

THE HAUNTED BELL.

BY VERY REV. LANGTON GEO. VRRH

It was some years before the tide of the so-called Reformation swept over this unhappy land. Slowly walking by the side of the river Brent, a man of middle age gazed pensively upon the waters. The autumn sun was setting and its last rays were gilding the glorious sky. He stood and bared his head and bent his knee and prayed his Ave Marias, for the bell in the tower of Battletree Church rang out the evening Angelus. As the sound of the bell died away in the far distance he rose to his feet and as he did so he murmured, "May her soul and all Christian souls, through God's mercy, rest in peace."

Why did he start as he looked forward? Why did he seem so transfixed? Was it simply the dusky twilight that made his face seem pale? No. He was dreaming no dream. Before his mortal gaze he beheld the figure of her for the repose of whose soul he prayed.

It was the seventh anniversary of her death. By the rites of Holy Church she had been remembered, for he was a good and religious-minded man.

It was also the seventh anniversary of his marriage day; when that same bell had rung the mid-day Angelus seven years before, he was a happy husband; when it sounded for the evening Angelus that same day, he was kneeling by his dead bride. The Angel of Death had come then as he often comes now, suddenly, and the soul of the young bride had passed away from earth. After seven years of sorrow and of prayer he was permitted to see her again. She came to him more beautiful than on that day when he led her from the altar to his home. She came to him with a message from the unseen world.

"Weep no more for me," said she, "but pray for me and for all Christian souls. What we suffer through the mercy and love of our Creator you on earth can never know. My time of probation is nearly at an end. Then I go to the untold bliss of reward. My message to you is, pray and persevere; and when you bell shall have rung its Angelus for seven years more, you shall join me in the land of rest." The vision then departed.

Four years had come and gone, and again the autumn anniversary dawned. Four years of anxiety and pain for that widowed man had passed. Anxiety, because he loved his faith, and even in the solitude of his quiet home by the beautiful river he had heard of the wicked King's doings and the defection of God's anointed ones.

The tide of religious revolution had not yet broken over that quiet spot. But the widowed man was about to close his eyes to things of earth. He felt he had not obeyed the spirit's warning. An untold sorrow and regret came upon him for his past sorrows for the dead, his want of resignation to the great Will that sweetly disposes all things here below.

But he had not obeyed; and the guilt of unrestrained and unresigned sorrow now seemed very great to him. She had told him that no human lips could speak the sufferings of the temporal separation that comes with the merciful sentence after death. She had told him that when the Angelus should for seven years have sounded from that bell, he should join her in the land of rest. What, thought he, will be the weary waiting of the three years yet to come? And as he thought, and as the good priest prayed beside his bed, the evening Angelus rang forth and his spirit passed away.

Once more the double anniversary came round. There was great and virtuous excitement among the simple country folk. When the evening Angelus had sounded, a body of the myrmidons of the religion of revolt had gathered on the banks of Brent.

The good priest had been seized as a traitor to his Sovereign, since he would acknowledge no other spiritual lord and master on earth save the Pontiff-king of Rome. The Church treasures had been carried off, and by royal decree the Angelus bell must sound no more.

Three hundred years have rolled into the great eternal gulf! The old people tell you that on a certain autumn evening of each year, as the sun sets and its last rays gild the silver river, a strange thing happens at the old parish church of Battletree. Even when the evening is quiet and the wind is still, they say that at sunset on that particular day the old bell swings to and fro, but never the slightest sound comes from it. Then they hear a rustling as of wings, and a soft sad voice like the distant wailing of one in pain and sorrow passes over the churchyard. As far back as the memory of the oldest inhabitant goes that bell in that old church tower has been called the haunted bell.

The wailing has ceased and the bell swings no more in the old tower. A merry chime of smaller bells peal forth each Sunday morn over the old church. The old desecrated Catholic bell has been removed and is in a yard of a large bell foundry.

Will the time never come for the two years Angelus notes to ring the sad spirit from its weary watch and waiting?

In the little school chapel of a poor mission a sight is witnessed strange to those who are congregated in that modest place. A Catholic Bishop is consecrating a bell for the new church which is to be opened in a few days for a house of God. It is an old bell and bears upon it the inscription "In honore omnium sanctorum."

And the old Battletree bell swings once more over a Catholic church, and morning, noon, and even tide its silver tones call the faithful to honour the great Mystery of redeeming love. The haunted bell is fulfilling its mission of mercy!

It is the second anniversary of the opening of the new church. The last rays of the setting sun are falling over the smoky city—suddenly from that little Catholic church come the strains of the old Catholic bell calling the faithful to honour the great Mystery of Christianity. As the last stroke sounds a strange vibration comes over the bell, and a strange sound as of a suppressed cry of agony comes with that last stroke. The music of that bell has passed from it for ever. Its mission is ended. The last stroke of its iron tongue has rent the bell in twain, and it will sound no more. The spirit is freed; the long term of its purgatorial pain has passed, its weary watching is at an end; the bell has rung the Ave Maria for the seven predicted years, and the soul has flown to its reward and joined the purified spirits in the Land of Rest. The haunted bell is broken, for the spirit that haunted it has passed through its long weary years of penitential waiting and is at rest forever!

I had finished the story and was dreaming day dreams of good old times in the ages of faith, and seemed to hear no end of bells ringing in the far distance, when my friend returned.

"You've been longer than you expected," I remarked.

