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Our Portrait Gallery.

No. 9.—MESSRS. KELLY & SONS.



IT was about the year 1770 that Mr. John Kelly started a binder's shop in some place adjacent to the Strand, London, though its precise location is not known. Whatever doubts exist as to its whereabouts, it appears plain that he succeeded so well that in 1803 it became necessary to remove to larger premises, and the family accordingly migrated to Water-street, where they occupied a large house that not only contained commodious rooms suitable for workshops, where the business could be carried on, but also dwelling rooms for the family; for in those days a master craftsman usually resided

on his business premises.

On the death of Mr. John Kelly, the business was for some time conducted by his widow, but was afterwards taken over by Mr. William Henry Kelly, his brother, father of Mr. Henry Kelly, the present head of the firm, who was born in the old house in 1824. As the family grew up around him, Mr. W. H. Kelly brought his two sons into the business, and the active co-operation of W. H. and Henry Kelly assisted the father to further extend the business until in 1852 its expansion, and other changes taking place in the immediate vicinity, necessitated the rebuilding of the premises, and the present building occupied by the firm was erected. The large increase of space afforded an opportunity for still greater development in trade, so that in 1858 Messrs. Kelly & Sons were able to take over the stock and plant of Mr. Macfarlane, of Old Bailey, and on its removal, the foreman and all the hands went with the work to Water-street.

Mr. W. H. Kelly, sen., died in 1866, but under his direction the firm had earned a good reputation for leather bindings, and though cloth was rapidly growing in favour since its introduction by Mr. A. Leighton, in 1822, this house did not seek to alter the character of its work, as many other establishments were doing, except in so far that cloth sides became the concomitant of a half-leather binding. Another important addition was made to the business in 1874, when, after Messrs. Westley had determined to confine their attention to cloth work exclusively, Messrs. Kelly took over their leather work. In 1878, Mr. Hubert Kelly was brought into the house, and, on the death of his uncle, Mr. W. H. Kelly, jun., in 1882, began to take an active part in the management with his father, which he still continues.

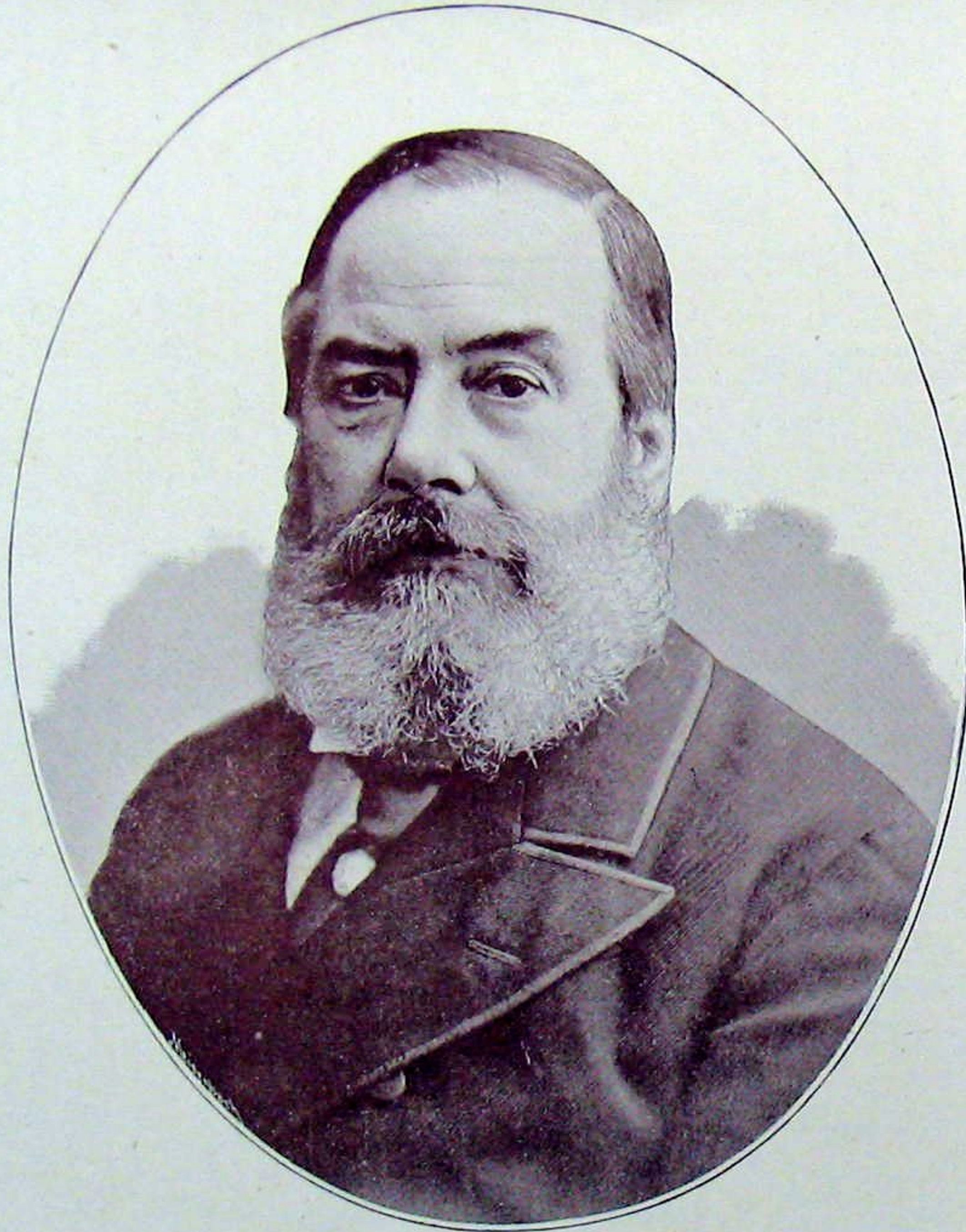
Under the guidance of the latter gentleman, we were favoured with a very full and complete inspection of the various departments, where the swish of the

