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## **Death of Mr G. T. Clark, Talygarn.**

### **GREAT FIGURE IN SOUTH WALES GONE**

#### **Biographical Sketch.**

Mr G. T. Clark, Talygarn, died on Monday night. The eminent archaeologist, who, had he lived till next May would have attained the great age of 89, had lain physically incapacitated for a considerable time, but that he retained to the last the clear and luminous mind which had distinguished him through life was evident in the letter on the subject of the Roman discovery at Cardiff Castle, written only three days previous to his death, which will be found in another column.

Mr George Thomas Clark, F.S.A., of Talygarn, Glamorganshire, was born at Chelsea on the 26th May, 1809. He was the eldest son of the Rev. George Clark, M.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was chaplain to the Royal Military Asylum, Chelsea, and Clara, only then surviving daughter of Mr Thomas Dicey, of Claybrook Hall, Leicestershire. The family is a very old one, coming originally from Staffordshire, where its founder, Joseph Clark, of Burton-on-Trent, lived and died. One of Mr G. T. Clark's ancestors, the Rev. Samuel Clark, of Wolston, was chaplain to Robert, Lord Brooke, also vicar of Alcester, perpetual curate of St. Bennett-Fink, London, and for eight years a governor and twice president of Sion College. In 1618 this clergyman was a tryer of elders, &c., under the Parliament, and in 1654 he served as a commissioner for ejecting scandalous ministers, while in 1656, with Walton, Cudworth, and others, he was one of a committee to report upon the translation of the Bible. He headed, in 1660, the address of the London ministers to Charles II, and in 1661 was Royal Commissioner on the Puritan side at the Savoy Conference. He was a fast friend of Richard Baxter and the author of a martyrology and many other works.

Mr Clark received his earlier education at the Charterhouse School under Dr. Russell, and was subsequently trained as a civil engineer and metallurgical scientist. He also acquired an intimate knowledge of chemistry in its relations to mineralogy and the manufacture of iron and steel. At an early age Mr Clark, while showing exceptional skill and power of application as an engineer, evinced the deepest interest in literary work, his tastes inclining him towards historical research and the unfolding of archaeological obscurities. In his fondness for letters he thus revived the best traditions of his family, for, as has already been pointed out, several of his forebears showed literary skill of an exceptionally high order. Thus the Rev. Samuel Clark, mentioned above, was the author of numerous theological works, and of "Annotations on the Bible," the successive editions of which received the imprimatur of Owen, Baxter, Calamy, Doddridge, and Whitfield. The same divine was the editor of an early but learned "Harmonies of the Gospels." Dr. S. Clark, of St. Alban's, was best known by his book called "Promises Of Scripture." He was the friend of Dr. Watts and the

guardian and early patron of Philip Doddridge, who preached his funeral sermon.

Having turned his attention to civil engineering, Mr Clark executed two divisions of the Great Western Railway, including the extension of the line into Paddington and the bridges over the Thames at Basildon and Moulsoford, during which employment he drew up a description of the geology of the country traversed by the railway and of its ecclesiastical antiquities, published as a large folio, to which, however, he affixed the name of Mr Bourne, the artist employed on the illustrations, which were numerous. Subsequently he proceeded to Bombay, where he was employed by the Government to report on the sewerage of the native town, and afterwards upon the extension of the salt pans round the shores of the island.

#### WHILE IN BOMBAY

he proposed a railway from the town of Bombay across Salsette to Tannah, a proposal almost immediately taken up by the committee of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, for whom he reported on an extension of his line from Tannah to the Ghauts, whence it was intended to traverse the Dekkan. With this view he examined the line of the Syhadree from Khandalla to Nassik, and selected the Malsege as the only pass practicable for locomotives. Having completed the survey he was sent to report upon an extension to Sholapoor, in the direction of Madras. This done he was summoned to England to give evidence in support of the railway as then intended, but on his arrival he found the direction of the line materially altered, for political reasons, by the Government of India. It was decided that the main line from Tannah should divide, one branch crossing the Kalian water and passing northwards to the Thul Ghant, and the other proceeding southwards by the Bhore Ghaut to Poona. To ascend these ghauts it was proposed to work the line by traverses, which has been effected, and the line by the Malsege, which had been approved by Robert Stephenson, was in consequence laid aside. The chief engineership of the new line was offered to Mr Clark, but while in England he accepted a sub-commissionership under the Board of Health, which he worked with his usual energy for two or three years, and applied their Act to Bristol, Worcester, Durham, and many other towns and villages, often in the face of a strong local opposition, demanding great tact and temper.

