

THE BELLS OF SHANDON.

BY "FATHER PROUT" (Rev. Francis Mahony.)

In republishing this beautiful poem, we take from "Father Prout's Reliques" the following exquisite description of the bells of Paris, by Victor Hugo, in his *Hunchback of Quasimodo* :—

In an ordinary way, the noise issuing from Paris in the daytime is the *talking* of the city; at night, it is the *breathing* of the city; in this case, it is the *singing* of the city. Lend your ear to this opera of steeples. Diffuse over the whole the buzzing of half a million of human beings, the eternal murmur of the river, infinite piping of the wind, the grave and distinct quartette of the four forests, placed like immense organs on the four hills of the horizon; soften down as with a demi-tent all that is too shrill and too harsh in the central mass of sound,—and say if you know anything in the world more rich, more gladdening, more dazzling, than that tumult of bells—than that furnace of music—than those ten thousand brazen tones, breathed all at once from *flutes of stone three hundred feet high*—than that city which is but one orchestra—than that symphony, rushing and roaring like a tempest.

"All these matters," says Father Prout, "we agreed, were very fine; but there is nothing, after all, like the associations which early infancy attaches to the well-known and long-remembered chimings of our own parish-steeple; and no magic can equal the effect on our ear when returning after long absence in foreign and perhaps happier countries. As we perfectly coincided in the truth of this observation, I added that long ago, while at Rome, I had thrown my ideas into the shape of a song, which I would sing him to the tune of the 'Groves.'"

THE SHANDON BELLS.

*Sa'bata pango,
Funera plango,
Solemnia clango.*

Inscrip. on an old Bell.

With deep affection
And recollection
I often think of
Those Shandon bells,
Whose sounds so wild would,
In the days of childhood,
Fling round my cradle
Their magic spells.
On this I ponder
Where'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder,
Sweet Cork, of thee;
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the river Lee.

I've heard bells chiming
Full many a clime in,
Tolling sublime in
Cathedral shrine,
While at a glib rate
Brass tongues would vibrate—
But all their music
Spoke naught like thine:
For memory dwelling
On each proud swelling
Of the bell's knelling
Its bold notes free,
Made the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the river Lee.

I've heard bells tolling
Old "Adrian's Mole" in
Their thunder rolling
From the Vatican,
And cymbals glorious
Swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turre
Of Notre Dame:
But thy sounds were sweeter
Than the dome of Peter
Flings o'er the Tiber,
Pealing solemnly;—
O! the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the river Lee.

There's a bell in Moscow,
While on tower and kiosko
In Saint Sophia
The Turkman gets,
And loud in air
Calls men to prayer
From the tapering summit
Of tall minarets.
Such empty phantom
I freely grant them;
But there is an anthem
More dear to me,—
'Tis the bells of the Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters
Of the river Lee.

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

WHAT WE WEIGH.—Upon the average, boys at birth weigh a little more than girls, and girls a little more than six pounds and a half. For the first twelve years the two sexes continue nearly equal in weight, but beyond that time males acquire a decided preponderance. Thus young men of twenty average about 140 pounds each, while the young women of twenty average about 120 pounds. Men reach their heaviest bulk at about thirty-five, when they average about 152 pounds; but women slowly increase in weight until about fifty, when their average is about 128 pounds. Taking men and women together, their weight, at full growth, averages about twenty times as heavy as they were on the first day of their existence. Men range from 108 to 220 pounds; women, from 88 to 207 pounds. The actual weight of human nature, taking the average ages and conditions—nobles, clergy, tinkers, tailors, maidens, boys, girls, and babies, all included—is very nearly 100 pounds. These figures are given in avoirdupois weight; but the advocates of the superiority of women might make a very nice point by introducing the rule that women be weighed by troy weight—like other jewels—and men by avoirdupois. The figures will then stand: young men of twenty, 143 pounds each; young women of twenty, 150 pounds each, and so on.

