went on during these operations, as there is only this item:—

To Richd Peirson Geo Peirson and Jo Hudson for drinke
and for their ringing 29th May and 5th November 0 3 6

Nothing is said about ringing on other days. Meanwhile an important work was in hand:—

1674				
Payd for the bell casting	.....	.....	.....	18 0 0
Mor to the bellfounders for ther advise aboutt hanging of the bell	.....	.....	.....	0 7 6
And towards ther jurney and chargis	.....	.....	.....	0 12 6
And for beare and other disbursements when she was hung	.....	.....	.....	1 2 4
For a bell rope	.....	.....	.....	0 4 0
To the Clarke for his labour aboutt the bell	.....	.....	.....	0 3 0
For drawing bonds and articles aboutt the bell	.....	.....	.....	0 2 6
To John Atkinson for making a bell wheel.....	.....	.....	.....	0 15 0

This work must have been done in the year 1673-4, according to churchwardens' computation, as it was paid for, soon after Easter, by

An

An assessment mad by the fouer churchwardens and the twelve sidmen according to our custom the 7 of June 1674 for the casting of the greate bell.

The rate was "collected by Richard Peirson, parish clerke"; who "for his paynes taking about the church affairs" gets 3s. We may be sure he took pains about the "greate bell"; for he was himself one of the ringers, no doubt their captain; and amongst other "paynes" taken by him about the "church affairs" must have been the posting up of the accounts; for it was surely a ringer who wrote concerning the great bell that "*she* was hung". The uninitiated may call a bell by what name they please: Great Paul of London, Big Ben of Westminster, Tom of Lincoln; to the ringer it will still be *she*.

Now this great bell, which had been cast, was probably the old great bell, recast; and recast in Cockermouth, perhaps in the churchyard, where a pit was dug for the purpose. But the item for "bellfounder's journey" shows that the founder was not a Cockermouth man. It is not unlikely that he was a Penrith man, as we know that in the 17th century there was at Penrith a foundry of considerable repute.

The great bell being now set up, we find the ringers again paid for Sunday ringing; not much, however: Rd. Peirson, 5s., Jo. Hudson, 3s., and Jo. Hodgson, 3s. On each of the rejoicing days, however, May 29 and Nov. 5, they had 2s. 6d.; for in this year, 1674, John Peile of the Swan was again one of the churchwardens. I have noted that one of his colleagues was Robert Mayson, probably an ancestor of one of the present churchwardens, Mr. C. Mayson, to whom, as also to Mr. Robinson, my best thanks are due for their courtesy in lending me the old accounts; which, for other reasons besides the information they give concerning the bells, are highly interesting to anyone who cares for local history.

But to return to the bells. It is evident, from what has been
been

been already stated, that they were in very bad condition, and not much used, down to the time of the recasting of the great bell. No doubt much disorder had prevailed. So at the Easter vestry meeting, on May 14, 1674, the attention of the vestry was called to an irregularity, which, now that belfry reform had been seriously taken in hand, was no longer to be tolerated. Hence the following edict; which, for greater impressiveness, was issued in the names of both the outgoing and incoming churchwardens:—

It is ordered by the new and old churchwardens That no person shall hereafter Ring any of the Bells at the death of any (except three peeles according to the Canon). But that every such person shall come to one of the then present churchwardens and have their consent and pay unto the then churchwardens Two shillings and sixpence to the publicke use of the church.

From this it would seem that it had come to be considered that anyone was at liberty, on the occasion of a death, to go and ring one of the church bells, without the permission of the constituted authorities, and to ring it how and at what times he pleased; which perhaps was formerly the custom in many Cumberland parishes, as to this day it is the custom in one Cumberland village church with which I am acquainted. But the Cockermouth churchwardens of 1673-4, both old and new, very properly determined to put a stop to it. It does not seem, however, from the wording of their order, that they forbade the ringing by private individuals; but merely that they required permission to do so to be asked for and paid for. Furthermore they required observance of canonical usage: "three peeles according to the Canon". The canon here referred to is the 67th, which enjoins that

when any is passing out of this life, a bell shall be tolled, and the minister shall then not slack to do his duty. And after the party's death, if it so fall out, there shall be rung no more than one short peal, and one other before and another after the Burial.

About

About the tolling of a bell "whilst any is passing out of this life" it is to be noticed that the churchwardens say nothing; probably because this usage had become obsolete at Cockermouth. It was called the "passing bell"; and, though there is no trace or tradition of its use in Cumberland in post-Reformation times, it did not fall into disuse in many other parts of the country until about the middle of last century. A bell is said to be tolled when the strokes, however produced, occur with a rather long interval between them. Ringing means a quick swing, and is of course the term applicable to a peal. The canon then does not sanction anything like a knell after death, whether on the day of the death or at the funeral, but orders a "peal", intended to indicate thanksgiving for the deliverance of a soul from "the miseries of this sinful world". Yet in most places, nowadays, nothing but tolling is ever practised, in connection with a death or a funeral. Indeed the death bell has not only adopted the tolling of the passing bell, but has also appropriated its name; for it is now often, but erroneously called the passing bell. Not that one often hears it so called in Cumberland, for a very good reason: for the death bell itself is seldom, *i.e.*, in few parishes, heard in Cumberland. On the other hand the after-burial bell, which in most other counties has become almost obsolete, is far from uncommon in Cumberland; where for the most part it is rung, not tolled. This, however, may be due to the circumstance that Cumberland church bells in country parishes are so small that when tolled there is little or no solemnity in the sound. Anyhow, whatever the cause of their being rung, the ringing is more in accordance than tolling with the injunction of the canon. It may be said perhaps that a peal, which is what the canon enjoins, is not obtained by the ringing of a single bell. But that is a mistake. The late Mr. North and other campanologists have decided that it is quite permissible to call the ringing
of

of a single bell a peal. No doubt, wherever there are several bells, the ringing of them all as a peal, after death and at funerals, was contemplated by the framers of the canon ; and such peals were formerly rung in many parishes down to comparatively recent times ; but they are seldom heard now, except occasionally as muffled peals. A muffled peal was rung at Crosthwaite last year immediately after the burial of the late Mr. Douglas, whilst a hymn was being sung at the grave ; and the effect of it was admirable. At Cockermouth there is now neither the usage of the death bell, except on rare occasions, nor that of the after-burial bell.

We may regard the order of the churchwardens in 1673-4 as a step in the direction of funeral reform. Whether to regard another step they took about the same time as one in the same direction will depend upon the point of view from which one looks at it :

for a new public coffen for the use of the parish 14/-

Did this mean that one and the same coffin was used over and over again for carrying the dead to the churchyard ? That is certainly what it did mean. Appended to the churchwardens' accounts of each year is an inventory of the parish church goods ; and, whereas amongst other goods there constantly recurs " One coffen for ye publicke use of ye parish," never again do we meet with another " new coffen " among the items in the accounts. To what extent it was used, whether the parishioners generally had recourse to it, there is nothing to shew. But we may be sure it carried every pauper to his grave. Was it then an institution peculiar to Cockermouth ? Well, a few weeks ago, whilst reading some antiquarian publication, I met with the statement that formerly many parishes had a public coffin ; and the writer, so far from admitting that the disuse of public coffins has been any improvement,

maintained

maintained that their abolition had been a retrograde step. He said it is quite a mistake to commit a corpse to the ground encased in anything which delays its absorption into the dust from which it came. Of course he did not mean that it should have no covering whatever; but that it should be wrapped, so as to be concealed from view, in something less durable than wood, a coffin being only used to convey it to the grave. And, when we come to think of it, this is nearly the same method as many sanitary reformers now recommend.