folding-stick and the thud of the backing-hammer mixing with the rythmical whirl of machinery filled the air with the customary music of the factory. In the basement an Otto gas engine provides power for some of the machines, but the broad area is chiefly filled with large stores of boards and other stock. The ground floor is devoted to case making and cloth work generally, which it has become expedient for the firm to have done in-doors, but no very large quantity is executed, the class relied upon being chiefly half-bound, and the less elaborate kinds of whole bound modern work. On the first floor is the women's shop, from whence the work is easily sent down to the cloth department, or out, to be marbled or gilt, as may be required. Nearly all the folding and sewing is done by hand, with the exception of a wire-stitching for very simple work; the firm not being satisfied with the trustworthiness of machine work. The second floor is occupied by the forwarders, about sixteen of whom are employed usually, and nearly all the work in this department is done in boards. The third floor is divided into several smaller shops, where the odds and ends are done, such as map and photograph mounting, guarding, etc., which require special facilities for the work, and advantages are gained by separating them from the methodical litter of miscellaneous work in its early stages. The finishing shop is on the fourth floor, and contains usually eight finishers and eight assistant finishers, and here the diverse character of the work is immediately seen, almost every book requiring different treatment, at least as regards the lettering. Large quantities of law work were also in evidence, but principally in library styles, and we noticed many gilt top books with the top panel of the back bearing the stamp of well-known public libraries, colonial and otherwise. It is for this work that Messrs. Kelly are best known, and one of the binders of New York some years ago came over to this country and worked for the firm as a journeyman in order to gain some practical experience of their method of turning out this class of work.

Having exhausted the workshop views, we returned to the counting house and were shewn some very good specimens of pig-skin tree marbled, a style which should prove advantageous where extra strength is required for hard wear, and it appears an excellent method of treating pig-skin, which is not a very ornamental leather in its usual form.

What engrossed our attention most, however, was the new style of half-binding introduced by Mr. Hubert Kelly, the particular feature of which is the "reversed cloth" sides. Simple as this may appear, and not exactly new, for many a binder has accidentally put a grained cloth on a book the wrong side up and let the job go rather than alter it, yet it is new by intention and has merits which few would

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HENRY KELLY.



HUBERT KELLY.

