

CHANGE RINGING,
AN
INTRODUCTION TO THE EARLY STAGES
OF THE ART OF
CHURCH OR HAND BELL RINGING
FOR THE USE OF BEGINNERS,

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Ever the same, yet ever new,
Changed and yet true,
Like the pure heavens unfailing blue,
Which varies on from hour to hour,
Yet of the same high love and power
Tells alway—such may seem
Through life, or waking, or in dream,
The echoing bells.

Keble's "Lyra Innocentium."

Second Edition.

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EXETER: HENRY S. ELAND, HIGH STREET.
1872.

CHANGE RINGING.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Change ringing is the production of changes on any given number of bells, in particular order and by particular methods, without any repetition of the same change, from the time that the bells leave the position of rounds, to the time that they return to that position again.

The position of the bells when struck at regular intervals from the highest bell, or “Treble” to the lowest or “Tenor” thus,—12345, is called the position of rounds.

The bells are said to be in changes when struck in any other order than the order of rounds thus,—21354.

Change ringing, therefore, is the continual production of such changes until the bells are brought back into rounds, or the whole number of which the peal is capable have been produced ; but, as will be seen by the frontispiece, on some numbers of bells the whole number of changes could never be produced, therefore

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5000 changes are generally considered a "peal," and any smaller number a "touch," or "flourish," or some other such word, and is only considered an ordinary performance or practice for the main achievement.

The young ringer's first object must be to manage his bell, over which he must have entire control before he attempts to join in peal with others.

For this purpose it will be well for him to ascend the tower with the sexton, or some other person (if possible not a round ringer), who understands the use of a bell, and there with the clapper of one of the bells lashed, to work away at her* until with a steady easy pull he can set her at "hand" or "back stroke" at pleasure; the "hand stroke" blow will be the one on which he pulls the "sallie," or tuffing on the rope; the "back stroke," that on which he pulls the end of the rope.

The three following diagrams will help to make these directions clearer:—No. 1 represents a bell in its ordinary position in the tower; No. 2, a bell set at hand stroke; No. 3, a bell set at back stroke. The instructor should set the bell at back stroke, and adjust the rope to exactly the right length for the learner, by pulling up or letting down the "tuckings," as shown in Figs. 1 and 2 in No. 3, so that he (the

* It is usual among ringers to speak of a bell as "she," or "her," in the same manner as a sailor would speak of his ship.

learner) can clasp it with both hands leaving no rope below the lowest hand as shown in Fig. 2, No. 2.*

He should then set the bell at hand stroke, and after having made the rope the right length, allow the pupil, standing directly in front of him, to pull each stroke with him until he has got an idea of the motion of the rope; he may then allow him to hold the rope for himself, but he should never leave his side until he can manage it fairly steadily, as the greatest care should be taken never to let him get frightened by the rope shaking about, or coming down on his head, as it is very apt to do with a beginner; he should then instruct him to take the end of the rope in one hand, and to stretch his arms above his head until at the extent of his reach (without straining) he can grasp the tuffing; then carefully pulling the rope downwards until the bell is brought to the balance, he should hold her so for a moment to get the "feel" of her,

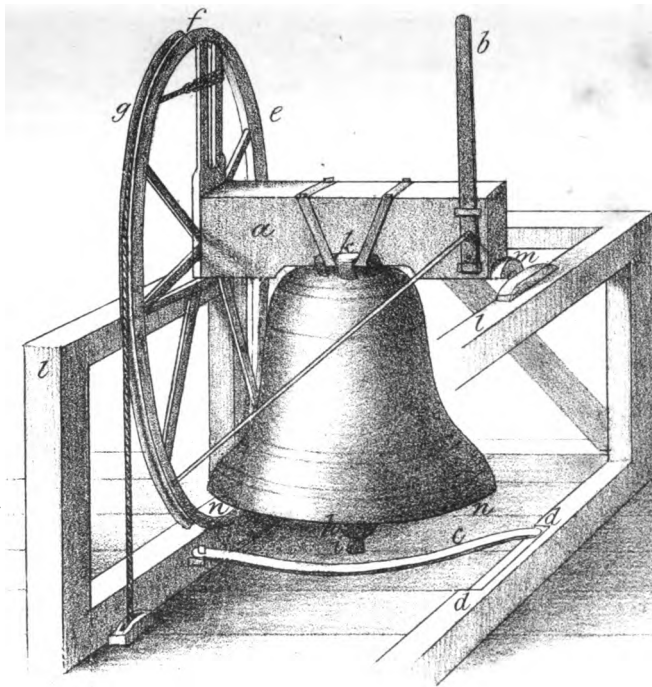
* The length of the rope at back stroke is a most important matter, and for the purpose of tucking up as shown in Figs. 1, 2, No. 3, new ropes should always be half as long again below the tuffing as can possibly be required for the shortest man likely to ring in the steeple; for good ringers and small bells this is not so important, but for the young ringer it is absolutely necessary that the rope should be *exactly* the right length for him to set his bell at back stroke without having anything left beneath his hands, as it will dangle in his face, and put him out of nerve. Good ropes can hardly ever be obtained in the country; the best ropes I have ever seen can be obtained, from 10s. to 12s. each, from Mr. John Nicholl, Rope and Twine Manufactory, 61, Keeton's Road, Bermondsey, London, S.E., by sending the weight of the bells, and the height from top of frame to floor of ringing chamber.

