

eight or nine o'clock in the evening when all fires and lights were to be extinguished. In some remote corners of England, curfew still "tolls the knell of parting day."

The explanation of the well-known expression, "communication by bell, book and candle," is simple. The bell's office was merely to summon the people; the service was read by the priest from the book; and, when the anathema was pronounced the candles were put out, which act was meant to be emblematic of the extinction of hope in the sinner's soul.

Illustrious naval and military commanders have often acknowledged the importance of bells, by melting them down when victorious in an engagement, because by their ringing the followers were called together. Many bloody scenes in history were rung in and out by bells. At the news of Nelson's triumph and death at Trafalgar, the bells of Chester rang a merry peal alternated with one deep toll.

Very superstitious notions were once entertained with regard to bells. For instance, they used to be rung during eclipses, in order to disconcert by the noise the evil spirits supposed to cause eclipses. This is referred to by both Juvenal and Pliny. They were also rung to avert tempests, drive away infections and abate lightning; in the firm belief that the wild spirits of the air would be terrified and flee to other regions. Alarms date back to an early period and were sounded when danger threatened from fire, flood or the common enemy. In the latter case they were used as much to frighten the foe as to give warning of approach. When Macbeth had shut himself up in the castle of Dunsinane, and was told that Birnam Wood was moving on him, he cried out in desperation, "Ring the alarm bell!"

Of bells that have gained world-wide renown we have only space to mention one—the Great Bell of Moscow. This is truly a most wonderful object. We learn from a sketch in the bell catalogue of Menckly & Co., of West Troy, N. Y., (to which we are largely indebted for the information in this article) that all the nobles of the Empire brought votive offerings and cast into the furnace their gold and silver plate and jewellery. For one hundred and three years it remained in the earth, and was thereafter raised on a pedestal by the Imperial Emperor, Nicholas. It measures 22 feet 8 inches across the mouth, 19 feet 3 inches in height, and 23 inches in thickness at the place where the clapper would strike; and it weighs about 440,000 lbs. It is conjectured that it has never been rung, being altogether too thick to have vibrated freely.

The associations of bells are very strong and have given rise to much poetic imagery. Need we mention Father Prout's famous "Bells of Shandon that sound so grand on the waters of the river Lee"? Or that grand flight in Tennyson's "In Memoriam," where the frantic

bells ring out to the wild sky and flying cloud? And who is there that cannot enter into the spirit of these lines by Longfellow?—

"The bells themselves are the best of preachers,
Their brazen lips are learned teachers.
From their pulpits of stone in the upper air,
Sounding aloft without crack or flaw,
Louder than trumpet under the law,
Now a sermon and now a prayer.
The clamorous hammer is the tongue,
This way, that way, beaten and swung
That from mouth of brass, & from mouth of gold,
May be taught the Testaments, New and Old."

NEWSPAPER "ELOQUENCE."

HAVE you ever come across a newspaper reporter who could discern any other quality in a sermon than that of eloquence? If so, your discovery richly deserves a wide circulation. For no matter how prosy a discourse may be during the process of its delivery on Sabbath evening, lo! the next morning when it creeps into print its soporific attributes have, by a curious freak of journalism, undergone a metamorphosis over night, and the community is blandly informed that the "reverend gentleman" has deliberately preached an eloquent sermon! Not long ago, amid the contending thunders of debate in our Convocation Hall, it was argued that the pulpit affords greater scope for eloquence than the bar; but the idea does not seem to have occurred to any of the speakers that the decision of the whole matter might safely be left to that impartial judge, the Daily Press. Such a course would have greatly simplified the discussion, for any one with an eye to read knows well that reporters are not accustomed to speak in rapturous terms of the speeches made by counsel at the bar, while on the other hand they seldom mangle a delectable discourse without calling it eloquent! This persistent use of their pet word is not altogether above the suspicion of sarcasm, not to insinuate any attempt at "currying favor" with public men. Reporters are doubtless aware that public men, as a rule, are not of the class that is most susceptible to doubtful compliments; it is the more obscure patrons of the press that revel in "puffs." But perhaps the reportorial profession harps so often on the one string, because their repertory of epithets is abnormally contracted. In that case there is scope for some ambitious freshman in our University to publish a volume of synonyms adapted specially for the use of the Fourth Estate. The word 'eloquence' itself should be omitted. It has seen its day—at least let us devoutly hope so. We begin to doubt the right of heartless city editors to the enviable reputation of striking out all superfluous adjectives in the manuscripts submitted to them. They do not ever seem to consider "eloquent" superfluous. It may be, that owing to urgent demands of despatch, the gentlemanly scribblers are unable to pause very frequently for the choice of appropriate words. Nevertheless, a little variety once in a while would not be disagreeable.

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