

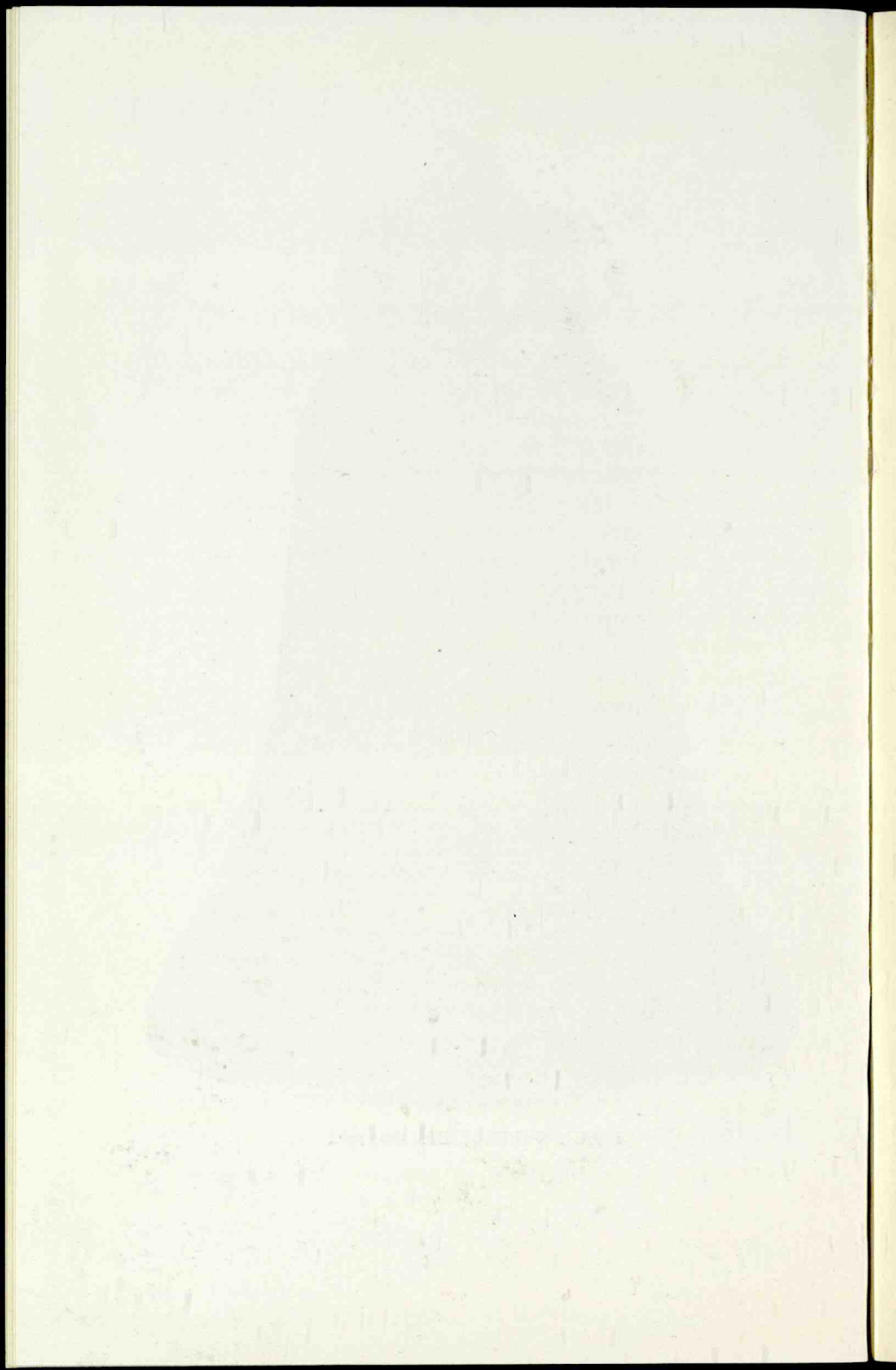


ITALIAN BELL, DATED 1471

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ITALIAN BELL, DATED 1351



TWO MEDIEVAL ITALIAN CHURCH-BELLS.

By Philip Nelson, Ph.D., F.R.S.E.

SOME years ago one had the privilege of exhibiting, to this Society, a twelfth-century altar-bell, since which time the opportunity has occurred of acquiring two other medieval bells.

These two bells, which must originally have hung in some church in Italy, are of tall, narrow, "sugar-loaf" form and, in view of the rarity of foreign bells of early date in this country, should, one feels, be placed on record. These two bells, which date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, bear inscriptions in relief, the one round the lip, the other about the shoulder, the former being in simple, the latter in elaborate script.

These bells may be thus described :

I. A tall slender bell, overall height $26\frac{1}{2}$ inches, diameter of mouth $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; the clapper, which hung from an iron ring, is missing. Above the lip, in low relief, in early Lombardic capitals, is :

✠ · $\overset{\circ}{A}$ · $\overset{i}{D}$ · \bar{M} · CCC · LI · \bar{M} · VICENCIVS · \bar{M} :: ·

The bell is provided with six canons for suspension.

II. A tall, narrow bell, overall height 21 inches, diameter of mouth 15 inches ; the clapper, which was suspended from an iron ring, is lost.

About the shoulder is an inscription, in elaborate Lombardic capitals, in high relief, in two lines, as follows :

✠ AVE : MARIA : GRATIA : PLENA : DÑS : TECVZ : MĀR
IORDANVS : DE NVRSIA : FECIT MCCCCLXXI

This bell is provided with six canons.

It is a matter for regret that no information relative to its founder, Jordan de Nursia,¹ has, as yet, come to light.

¹ Nursia is a town in the Apennines about 70 miles north-east of Rome.