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and then with a force of not more than two or three pounds weight (if the bell is under 10 cwt., and goes fairly well) bring her over the balance. As soon as she is over, or "off," (as the expression is), he must at once put the hand which does not hold the end of the rope down to the other which does, and allow the bell to carry his hands up at back stroke until she is just over the balance again, when he must check her there, holding her so as not to let her touch the block *d*, No. 1, but yet so that she is over the balance, and would not fall either way; the stay *b*, No. 1, should touch the slider *c*, but should not cause it to touch the block *d*; he should then pull her off in exactly the same manner, and with the same force as is described for pulling her off at hand stroke, and when the tuffing comes opposite his face, he should grasp it as directed at first, and in exactly the same place, letting the weight (or impetus) of the bell carry his hands up as described for setting her at back stroke, till she is over the balance, and taking care that the tuffing does not slip through his hand; and so on until he has had enough. It is of great importance that the rope should never be allowed to slide through the hand; it is a habit with round ringers to let the whole of the slack of the rope run through their hand, when they pull a bell off at hand stroke; this, as well as letting the tuffing slide through the hand when setting a bell, is

Nº1

A BELL IN HER USUAL POSITION



- a. Stock
- b. Stay
- c. Slider
- d. d. Blocks
- e. Wheel
- f. Groove of Wheel
- g. Fillet
- h. Ball of Clapper
- i. Flight of Clapper
- k. Cannons
- l. Timber of Cage
- m. Gudgeons
- n. Lip of Bell

Nº 2

A BELL SET AT HAND STROKE.

*with the clapper loose and
in its right position.*

The dotted line denotes
the position of the rope in
the groove of the wheel.

The arrow shows the di-
rection in which the bell
will move when the rope is
drawn downwards.

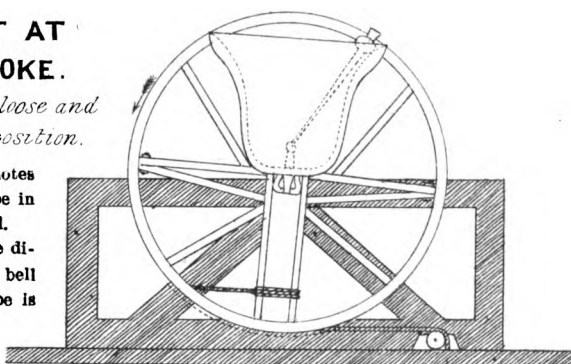
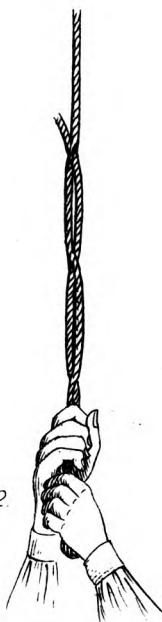


FIG 1



FIG 2



N.B.—The figure of the Ringer is drawn considerably too small
for the size of the bell on account of space.

a great fault, and both are incompatible with good ringing. Figs. 1, 2, No. 2, show the positions which the hands should be in when holding a bell on either stroke.