Returning to the bells, we find that in 1676 there was paid by the churchwardens

To Henry Beck for a new hand bell in money	o	7	o
and he allowed for old bell	.....	.....	o 2 o

This then, was no new institution, since there had been an "old bell". Indeed, a hand bell, as an article of church furniture, was a very old and once universal institution. At Brigham church there was, more than 500 years ago, a "bell of good siluer xxx oz. in weight", evidently a hand bell, and in Edward VI's Inventory there is continual mention of hand bells among the goods of the various parish churches. Mr. North says:—

They were used in a variety of ways: in processions on Rogation Days; in the procession when the Eucharist was borne to the house of the sick or dying, to give warning of its approach, that all might pay reverence to it; hence it was sometimes called, as at Gt. Gonerby, Lincolnshire, the "houseselling bell"; it was also rung to clear the way, and to call for a prayer for the deceased, at the burial of the dead, and so was frequently called the "corse bell". (*Bedfordshire Church Bells*, pp. 103-4).

It was also sometimes used as the sacring bell; which perhaps was the use of the silver bell at Brigham. We may be quite sure, however, that for no such purpose as
any

any of these did the Cockermonth churchwardens in 1676 purchase their new hand bell from Henry Beck. Nor is it likely that even the "old bell", which Mr. Beck took as part payment for the new, had seen the days when it would be put to any of those uses; for all such bells were ordered to be destroyed in the early years of the reign of Elizabeth. A document, called "*Inventarium Monumentorum Superstitionis*", preserved in the Episcopal Registry at Lincoln, and printed in Mr. E. Peacock's book on "English Church Furniture", contains

returns made in the 8th year of Elizabeth, to certain royal commissioners, by the churchwardens of 150 parishes in the county of Lincoln, of such articles of church furniture as had been used in the previous reign, but were in 1566 considered by the authorities to be superstitious or unnecessary.

A few extracts will suffice, so far as handbells are concerned, as specimens of these returns:—

OSBOURNBY: "Handbells sold to Tho & Wm Bell, and they have made brase mortars with them". (*Peacock*, p. 120).

SLEAFORD: "Sacring belles with suche other trumperie were burned in the market place the xxj daye of October Ao secundo Elizabeth". (*ib.*, p. 138).

SPRIDLINGTON: "Sold and defaced". (p. 142).

UPPINGTON: "Broken and knockt in peces". (p. 514).

ULCEBY: "Broken in peces and sold to our Vicare". (p. 162).

WADINGHAM: "Honge at a Maypole toppe". (p. 163).

WINTERTON: "Gone at the puttinge awaie of all papistrie". (p. 164).

The Cumberland returns, if any such were made, are no longer extant. But a document quoted by Whellan (p. 334), shows Dr. Barnes, bishop of Carlisle, ordering the churchwardens of Crosthwaite in 1571 to "sell all the Popish relics and monuments of superstition as presently remain in their parish"; which he (the bishop) proceeds to enumerate; and among them we find "three hanbells".

As

As far as Cockermouth is concerned it is no use saying that Bishop Barnes doubtless issued similar injunctions to all churchwardens in his diocese; because Cockermouth was not at that time in the diocese of Carlisle, but in that of Chester. Still if the Queen's orders in this matter penetrated to Rose Castle, no doubt they were received and obeyed by the bishop of Chester. So the Cockermouth handbell, allowed for and carried away by Henry Beck, was no mediæval relic. What purpose then had it served, and why, when old and perhaps cracked, were the churchwardens under the necessity of finding for it a successor? We are reduced to the prosaic hypothesis that the Cockermouth handbell was for the use of the town crier. To provide a bell for that functionary is in our day no part of the duty of the churchwardens; but two centuries ago it would be difficult to say what was not a part of the churchwardens' duty. As for the town crier, doubtless it was they who appointed him, they found him his bell, and they gave him his orders; very curious orders, some of them, from a modern point of view.

In the same year, 1676, in which a new handbell was procured there was

paid to Richard Peirson for glaseing the windowes				
and ringing the morneing bell.....	.....	.....	3	0 0

Richard Peirson, then, the parish clerk, was a glazier. How much he received for ringing the morning bell, which in that year is mentioned for the first time, does not appear in this item. But in the following year, 1677, he had £1 for "ringinge morneing bell"; which the accounts show was henceforth the regular pay for this special work. What was its purpose? We often meet with a morning bell in churchwardens' and corporation accounts, *e.g.* :—

1614

1614, To Ralf Kidd for ringing 4 of ye Clock xxs (*Carlisle Corporation Accounts*).

It was in most cases a survival from pre-Reformation times, when a bell was rung as a reminder to all to say the appointed prayers. But at the time we are now dealing with, and for long afterwards, it was "used simply as a call for daily work"; as at Tydd St. Mary, "to call men and carts to work"; and at Louth, known as the "getting-up bell" (North's *Lincolnshire Bells*, p. 213). It is "still rung at five o'clock in the morning at South Luffenham, and till recently was heard in many parts of the county" (*Rutlandshire Bells*, p. 202). At Toddington "the tenor was rung at 4 in the morning down to 1877"; and at Woburn "a bell was formerly rung at 4 a.m. as a school bell in connection with the free school there. It was afterwards rung at 6 a.m., but has been entirely discontinued for about forty years" (*Bedfordshire Bells*, p. 105). At Cockermouth the morning bell was not a survival; for we have no trace of it before 1676. Something new, then, must have happened in that year.

Well, in Askew's "Guide to Cockermouth" (p. 8) we read:—

The Grammar School for the townships of Cockermouth and Embleton, situate in All Saints' Churchyard, was founded by Philip Lord Wharton, Sir George Fletcher, Sir Richard Graham, and Dr. Smith, Bishop of Carlisle, in 1676.

Burn and Nicolson (II, 67), mentioning the same four founders, with "other contributors" unnamed, more correctly describe Dr. Smith as "dean (afterwards bishop of Carlisle)"; for he did not become bishop until 1684. Lysons (p. 43) says "the school was founded in the reign of Charles II by Philip Lord Wharton, Sir Richard Graham, and others". He does not give any date; nor do

do Burn and Nicolson. Whellan (p. 306) says "the school was founded in 1676", giving as his authority for this date "an inscription over the door", which he quotes. As he does not notice four coats of arms, and some initials, by which it is flanked, I here quote it with these additions, additions, at all events indicating the positions of the shields.

☒	SCHOL : HUIUS FUND :	☒
	JACT : FUERUNT XXV DIE	
☒	MENSIS MAII AN DOM	☒
R L	MDCLXXVI.	R T

No doubt the arms are those of the four chief founders. But they are so defaced that, if we did not know who the founders were, it would be quite impossible to make out what is on any one of the shields. Inspecting them, however, with knowledge of the founders, we may venture to assign the higher shield on the left to Dean Smith, the lower to Fletcher, the higher on the right to Wharton; and the fourth, on which there remains nothing that can be recognised, falls to Graham. The owners of the initials R L and R T we are able to identify by help of another inscription, on a stone tablet inside the school-room, also quoted, but incorrectly, by Whellan, who makes the first line run thus:—

HÆREDES PULCHRAS CUM POSTERA VIDERET ÆTAS.

He also in the third line substitutes A for U as final letter of the fourth word; which is a contraction, perhaps accidental, of SUBSCRIPTUM. The following is a correct copy of the inscription:—

HAS ÆDES PULCHRAS CUM POSTERA VIDERIT ÆTAS
 ET LOWRY ET TUBMAN SIT GRATA UTRIQUE RICHARDO.
 ULTIMA CUJUS HABET SUBSCRIPTU LINEA NOMEN
 HUIUS ERAT PRIMUS GYMNASIARCHA SCHOLÆ.
 GAUENUS NOBLE . 1676.

Whellan

Whellan was only just in time to preserve the author's surname, which is now quite erased by decay. But Mr. Noble, could he have foreseen what Whellan would represent him as having written, would have erased it himself. It must, however, be admitted that a man who could get safely through three Latin hexameters should have been more careful of his reputation than he has shewn himself in his pentameter; where his tautological designation of himself as "gymnasiarcha scholæ" lets him in for a false quantity. This he might easily have avoided by adhering to hexameter and keeping clear of "scholæ", *e.g.* :—

Hujus gymnasii primus fuit ille magister.

