

THE ST. ALWYN GAZETTE

“Founded 1843 — Serving the Faithful and the Fallen Alike”

February 22, 1894

VOL. XLVII NO. 6 -
ESTABLISHED IN THE ERA OF THE PENCE - PROUDLY UNCHANGED SINCE 1887

Price Two Pence

ST. ALWYN'S BELL TOWER REDUCED TO ASHES

LIGHTNING STRIKE SHATTERS BELFRY; HISTORIC BRONZE BELL DESTROYED

ST. ALWYN, FEB. 21 — IN THE SMALL HOURS OF TUESDAY MORNING, A VIOLENT STORM BESET OUR TOWN, BRINGING DREADFUL CALAMITY TO THE BELOVED CATHEDRAL OF ST. ALWYN. AT APPROXIMATELY 2 : 17 A.M. A BOLT OF LIGHTNING STRUCK THE BELL-TOWER'S SPIRE, SETTING THE UPPER TIMBERS AFLAME.

Witnesses report that the fire spread with unnatural haste, casting an orange glow across the square. Parishioners and townsfolk alike formed a bucket line, yet their efforts proved in vain as the blaze consumed the belfry. With a terrible groan, the great bronze bell — cast in 1748 and rung every hour for nearly a century and a half — fell through the burning floors, shattering upon the flagstones below.

No lives were lost, though two were treated for smoke inhalation. The Reverend Elias Gray has declared the tower a total loss and questions linger as to whether it will ever be rebuilt. Some whisper that the strike was no mere act of nature, but a sign to be heeded.

REVEREND GRAY VOWS SERVICE TO CONTINUE IN PARISH HALL

Despite the ruin, Reverend Gray assured parishioners that divine worship shall not be suspended. Temporary benches are being assembled within the parish hall, where Sunday's service will commence under lamplight. "Faith," said the Reverend, "needs no tower to be heard."

Local carpenters have volunteered to erect a modest lectern, and Mrs. Vale's surviving choir books will furnish the hymns. Donations of blankets and candles are requested for the congregation's comfort in the chill mornings ahead.

TOWN COUNCIL CONVENES ON CATHEDRAL RUINS

In an emergency session of the St. Alwyn Town Council was held Wednesday evening in the courthouse. Alderman Croft moved that funds be allocated to clear debris, while Mrs. Haversham urged that the blackened stones remain as a memorial. Engineer Thomas Wynn presented preliminary sketches for a timber scaffold should reconstruction be pursued.

Debate grew spirited when Treasurer Booth warned that the town's coffers could ill bear the expense. A final vote was postponed pending the Bishop's counsel. In the meantime, constables have cordoned the nave to prevent

souvenir-hunters from disturbing sacred ground.

MYSTERY LIGHTS REPORTED OVER ST. ALWYN HEATH

Several farmers returning from market claim to have witnessed pale blue illuminations flickering above the cathedral spire long after the storm had passed. One, Mr. Silas Green, avows that the glow pulsed in rhythm, "as if some heart were still beating within the ruin." The constabulary attributes the phenomenon to residual lightning or marsh gas, yet whispers of divine portent spread swiftly among the faithful.

OBITUARY — MRS. AGNES VALE, CHOIR MATRON

It is with deep sorrow that we record the passing of Mrs. Agnes Vale, aged 68, beloved matron of the Cathedral

Choir. Though taken by frailty last autumn, her spirit seemed to linger in every hymn sung within the old nave. She often remarked that "the bell knows each name it tolls for." How true her words now ring. Interment will occur Friday at three o'clock in the churchyard behind the south wall.

WEATHER REPORT

TEMPERATURE —

|LOW 18°, HIGH 36°|

WIND — SW GUSTS

40 MPH | BAROMETER

— STEADY

OUTLOOK

CLEARING SKIES;

COLDER NIGHTS

EXPECTED.

TRAVELERS ADVISED

TO SECURE LANTERNS

AGAINST HIGH WINDS

ON THE RIDGE

ROADS.



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EDITORIAL CORNER — A SIGN TO BE HEEDED

We of St. Alwyn are apt to see calamity as punishment, or perhaps as purification. Whether Heaven spoke by thunder or mere mischance kindled our tower, it has left us a question: shall we rebuild stone upon stone, or upon spirit?

Let not our zeal turn to pride. Let the ashes remind us that faith must burn inward, else its tower stand hollow.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"SIR, I HEARD THE BELL'S LAST PEAL AND FELT THE EARTH TREMBLE BENEATH MY FEET. IT WAS AS IF ST. ALWYN HIMSELF EXHALED A FINAL BREATH." — E.H., MARKET ROW

"TO THE GAZETTE: SHOULD WE RECAST THE BELL, LET ITS METAL BEAR THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO KEPT THE BUCKETS THAT NIGHT." — J.T., HIGH STREET.

ADVERTISEMENTS AND NOTICES

M. J. PRITCHARD & SONS, UNDERTAKERS — PROMPT AND DISCREET SERVICE — COACH AND PALL AVAILABLE DAY OR NIGHT.

HAVERSHAM'S APOTHECARY — TONICS FOR NERVES & NIGHT AIRS — LAUDANUM MIXTURE 1 SHILLING PER BOTTLE.

NOTICE OF STRAY MARE — A BROWN MARE, WHITE STAR ON FOREHEAD, LOST FROM NORTH GATE FIELD TUESDAY EVE. REWARD OFFERED. CONTACT THOMAS WYNN, BLACKSMITH.

ROOMS TO LET — TWO CHAMBERS ABOVE THE MILLINER'S SHOP, WARM FIRE AND MODEST VIEW OF SQUARE. ENQUIRE MRS. DOOLAN.

SERMON FOR THE YOUNG

"When lightning strikes a spire, the flame leaps heavenward — but the bell below rings for the living. Thus does the Lord remind us: even ruin may be a call to rise."

CLASSIFIEDS — HELP WANTED

PRINTER'S APPRENTICE WANTED, APPLY AT THE GAZETTE OFFICE.

SEAMSTRESS FOR CHOIR ROBES, MUST BE ADEPT WITH FINE LINEN.

BOY TO TEND LANTERNS IN THE SQUARE; WAGE 3 PENCE PER NIGHT.

CLOSING NOTE — THE BELFRY'S ECHO

As the ashes settle, the square lies unnaturally still. Yet those who pause by the ruins swear they hear a low resonance beneath the wind — not a ring, but a memory of one. Thus ends this week's edition. May our next bring news of rebuilding.