The clapper of the bell in No. 3, is represented as being lashed; it is of importance in lashing the clapper of a bell, that it should be lashed exactly in the centre of the bell, as if it leans much to one side or the other, it materially affects the balance of a small one; for this purpose it is well to keep lashings ready for all the bells in a tower, as practices with the clappers lashed save much annoyance to the people living in the neighbourhood. The lashings should be prepared by making a small noose in the end of a piece of fine rope, the noose to be just large enough to slip over the flight *i*, No. 1, of the clapper, and the rope long enough to pass from the centre of the bell over the lip, *n*, No. 1, and to be made fast to the cannons, *k*; two of these being kept under each bell cut the right length, a peal of eight bells can have their clappers lashed in as many minutes. It is advisable to sew a piece of canvass or leather round the lashing where it passes over the lip of the bell, as it is very apt to get cut in that place.

I am aware that my plan of teaching the first use of a bell will be found fault with by almost all round ringers, and perhaps by some others, because I recommend beginning with the bell up, instead of at first

teaching the young ringer to raise her for himself ; my reasons, however, are as follows, and I will leave the reader to determine whether he will follow my advice or no.

In London where there is undoubtedly the best ringing in the world, it is always the plan with young ringers.

It is the plan I have always followed myself, and I have before now taught a youngster to handle a bell fairly, within a couple of hours of the first time he ever tried to ring a bell up (the person in question had tried often and often to raise a bell, and could never succeed until I had taught him beginning with the bell up.)

It stands to reason that the slower the motion of the rope the easier it will be for a pupil to manage it, and of course the higher a bell gets the slower the rope goes.

The coil of rope which it is necessary to hold in the hand, before, and whilst, raising a bell, always puzzles a learner ; it gets into his face, and perhaps round his neck (in which case he may be hanged !)

And lastly, it is purely waste of time to begin with a bell down, for he need never raise a bell for himself until he can manage her properly, and should never be allowed in the steeple by himself until such is the case.

Having said so much about the way to hold the rope, &c., I will now say a few words about

POSITION.

A ringer should stand upright, never bending his body from the hips, as most round ringers will be seen to do; if a bell goes badly, and thus requires strength, or if she is a very large bell, the weight of the body should be thrown on the rope by dropping the knees, and the greatest care must be taken never to do this too much. A large bell ought to be rung so as never to be thrown over the balance more than half a dozen pounds weight or so, else it will be impossible to strike her properly. The position of the feet, I do not consider of any great importance, the prettiest way is to keep one foot a little in advance of the other (which, it does not matter); but a great thing is to keep them during a whole touch, or as long as possible in the same place, and not to keep moving them. A man who moves his feet about is never so safe in a peal as a man who stands quietly all the time.

Unless, as has been said, a bell goes very badly, there should be little or no motion in the body, a slight movement, like a very slight bow is not ungraceful; but this will come naturally to a man who is likely to become a good ringer; but above all things the body should never be turned for the purpose of looking at one rope or another. It is a most laughable thing to see some round ringers, ringing call changes. On the word, "Treble to second," "five to third," you may see all the ringers, tenor man and

all, give a jump as if they had been shot, and turn their whole bodies round to stare and glare at the man after whom they are ordered to pull ; it would make a "5,000" hardish work if this were necessary ! The body should never be moved, but the ringer should place himself in such a position that he can command, by turning his head, a sight of every rope in the tower, and then turn his eyes or his head, if necessary, towards the ringer of the bell after which he has to strike.

When all this has been learnt, he may join with four or five others, and learn to ring rounds. He should first be put to an inside bell, and when he can ring rounds fairly, the work of learning change ringing should begin, and he must be put to the Treble, being taught to ring her thus,—

Pulling her off (the bell being of course set) at the hand stroke, he must listen for the interval which is allowed to intervene between the strokes of the other bells, and then the round being completed, he must cause his bell to strike after the Tenor at exactly the same interval at which the others struck.

His next stroke being a hand stroke, he will allow exactly double that interval to intervene between the striking of the Tenor and his own, and thus he will continue, causing the rounds to run in this manner,—

HAND BACK HAND BACK HAND BACK
1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

OR THUS,



When he can do this with tolerable ease and steadiness, keeping his bell at a set pull, that is, ringing her in such a manner that she would never have struck if it had not been his will to make her do so, it will be a good plan to make him dodge with the second, and then again to put him to an inner bell, and make him dodge with the bell before or after him, thus,—

"Go"	H.	1 2 3 4 5	"Go"	H.	1 2 3 4 5
	B.	1 2 3 4 5		B.	1 2 3 4 5
	H.	2 1 3 4 5		H.	1 3 2 4 5
	B.	1 2 3 4 5		B.	1 2 3 4 5
"Round"	H.	2 1 3 4 5	"Round"	H.	1 3 2 4 5
	B.	1 2 3 4 5		B.	1 2 3 4 5

In the latter case we will suppose our learner to have been put to the 3rd bell ; he must be told what bell he is to dodge with (in the example the 2nd), and then the word "go" being given, when the Treble is being pulled off at hand, he will wait until the next hand stroke comes round, and letting his bell fall a little, will pull down after the Treble, then on

the back stroke he will hold his bell up a little to allow the 2nd to come down to its original place.

