

Church Bells.

The first recorded application of bells to churches is accorded to Paulinus, a holy Bishop of Nola, in Italy, who died in the year 430 of the Christian era. Until that time the Christians had been called to their assemblies by less commodious and less efficacious means, such as trumpets, wooden instruments, and even the human voice. Bells were first introduced into France as early as the year 550. In 680, Benedict, Bishop of Wearmouth, imported them from Italy, and in the seventh century the venerable Bede mentions them in England. The learned Alcuin, a disciple of Bede, speaks of the custom of blessing the bells as practised before the year 770. St. Dunstan is said to have hung many in the tenth century, and in the eleventh they were not uncommon in Switzerland and Germany. The Catholic Church, which blesses almost every object, consecrates bells with special solemnity; she ennobles and sanctifies whatever her holy and noble hand touches. She turns every object in creation to the glory of the Creator of all objects. She willingly employs her arts and sciences to enhance her religious edifices, and to render grand and solemn her sacred solemnities and religious ceremonies; she readily admits musical instruments to assist the human