

NOTES ON THE SANCTUS BELL.

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It is not easy to present accurately the facts as to the use of bells at the Eucharist, because of local variations as well as changes of practice from time to time.

Certainly handbells thus used date a long way back. The Saxon Cross at Winwick, Lancashire, bears the figure of an ecclesiastic, vested in a camise, with a bell in each hand. Pacichelli, after quoting from the canons of the Councils of Cologne in 1260, 1300, and 1310 prohibitions of beards and lay dress to bell-ringers, and instructions to wear that which is called *vestis camisiialis* in the first date, and *superpelliceum* in the third, says that like directions are to be seen in excerpts of Egbert, Archbishop of York, who presided over that province from A.D. 731 to A.D. 767.*

Archbishop Peckham's Constitutions in 1281 ordained the tolling of a bell at the elevation of the Host, for the sake of those unable to come to church†; but the setting apart of a bell outside the building for this purpose does not appear to have obtained, one of the tower bells being used for the purpose. In Archbishop Winchelsey's Constitutions, about twenty years later, a handbell to be carried before the Host at the Visitation of the Sick, and bells

* Pacichelli, de Tintinnabulo, p. 219.

† In elevatione corporis xpristi (*sic*) ab una parte ad minus campane pulsantur ut plures qui celebrationi missarum non valent cotidie interesse ubicunque fuerint sive in agris sive in domibus flectant genua indulgentias concessas a pluribus episcopis habituri." Const. Jo. Peckham Archiep. Cant.

On which Lyndewode notes: "*Pulsantur* ut sonent ex una parte ad minus *Campane* non intelligas de pluribus illo tempore simul pulsandis in una ecclesia quia sufficit unum sonari sed pluraliter loquitur respectu plurium ecclesiarum. Et hec pulsatio fieri debet de campanis illis que longius possunt audiri quod satis patet per rationem que sequitur. Ut populares (*sic*) ubi ponitur finis ob quem statuitur."

with ropes are mentioned,* and that the latter were for the tower alone may be gathered from the subsequent Constitutions of Archbishop Simon, which in addition to handbells specify "bells in belfry with cords to the same."†

The Lay Folks' Mass Book, which is assigned by its learned editor, Canon Simmons, to a date c. 1375, thus describes the use:—

"Then tyme is to the sacrynge
A little bell men oyse (use) to ryng
Then shal thou do reuerence
to ihesu crist awen presence."

The sacring bells were often of silver, as in the case of one bequeathed to the Church of the Friars Preachers in London, by Elizabeth Bohun, Countess of Northampton, in 1356. So far as I can ascertain, the term *Sance-bell* or *Sanctus-bell* is restricted in common use to one outside the church. Not that the name at all indicates this restriction, as the external use was at the same time of the service as the internal. Three strokes were given at the utterance of the *Ter Sanctus*, as it has been explained to me, not for the *Ter Sanctus*, but because the Canon invariably follows. In that case such a bell as hangs in the Hawstead screen might have been called either *Sance-bell* or *Sacring-bell*, partaking as it did of the nature of both, hung like the former, inside the building like the latter.

It appears to have escaped notice in the return made to the Commissioners of Edward VI. in 1553, and as the same thing happened at Scarning and Wiggshall S. German's, Norfolk, the only instances resembling Hawstead, which are known to me, we are left in the dark as to what may be considered its official designation.

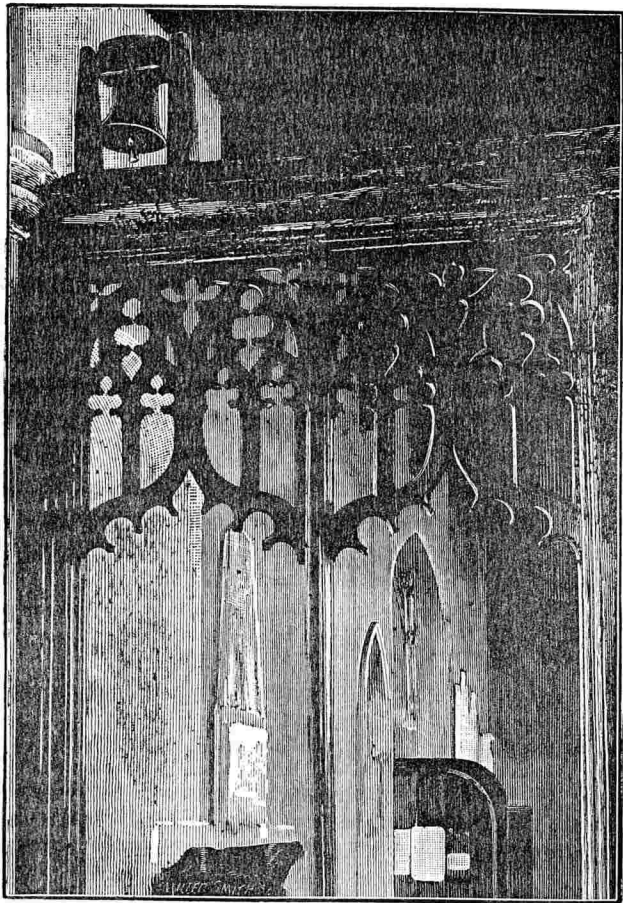
In France at the present day I am informed that the

* "tinnabulum ad deferendum coram corpore xpristi in visitatione infirmorum . . . campanas cum cordis." Const. Roberti Wynchelsee.

These extracts are from the valuable copy of Lyndewode, belonging to Thetford Grammar School, kindly lent me by the Governors.

† From a transcript of Constitutions of Simon, Archbishop of Canterbury (? Islip, Langham, or Sudbury) not to be found in Lyndewode, written in an early part of the inventories of William de Swynefete, Archdeacon of Norwich. The book was prepared by him in 1368, and additions were made by his successors. (See Norfolk Archæology, v. 93.)

bell is rung not at the beginning of the Canon, but just before the *Pater Noster*. In Rome it is only rung once, at the Elevation. At Milan a bell hanging in the belfry was rung at the end of High Mass.*



SANCE, OR SACRING BELL, HAWSTEAD, SUFFOLK.

The erection of cots for the Sanctus Bell appears to have been due mainly to the Perpendicular period. At Mildenhall, where there is an unusually fine Early English arch, a bell turret was erected in the Perpendicular days, and the mark of the rope against the wall is still visible.

* Pacichelli, p. 244.

Many have been the vicissitudes of these bells. For instance, the Sanctus Bell of Brampton Church, in the Ingworth Deanery, 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 & alleged as follows:—

"That the said Bell articed was never promised unto the church by M^r Edward Brampton deseased, but was alwaies kept & did belong unto the house of M^r Brampton of Brampton; & that hee, the said M^r Brampton, have had it alwaies in his possession, & 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, & 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 same; & this respond^t 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."* (Norfolk Archæology, I. 241. 1847).

In the days of Bishops Wren and Montague of Norwich, the attempt to revive the use of these bells led to great heats. When Dr. Warren, rector of Long Melford, was ejected by the Parliamentary "triers," as he returned, one of the party beat a frying-pan before him, crying, "This is your Saints' bell."

One would have thought that such objects might have been regarded as "ower gude for banning, and ower bad for blessing," as Andrew Fairservice said of Rob Roy; but there is no limit to the passions which can be raised in mortal breasts by the use, or the absence of use, of things which can hardly be considered either essential or pernicious in themselves.

The one bell which was reported as hanging in the tower in 1553 is still there, but no longer alone.

* The Bramptons were a well-known recusant family.