

## Clocks of the Early Days

In primitive times a man was stationed at the top of the belfry to ring the bells at the indicated hours, day and night, writes Alfred Beillard in L'Horologere. This watchman was called the horoscopus, that is to say, the observer of the hour. He had recourse himself, in order to fulfil his duty, to the study of the astral system, to the number of prayers he was to recite, to the quantity of wax a candle had consumed, to the clepsydra, or water clock, and to the hour-glass. The trade of the horoscopus was inevitably one of the first which the progress of mechanism was to cause to disappear.

The first clocks with bells known in France date back to the fourteenth century. Particular mention is made of one which was established in Caen in 1314, by Beaumont, and that of the Palais de Justice in Paris, which King Charles V. had constructed in 1370 by the German clockmaker Henri de Vic.

This machine seemed so marvellous that the inhabitants of Paris, so goes the legend, asked permission of the King to go on guard at the door of the tower to assure themselves that it was the clock and not the watchman that rang the hours.

This astonishment of the people at a period when mechanism was but just born may well be conceived in presence of a machine capable of calculating and striking the hours, without the assistance of any human being, with the same precision that could be exercised by the most vigilant horoscopus.

The custom was perpetuated until the seventeenth century, and still exists in certain cities of Europe of placing alongside of the clocks various automata which ring the hours. It is due to nothing else than the thought of recalling to memory the recollection of the ancient watchman.

And also the clocks with automata catered to the popular taste of that epoch. The people of that period preoccupied themselves but little with the more or less exact measurement of time. Railroads were not in existence and the exigencies of life were not so great as they are now. A cock which crowed and flapped his wings, some apostles who marched by, striking a blow for each hour, filled them with admiration, and in this respect no other clocks aroused so much enthusiasm as those of Lyons and Strasbourg.

It was a clock of this character that Henri Deux placed over the superb portal of the Chateau of Anet. Nevertheless this timepiece was distinguished from other clocks with automata by the originality of the figures that it set in movement. Here no longer was a woman or a man who struck the hours with rusty arms. It was a majestic stag, standing erect, surrounded by four bloodhounds of natural size, which appeared to be holding it at bay, that one saw on the summit of the portal. One of the stag's legs was movable, and as it was lifted it seemed to strike the hours. The four hounds opened their jaws at each striking of the quarters, and their voices were imitated by bells of different notes, whose clappers were connected by wires with their lower jaws, causing them to open and shut as long as the bell ringing mechanism continued.

This curious clock exists no longer. It was sold at auction with its finest dials for the sum of 505 francs when the Chateau of Anet was confiscated as national property and sold with its furniture in the Year Two of the First Republic.

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## The French Elections

To get a clear idea of the French elections (writes the special correspondent of the 'Catholic Times') it is necessary to know how the elections were managed. Are they to be regarded as an acceptance by the people of the Government's policy? No; for they are the consequence of odious slanders circulated against priests and liberal candidates. The priests were accused (1) of collecting money to make war, (2) of having fomented and paid for the recent strikes in the north! They have, it is said, £2,000,000,000 in a heap somewhere (in the moon, probably). Then the Government had discovered 'the complot (!) and the Ministerial newspapers wrote about it indignantly every day! Country people believed the story. Knowing their credulity, M. Clemenceau invented the famous 'plot.' Being successful, he simply said, with a laugh: 'There is no complot.' Many see clearly now that they have been deceived, but it is too late. Again the Liberal candidates were accused of intending to restore the seven years' service in the army, to suppress the schools, to overturn the Republic, and especially to provoke war. At St. Briec was posted the following bill: 'Electors, if you vote for Mr. Armez (a Radical), it is peace; if you vote for Mr. Meunier (a Liberal), it is war. To avoid war a great many voted for Mr. Armez. It has been the same all over France. It was thought that to vote for a Liberal meant voting for war. Besides, frightful pressure was put on the electors. In many places threatening 'bloccards' compelled them to vote for the Radical. Moreover, the ballot-boxes were shamefully manipulated by the authorities, and many Radicals have won, who were not in fact elected. In short, the success of the 'Bloc' at the French elections cannot be considered a popular expression of approval of the Government's anti-religious policy, but as a proof of the people's devotion to Peace. The Government's triumph is the consequence of the most vile calumnies and strong Governmental pressure.

Letters from San Francisco (says the Sydney 'Freeman') report that Mr. Daniel O'Connor is stranded in that city as the result of the recent earthquake and fire. From his arrival there fate seemed determined to deal harshly with him. The lecture season which he hoped to inaugurate in the Pacific capital was delayed by the presence there of Mr. Douglas Hyde, who had the public ear with his Gaelic Revival lectures. Mr. O'Connor placed the MS. of his book, 'Fifty Years of Australia,' in the publisher's hands, and the issue was expected within a few weeks. Then came the earthquake followed by the fire, and in the ruins of the 'Chronicle' office the book was swept away. The house in which Mr. O'Connor resided took fire, and he removed himself and his belongings, which included his series of lectures, to another house. 'This house was also doomed, and Mr. O'Connor was just able to escape with his life, losing everything but the clothes he wore.

Tell us not our days are numbered;  
That nothing on this earth can save  
Us,—by coughs and colds encumbered,  
Struggling for mastery o'er the grave.

To the rescue comes undaunted,  
Life's panacea, strong and pure,  
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