A translation of these lines, as literal as the exigencies of metre and rhyme permit, is here subjoined :—

Two names shall still, to all their gaze who fix
 On this fair building, in some distant year,
 Lowry and Tubman, Richards both, be dear,
 And, writ below, let one last line proclaim
 Who was first master of this school: his name
 Was Gawen Noble. Sixteen seventy-six.

Here then we have the rightful claimants to the initials R L and R T: Richard Lowry and Richard Tubman. That they were men of consequence in Cockermonth is evident from the prefix of "Mr" to each of their names in a list of 300 householders who paid the "church sesse" in 1676, to only fifteen of whom was that title accorded. Richard Lowry was an "overseer of the poore" in that year. But neither he nor Richard Tubman was ever a churchwarden, unless the latter was identical with one Richard Tubman who was churchwarden in 1724-5. Mr. Lowry was probably a dissenter, for on

Dec

Dec 20, 1692, the Brethren met at Brother Lowry's house in Cocker-
mouth in order to the choosing of a Deacon (*Congregational Records*);

and eighteen months later

Richard Lowry, an aged disciple, departed in peace, June, 20, 1692.
(*ib.*)

Assuming the identity of "Brother Lowry" with the Richard Lowry of the inscription we may impute a tolerant spirit to the author of the hexameters, who was Mr. Ricarby's curate, as we learn from a footnote to the accounts of 1690-1:—

These accounts passed before Gawen Noble Minister.

The curate, down to a time within living memory, was usually the master of the school. Schools of this kind, of which there are or have been several in Cumberland, are mostly of Elizabethan origin. Nor is the foundation of this school, notwithstanding the above cited authorities, to be assigned to a later date. Hutchinson (II, 118), in his account of Cockermouth, says that "the free grammar school was founded soon after the Reformation". This statement, if uncorroborated, as it seems at variance with the account given by all the other local historians, we might hesitate to accept; but it is confirmed by a note in the parish inventory for 1673-4:—

Henry Fletcher Vicar of Towne Malling part of his Last Will Dated xxx day of July 1554 wherein is Bequeathed Fourescore pounds to the Inhabitants of Cockermouth to find a Schoole Master &c. The whole will and Administracion dated in Aprill 1561 were delivered from Churchwardens to Churchwardens till the year 1629 when Thomas France and his partnere were Churchwardens who hath kept it ever since and lost the Administracion and a good part of the will as appears.

Of course a school founded in 1561 might have ceased to exist long before 1673, and so would have no continuity
with

with a school founded in '1676. But that this school had not ceased to exist appears from the title page of the old account book, dated "the yeare of our Redemption 1668":—

A Booke of accountes of the parish of Cockermonth wherein is contained the Bookes Records writeings and other Vtensalls belonging to the Church & Free Grammer Schoole there.

In 1673-4 the parish inventory has these items:—

2 Rentall Bookes in parchement of Schoole Land.

A copie of Decree for paymt of 5*li* yearly by Mr Fletcher of Tallantire for the use of the Free Schoole.

A Deed & bond from Mr. William Uryell for *xli* to ye Schoole.

A Deed bond & Defeazance from Michaell Hodgshon and Mary his wife for Five pounds to ye Schoole. See Anno 1640 in the old booke.

Scapula's Lexicon Græco-Latinum & Cooper's Dictionary the Gift of Mr. Peter Murthwaite to the Schoole.

In the same year the following "payments to the Master of the sd Schoole" are recorded:—

At Whitsuntide last	.....	.....	o	6	o
At Martinmas last .....	.....	.....	o	6	o
On St. Thomas Day last	.....	.....	o	3	o
On Good ffriday last	.....	.....	o	3	o

There is also in that year an item which throws light on the matter now under consideration:—

ffor one yeare rent for the School house 1 0 0

The school, then, though founded in 1561, and evidently in existence "Anno 1640", also "in the yeare of our Redemption 1668", and in 1673-4, had as yet no house of its own. But the time for its obtaining one was now at hand; and in 1676-7 the churchwardens in their inventory report

one

One letter from Sr Geo ffletcher touchinge our ffree Gramer schoule
 one from Sr Richard Graham one from Mr Geo Gee & one from
 henry Bouch Esqre

Doubtless these letters referred to the new schoolroom ; the foundations of which, according to the lintel inscription, were laid on May 25, 1676. To this inscription may be traced the origin of the prevalent belief that the school was founded in 1676. But the inscription must mean that the schoolroom, not the school, was founded in that year. Richard Lowry and Richard Tubman, whose initials appear on the lintel, were probably the builders of the room ; and Gawen Noble, when he described himself as "primus gymnasiarcha scholæ", could only have meant that he was the first master who presided over the school in that room. The present master, I fear, is likely to be the last. Already he has had to desert the old building, now in an almost ruinous condition, and to rent a room wherein to carry on his school. Nor does there seem to be any intention to repair the once "pulchras ædes" in which Gawen Noble taught.

The importance of the year 1676 in this story would of itself warrant our assuming that at Cockermouth as at Woburn the morning bell, then heard for the first time, was "rung in connection with the free school", perhaps to call the boys to school ; and as the schoolroom was in the churchyard, and the bell was rung by the parish clerk, who was captain of the church ringers, we may also assume that one of the church bells was used for that purpose. But the purpose for which this bell was rung is placed beyond doubt by a change in the wording of the item for ringing it, which in 1688-9 becomes

To Richard Peirson for Ringing of Scholer Bell i o o

In later years it is sometimes called the "scholar bell", sometimes the "morning bell", and sometimes simply
 "the

“the bell”. The pay for ringing it is always the same, viz.: £1; and if, as originally at Woburn, it had to be rung all the year round at 4 o'clock, I think that Richard Peirson fairly earned his pay. And the unfortunate master! And the wretched boys! It was indeed well that at Woburn the hour was afterwards changed to six. There is some ground, however, for hoping that the Cockermouth morning bell was rung at seven; for in 1695-6 there is this item:—

To Jos Noble for Ringing seven a clock bell 1 0 0

Joseph Noble, successor of Richard Peirson as parish clerk, made his first appearance in the belfry in 1691-2, for which year there are these items:—

To Richard Peirson for Bell Ringing .....	.....	0 7 0
To Joseph Noble for ringing ye Bell .....	.....	0 10 0
To one ffearon by Mr Noble order .....	.....	0 2 6

Peirson, as we never again find him in the belfry, probably died in that year. Then, during a short interregnum, “Mr. Noble”, whom I take to be Gawen Noble, school-master and curate, has the morning bell rung by “one ffearon”; who presently gives place to Joseph Noble, now parish clerk and captain of the ringers. Henceforth Joseph Noble annually receives his £1 for ringing the morning bell, under whatever name, until in 1695-6 it seems to be called the “seven a clock bell”. I say it *seems* to be so-called; for we must not too hastily assume the hour in this item to be 7 *a.m.* We must first examine the “curious legend of the evening bell”. (Askew, p. 1).

Mr. Askew, in his “Guide to Cockermouth” (2nd ed. pp. 5, 6), speaking of the parish charities, says:—

One singular legacy has been lost. This legacy relates to the ringing of one of the church bells every night at seven o'clock for about five minutes from Halloween to Candlemas. Tradition gives two slightly

slightly different versions as to the origin of this singular custom. One attributes it to a man; the other, which is the most generally accepted, is that adopted by Mr. Peter Burn, the Brampton poet, viz., that its originator was a lady, who had the misfortune 'once upon a time' to be overtaken by darkness and was lost upon Slate Fell, about a mile east of the town. . . . This lady, to whom tradition assigns the name of Miss Betty Waif, became bewildered in the darkness, and sat down upon a stone, still known as "Betty Waif's Stone," a large earth-fast boulder. . . . Whilst sitting here, lost and forlorn, she heard the welcome sound of the church bell. She rose, proceeded in the direction of the sound, and reached her home in safety. As a token of thankfulness for her deliverance she left the sum of £2 per annum to be paid for the ringing of the bell nightly during the dark quarter of the year, as a guide to any wanderer who might be benighted; and although this donation is lost, the ringing of the bell still continues. The ringers, eight in number, mount the tower weekly by turns to ring out what is now designated by the townspeople "The Evening Bell."