"Yes," said he. "You have read the little story, I see. Years ago a friend of mine purchased that old bell and gave it to a poor mission. For two years it rang the people to Mass and to evening service, and morning, noon, and night it rang out the Angelus. But, strange to say, on the second anniversary of the opening of the church, after it had been rung for exactly two years, at the last stroke of the Angelus the bell cracked and was no longer of any use. I was so struck with the circumstance that shortly

afterwards, when I was unwell and during the watchful hours of a sleepless night, I imagined the little story you have just read."

"But," said I, "you have made the poor soul suffer a long Purgatory."

"Well you know," said the priest, "when people get great graces, as did the soul I have imagined, and wonderful warnings, much, we are taught, is expected from them."

"But then the soul in your story seems not to have been confined in the prison house of purgatorial fire; is that strictly theological?"

The priest went to his library and opening a book read me these words:

"There are revelations which speak of some who are in Purgatory but have no fire. They languish patiently, detained from God, and that is enough chastisement for them. There are revelations, too, which speak of multitudes who are in no local prison, but abide their purification in the air, or by their graves, or near altars where the Blessed Sacrament is, or in the rooms of those who pray for them or amid the scenes of their former vanity and frivolity. What we in the world call very trivial faults are most severely punished in Purgatory; slight feelings of self complacency, trifling inattentions in the recital of the Divine Office and the like occur frequently among them. Sister Francesca mentions the case of a girl of fourteen, who was not quite conformed to the will of God in dying so young; and one soul said to her, 'Ah! men little think in the world how dearly they are going to pay here for faults they hardly note there.'"

UNTOLD MISERY—WHAT A WELL-KNOWN COMMERCIAL TRAVELER SUFFERED AND HOW HE WAS CURED.—GENTLEMEN,—About five years ago I began to be troubled with Dyspepsia, and for three years suffered untold misery, from this terrible complaint. I was at that time travelling for Messrs. Walter Woods & Co. Hamilton, and was treated by some of the best physicians in the country, but all to no purpose. I continued to grow worse, one day I was induced to try a bottle of Northrop & Lyman's VEGETABLE DISCOVERY and to my great surprise and joy, I soon began to improve. I continued using this medicine and when the third bottle was finished, I found I was entirely cured; and as a year has elapsed since then, I feel confident that the cure is complete and permanent. To all afflicted with this distressing complaint I heartily recommend Northrop & Lyman's VEGETABLE DISCOVERY believing that the persistent use of it will cure any case of Dyspepsia.

Signed, T. S. McINTYRE

IMPERIAL
CREAM TARTAR

BAKING POWDER
PUREST, STRONGEST, BEST.

Contains no Alum, Ammonia, Lime, Phosphates, or any Injurious.

E. W. GILLET, Toronto, Ont.

HUGH BRIMSTIN

LOCKSMITH and BELCHANGER.

Razors, Scissors and all kinds of Cutlery Ground and Repaired.

Lawn Mowers Ground & Repaired.

596 YONGE STREET,

Established 1864. TORONTO

ABOVE EVERYTHING ELSE,

Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery purifies the blood. By this means, it reaches, builds up, and invigorates every part of the system. For every blood-taint and disorder, and for every disease that comes from an inactive liver or impure blood, it is the only remedy so sure and effective that it can be guaranteed.

If the "Discovery" fails to benefit or cure, in every case, you have your money back.

These diseases are many. They're different in form, but they're like in treatment. Rouse up the torpid liver into healthful action, thoroughly purify and enrich the blood, and there's a positive cure. The "Discovery" does this, as nothing else can. Dyspepsia, Indigestion, Biliousness; all Bronchial, Throat, and Lung Affections; every form of Scrofula, even Consumption (or Lung-scrofula) in its earlier stages; and the most stubborn Skin and Scalp Diseases, are completely cured by it.

ALWAYS OPEN—the offer made by the proprietors of Dr. Sage's Catarrh Remedy. It's a reward of \$500 cash for an incurable case of Catarrh. The only question is—are you willing to try it, if the makers are willing to take the risk?

WESTERN Assurance Company.

INCORPORATED 1851.

CAPITAL, - - \$1,200,000.

Fire and Marine.

Head Office, Toronto, Ont.

PRESIDENT. A. M. SATTU, Esq. VICE-PRESIDENT Geo. A. Cox, Esq.

DIRECTORS

Hon. S. C. Wood, Geo. McMurrich, Esq. H. N. Baird, Esq. J. J. KENNY, W. R. Brock, Esq. A. T. Fulton, Esq. Robert Beatty, Esq. Managing Director

SOLICITORS.

Messrs. McCarthy, Osle, Hoskin and Creelms. Insurances effected at the lowest current rates on Buildings, Merchandise, and other property, against loss or damage by fire. On Hull, Cargo, and Freight against the perils of Inland Navigation. On cargo risks with the Maritime Provinces, by sail or steam. On Carriage by steamer to British Ports.

Wm. A. Lee & Son,
GENERAL AGENTS,
10 ADELAIDE ST. EAST.
Telephones 592 & 2075.



Whaley, Royce & Co.,

IMPORTERS OF

MUSICAL

MERCHANDISE

Music Engravers

and Publishers.

Band Instruments,

Vocal and Instrumental

Music, Band and Orchestral

Music, Cheaper

THAN ANY OTHER

HOUSE in the trade

Send for catalogue

BAND INSTRUMENT

REPAIRING

A SPECIALTY

154 YONGE STREET

TORONTO

WEDDINGS,
WEDDING CAKES,
WEDDING SUPPLIES,
HARRY WEBB,

447, YONGE STREET,

20

Toronto.