

## WHAT THE BELL SAID, AND WHAT THE PEOPLE SAID.

The quiet of a Sunday morning was broken by the tones of a Church bell. Over the town floated its full, rich music, and it came back again in faint echoes.

The bell seemed charged with a message to the people, which it was telling with all its might, and the message ran thus: "Come—come. Come—come. Come—come."

But, although well understood, it was not heeded by many; and this was what the people said who did not heed it, and what conscience said to them:

Bell—"Come—come."

People—"We do not feel very well to-day."

Conscience—"Isn't it strange there are so many sick people on Sundays? Many who are well enough on Saturday 'night are unable to get out on Sunday, and those who are so sick on Sunday, recover when Monday morning comes. It might seem as if some weekly epidemic visited the town with a full supply of headaches, colds, fevers and other disorders."

Bell—"Come—come."

People—"The weather is too unpleasant to-day."

Conscience—"Yes; the weather on Sunday is always wrong—too hot, too cold, too wet, too cloudy, or too windy. Sunday rains are so penetrating, Sunday colds are so piercing, that no one but the Minister and Sexton should go out to church!"

Bell—"Come—come."

People—"We have company."

Conscience—"Isn't there something said about the stranger within thy gates keeping the Sabbath holy?"

Bell—"Come—come."

People—"Our garments are not good enough."

Conscience—"There are a great many directions in the Bible about how we should come before the Lord, but the style and quality of clothes are not mentioned. The Church isn't a millinery establishment or a show-room. In old times the rich and poor met together, for the Lord is the Maker of them all."

Bell—"Come—come."

People—"We are better than some who go to church."

Conscience—"You may be much better than some, but are you satisfied with that? Will it do to tell the Lord so! There is something in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican bearing upon this point."

Bell—"Come—come."

People—"We haven't any seats in church."

Conscience—"Yes, there are always seats there for all who come. There need be no fear of intruding, for all are welcome; and there need be no fear of wearing out your welcome, for you are urged to come every Sunday."

And the Church-bell kept ringing out its message, "Come—come."

And some heeded the message, came, thanked God for the privilege of coming, and resolved to come always. Others still refused, and conscience went to sleep, murmuring ere it slept: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—*Selectæ.*