

The late Mr. Richard Clay.



N EED it be argued that he who perfects a part is justly entitled to share in the honour and glory accorded a perfected whole. If otherwise, who, in this age of division and subdivision, shall be honoured? In bookmaking it would be hard, as we have previously observed in these columns, to find a modern instance of one who was a master of all branches, therefore it is obligatory to select as our notable men those who have devoted their life's energies to the betterment of a particular section and who by universal consent have succeeded in that task.

The notable printers of to-day and the long days gone by are too numerous even to name, yet there are few heads of existing firms whom we can credit with being practically engaged in improving that which already exists. Of such we can name no worthier worker than was the late MR. RICHARD CLAY. The



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business, founded by his father and to which he succeeded, was not regarded by him as merely a money-making piece of machinery, but as a craft with which it was an honour to be associated and which was capable of wonderful development at the hands of an earnest student. Mr. Clay made himself practically acquainted with all classes of printing, and no man better understood the capacity of the printing press. This he proved by the work his house was able to turn out, notably the *English Illustrated Magazine*. He further benefited posterity by one, at least, clever

invention. Though some six months have passed since his death, we can but express continued regret that so able a man should have been removed from our midst in the prime of his manhood, and at a time when his ripened experience was likely to be fruitful of most valuable results.

Fifty-one years ago Mr. Richard Clay was born at Hackney, but remained in that neighbourhood only until he was seven years of age. His parents then removed to Muswell-hill, Hornsey, and the deceased gentleman remained a resident of that parish until his death. Having been educated at Highgate School, after attaining the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to his brother, Mr. C. J. Clay, M.A., Cambridge, the head of the University Press. Always a busy inventor, he patented a printing machine for perfecting half-sheet work on a single cylinder, and registered a plan for holding down stereo. plates by atmospheric pressure, a method that is still used by Messrs. Clay and other large houses. The Inventions Exhibition brought Mr. Clay to the fore, and he was elected a juror in the printing section. He was also on the committee of the Caxton Exhibition at South Kensington in 1872, and there exhibited his stereo.-plate process.

Messrs. Clay & Sons' present branch establishment at Bungay was an arrangement made by the deceased. He purchased this country business of Messrs. Childs & Son upon the death of Mr. Childs, the purchase being completed in 1877. This addition to the Bread-street-hill house was made prior to the death of Mr. Richard Clay's father, who died, however, at Muswell-hill in December of the same year. As we have mentioned, Mr. Clay devoted his spare hours to another form of work. He was a member of the Local Board for his neighbourhood for about twelve years and was a director of the Hornsey National Hall Company, Limited, which was opened in 1888. His pet amusement outside business was volunteering. He joined as a private in the local corps at Hornsey and was eventually honoured with the rank of major, retiring the year prior to his death with the honorary rank of lieutenant-colonel. He was an expert shot with the rifle and gained the "St. George's" at Wimbledon on one occasion.

The will of Mr. Clay shewed that the value of his personal estate amounted to £26,000.

The present house of Messrs. Clay & Sons is guided by a directorate and largely managed by the late Mr. Clay's two sons, both of whom are excellent business men and evidently intend following close in their father's footsteps. Messrs. Clay continue to print the *English Illustrated*, and the manner in which it is turned out speaks volumes for the principles upon which the house has been reared. The admirable "process" and other engravings produced in this magazine need the most skilled treatment upon the machine, and so long as this work is done so excellently so long will Messrs. Clay & Sons, Limited, remain one of the foremost houses in the printing trade.

THE Chiswick Press Calendar and Diary for 1891 is a neat little booklet for the pocket, printed in red and black on toned paper, with red edges, and containing a reprint of the paper on this famous press which appeared in the September BRITISH BOOKMAKER.