#### ON THE DEATH OF SIR JOHN GUEST

in 1852 he became one of the trustees and executors under his will, and shortly afterwards the sole trustee for the Dowlais Ironworks, which, having been a source of considerable wealth, had during a year or two of Sir John's illness been worked at a heavy loss, and as he then learned with dismay, were, by investments in landed estates, denuded of the capital necessary for the maintenance of the concern. He was strongly advised at once to wind up the estate as the only safe course to be pursued. This, however involved the dismissal of ten or eleven thousand workmen and the ruin of a large number of small cottage proprietors, as was urged upon him very strongly by the late Lord

Aberdare. then Mr H. A. Bruce, the member for the borough, and well acquainted with the district, of which Mr Clark knew but little. Finally Mr Bruce agreed to share with him the responsibility of the trusteeship, and the necessary capital was borrowed upon their personal application, and Mr Clark determined to devote himself to the redemption of the estate, the trust having about 20 years to run and the powers being almost unlimited. He gave up the house he had built near London and decided to reside on the works, to remodel the establishment, and to introduce various economies in the manufacture. It was loudly predicted of him by the neighbouring ironmasters that, from his ignorance of the manufacture and his want of experience in business, and his age, then above 40, he was certain to fail. He however wisely determined not to attempt the details of the manufacture, but to confine himself to finance and the general administration, and to seek for some man to whom he could entrust the details. Such a man he was fortunate in

#### FINDING IN MR MENELAUS,

who, rising from the ranks, gradually made himself a great name among the manufacturers of iron, and contributed powerfully to the success of the Dowlais Works and to his own advancement. At first the difficulties in effecting a thorough change of system were severe, and the local opposition strong, added to which Mr Clark could not as trustee draw a salary. After a time the Court of Chancery, looking into the progress made, allowed a small salary, and some time afterwards a moderate increase which, with his private means, rendered him independent and enabled him, without imprudence, to occupy the principal house connected with the works, and to assume the full position of a resident trustee of that vast establishment. The losses at the Penyardren Works having induced Mr Forman to close them, the trustees purchased the coal lease for Dowlais, and the command of the mineral enabled Mr Clark, taking advantage of the extension of the Cardiff Docks, to go largely into the coal trade, being "the first ironmaster who was in a position to do so", to the great and permanent advantage of Dowlais. At an early period of the trusteeship Mr Bessemer, at the meeting of the British Association at Cheltenham, brought forward his plan for the manufacture of malleable iron direct from the ore. The process, though imperfect, promised so well that Mr Bessemer was invited to Dowlais, and there conducted experiments, the result of which was the production there of the first rail ever rolled without the intervention of the puddling process. The metal, however, turned out too soft for rail-making, and it was not till the addition of Mushel's invention produced the steel rail that Dowlais, being first in the field, had for some time the monopoly in Wales, and a very lucrative monopoly it proved.

#### THE EXPANSION OF THE WORKS

and the enormous increase of production created a great demand for iron are far beyond any local supply, even when supplemented from the mines of the Forest of Dean. For some time the Welsh masters had recourse to the lake district of Westmoreland and Cumberland, until the establishment of the Barrow Works, by creating a local demand, practically closed this source. The oolitic ores of

Northamptonshire were next tried, and for some years were largely imported by rail, but this ore was poor in quality, and its carriage was costly. The attention of the trustees was next directed to Spain, and Dowlais, combining with the Consett Company and Krupp, t sectored a large tract of very rich ore near Bilbao, whence they not only have drawn their own supply, but have sold large quantities to other works, with profits known to have been very large indeed. It was this new source of ore, among other causes, that led Mr Clark to establish

#### BLAST FURNACES AT CARDIFF,

and thus to save 24 miles of inland transport, both for the ore and for a considerable portion of the manufactured metal. The design and execution of the new furnaces were placed by him in the hands of Mr Martin, with the general management of the Dowlais Works, and the result has been a make per furnace hitherto, it is believed, unequalled in England, with a corresponding economy of cost. Nor were the profits confined to the manufacture. The annual import duties paid at the Cardiff Docks being very large, Mr Clark, also in conjunction with the new furnaces, secured an area of steam coal of about 2,000 acres at a convenient distance from Cardiff, together with a further tract of bituminous coal, having regard to the general employment of coke in the blast furnaces. Thus it came to pass that in the course of a long and unfettered trusteeship the circumstances and position of the Dowlais Works underwent a complete change. From a local and almost self-contained manufacture of iron it took a place very nearly at the head of the coal trade of the district, superseded the iron manufacture by that of steel under the Bessemer process, renewed and largely extended the Dowlais leases, established most profitable iron ore mines at Bilbao, founded furnaces upon an entirely new principle at Cardiff, and laid the foundation of a trade in steam coal calculated to continue in operation long after the exhaustion of the steam collieries in the northern parts of the county. It has been estimated from the