He will thus continue pulling down a little quicker than in rounds so as to strike at hand stroke after the Treble, and holding up his bell at back stroke, so as to strike a little slower than in rounds, in order that he may allow the 2nd time to strike between him and the Treble, until the word "round" is given, on which he will cease dodging and continue in rounds; it will then be well to tell him to dodge with the bell striking after him, as this will cause him to "hold up" at "hand" and pull "down" at back, and when he can do this, let him learn to do the six changes on three bells as explained further on, with any other two bells which are pulling near him, and then the 24 singles will soon be accomplished, and he may go on with larger numbers of bells and changes.

It will be right here to make a few remarks on the terms "up" and "down," as they at first prove a difficulty in many a young change-ringer's mind.

"UP."

A bell is said to be going "up" when she changes her position, moving from the position of the Treble in rounds towards that of the Tenor.

It will be seen by the following diagram that the Treble in working from her own position towards that of the Tenor

1 2 3 4 5

2 1 4 3 5

2 4 1 3 5

4 2 3 1 5

will have before she changes no bell to ring after, but when she goes into 2nds place she will have one bell to ring after ; in changing, therefore, she has to be rung slower or held "up," to allow time for another bell to strike before her ; in the next change she has two bells to strike after, and in the next three ; therefore, until she gets "up" behind (or to the place where the last changing bell strikes), she has to be constantly rung higher or slower, for this reason the whole of her course from the first place until she strikes last of the changing bells is called "going up."

"DOWN."

A bell is said to be going "down" when she changes her position from behind, or being last changing bell towards the position of the Treble in rounds.

It will be seen by the following diagram, that the 4th in working from her own place to that of the

1 2 3 4 5

2 1 4 3 5

2 4 1 3 5

4 2 3 1 5

treble is first "behind," *i.e.*, is last of the changing bells (the Tenor not changing her place), and has three bells to pull after ; but when she changes her place, she has only two to pull after, therefore, to get into 3rd's place she must be "pulled down," that is struck quicker or "rung lower," in order to allow space for the 3rd to strike into her place ; and the next change she has only one to strike after, therefore she has to be pulled quicker, and again quicker for the next change, when she is at "lead," and has no bell to pull after.

For this reason the whole of her course from "behind" to lead is called "going down."

We have now then eight words which I have endeavoured to explain, and which will be used hereafter without further explanation,—

"Rounds."	"Changes."
"Hand Stroke."	"Back Stroke."
"Going Up."	"Going Down."
"Lead."	"Behind."

If these words are not perfectly understood, the learner should carefully re-peruse the foregoing pages, or he will not be able to understand the explanations which follow of the methods by which changes are produced.

"HUNTING."

Hunting is the first part of change ringing which

it is necessary to understand. It is of two sorts
 "hunting up" and "hunting down."

"HUNTING UP"

Is performed on any number of bells by "pulling after the bell which pulled last after you,"—let us suppose the learner to be ringing the Treble in 3 bells,—

"Go"	1 2 3
	1 2 3
H.	2 1 3
B.	2 3 1
H.	3 2 1
B.	3 1 2
H.	1 3 2
B.	1 2 3

At the word "go" the 2nd will be being pulled after him, he will therefore pull after her the first change at the same time looking out for the bell which is coming after him he will hear and see the 3rd, he will therefore pull after her the next time, this will bring him behind, where according to rule he will strike two blows and begin the

"HUNTING DOWN,"

Which in this case he will be able to do by looking out merely for which bell strikes first of the other two, and then striking after her, which brings him

into 2nds place, and then he will lead twice, and the full six changes of which the three bells are capable will have been rung.

