

let her go right back to the stay, but be able to hold her on the balance a longer or shorter time as may be necessary; this of course can only come with practice and a good deal of patience; and at first until she has got quite used to the rattle and sight of the other ropes as they fly up and come down there should always be an old and competent ringer by her side ready to act in case of emergencies.

We have said nothing about learning to "raise" and "lower" the bell; and this omission is intentional, as we believe it is beginning at the wrong end to teach a learner first to do this. Teach her first to manage the bell when she is raised, and she will then soon be able to raise her herself and lower her when necessary, and for two reasons. Practice at ringing will develop certain muscles necessary for the work, and these when in working order will materially help her to do that which is harder work than merely ringing, viz., raising and lowering, and secondly practice at ringing will teach her to know the bell as a friend, and not to fear her as a possible and dangerous foe. It will give her quickness to catch the rope at the right time; it will give her nerve to overcome the natural discomfort of a rope dancing wildly about; so that when she has learnt to manage the rope as it moves slowly and in a more measured manner, she will gradually be able to manage it when it is moving in the quicker and more unsteady way it does when the bell is being raised or lowered.

In conclusion there are one or two directions which ought to be given, as the ringer may as well learn to ring well at first.

I. Stand well under your bell and don't look up at the rope as it goes up, and don't move your body round to look at the other ropes.

II. Keep your toes always on the ground so as to prevent the spare rope getting underneath them, and only raise your heels when it is absolutely necessary for you to reach a little higher.

III. Keep your body upright and do the work with your arms as much as possible.

IV. Keep your knees firm, and only bend them just a little when it is necessary to get some of the weight of your body on to the rope.

V. Always be quite silent when you are ringing; and attend entirely to the business in hand.

In addition to the above technical directions, there are two important suggestions to be made:

I. Remember that you are in the House of God, so discourage in every way possible talking about outside things, and especially any joking.

II. Remember that in this pursuit, or pleasure, or amusement, or exercise, or whatever you choose to call it, you will have many opportunities of getting to know the characters and tempers of those with whom you may be ringing, and also many opportunities of influencing them for good. Try therefore to use the opportunities gently, firmly, humbly, and prayerfully for the Master's glory and the salvation of souls.

THE MAIDEN'S BELL.

AN Englishman has just published a book describing his experiences in Spain, which he tramped from end to end with only a bag upon his back. The book is called *A Vagabond in Spain*, and contains the following account of an ancient custom in the village of Sabinan:—

Sabinan was our place of refuge. Here my companion had a friend—the tailor of the village—and we were well received and pressed to stay the night. (I must own that I needed no pressing.)

The tailor was an old sportsman, and showed me his guns, dogs, ferrets, and pigeons with pride. He had also some fine old red clay plates, cups and basins enamelled with white and elegantly flowered in Arabic and Spanish designs, and curious lamps in iron, brass, and clay. I feel sure that his wine-skins and curious old bottles of glass, wood, clay, and stone would be looked on at Christie's sale-room by a crowd of envious eyes. Here they are old and useless, nothing more.

It is the custom in this part of Spain when you share a man's roof to pay for your fare and sometimes your host's as well! My friend of the day sent out for a sou's worth of potatoes, of tomatoes, and little strips of salt cod-fish. These, cooked in a large three-legged frying pan with some olive oil, an onion, and a handful of herbs, made a big supper for five of us. We ate from a big dish placed on a stool. Wooden spoons and one knife served for all, and a piece of bread was broken from in turn. While we were supping my friend put up his hand and signed me to listen. I did so, hearing for the first and probably for the last time the sound of the "Nina's Campanilla." It is one of the most ancient customs in all Spain, and in the midst of all this cobwebby *bric-à-brac* and primitiveness I found it hard to persuade myself that I was an alien and living in the nineteenth century.

"LA NINA'S CAMPANILLA" ("THE MAIDEN'S BELL").

Many centuries ago, when the world had little history but many witching legends and

gruesome tales, a tiny "nino," tired of play and tale, sat nodding before the winter fire. His father and mother pressed him to seek his bed, but in vain. He feared the darkness of his solitary chamber, which his fancy peopled with goblins and legendary sprites. Deaf to his parents' voice, he sat dozing and nodding on the hearth till, overcome by sleep, he fell forward into the blazing fire. His wounds were terrible, and when he rose from his sick bed—his sight was gone. Never more would he see the sunshine or the flowers by sweet Jalon's brink. A sad and sightless boy, he fretted his early years away, and when his parents died he became a beggar-man, wandering through the vale and begging a pittance from door to door. The children learned to fear him as the dead, for, in his blindness, he fumbled round the doors and terrified the little heads he touched with his outstretched hands. Hence the blind beggar-man became a terror in Sabinan's Vale, and children grew to fear their quiet beds.

Then the mothers of the valley met together and sought a way to end this growing terror.

The form was this: the prettiest girls were called into the plaza, and the mothers bade them choose a "Campanilla" maiden for a year. She had to vow that she would never fail, when evening came, to leave play or feast, vesper or toil, to ring her "Campanilla" through the vale, and tell in sound of every house the tale of him who bred such fears in Sabinan.

The song was brief, for the maiden had to hasten and repeat it often ere the sun went down:—

"Children now to bed must go,
Or their lives be filled with woe."

And still to-day the maiden may be seen running through the streets of Sabinan and ringing her little silver bell. The scene is strange. Before her groups and games and noisy shouts—behind her silence! The little



AN ACCIDENT.

ones give but one shout, "The Nina comes," and dart into their homes. No mortal, no despot commands such calm as the mild maiden of the bell.

What a long life is hers! Seasons come and go, but Campanilla is unchanged. Fierce wars and feuds have raged within the vale; the storms of centuries and manifold disasters have all been centred there; illness and death have overtaken forty* generations of the world; but Campanilla is a child through all. Her voice will never cease till Sabinan itself is still.

This was a most delightful evening, and I took leave of my simple friends the following morning with real regret, for I knew I should behold their cheery faces and curious little nest no more.

* It is recorded in Parracuellos that in the twelfth century a silver bell was purchased for the Nina (*por una aracion de la noche*), but the custom is believed to be much older.