

The "Travilors" were probably gipsies, many of whom come to Orpington at the present time, especially during the fruit and hop seasons.

June 13, 1771. We do jointly agree to oppose the proposals sett forth for erecting a county workhouse for the western part of Kent.

(To be concluded.)



## An Ancient Dumb Bell at Knole House, Kent.

BY C. ESSENHIGH CORKE.

**T**HOSE who visit Knole, the ancestral home of the Sackville family, which has justly been called one of the treasure houses of English art, cannot fail to be impressed with the many objects of interest it contains in the "huge halls, long galleries, spacious chambers," crowded with priceless examples of paintings and portraits by so many well-known masters. There are rooms filled with suites of furniture, remaining in perfect condition, almost as they were as at first used in the early Jacobean period, and an endless variety of later dates, as well as a vast assortment of costly and rare bric-à-brac, with some of the more homely specimens of early domestic household furniture, once in daily use, but now "retired" from active service. Amongst its many treasures there are some which have for centuries been hidden from the public eye, and, indeed, forgotten by the noble owners of the mansions themselves. One of these is the ancient dumb bell. Some twelve years since, when first working at Knole, I was puzzled by hearing the housekeeper speak of the Dumb Bell Gallery. The name occurred to me as uncommon, and I asked her why it was so called. She could give me no reason but told me where it was situated. I therefore found my way to one of the old attics or, as they are called at Knole, "ward-ropes." This attic was unfurnished and empty, excepting that in the middle of it stood a curious wooden machine resembling

a windlass, used for hauling up the bucket from a draw-well, but it had no handles. A rope was wound round the middle of the roller, and at each end were four iron arms, each with a poise or ball of lead at the end. The rope formerly passed through a hole (which still exists) in the floor into the Leicester Gallery below. A person, by pulling the rope in this gallery, would cause the roller with the iron arms poised with lead to revolve at the first pull, and the impetus given would rewind the rope again, and so continue to wind and unwind at each pull, thus giving the same exercise as that of ringing a bell in a church tower, except that it was noiseless.

I understood at once the reason of the name given to this gallery, one which had probably



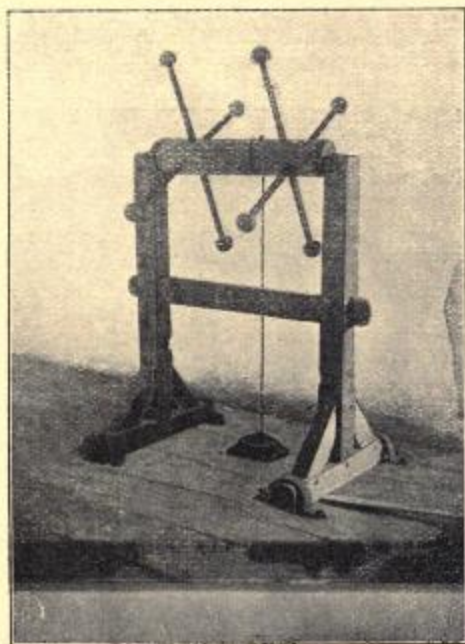
THE DUMB BELL GALLERY.

been handed down from generations, and was still in use, although the dumb bell itself had ceased to be used, and was forgotten. A closer examination of the oak woodwork, and the old iron clamps, etc., which fastened it to the floor, proved it to be of great age. It also immediately occurred to me that the missing link was here found in the derivation of the name "dumb bells" as given to those in present use, which in themselves suggest no such name, and have little or no resemblance to bells of any kind. They were doubtless devised by reducing the iron bars with the poises of lead of the larger dumb bell to such convenient lengths as to exercise the arms without the use of the cumbersome machine

as here existing, the size of which would render it impossible to be used except in large houses, whilst the smaller bars could be adapted to general use.

The attic, or Dumb Bell Gallery, forms part of the additions made at Knole by Thomas Sackville, first Earl of Dorset, 1603-1608, in the Jacobean style of architecture, rebuilt upon the stone basement, which is fifteenth-century work.

This might suggest the approximate date of the machine. It is now too much decayed or use, but Lord Sackville informed me that



THE DUMB BELL.

he recollects when a boy he used to fasten a stick to the end of the rope in the Leicester Gallery, and be jumped up and down by the revolving motion. An old man, who worked at Knole some sixty or seventy years ago, also told me that he remembers using the dumb bell for exercise.

The late Chancellor Ferguson, F.S.A., with whom I had much correspondence at this time, and to whom I sent a photograph and description of this machine, fully concurred with me as to the derivation of the name given to the smaller dumb bells, and

Sir Henry Dryden, to whom he showed the photograph, attributed it to the seventeenth century, "when bell-ringing was part of a gentleman's education and practice." It was probably to train and keep in practice the arms for bell-ringing, and not merely for exercise.

John Northbrooke, in a treatise against "Diceing and Dancing," 1577, says: "In the reign of Queen Elizabeth the progress of building in London was like an inundation; it overflowed the ancient fields and vacant spaces within and around the city, so that tilt-yards, shooting-grounds, and race-courses were covered with streets and alleys, and thus the active civic sports were of a necessity in a great degree laid aside. As a substitute for these healthful exercises young gentlemen were exhorted to labour in their chambers with poises of lead"—that is, to exercise with dumb bells.

Joseph Nash, whose *Mansions of England in the Olden Time*, second series, was published in 1840, introduces in his drawing of the "Retainers' Gallery," which he calls "Gallery over the Hall, Knole," the figure of a boy in the costume of the Jacobean period pulling a rope coming through the ceiling. Doubtless he had seen the dumb bell, and taken an artist's license to reproduce it in this drawing. The machine itself was too cumbersome ever to have been placed between the lower ceiling and roof of this room or any other of the old attics or ward-ropes.

It would be interesting to know if any other instance of such a contrivance exists, or is known to have existed. I have, so far, been unable to hear of any.



## Bridge-Building in the Middle Ages.

BY ISABEL SUART ROBSON.

**F**ROM earliest times our forefathers recognised the importance of bridge-building as an agent in the progress and civilization of the country. To them, however, the work possessed an element not acknowledged in