



PROCEEDINGS
RELATING TO THE
CONCEALMENT OF THE SANCTUS BELL

AT BRAMPTON.

COMMUNICATED BY HENRY HARROD, ESQ.,

ONE OF THE SECRETARIES.

For a considerable number of years subsequently to the Reformation, the inhabitants of many of our secluded villages secretly retained their veneration for the forms and ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Church, and for the goods and ornaments dedicated to its service. This was especially the case where an old family attached to that creed happened to be located. Great was the ingenuity expended in evading the orders of the Ordinary—many the devices resorted to,

to rescue the sacred objects from the hands of the spoiler. The Ordinary's Visitation Books for a portion of this county, from the commencement of Elizabeth's reign (which are still in existence), teem with complaints of non-compliance with the Queen's injunctions in these sequestered spots. "The Rood-loft is not pluckt down." *Marsham*, 1563.—"The Rood-doors not stopped, and eight Tabernacles remain in the wall." *Morton*, 1563.—"They have pictures and other superstitious things *hidden* in the Rood-loft." *Briston*, 1563.

There can be little doubt but that it was with a similar desire to preserve the consecrated ornaments of the Roman Catholic Church, until (as was hoped would shortly be the case) it was again established in the land, that the Alabaster Tablet and Crucifix (the former of which is figured in the present volume) were wrapped in sedges and placed beneath the floor of the chancel at Buckenham Ferry.

Among the appliances required in the Roman Catholic ceremonial, was the Sanctus, more commonly, but improperly, called the Saints, or Saunce * Bell, which was a small bell formerly hung in a turret at the summit of the east end of the nave, and rung by a rope from within. "Its use," according to a distinguished and dignified clergyman of that communion, in a letter to a friend, "was to toll at the most solemn parts of the mass, ushered in by the concluding words of the Preface, 'Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabaoth;' but these words occur but once in the mass." He adds, that the bell was again tolled at the elevation of the host, about the middle of the mass; and that a hand-bell, or other small bell, was then rung, to call the attention of those assisting in the church, while at the same time the Sanctus Bell was tolled, to give notice to those who were outside, and who uttered a prayer on hearing it.

Many of these turrets still remain on our Norfolk churches,

* Vide supra, p. 77.

or have been removed within the memory of man.* For the view of that at Wiggshall St. Germain's, at the head of this paper, I am indebted to Mr. Dawson Turner; as I am to Mr. Ward for the sketch, at the end, of the bell on the screen at Salhouse, most probably intended for the purpose just mentioned, of securing and quickening the devotion of the congregation.

The Sanctus Bell of Brampton church, in the Ingworth Deanry, was in 1627 missing from its place; and the following proceedings appear in the minutes of the Ordinary's Court at Michaelmas in that year.

"Brampton, 1627.—Richard Smith notatur for not bringing into the church a bell, called the Saints' Bell, belonging to the church there."

"12 Nov.—Appeared personally the said Smith and alleged as follows:

"That the said Bell articted was never promised unto the church by M^r Edward Brampton deseased, but was alwaies kept and did belong unto the house of M^r Brampton of Brampton; and that hee, the said M^r Brampton, have had it alwaies in his possession, and never in the possession of this respondent.

"And of the truth of this allegation," &c. &c.

Suddenly he seems determined to be more communicative, and the entry proceeds:

"But he *thinketh* y^t it is in some part of Brampton hall w^{ch} M^{rs} Brampton doth reserve to herself, and y^t he hath oftentimes desyred of her to have the said bell, the w^{ch} shee have promysed to deliver unto him if shee have the

* At Diss, I am told, and perhaps at other places, the bell not only hangs in such turret, but is rung every Sunday, to warn the congregation of the approach of the minister to the church. At Shipdham, it is rung when the minister has entered the desk and commenced reading the sentences of Scripture at the beginning of the Service. It commonly passes by the more expressive than elegant appellation of the *ting-tang*.

same; and this respondent have promised to restore it, yf soe bee it bee to bee found in the said howse of M^{rs} Brampton, the wiff of M^r Charles Brampton now living in Brampton, yf shee deliver it unto him.”

These Bramptons were settled there as early as 1150: they clung to the Roman Catholic faith; and as regularly as the Ordinary visited the neighbourhood, so regularly was their excommunication recalled to mind, and fines levied on them as recusant Papists, and on their servants also. Edward Brampton died in 1622, leaving two sons, Charles and Edward, who both died without issue (Charles in 1631), and two daughters, Philippa and Alice, who then inherited and sold the estates.

HENRY HARROD.