The second edition of the "Guide to Cockermouth" was published in 1872; since which date, I am sorry to say, this bell has been discontinued. Its story, as told by Mr. Askew, is not improbable; nor is it, as he considers, "singular," if by that he means unique. Mr. W. Andrews, in his "Anecdotal History of Bells," says:—

In winter, and in flat and dangerous localities, the ringing of the bell in the evening has often been the means of guiding and sometimes saving the lives of travellers; and there are instances on record of persons so saved leaving a sum of money for ringing this bell. Such is the story of a bride, who, from an English village stole out to hide, like another Ginevra, from her friends on the wedding day. The place was near a wide moor, and the girl hid awhile among the furze. When she sought to return, to laugh merrily at the anxious groom and guests, she took a wrong path, and presently found herself on the waste. The shades of night and the shrouding snow fell fast, and the bride had well nigh given herself up to despair; when, hark, the curfew bell, how sweetly pealing from the old grey tower that overshadowed her home! After being guided to her home by the blessed sound, she presented a chime of bells to the church, and upon her death, years after, it was found she had bequeathed money to keep up the ringing of the curfew bell for ever (*Newcastle Courant*, June 1, 1883).

Mr.

Mr. Andrews does not help us to identify the village which was the scene of this story. The late Mr. T. North, in one instance, is more circumstantial. Speaking of the curfew he says :—

In several parishes, as traditionally at Langham in this county (Rutlandshire), the continuance of the curfew is sought to be secured by an endowment, provided by persons who in times when roads were badly defined, and crossed an open unenclosed country, lost their way in the gloom of the evening, or in the darkness of winter early nights, but were enabled to find their village homes by its welcome sound. Apparently with reference to this end it is frequently only rung during the winter months (*Rutlandshire Church Bells*, p 100).

Turning to Mr. North's account of the parish of Langham we find the following statement :—

The Curfew is here rung at 8 p.m. during the winter months, after which the day of the month is tolled. Tradition says a lady, being benighted, and finding her way home by the sound of the bells, left an endowment for the future ringing of this bell ; but none such is now known (*ib.* p 137).

It is disappointing that these stories about legacies for the continuance of the evening bell invariably end with the statement that no such legacy is now known. I thought the other day that I had at last got hold of a piece of conclusive evidence in behalf of one such story ; for I was informed, on what seemed good authority, that in the porch of the old church at Chelsea may be seen a bell bearing an inscription to the effect that it was presented by a man who having lost his way at night was guided back to his home by the Chelsea curfew. Naturally I was anxious to see a rubbing of the inscription ; and, through the kindness of a friend, one was taken, and sent to me by post. But, alas, it ran thus :—

THE GIFT OF THE HON WILLIAM ASHBURNHAM ESQ
COFFERER OF HIS MAJESTY'S HOUSEHOLD 1679.

In these stories, as in most of the same kind, the bell is stated

stated to have been the curfew. Was, then, the bell heard by Betty Waif the curfew? Clearly not; for if the curfew at Cockermonth had not become obsolete before the time when the oldest extant book of accounts begins, we should certainly come upon the trace of an evening bell before 1695. If the "seven a clock bell" in that year was rung at 7 p.m., then it was in 1695 that the evening bell, whatever its origin, was first rung. It is not, however, until 1703-4 that there is any clear indication of an evening bell. The accounts for that year have this entry:—

Cash paid to Joseph Noble for ringing the scholer bell,	}	1 2 0
broums 6d. for sweeping the Church, Oile for ye Clock 6d,		
for ringing the saven a Clock beil first time 6d, Coreuna-		
tion day ringing ye bells 6d		

Here the "scholer" or morning bell—the payment for which, though not specified, must have been £1—is distinct from the "saven a Clock bell": which in succeeding years is sometimes called the "evening bell"; for ringing which "first time", and that time often indicated as November, seldom more than 6d. is paid. Clearly we have here the 7 p.m. bell, rung each year "first time" at Halloween, and last time at Candlemas, down to its recent abolition; and, whether or not instituted in 1703-4, it was evidently not instituted later than that year. Askew, speaking of this bell in 1872, says it was designated by the townspeople the "evening bell." That is not what the sexton says it was designated. He told me it was called the "supper bell": and it is so called in the churchwardens' accounts as far back as 1716-7:—

Nov Ale when began to ring supper bell.. .. 6d.

It is not to be supposed that a church bell, whatever it may have come to be called, was originally rung for supper. But many a bell, which had once a dignified title, indicative of its true origin, has in course of time
assumed

assumed an undignified alias. Thus at Brigham the "Knolling of the Aves" degenerated into the "Oven Bell"; and the curfew has often gone by strange names. At Cockermonth it seems to have taken at least eleven years to foist upon the "seven o'clock" or "evening" bell the name of the "supper" bell, or at all events to get that name into the churchwardens' accounts. Perhaps it took more than eleven years to bring this about: for we have not yet arrived at a decision about the "seven a clock" bell of 1695-6. One thing is clear: that, whatever "seven a clock" in the item of that year may mean, the payment £1 must have been for the morning bell; for the ringer of the evening bell, whatever called, seems never to have had any payment at all, except a few pence for ale on "first night" at Halloween. Perhaps he did not even get that before 1703-4, or whatever he did get was given to him by some one else than the churchwardens. But, as probably the same man rang both the morning and the evening bell, whoever posted up the accounts for 1695-6, if the evening bell was first instituted in that year, may have made a mistake, and jumbled up the two bells together. Or, after all, seven o'clock may have been the regular hour for the morning bell. Anyhow we seem to have ascertained the period within which the evening bell must have been instituted, viz., 1695-1703. If Betty Waif was not an imaginary person, that is about the time to look for her; and the place where to look for her will be the parish register, which I have not yet seen. Then, if the year of her death should be ascertained, there would be her will to look for; which should be at Chester or York. And what if her will, supposing it to be found, should contain no bell-ringing bequest? Must we then fall back upon the "other version", and say that the "originator" of the evening bell was a man, name unknown? No, let us still adhere to Betty Waif; whose name is something tangible in the tradition: and there is her

her stone. She may have left no bell-ringing legacy. It does not indeed follow, because the £2 has not been forthcoming within living memory, that therefore it never was bequeathed. Legacies left for various objects formed what in those days was called the "parish stock", which was lent out at interest to several persons, and the interest was applied to the purposes indicated by the testators. Many parishes, especially town parishes, had such a "stock"; concerning which much interesting information is generally found, as at Cockermonth, in the churchwardens' accounts. Now it will be easily understood that this mode of getting interest on the "stock", owing to defalcation on the part of a borrower, sometimes resulted in total loss of one or other of the legacies. Therefore the fact of there being now no money to pay for ringing the evening bell is not conclusive evidence that no such money was ever bequeathed. But a more serious objection is the fact that there is no mention of any such bequest in the churchwardens' accounts. So I think we must give up the tradition of the legacy. Still there is no occasion on that score to give up Betty Waif. My friend Peter Burn of Brampton, in his poem, referred to by Mr. Askew, does not hamper himself with a legacy, supposed to have been lost. He represents the lady as not waiting to shew posthumous gratitude for her rescue from a night on Slate Fell, but as encouraging the ringer, by liberal reward during the rest of her life, to keep the bell going :

And now through Autumn and Winter
The bell from the spire was heard.

He further assumes that, once set regularly going, the bell was continued after her death, by the influence of her example both on the ringers and on the parishioners :—

And hands are ready to labour,
And hearts are ready to give.

But

But a question arises : If there was no curfew at Cocker-
mouth, and the lady was the " originator " of the evening
bell, what was the bell she heard whilst sitting on the
stone ? Mr. Burn is equal to the occasion. Speaking of
the lady's gratitude to the ringer, he says :—

To the bellman gold and silver
She ever was wont to bring ;
And each evening found him ringing
The bell he had chanced to ring.

