

MR. GEORGE THOMAS CLARK.

The death on Monday, January 31st, of Mr. G. T. Clark in his eighty-eighth year, is the severance of a long link with the past, and there must be few antiquaries in England who have not received the announcement with deep regret. Certainly it is a loss which will be keenly felt by the members of the Archæological Institute.

For more than half a century Mr. Clark has been a conspicuous figure in the archæological world, and has long been looked up to as the highest authority upon mediæval earthworks and castles. Working from a somewhat different and earlier point of view to that of the late Mr. Hartshorne—who frequently included in his numerous essays upon castles the Parliaments held in connection with them in Edwardian times, thus adding the political to the military aspect, and both authors basing their labours upon personal surveys and original documents—Mr. Clark was the first to give a clear insight into the military and historical importance of the earthworks, the burhs, throughout the country, and to show the value and the use made in Norman times of the mound “the hill of the burh.”

The whole matter is fully and admirably set forth in the series of papers which appeared some years ago in *The Archæological Journal*, and which form so pertinent an introduction to Mr. Clark's collected papers comprising the two volumes of “Mediæval Military Architecture.” It was a happy thought to extract, so to speak, from their graves in forgotten numbers of *The Archæological Journal*, *The Archæologia Cambrensis*, *The Builder*, and many journals of country archæological societies, the whole of Mr. Clark's papers. The book is not likely to be superseded, though small additional matters of detail will no doubt be gathered in course of time, and add still more to the value of the work. Fortunately the moderate price of the volumes brings them within the easy reach of all students interested in this branch of archæology. Appropriately

dedicated to Mr. Freeman, the genial author contrasts his share of labour in this field with the wider range of the work of the distinguished historian; and while contenting himself as regards his contributions with the relative position of a mason, is almost tempted sometimes, on seeing the brilliant uses to which Mr. Freeman had put them, to feel as if he had a slight share in the glory of the architect.

But while Mr. Clark held, as it were, the earthworks and the castles in the hollow of his hand—he had, indeed, their history at the tips of his fingers—this branch of learning was not his sole relaxation. He was thoroughly versed in heraldry and genealogy, and he shrank not from the depressing drudgery of a pedigree. To give only one instance, he compiled and printed privately a few years ago, with characteristic munificence, a pedigree of the Babington family, which is perhaps unsurpassed for its dimensions and grandeur of type. In late years he undertook the collection and publication of the whole of the Charters of Glamorgan, a great enterprise, sumptuously printed for private circulation. Unexpected and considerable accessions from the muniment room of an ancient Glamorgan family increased the work to many and bulky volumes, and it is to be hoped that the generous author has completed his self-imposed labour. That Mr. Clark would wear his harness to the last is certain; indeed, it was only a few weeks before his death that he sent the present writer some succinct notes on the military works at Bridgnorth and in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Clark's death is not only the severance of a link with the past: for the members of the Archæological Institute it has a more special and a sadder significance. It almost brings to an end the long list of distinguished historical students and scholars who rallied round Mr. Albert Way, and took a prominent part in the movement in 1843 which, as its most important result, brought about the foundation of "The Archæological Association," now "The Royal Archæological Institute." With the work of this Society Mr. Clark was constantly associated for more than forty years, his first paper on "Military Architecture" appearing in 1846 (*Archæo-*

*logical Journal*, Vol. I, p. 93). He attended the annual meetings of the Archæological Institute year after year, almost without intermission, taking the earthworks and the castles, after Mr. Hartshorne's death in 1865, as his natural share of the work. No meeting seemed complete without him, and with him its success was assured, for he was unapproachable as a field lecturer. And who among those who attended the delightful yearly gatherings in the earlier days will not readily recall his fine manly presence, his piercing dark eyes, and his singularly clear and eloquent discourses as he stood upon a bare "hill of the burh," within the desolate polygonal space of a shell-keep, or in the enceinte of an Edwardian castle?

Under his skilful touch what scenes of antiquity lived again! The burh was palisaded before our eyes; the home of the English lord, stockaded afresh, rose again on its hill; the covered way was manned, and the long peaceful grassy slopes became crowned with bristling defenders! His vivid and faithful imagination accurately re-erected in the mind's eye the timber or stone dwelling of the Conqueror's Earl, and the offices and pent-houses within the crumbling walls of an early Norman shell. Or, he pictured the attack and the defence, and the horrors of a long siege of a Norman keep, mitigated only by the security of the well within its walls, and by sublime heroisms. Or, again, according to his subject, he re-peopled with easy familiarity the Edwardian fortress, and showed its battlements alive with mailed warriors, and mangonels and catapults, in martial array.

Such were the recreations only of the busy life of a born leader, and all of those intelligent throngs who listened to Mr. Clark at such historic sites as the mounds wrought by the Lady of Mercia, the castles of Bamborough, Rockingham, or Lewes, who sat under him in the great hall of Caerphilly—of which the history has well-nigh perished save for one shameful Edwardian episode in 1326—specially roofed for the meeting of the Archæological Institute on a memorable occasion by "My Lord of Caerphilly" in 1871, after a desolation of five centuries and a half, or followed his leading to countless fortresses on Welsh or Scottish borders,—must retain a lasting impression both of the speaker and

his texts. And all will doubtless long cherish the memory of a worthy scion of a worthy stock, of a man of rare gifts and ready tact and courtesy, such as the present generation of antiquaries is hardly likely to meet with again.

A. H.