#### COAL RETURNS, QUAY DUTIES, AND ROYALTIES

that the payments to the landlord, direct and indirect, from the Dowlais estate cannot be far short of £40,000 per annum, and to the various railway companies connected with the work not less than £160,000. The profits handed over to the trustees to the uses of their trust are of course unknown no doubt they were such as to justify the long continuance and singularly irresponsible character of the trust. The energy which led Mr Clark, at the age of 46, to take up the business of an ironmaster, was of an administrative character. "I have no scruple," wrote one of his correspondents, "in troubling you, for I have observed that those who conduct large concerns can always command leisure." It was on hearing it said of one of the old masters that he lived among his mills and furnaces, and sometimes took a turn at them, that Mr Clark remarked that that might be very proper with a small work, but that with such a work as Dowlais such knowledge would be of little use and such attention out of place. "My business," said he, "is to put the proper man in the proper place, and to leave him there as much as possible undisturbed." At Dowlais this was carried out in a very remarkable degree. The head of each department was chosen with care, and so long as he did his work

well he was never interfered with. The patronage, in the collieries, the mills and furnaces, the fitting shops, in the office, in the establishment at Cardiff, in London, in the Forest of Dean, and in the schools, was left almost wholly in the hands of the head of each department. If a man was not up to the work he was at once set aside; if he did well he was thoroughly trusted, with the conviction that he would then do his best.

#### AS AN EDUCATIONIST

It was this system, steadily acted upon, that left Mr Clark free to become the active chairman of the Merthyr Board of Guardians, the Board of Health, the School Board, and the Dowlais Burial Board, besides making frequent visits to Cardiff, and at least once a fortnight to the branch office in London. The schools for the children of the workpeople were not neglected. The numbers attending rose from 100 to above 2,000, under a large staff of efficient teachers. The schools were the largest in Britain, and earned the largest grants. Very many of the boys found employment in the works; many, especially of the girls, became teachers, and as the reputation of the schools was good, they found no difficulty in obtaining engagements. Also by a system of graduated money prizes the best of the children were induced to stay at school beyond the usual age. The penny poundage stopped from the Roman Catholic workmen was paid over, with a moderate addition, to their school fund, and their schools were managed by their priest, subject to Government inspection, with the result that there were no better conducted body of men than the Dowlais Irish. The sick fund was raised from and entirely managed by the men; the doctor, selected by the trustees, has always been a man of superior skill, and the medicines were purchased from the Apothecaries Company, or from chemists of high repute.

#### OTHER PUBLIC WORK.

Mr Clark found Dowlais and Merthyr without any kind of water supply, and by consequence without house drainage or sewers. It took him three years to overcome a very strong local opposition and to establish water works, to which he added house drainage and sewerage without much difficulty, by which the average of life in the district has been materially lengthened and the comforts of the people, especially of the workpeople, materially improved. He sat for above a quarter of a century as chairman of the Board of Guardians, and for much of that time as chairman of the Board of Health and of the School Board. Although Mr Clark took an active part in the business of the county, never sat locally as a magistrate, thinking that an employer of labour should not decide in cases many of which arose out of disputes between the employers and the employed. As trustee he erected one large church and largely added to the other, and he was never backward in the support of the many local chapels.

#### AN ARDENT VOLUNTEER.

The Volunteer movement found in Mr Clark one of its earliest and most energetic supporters. His battalion at one time numbered above 1,000 men, and was allowed two Lieut.-Colonels and an excellent line adjutant. To the regimental

drill he paid great attention, and his field days were well attended. Attached to the battalion was a corps of Engineers, raised at Dowlais, and he always had the support of the Artillery Corps from Cardiff, and the squadron of local cavalry. On the occasion of the coming of age of Lord Bute the three services formed a line extending the whole length of Cathays Park. During the trusteeship Dowlais underwent many changes, all of which were understood to be, financially, successes. Of these the chief were the introduction of the coal trade, the substitution of steel for iron, and the use of imported ore from Spain. This last, as already noticed, was the main cause of the establishment of furnaces at Cardiff, where also a mill for the rolling of ship plates was set up with a view to a competition with Glasgow and the northern ports. At the same time the new coal pits were opened at a convenient distance from Cardiff, the main seam of which proved to be excellent steam coal, ready to take the place of the heavily worked seams at Aberdare. The establishment of the furnaces and mill at Cardiff and the opening of the new coalfield were the last of the services rendered by Mr Clark to the Dowlais trust. He was at that time in his 85th year, and obliged by age and infirmities to discontinue any close personal superintendence. He employed the time thus placed at his disposal in the publication of a well-known work on military architecture, a volume of Glamorgan pedigrees entitled "Limbus Patrum," and in the editing and privately printing four bulky volumes of charters of the Lordship of Glamorgan. He printed also a volume of Family Prayers, and edited and reprinted some curious religious works printed one and two centuries ago by members of his family.