As change ringing is a matter of practice and experience combined with the proper use of certain "aids," I here give another rule by which the hunting up and down may be accomplished in case it may appear plainer to the reader. Supposing the learner to be ringing the Treble in five bells, and to be standing in such a position as to have a sight of all the ropes, at the first change he must strike into 2nds place by pulling after the bell which followed him ; he will now have one bell below and three above him, when his attention must be directed to the three above him, to see which is following him, and he must pull after that the next time ; now counting himself in 3rds place he will have two bells below and two above him, he must still observe the two above him, and pull the next blow after the one that follows him, he will now count himself to be in 4ths place, having three bells below him, he will have only one to look after, which he will pull after next time, this will be his first blow behind ; and now having four below him he must pull after the last of them, which will be his last blow behind, he must now descend into 4ths place by letting the last bell he pulled after pass him, and pulling after the last of the three below him ; the next blow he strikes in 3rds

place, allowing the last he followed to pass him, and pulling after the remaining two below him, he next descends to 2nds place, making way for the last he followed to pass him by pulling after the remaining one; he will next be at lead again from whence he started, when he leads two blows and hunts up and down again in the same regular manner.

But perhaps the easiest method for hunting down is that known as the "course" method, and which is performed thus.

Hunting up by the usual method (above described) till he gets into 4ths place, the learner must carefully observe the bell after which he has next to strike, or which he turns from behind, and when he has struck after her (his first blow behind) she will be his "course" bell down to lead.

Keeping his eye on her he must let continually one bell strike between his bell and her, until he hears her at lead, the next blow he must himself strike next to her, and then lead.

1 5 4 2 3

1 4 5 3 2

4 1 3 5 2

4 3 1 2 5

3 4 2 1 5

3 2 4 5 1

2 3 5 4 1

If the 2nd is observed in the diagram, it will be

seen that she comes up and turns the 3rd from behind, her first blow behind she strikes after the 3rd, her next one she allows the 5th to come between, her blow in 4ths place the Treble comes between them, her blow in 3rds place the 4th, then the 3rd having led one blow she strikes next her again, and her next blow she leads.

The 4th and 5th in the diagram both do part of the same work.*

Having now I hope made the plain work of hunting understood, there are yet two more words to explain, before we come to the regular methods for producing changes; viz., "dodging," and "place making."

"DODGING"

Is taking a retrograde movement, or moving a place backwards out of the ordinary hunting course, and is of two kinds, "dodging going up," and "dodging going down."

* There is yet another method by which both these forms of hunting may be accomplished, viz., that known as "counting the place;" the learner being supposed to start from the lead will simply count mentally as he strikes, "one," "two," "three," &c., "five," "four," "three," &c., looking out at the same time for the number of bells which strike before his, so as to make his strike in the place the number of which he names. I do not approve of this plan, however, nor do I recommend my pupil to try it, and I have only mentioned it as there has been some controversy on the subject, and it is possible that a person who has failed to learn by the safer method may pick up this one.

“DODGING GOING UP.”

A bell is said to “dodge going up,” when its proper course is towards the position of the last changing bell, and it is obliged to take a step down towards the leading bell, and then go on with its proper work. Thus in the following diagram the 2nd is hunting up, she should strike into 4ths place (in the third line), but she “dodges” into 2nds, and therefore she is said to “dodge in 2, 3 going up.”

	4	2	5	1	3
{	4	5	2	3	1
	4	2	5	3	1
	4	5	2	3	1
	5	4	3	2	1

“DODGING GOING DOWN.”

A bell is said to “dodge going down” when its proper course is downwards towards the lead, and it takes a step back or up towards the hinder bells, as the 5th will be seen to do in the diagram ; she is, therefore, said to “dodge in 2, 3 going down.”

Thus all dodgings are said to take place in the two places in which they occur, *i.e.*, in the place which the dodging bell strikes in before the dodging, and the place into which she moves when she dodges, and all the dodging of a bell whilst hunting up, before she

has struck her two blows behind, is called her dodging in "going up," all whilst hunting down, before the two blows at lead, her dodging in "going down,"

"PLACE MAKING."

A bell is said to make a place when she strikes two blows in succession in any one place, except the two blows at lead and behind which are considered in the work of hunting. In the accompanying diagram the 4th is said to make 3rds place, and the 5th 2nds place.

1 5 3 4 2

1 5 4 3 2

5 1 4 2 3

5 4 1 3 2

There is one other term for striking two blows in one place, viz., a bell is said to "lie a whole pull" in a place; as for instance, the 5th in the diagram would be said to "lie a whole pull next the Treble."

I have now I hope explained all that it is necessary that the learner should understand before he tries to take a part in the production of changes.

I shall, therefore, at once proceed to give the rules, &c., for the different methods, giving at the same time such hints as to the practical work as I have myself gleaned from time to time from those who have assisted me in the study of this art.