

The bells, three in number, must have been the very original ones from which the poet laureate of his day composed the touching poem.

"Ding, dong bell
Pussy's in the well."

For that was they said,
"Ding, dong bell."

over, and over again, each Sabbath, until all were seated in the church, and the ringers gave up the ropes, shuffled up the aisle with heavy steps and sat down in the seats reserved for them.

The rector was a tall, handsome Welshman, in age between sixty and seventy.

Family he had none. Of pets he possessed two, one, a little rough coated terrier, a terror on rats; the other, a fat black and white milch cow, always designated by the owner as "the Coo."

Close to the churchyard, with but a narrow country lane between them, was the large kitchen garden of the vicarage. This garden, again was divided from a small pasture field by an antique and very rickety wooden fence.

From the pulpit in the church (I have been told, needless to say, that I was never an occupant thereof) a view could be obtained of the field, the garden and the rectory. The cow was a born trespasser, although sleek and well-fed in the rich meadow land, yet

when opportunity offered, and the owner or the maiden who milked her, were absent, she, the "coo," had a habit of pushing down a portion of the aged fence—wandering into the kitchen garden, and munching with zest, the carrots, cabbages and garden stuff most palatable to cowdom. Then the beast was happy.

The clerk and vergier was a Mr. Edward Hands, generally known in the village as "Ned." He used to pride himself that his rendering of the responses was a shade better than the reading of the clergyman. "Not but what," Ned would say, with modest depreciation, of his own performance, "I could lick him a long way, but it wouldn't do to make the parson jealous." Ned, however, was not the organist. This position was filled by a Mr. Samuel Purden, whose daily avocation was that of an agricultural laborer.

The organ was a fine looking instrument as far as the case was concerned, but was innocent of bellows, keys, stops or pedals: In short, it was a hand organ of very superior manufacture. This instrument had been presented to the church by a benevolent lady, some years before.

I forget how many Psalm and Hymn tunes this instrument played, but there were many.

Purden was more than slightly deaf. In the manipulation of his instrument, he received some valuable assistance from his wife, Sarah. She sat handily near to him, so that, in case the first six verses of a psalm only had been announced, her deaf mate should not wander on, and grind out an extra verse or two.

This remainder she effected by zealously prodding him in the ribs with her

umbrella, at the termination of the last verse of the psalm as given out. Not always were her efforts crowned with success. Any lack of attention on her part and George was off with an unauthorized seventh or eighth verse on his own account. The pay of our organist was not on a par with the cultured musician of to-day.

Mr. Purden received one shilling and six pence per Sunday, and five shillings each Xmas day, as salary in full.

I do not think that he made any money by taking pupils or giving lessons in music on his organ. This instrument was on the ground floor of the church, but partially hidden by a long crimson curtain. Behind, and overlapping at either end of this curtain, at the Sunday matins, were the village school children, who were also the choir. The village schoolmaster was conductor and leader of the choir.

He likewise was responsible for the behavior of the little ones.

To assist in this duty in church he possessed a long wand. This weapon was far-reaching.

A boy caught in the act of eating forbidden, and generally unripe fruit, was admonished with a rap-tap-tap upon his curly pate. This rap-tap-tap was audible to the congregation.

The immediate effect of this wooden greeting was a yell, followed by sobs, which did not discompose the assaulter, for he listen with more patience than the disturbed congregation to the shortened violence of the hiccupping sobs of childhood, as the pain lessened from the effusion of of time after the knock on the cranium.

The clerk sat in the modest reading desk of the old three-decker. Above was the reading desk for the clergyman—still higher soared the pulpit itself.

But we have nearly forgotten Mrs. Dieball, the vicar's cow.

Sunday was a great day for this trespasser. The master was at church. The maiden, all forlorn, who "milked the cow with the crumpled horn," likewise went to church.

Connoisseurs have quietude, with their choice tit-bits.

The cow was a connoisseur in broccoli, Brussell's sprouts, cabbage and edible green stuff in general. She selected the quiet, peaceful day, when pursuit by aged parson or irate maiden was impossible. In the church we all were prepared for what was to follow, when the vicar would gaze from the lofty pulpit through the window in the direction of the garden. The next moment the handsome grey head was bent towards the tower regions, piercing through gold-rimmed spectacles for Ned—then—"Edward! Edward, the coo is in th garden, go and drive her out."

Hands stumped down the aisle—out of the church door and now we would hear his "Shoo! shoo!" as the coo was driven forth, vanquished. Then, and not until then, the dear old vicar would resume his interrupted discourse.

CECIL.

CORRESPONDENCE

(The editor of the Western Churchman desires to say that he declines to be held responsible for the opinions of his correspondents.)

My Dear Sir,—In your last week's issue of the Western Churchman, you published a letter signed "Cantab," which dealt with the question of academic hoods. I am not at all curious to know who "Cantab" is; it is quite evident that he is one of those who regard the possession of an Oxford or Cambridge degree, whether pass or class, a sure indication of intellectual culture. No man has a greater respect than I for the two ancient English universities; but at the same time I have come in contact with not a few who did not have the privilege of being educated at one of these celebrated seats of learning, but who nevertheless were not inferior in scholarly ability and mental acumen to the ordinary graduates from the banks of the Isis or the Cam. University graduates are fond of claiming the exclusive right to wear hoods, and many of them would like to debar the possessor of a Testamur from a Theological College from wearing the hood assigned to his alma mater. I certainly think it is wrong for any clergyman to wear a hood to which he is not entitled; at the same time, it is quite another thing to sneer at the hoods of Theological colleges, seeing that in many cases the wearers of these have reached to attainments in the study of Theology to which the ordinary Oxford or Cambridge passman is a stranger. To bring up Canon 38, in this connection, is no argument at all against the use of hoods which designate seats of learning that were not in existence at the time that the Canon was promulgated. "Cantab" says that medical and scientific lecturers and practising lawyers do not wear the hoods of their degrees except in university ceremonials, and that it would be well if the clergy followed their examples. Admitted; but the clergy only wear their hoods at an ecclesiastical or academic function. Besides if we go back to the origin of the academic hood, we shall find, I think, that it is the remnant of the old hood which was worn by the monastic orders and was drawn over their heads to protect them from cold during the recital of the night offices; so that, it has, after all, something of an ecclesiastical character. I should very much deprecate the discontinuance of academic hoods in church. In any case, I should not like to think that they had been discontinued because of the jealousy of Oxford and Cambridge graduates, who would like to retain these special privileges for themselves alone. I know that it is a fashion with a certain class of churchmen to keep out of church both hood and black preaching gown; but as I have already shown that the hood has an ecclesiastical origin, so I assert that the black gown is only a modernized form of the old Benedictine cuculla or cowl, which formed the outer garment