

THE SWISS BELL-RINGERS

One of the regular allies of the Mirror, a man of a very humorous critical vein, has taken it into his head to prove the Swiss Bell-ringers to be an automaton. We have argued the point with him till we are tired, and have at last sent to beg a copy of their board-bill with affidavits that their stomachs are not wooden and *do kindly entertain* rolls and sausages. While these documents are coming, we publish the skeleton of our friend's hypothesis:

The Swiss Bell-ringers. The readers of the Mirror scarce need be told, as most of them have seen and heard for themselves, that the Swiss Bell-ringers enter, to the number of seven, whiteplumed and fancifully costumed, and each armed with four or five hand-bells of various sizes, which they deposit on a cushioned table before them, retaining one in each hand, which they are continually changing for others in their armory, putting down and taking up with the rapidity of jugglers, and all the while ringing the changes upon them with a delicate harmony and precision, which are as perfect in a symphony of Haydn as in "Miss Lucy Long." The writer alludes to them now only to say, that they may be heard again to-night, and to correct the *erroneous but common idea that these Bell-ringers are real living beings*. The writer is firmly convinced that they are ingenious pieces of mechanism, contrived on the principle of Maelzel's Automaton Trumpeter and Piano-forte player (exhibited here some years ago), but made so much more perfect and effective by the application to them of the same power which operates in the *Electro-Magnetic* Telegraph, but which should here be called *Electro-tintinnabulic*. A powerful electric battery under the stage communicates by a hidden wire with each of them, and its shocks are regulated and directed by the skilful musician and mechanic who secretly manges [[manages]] the whole affair. This explains the precision with which they all bow at the same instant, as if moved by the same soul (and so they are an *electric* one), and keep such perfect time and order. For this reason, too, they arrange so carefully their surplus bells before them in such exact spots, just as Maelzel's Automaton Chess-player always insisted on the pieces being placed exactly on the centre of the squares, so that his mechanically-moved fingers might not miss them. Their very number shows that they were contrived in imitation of the music of the *seven* spheres, and any lurking doubt of the truth of our theory will be at once removed by noticing how they *electrify* their hearers.