Peter here entrenches himself in a strong position. He must, as a poet, have been tempted to go in boldly for the curfew. But doubtless he reflected that some such unpoetical critic as myself might arise who would perhaps shew that there was no curfew at Cocker-
mouth. So he judiciously fell back on the bell ringer " who had chanced to ring ". From this ground he cannot be dislodged. That an evening bell was rung at Cocker-
mouth during the winter months for close upon 200 years is beyond dispute ; and the very fact that no such bell having been regularly rung before the end of the 17th century, with nothing else to account for its then beginning, not only tells in favour of the only explanation ever advanced of its origin, but also confirms Mr. Burn's hypothesis that what Betty Waif heard, on the occasion of her memorable adventure, was a casual or at all events exceptional bell. But even an exception is sometimes according to rule. It has a rule of its own ; which, if discovered disposes of the apparent antagonism to the rule to which it had been regarded as an exception. The primary rule, in the present case, is that there was no regular evening bell at Cocker-
mouth, which Betty Waif could have heard. What bell, then, supposing she heard one at all, did she hear ? I venture to suggest that she may have heard the " Gun-
powder Treason " bell or bells ; which, being rung in November, exactly meet the demands of the case. Here

I

I take leave of the subject, trusting that I have not laid myself open to the imputation of having sought to undermine the popular belief in the interesting legend of the Cockermouth "evening bell". But it must be admitted that, if I had been guilty of any such nefarious design, and had even succeeded in demolishing the legend, the people of Cockermouth would have had no ground for complaint, inasmuch as they have allowed the bell itself to be abolished. The determining cause of its abolition is not far to seek. "Too many cooks", says the proverb, "spoil the broth"; and so, when it had come to "ringers eight in number mounting the tower weekly by turns to ring", the bell was sure to come to grief. However that may have been, let us hope that we may not next hear of "Betty Waif's stone" being broken up as metal for mending the roads.

My reference to "Gunpowder Treason Day" reminds me to notice the "rejoicing peals" recorded in the old account book. No day but the 5th of November holds its ground from beginning to end of the book. Even the 29th of May, which in many parishes of some parts of England is still commemorated by ringing, ceased to be so observed at Cockermouth after the death of Charles II; which occurred on February 6th, 1684-5. The bells then ring in his brother and successor:—

To the Ringers at the King's Proclamation 0 3 0

They ring another peal on April 23rd, 1685, when James is crowned:—

ffor ringing on the K: Cor: day 0 2 0

They continue during his reign to observe this day, together with the 5th of November; for which latter day, however, in 1688, they significantly get extra remuneration; though they could not then have heard of the Prince
of

of Orange's landing at Torbay. No matter; perhaps they were expecting him. The ringing for the year 1688-9, which for parish affairs ended at Easter, 1689, was on this wise :—

To the Ringers the 5 November	.....	.....	o	4	o
Pd the Ringers for ringing of thanksgiving daie and Kings proclamation	.....	.....	o	6	o
Pd for Ringing the Kings Coronation	.....	.....	o	3	o

Occasionally in this reign (William III) they observe "ye Kings birthday", as well as the anniversary of his coronation; nor do they omit to celebrate his victories :—

1690-1	Pd to the Ringers att ye happy news of Taking of Dublin	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	4	o
1691-2	Pd to ye ringers of ye takeing of Athlone	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	3	o
	Pd to ye ringers of ye takeing of Limerick	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	4	o
	Pd to ye ringers upon ye News of ye happy return of ye King to England	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	3	o
1692-3	Pd ye ringers for news of victory over french fleet	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	4	o

King William died on March 8th, 1701-2; for which year, ending at Easter 1702, there are the following entries :—

For Ayle to Ringers upon the Queen's proclamation & coronation	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	5	o
ffor Ringing upon the 25th of November & upon King Willms Returne from Holland upon the Queens pro- clamation and coronation & on the Kings death att 2s 6d p day	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	o	10	6

What was in the space left blank in this entry I cannot say; for there is here a hole in the page, doubtless made by the proverbial "church mouse", as it goes right through the last 30 leaves of the book, cover and all. Nor, whatever there was here, do I understand how "2s. 6d. per day" for five days amounts only to 10s. 6d.

But

But the churchwardens in that year seem to have got somewhat confused in their reckoning, not only of money, but also of time, inserting King William's return between the ale and ringing for Queen Anne's proclamation, and again the Queen's proclamation between the King's return and his death. They have certainly contrived to bring home to us with great force the constitutional maxim: "The King is dead. Long live the King!" They come and go, kings and queens, like humbler folk.

Rectors and vicars, too, come and go; but no items for ringing them in or out occur in the churchwardens' accounts. Indeed they ring themselves in; and a prevalent superstition assigns them as many years of incumbency as they give pulls to the "induction bell". Mr. Rickerby, if this were so, must have applied himself with exceptional vigour to the bell rope; for, whereas he rang himself in before the time of the Commonwealth, he did not die till 1699. Not one of the local historians gives the date of his induction; though Hutchinson (II, 218) seems to hint that it was 1640. His old antagonist, George Larkham, the Commonwealth vicar, did not long survive him. He (Mr. Larkham) lived at Tallantire, where the Cockermonth nonconformists attended his ministrations, until James II's Declaration of Indulgence in 1687 permitted him to preach in Cockermonth, where he died in 1700. Of Mr. Rickerby we find but few traces in the churchwardens' book. Two or three items of expenditure in 1668-9-0, are mentioned as incurred "by Mr. Rickerbie's order"; he occasionally wrote the "presentments"; and once, in 1678, he signed his name to the accounts. In later years his name does not again occur; and that of his curate "Mr. Noble" comes to the fore.

The parish register, as I have said, I have not yet seen. Its earliest extant volume, which begins at 1632, might enable us to ascertain the date of Mr. Rickerby's induction

tion. The parish inventory, written each year by the churchwardens, mentions older register books, still existing at the end of the 17th century. I here subjoin the first and last entries relating to them in the oldest extant churchwardens' book :—

1668-9 One new Reidgster Book Two ould Register Bookes
1702-3 One new Register Book with 2 old ones.

The inventory also has frequent reference to

One old book of Accompts.

It is to be regretted that this old book of accounts cannot now be found. If ever I again take up the story of Cockermonth church bells, instead of beginning where I now leave off, I would prefer to end where this paper began.

CROSTHWAITE.

The present peal of Crosthwaite church consists of the following bells :—

No.	Note.	Diameter.	Date.	Founders.
1	E	28 inches	1882	Warner & Son
2	D \sharp	29 "	1775	Pack & Chapman
3	C \sharp	30 "	1775	Pack & Chapman
4	B	32 $\frac{1}{2}$ "	1775	Pack & Chapman
5	A	35 "	1882	Warner & Son
6	G \sharp	38 "	1775	Pack & Chapman
7	F \sharp	40 "	1882	Warner & Son
8	E	44 "	1882	Warner & Son

The treble (No. 1) weighs about 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ cwt., the tenor (No. 8) about 15 cwt., and the rest in proportion, the weight of a bell being approximately known from its diameter at mouth

mouth. (Warner's *Bell Catalogue*). The treble and tenor are entirely new. Nos. 5 and 7 are recast from the metal of two of the peal cast in 1775 at the Whitechapel foundry by Pack and Chapman. The six Whitechapel Bells were a famous peal in their day, superior to any neighbouring peal in the estimation of Crosthwaite and Keswick folk, who thus accounted for the alleged pre-eminence:—

The tradition is that there were three sets of six bells each, cast by Pack and Chapman for Penrith, Cockermouth, and Keswick—some say there were four sets, adding Workington—and that Dr. Brownrigg, who built Ormathwaite, and was one of the chief residents here, gave £10 10s. to the collection on the condition that Keswick had the first pick of the three, or four sets, as the case may have been, and that this accounts for the Crosthwaite bells being of a sweeter tone than either those at Penrith, or those which were destroyed when All Saints Church, Cockermouth, was burned down. *Crosthwaite Parish Magazine*, October, 1882.