#### ARCHAEOLOGIST AND LITTERATEUR.

Indeed, it is as a man of letters, a decipherer of medieval legends and inscriptions, a discoverer of records and archives, a collector of historical fact and popular tradition, that the deceased has based his chief claim to lasting remembrance. His principal delight was in unearthing old charters, long-lost or forgotten enactments, the chronicles bearing upon ancient or forgotten social and political institutions. He numbered among his friends some of the leading historians of the age, including the late Professor E. A. Freeman, of Oxford University. He was an investigator and a chronicler by intuition. Shortly after taking up his abode in Merthyr he presided at an entertainment in that town and astonished the natives by telling them the meaning and derivation of not a few of their place-names. It was looked upon as passing strange that he, a new comer, an Englishman to boot, and an engineering expert, should possess this wonderful knowledge of the history, topography, and archaeology of South Wales. He knew more of their own district than they did themselves. A curious tale is told incidental to his history of the parish or Manor of Kenfig. It was in 1871 that the Royal Archaeological Society held its annual meetings in Cardiff. The late Edward Freeman was among the visitors, and there took part in the proceedings, inter alia, the Marquis of Bute and Mr Clark. A field meeting was held at Bridgend, where Mr Clark read a paper on the castle and its history, and another meeting took place at Kenfig. In the latter village, rather from curiosity than anything else, the keys of the muniment office were sent or in order that the contents of the building might be examined. Mr Clark said it was a mere waste of time, as there was nothing there of the least antiquarian or historical value. When at length the

keys were forthcoming and the chest containing the deeds was opened, Mr Clark's face almost beamed with delight as he came upon an original

#### CHARTER GRANTED BY RICHARD II.,

and bearing the signature and seal of Thomas, Lord Despenser, Lord of Glamorgan. The document was in an excellent state of preservation, and along with the others in the muniment office was shortly afterwards transferred to Mr Clark. That gentleman translated them from the Latin in which they were written and made exact copies of them, giving both to the world a little later in the journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association. The charter related to the appointment of a portreeve at a stipend of £3 year, of an ale taster and other village or parochial functionaries. At that time (the reign of Richard II.) the hamlet of Kenfig was one of the most important and populous places in the county; it is difficult for those who know it now to realise how that could be. It is impossible here to enumerate a tithe of the papers, reviews, essays and the like which Mr Clark gave to the world at short intervals during his long and active life. He was one of the greatest living authorities on the Norman occupation of Glamorganshire and its social and religious bearing on the lives and customs of the people. His "History of St. Donat's Castle" is well known, its conciseness, combined with accuracy, making it a very useful little work. Some eight or 10 years ago he published, through Messrs Wyman and Sons, London, a large two volume work on the "Medieval Architecture of Great Britain". In 1883 he reprinted from the Journal of the Archaeological Institute his "Land of Morgan, being a contribution towards the history of the Lordship of Glamorgan." In or about the same year there emanated from his active brain and hand "Some Account of Sir Thomas Mansel, Kt., Vice Admiral of England and Member of Parliament for the County of Glamorgan, and of Admiral Sir Thomas Button, Knight, of Worlton, and of Cardiff, in the county of Glamorgan." This latter was inscribed to John Patrick, present Marquis of Bute. Besides being a gifted Latin scholar the late gentleman had an intimate acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon and early English linguistic powers, which served him in good stead in poring over faded and worm-eaten parchments and vellums dating from Norman and Plantagenet times.

#### A CONTRIBUTOR TO THE "CARDIFF TIMES."

Although at that period perhaps the busiest man in South Wales, Mr G. T. Clark, some 30 years ago contributed a series of articles on antiquarian subjects to the Cardiff Times. They were read with the keenest interest, and were admired for their perspicacity and their proof of intelligent and enthusiastic research and command of the English language. The late Mr Thomas Stephens, whose History of the Literature of the Cymry is admittedly a standard work, and who gave the late Lady Charlotte Schreiber much useful assistance in her monumental task of translating the Mabinogion, was, until his death, an intimate friend of Mr Clark, the pursuits which furnished to both their chief happiness being closely akin. In their historical and bibliographical labours there was no doubt much mutual consultation. It will never be known what South Wales lost by the all too early termination of the career of Thomas Stephens. Any notice of Mr Clark would be