THE RULE OF THE ROAD.—The want of a better knowledge of the "rule of the road," is often the cause of great inconvenience, as well as occasional unpleasantness, and sometimes accident. Everyone seems to know that, in riding and driving, the side of the road to the left must be kept on meeting any horse or carriage, passing right arm to right arm; but not one in ten seems to know that, in walking, the right side should be kept, passing left arm to left arm. The rule for riding and driving to the left in England and Italy is from time unknown, while that for walking was instituted nearly 600 years since by Pope Boniface XIII. when he directed, to avoid confusion, at a large gathering of strangers in Rome, that all who crossed the Bridge of St. Angelo should take the side of the bridge that was on their right, and this rule has been observed in civilised countries ever since. Probably a few doggerel lines, from "Notes and Queries," will do much to assist the pedestrian :—

The rule of the road is a paradox quite
In riding or driving along;
If you keep to the left, you are sure to go right—
If you keep to the right, you'll go wrong.
But, in walking, a different custom applies,
And quite the reverse is the rule,
If you keep to the right, you'll be right, safe, and wise—
If you keep to the left, you're a fool.

NEWSPAPERS.—There are 5,000 newspapers in the United States, or one to every 7,000 inhabitants; 1,200 in Great Britain, and 1,640 in France, or one to every 23,000; 700 in Prussia, or one to every 26,000; 506 in Italy, or one to every 44,000; 365 in Austria, or one 105,000; 300 in Switzerland, or one to 8,000; 275 in Belgium, or one to every 15,000; 225 in Holland or one to every 16,000; 200 in Russia, or one to every 530,000; 200 in Spain or one to every 75,000; 150 in Norway and Sweden, or one to every 20,000; and 100 in Turkey, or one to every 300,000.

ODD MOMENTS.—Smiles, in his useful work entitled "Self-help," tells us that Elihu Burritt, disclaiming all pretensions to anything like genius, attributed his first success in self improvement to his not wasting "odd moments." While toiling at the blacksmith's forge, he mastered no fewer than eighteen ancient and modern languages, together with twenty-two ancient and modern dialects. Dr Mason Good translated Lucretius while going his rounds amongst his London patients. Dr Darwin composed the chief portion of his works while similarly employed in the country. Dr Burney attained a knowledge of French and Italian as he rode on horseback between the houses of his musical pupils. Henry Kirke White instructed himself in Greek in the course of his walks to and from a lawyers office. Hall wrote his "Contemplations" as he travelled on circuit. Daguerre, one of the greatest chancellors France ever possessed, wrote a large-sized and able volume in the intervals of waiting for dinner. And Madame de Genlis informs us that she composed many of her books while waiting for the coming of the princess whom she taught.

THE IRON CROWN OF LOMBARDY.—The Iron Crown of Lombardy is so called from a narrow band of iron within it, which is said to be beaten out of a nail used at the crucifixion. This band is about three-eighths of an inch broad, and one-tenth of an inch in thickness. According to the tradition, the nail was given to Constantine by his mother, who discovered the Cross. The outer circlet of the Crown is of solid gold, and set with precious stones. The Crown is preserved with great care at Monza, near Milan, and both Charlemagne and Napoleon were crowned with it. After the war between Austria and Italy, the Iron Crown was delivered from the former power to Victor Emmanuel.

THE BLACK BRUNSWICKERS.—The Duke of Brunswick died in 1815, at the very outset of the Battle of Waterloo. His followers swore to avenge his death. They dressed in a black uniform, and were consequently known as "The Black Brunswickers." The Duke's sister, was the unfortunate Caroline of Brunswick, Queen of George IV.

THE BATTLE OF DETTINGEN.—The last battle at which an English King took part personally, was the Battle of Dettingen, fought between the Anglo-Hanoverian and French armies, under Naouilles, in which the latter were defeated, in 1743. George II. of England was present at the battle at the head of the British infantry, but Lord Stair had the supreme command of the allied troops.

ADVANTAGES OF CRYING.—A French physician is out with a long dissertation on the advantages of groaning and crying in general, and especially during operations. He contends that groaning and crying are the two grand operations by which nature allays anguish; that those patients who give way to their natural feelings, more speedily recover from accidents and operations than those who suppose it unworthy for a man to betray such symptoms of cowardice as either to cry or groan. He tells of a man who reduced his pulse from 126 to 60 in the course of two hours, by giving vent to his emotions. If people feel at all unhappy about anything, let them go to their rooms