The Workington bells were undoubtedly cast in 1775 by Pack and Chapman. But the Penrith bells, as may be seen from their inscriptions, were cast by Lester and Pack in 1763. In what year the late Cockermouth bells were cast there is nothing to show. But the present proprietor of the Whitechapel foundry has a list of bells cast by his predecessors, with the peals recorded in the order in which they were cast, but without any dates appended, in which, whilst Workington stands next to Keswick, a dozen peals intervene between Workington and Cockermouth; from which he infers that the Cockermouth bells must have been cast a few years later than those of Keswick and Workington. Thus the above mentioned tradition shorn of its application to Penrith, and probably of its application to Cockermouth, must be content with keeping what hold it can on Workington.

Another bell story also needs reconsideration. The bell given to the vicar of Crosthwaite by Mr. Robert Ferguson, F.S.A., was thus described in the catalogue
of

of the loan collection exhibited during Church Congress week at Carlisle:—"Ancient bell, formerly belonging to Crosthwaite Church, Cumberland". No doubt Mr. Ferguson received this description with the bell when it came into his possession. Mr. Christopherson, who sold it to Mr. Wake, by whom it was sold to Mr. Ferguson, says that he bought it from a travelling dealer, and has never alleged or supposed that it once belonged to Crosthwaite Church. It may have, if we only knew it, an interesting history. But we do not know it, and are not likely to know it. It seems ancient; but, it is blank, *i.e.*, without inscription or stamp of any kind, so that no idea can be formed of its probable age. It is small enough—only 8 inches in diameter at mouth and weighing only 13 lbs—to have been a sanctus or sacring bell. But few such bells survived the reign of Elizabeth, when they were mostly destroyed as "monuments of superstition". Some were sold, and being generally blank soon lost all trace of their original character. It so happens that we know the very year (1571) in which the church authorities of Crosthwaite were ordered by the bishop (Barnes) of Carlisle "to sell before the first day of December of the aforesaid year all the Popish relics and monuments of superstition and idolatry, as presently remain in the said parish, of the church or parish goods" (Whelan's *Cumberland*, p. 334). Whelan, who does not state where he saw the document containing this order, gives a long list of things commanded to be sold, amongst which were "three hand belles"; also "two silver chalices", in place of which were to be provided "two decent communion cups".

It is worth while in this connection to notice that the communion cup still in use at Loweswater bears the date 1571; from which it may be inferred that similar orders were issued by Bishop Barnes to other parishes. No doubt it was then that the "iij litill belles" of Loweswater, mentioned in Edward VI's Inventory, disappeared. Unfortunately

fortunately Crosthwaite is one of the churches the names of which have been torn off from the Cumberland portion of this inventory. But, approximately knowing their places in the inventory, in which the Cumberland churches are arranged according to the county wards, we are able to recognise the Crosthwaite list of church goods in one which mentions "iij prch (parish) iij litill belles". The "iij litill belles" we identify with the "three handbells" subsequently sold in 1571. The "iij prch belles" doubtless, like other Cumberland parish bells, survived not only the confiscations of the reign of Edward, but the iconoclasm of that of Elizabeth; though why such bells, with their inscribed invocations to saints, escaped destruction in Elizabeth's reign as "monuments of superstition", can only be explained upon the supposition that no one knew what the inscriptions were; which is likely enough, seeing how many custodians of mediæval bells to this day are altogether ignorant of the inscriptions they bear. The "iij prch belles" then, of which we catch a momentary glance in 1552, may have been identical with three Crosthwaite church bells, the items for ringing of which, in the reign of Queen Anne, appear in the earliest extant pages of the churchwardens' accounts. The ringing at that time seems to have been confined to "ye Sabath Days". There is no record of "rejoicing peals", as at Penrith and other places, for royal anniversaries. Even "ye Gunpowder Day" had no other recognition in the Crosthwaite churchwardens' accounts than this:—"Spent in Ale on ye 5th November at Nich Graves 0 5 0". At one time and another a good deal was spent in ale at the house (evidently a public house) of Nicholas Graves, who was, as recorded on his tombstone, "clerk of this parish 56 years". Probably the ringers came in for a fair share of the ale. If they did ring on the 5th of November, then it would seem they were paid in ale. Their wage in money was little enough, only 4s. each a year. But they
eked

eked it out by doing odd jobs about the church, impartially distributed among them by the churchwardens. One of them, Gyles Zinogle, bore a name evidently foreign to Cumberland. A descendant of one of the "German miners" mentioned by Mr. J. Fisher Crosthwaite, in his paper on the Crosthwaite Registers, "settling here in the reign of Elizabeth", he had the good fortune to live at a time when his family name had not yet degenerated, as found by Mr. Crosthwaite in a later generation, into "Snoggles". His principal achievement was taking charge of "ye great bell", at least as far as Whitehaven, when it went in 1714 to be recast at Dublin. The items of expenditure for the voyage and recasting, which occupy a whole page of the churchwardens' book, will be found *in extenso* in a paper contributed by Mr. Crosthwaite to this Society's Transactions, vol. viii, p. 48, to which reference should be made. In our day it would seem strange to send a bell to be recast at Dublin. But in those days it was easier and cheaper to send a heavy bell to Dublin than to London. To London itself, fifty years later, the old Penrith bells went by sea, *viâ* Newcastle, and their successors came from London by the same route. The payment of a fourth ringer in 1729 is the only hint the churchwardens give in their accounts of the addition in that year of a new member to the Crosthwaite peal; which must, therefore, have been a gift. The peal, thus reinforced, doubtless by a new treble, remained until superseded in 1775 by the six Whitechapel bells; the arrival of which, as they were not paid for by a rate, receives no other notice in the churchwarden's book than had been accorded to the new treble in 1729. For many interesting particulars concerning the Whitechapel peal of six, and the present mixed peal of eight, the reader is referred to the late vicar's* papers in

* The Rev. Canon Richmond.

the

the Parish Magazine, and to Mr. Crosthwaite's paper just mentioned. It only remains to conclude our notice of the old bells with the following description of them from the terrier of 1749 :—

Four Bells with their frames the least thought to weigh about Six Hundred the Second about Seven Hundred and the Third about Eight Hundred and the biggest about eleven hundred."

Yet something else, we would fain hope, may still remain to be told, if we can but recover it, concerning those old bells. Tradition says that two of them went to Whitehaven. But tradition, we have seen, is not infallible. Doubtless it has often a germ of truth. The old bells may, all four of them, have gone to Whitehaven, but not to remain there. They may have gone viâ Whitehaven, like the old Penrith bells viâ Newcastle, by sea to London, there to be relegated to the Whitechapel furnace. Let us hope that such was not their fate, and that investigation of Whitehaven belfries may result in adding another chapter to the story of the old Crosthwaite bells.

DISTINGTON.

There are two bells here, in a double cot on the west gable of the old church :— *

	Note.	Diameter.	Weight.
Treble.	C	1ft. 4in.	1 cwt.
Tenor.	B♯	1ft. 7in.	1½ cwt.

The treble has, in rather small Lombardic letters, this legend :

+ SANCTE : CUDBERTE :
 ORA : PRO *** NOBIS
 ✠ U C ✠

* NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—This Account was written in 1885.

The initial cross seems in the rubbing a plain Greek cross. The intervening stop is three roundlets between two perpendicular lines. The asterisks given above represent a stamp which consists of four perpendicular lines, inclosing three diamonds, with a horizontal line laterally bisecting them; and the same stamp occurs in six places above the legend. The letters U C, which are larger than the other letters, have a stamp (apparently a flower) on each side of them. These two letters are considered by Mr. Stahlschmidt, to whom the rubbings have been forwarded, as the initials of the founder; the U, as in the word UESTMORLAND on the old town clock bell at Carlisle, standing for W. What was the name or locality of this founder it is impossible to say. His lettering seems to be identical with that on the old Loweswater tenor, now in Crowthwaite parish room, and considered from its lack of space, stop, or mark of any kind between its words, to be an early 14th century bell. Mr. Stahlschmidt thinks that the presence of such marks on the Distington treble, and especially "the insertion of the ornament between PRO and NOBIS" indicate "later work than Loweswater". He notes also that the U at Distington is of different type from the rest of the lettering, probably indicating the founder as "a successor of the founder of the Loweswater tenor", the set of type being imperfect when he succeeded to the business. It is to be remarked, however, that, as there is no U in the Loweswater inscription, we do not as yet know what kind of U would have been used, if wanted, in that inscription. One other remark it may be worth while to make, viz., that the Distington U, which is a very curious letter, is identical with the U in ERASMUS on the second bell at Greystoke*; which, by the way, is unlike any other U in that long and puzzling

* These *Transactions*, vol. xi, pp. 134-151.

inscription.

inscription. There is nothing more to be noted at present concerning the Distington treble, except that the S in SANCTE is reversed, as in SANCTA at Loweswater; and the last letter in NOBIS at Distington can only be identified as S by its position, apparently owing to some injury in the stamp.

The tenor has, in much larger Lombardic letters, not at all resembling those on the treble, the following inscription :

+ SANCTE + CHRISTOFORE +

“Very quaint indeed”, says Mr. Stahlschmidt, “as regards lettering”. It is no use attempting to describe the letters, some of which are altogether unlike anything that has yet come under my notice. The cross seems the same as on the treble; yet, if closely examined, might be found to be somewhat different, as crosses often do not come out well in rubbings. If it should be found that the same kind of cross is on both bells, it will be reasonable to infer that they are from the same foundry, and perhaps of the same date, notwithstanding the difference of their lettering. There were often at the same foundry different kinds of type for large and small capitals; as may be seen from the two inscriptions, both Lombardic, but differing from each other in character of type, on the second bell at Dacre.

It is therefore to be desired that, when the bells are being removed, casts should be taken of their crosses, stamps, and some of their letters; and, for guidance of those who may be at hand during the removal, I will here state what casts will suffice. For the treble RA : PRO ***N, and U C † ×. For the tenor × SANTE. Both of the bells should also then be photographed; as there is something to be learned concerning the age of a bell from its shape.*

* NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—It is to be feared the opportunity was lost: this paper was in print in a newspaper in 1885. See note at end.

These

These two bells, interesting in themselves as relics of mediæval times, have the further interest of affording additional proof that none of the bells of Cumberland churches were confiscated by Edward VI's commissioners who reported as belonging to Distington in 1552

ij prch belles ij litill belles.

The "ij litill belles", no doubt, whether sanctus, sacring, or hand bells, were removed in accordance with the injunctions in the reign of Elizabeth. But the "ij prch (parish) belles" of 1552 are beyond doubt identical with the pair that still remain.

The dedication of Distington church is unknown; and the rector asks whether any light is thrown upon this point by the bell inscriptions. It is likely enough that they do afford a clue to the dedication; though it would be very unsafe to give an affirmative answer to such a question in any of the southern or midland counties. In Cumberland, however, such evidence as has yet come to hand seems to point to the inference that it was the rule to dedicate one of the bells to the patron saint of the church. But, if so, it still remains to be settled which of the two Distington bells bears the name of the church's saint. Formerly it would have been said that St. Christopher must needs be the tutelar saint of the church, as his name is on the tenor. But that is now an exploded theory, clearly seen in many cases to be erroneous, as at St. Michael's, Burgh by Sands, where St. Michael's name occurs on the treble. If, then, the Distington dedication may be assigned to one of the two saints whose names are on the bells, there can be no doubt that Cumberland antiquaries will be unanimous in assigning it to St. Cuthbert, to whom as many as sixteen churches in the county are dedicated, whilst there is not one to St. Christopher. By the way, I must not omit to mention that to Mr. Stahlschmidt is due the credit of identifying the
name

name on the treble as CUDBERT. The first letter had been thought by others, including myself, to be E; and we thought the name was a bungling version of Hubert. But, when once suggested, it is not difficult to see that the name is Cudbert.

It is very probable that if the southern part of Cumberland and the whole of Westmorland were to be thoroughly explored they would be found to possess a larger percentage of mediæval bells than any other part of England; and it is to be hoped that other rectors and vicars will follow Mr. Hodgson's example, and ascertain what inscriptions their church bells bear.

Of "peculiar usages" there are at Distington (1) the death knell, without indication of sex or age; (2) the after-burial bell; (3) the sermon bell, "rung during the hymn after matins when there is no communion", probably the only survival of its kind in the diocese; and (4) the sacrament bell, formerly rung after the sermon, but transferred by the present rector to "the commencement of the communion office".

HOLME CULTRAM.

A double cot on the west gable of Holme Abbey, contains two bells: one of which 27 inches in diameter, weighs about $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt: the other is 21 inches in diameter, weight about $2\frac{1}{4}$ cwt.

The larger of the two is inscribed:—

PACK AND CHAPMAN, LONDON, FECIT, 1771.

CHURCHWARDENS

JOSEPH THOMPSON SAMUEL PATTINSON

THOMAS SALKELD INO ROBINSON

This bell is from the Whitechapel foundry, the successive proprietors of which, during the last 140 years, may be almost

almost continuously traced from inscriptions on bells in this neighbourhood. Thomas Lester, when sole proprietor, recast the Hexham ring in 1742: Lester and Pack the Penrith ring in 1763; Pack and Chapman, the founders (in 1771) of the Holme Cultram bell, cast the Lanercost bell in 1773, and recast the Crosthwaite (Keswick) ring in 1775; W. and T. Mears cast a bell for Egremont in 1788: Thomas Mears the Brampton ring in 1826 and the Talkin bell in 1842: C. and G. Mears the Edmond Castle bell in 1847: Mears and Co. the St. Stephen's (Carlisle) ring in 1864; and Mears and Stainbank the St. Cuthbert (Carlisle) bell in 1876. Of the work of Thomas Lester's predecessors, from Robert Moate downwards, no specimen has hereabouts yet come to light.

But a bell cast by Robert Moate himself, who died in 1608, would be junior by more than a century to that which shares with Pack and Chapman's bell the double cot at Holme Abbey. This interesting relic of mediæval times bears, in small black letter, running quite round, the following inscription:—

ih̄s : thomas : york : abbas : de : holm
cu · dominio : anno dni · mill.cccc.lxv :

The inscription is surmounted throughout by trefoil ornament. Below the date is what seems to be the founder's stamp, unlike any given by Mr. North or Dr. Raven, three griffins passant, the middle one to dexter, the other two sinister, inclosed in a rectangular oblong. A dated mediæval bell is a rarity. Three bells of the ancient Hexham ring bore date 1404 (*Handbook to Hexham*, by Jas. Hewitt, p. 100). But the earliest dated bell in Rutland is post-reformation (*North* p. 39). Dr. Raven says:—

To what cause the absence of dates on our mediæval bells is due is a great mystery; but the fact remains. There is not a dated ante-Reformation bell in Cambridgeshire, which runs very short in mediæval specimens *Church Bells of Cambridgeshire*, p. 12).

For

For reasons already given in these papers it may be hoped the number of mediæval bells in Cumberland will be found to be above the average of other counties; and their inscriptions, when in Gothic capitals, as at Cumrew, may be indicative of a period earlier even than that of the small black letter inscription at Holme Cultram: but we can scarcely expect to find in Cumberland another dated pre-Reformation bell. The dated inscription now before us is of special value, as it recovers a long forgotten name, and informs us where to place it in the incomplete list of the abbots of Holme Cultram, thus given by Bishop Tanner:—

HOLME CULTRAM ABBOTS.—Everard 1175, died 1192. Gregory 1192. William resigned 1215. Adam elected 1215. Hugh elected 1223. Gilbert died 1237. John 1237, died 1255. Henry 1255. Gervasse 1278. Robert 1292. William de Redekar 1434. Robert Chamber 1507 and 1518. *Notitia Monastica*, 2nd ed., p. xxxix).

Mr. C. Ferguson in his paper on Holme Abbey (*Cumberland and Westmorland Transactions*, vol. 1, p. 268), quoting from Willis, omits Gervasse, inserts a second Everard (undated) after Adam, a second Gregory (undated) after Robert, and adds Gawin Borrowdale, the last abbot, who, on the suppression of the monastery in 1538, became the first vicar of Holme Cultram, the parishioners having presented the following petition to Henry VIII's Vicar-General:—

That it might please your Lordship to be a meane for us to our Sovereigne Lorde the Kyng for the preservation and standynge of the Church of Holme Coltram before saide whiche is not onely unto us our parish Churche and little ynoughe to receyve all us your poore crators but also a greate ayde socor and defence for us agenst our neighbors the Scots (*ib.* p. 270).

To the granting of this petition the Holme Abbey bells owed their escape from the fate which overtook the
bells

bells of the monasteries at Shap, Carlisle, Wetheral, Appleby, and Penrith. Their number is shown in the following extract from Edward VI's Inventory of Church Goods in 1552, the missing portion of which, torn off from the original MS. on the right hand side, is here restored, as far as possible, in italics :—

Church of Holme Coltram	{	Itm one chales of silvr one iij vestments iij copes ij <i>tunycles</i> . alterclothes iij towels iij <i>surpclothes</i> iij bells iij handbells one <i>holy water</i> ffat of brasse ij latten <i>candilstiks</i> .
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In 1553 a commission was issued for the confiscation of all church goods not considered necessary for divine service, when two of the above mentioned "iij bells", if the commission was strictly executed, were converted to "ye Kynges use". But such evidence as has yet come to hand points to the inference that in many places, perhaps everywhere in Cumberland, the commissioners, so far as the bells were concerned, did not fully carry out their instructions. The Cumberland Commissioners, for instance, when called to account, in 3 and 4 Philip and Mary, for their proceedings in Edward's reign, returned a "scedule" of "plate jewelles and ornaments" seized by them in 1553, but made no mention of bells; a significant omission when regarded with reference to their instructions as to "plate juels *bells* and ornaments" (*MSS. in Record Office*). Whellan, writing in 1860, in his account of Greystoke church, says (p. 543) :—

There are four very ancient bells, with inscriptions round them.

Bishop Nicolson, who was fond of deciphering inscriptions, would no doubt, had he seen the bells when he visited Greystoke in 1704, have given a complete account of them.

But the tower was "crack'd" and looked "threatening," and therefore he contented himself with hearing them,
when

when he pronounced them to be "pretty tuneable" (Bp. N., p. 131). Perhaps some antiquary will tell us the true story of these bells, which, if all four of them be really "very ancient", will confirm the supposition that the Cumberland church bells were left unmolested by Edward VI's commissioners.* The Holme Abbey bells, however, if they survived not only the dissolution of monasteries in 1538, but also the spoliation of parish churches in 1553, had other and not less formidable dangers yet to encounter.

In 1600, on the 1st of January, the steeple of the church, being of the height of nineteen fathoms, suddenly to the ground, and by the fall brought down a great part of the church, both timber, lead, and walls. In 1602-3 the tower was rebuilt, and on the 18th of April, 1604, it was burnt down by one Christopher Hardon carrying a live coal into the roof. (*C. and W. Archæological Transactions*, vol. i., p. 274.)

If on one or both of these occasions the bells fell with the tower, it is a matter for surprise that even one of them escaped destruction. Yet the terrier of 1749 has this entry:—

Two bells with their frames, the less thought to weigh about five hundred weight, and the bigger about seven hundred weight.

Accuracy is not a characteristic of terrier weights. Therefore, as it is evident that "the less" of these two bells, which must needs be identified with Abbot York's bell, was "thought" to be more than double its real weight, we may doubt whether "the bigger" was correctly thought to be "about seven hundred weight." Perhaps $4\frac{1}{2}$ cwt. would be nearer the mark, that being the weight of its successor, for which it may have supplied the metal, pro-

* NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—Mr. Whitehead has himself told the story of the Greystoke Bells: see these *Transactions* vol. xi, pp. 134 to 151.

badly

bably being itself cracked, and therefore ordered to be recast in 1771: and, if so, it is well that it was at least big enough to supply all the metal that was required for the new bell, else Pack and Chapman, as at Lanercost two years later, might have been directed to found both the old bells into one, and Thomas York's bell, after surviving the dissolution of the monasteries, the spoliation of the parish churches, the falling of the abbey tower, and the burning of the abbey itself, would have been relegated, like many of its mediæval contemporaries—*e.g.*, the famous bells of King's College Chapel (*Raven*, p. 58)—to the White-chapel furnace. It may still be in some danger. The Rev. W. F. Gilbanks, to whom we are indebted for the inscriptions and diameters of the Holme Cultram bells, writes:—

The mediæval bell has a good note of A when struck, but the present mode of ringing, which allows the clapper to stay too long on the bell, together with the want of canons, necessitating iron straps, at present badly fitted, causes it almost to seem cracked.

Improper modes of ringing have much to answer for. The Trinity (Carlisle) bell was cracked through being rung with a cord tied to the clapper. The old St. Cuthbert's (Carlisle) bell was cracked in the same way. The same mode of ringing, still adhered to at St. Cuthbert's, will probably sooner or later prove fatal to the present bell; for which, however, a successor, of equal diameter, and not much less antiquity, can easily be found. But a bell like that of Holme Cultram

when once destroyed can never be supplied.

Thus ends, so far as it has yet been possible to trace it, the story of the eventful career and hair-breadth escapes of what is probably the most interesting bell in the county of Cumberland.

But

But among the multifarious papers relating to the abbey, some of which are in the parish chest and others in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, there may be documents which would throw further light on the history of the abbey bells, and in particular on the casting of them, if not by the monks themselves, at all events under their superintendence, after the manner thus described by Mr. North :—

In the middle ages, when roads were bad, and locomotion difficult, bells were frequently cast within the precincts of religious houses and in churchyards, the clergy or monks standing around and reciting prayers and chanting psalms.
 During excavations in the churchyard of Stafford, Leicestershire, some years ago, indications of the former existence of a furnace for the casting of the church bells there were discovered, and a mass of bell-metal was found, which had clearly been in a state of fusion on the spot, and a similar discovery was made about four years ago in the churchyard of Emmpingham, Rutland. (*Church Bells of Rutland*, pp. 10, 11).

Sometimes bells were cast within the church itself. Dr. Raven, after mentioning the fall of the central tower of Ely cathedral in 1322, says :—

A little more than twenty years after this we find great works in bell casting going on in the cathedral under the superintendence of Alan de Walsingham, prior, and Robarte Aylesh'm, sacrist. (*Church Bells of Cambridgeshire*, p. 5.)

Of these "great works in bell casting" at Ely no traces now remain but the grooves worn by the bell ropes, discovered by the present bishop of Carlisle, when he was dean of Ely (*ib.* p. 8). But from the role of the sacrist Dr. Raven has transcribed the account for the "works," from which it appears that the bells, four in number, one of which was called "Walsynghame", after the prior, were cast by one "Master John of Gloucester." Some one may yet discover the name of the founder and the
 account

account for the casting of the Holme Abbey bells. Meanwhile it is a matter for satisfaction that one of them, more fortunate than the bells of Master John, still survives, in its fifth century, to preserve the name of Abbot Thomas York.

NOTE BY THE EDITOR.—The accounts of the Brigham, Cockermouth, Crosthwaite, Distington, and Holm Cultram Bells are reproduced from various newspapers, in which they had been printed under Mr. Whitehead's supervision, some of them so long ago as 1885. They lack, therefore, the final revision, which Mr. Whitehead intended to give them, in the light of increased information. See footnote *ante* p. 256.