

A GREAT INVENTOR.

It is with the deepest and most profound regret that we have to record the death at Florence, on Monday last, of Colonel Richard March Hoe, the inventor of the gigantic printing machines called by his name, and now used by journals of the largest circulation all over the world. For more than half a century the greatest engineers, both English and foreign, had been striving to carry out the idea foreshadowed in Nicholson's patent of 1790—that of printing by means of type placed on the outer surface of a revolving cylinder; but it was reserved for the descendant of a sturdy Leicestershire farmer to triumph where all others had failed. His "Lightning Press" not only revolutionised printing, but also brought the cheap newspaper of our time within the range of practical possibilities; and England will surely join with America in deploring the loss of so worthy and illustrious a son. "Justice enacts," said Dr. Johnson, "that those by whom we are most benefitted should be most admired." and the benefits conferred on every newspaper reader by Hoe's presses cannot fail to awaken admiration for the author of an invention that was the result of so much earnest thought, patient industry, and unflagging perseverance. The history of the firm, of which the deceased Colonel was the head, commences with Robert Hoe, the son of a Leicestershire farmer, who, having been apprenticed to a carpenter, purchased his indentures, and in 1803, at the age of 19, emigrated to America. Quickly establishing himself in business, he, in the following year, married the daughter of Matthew Smith, of Westchester; and had by her six daughters and three sons. Two of his brothers-in-law, Matthew and Peter—one a joiner, and the other the inventor of a handpress—formed a partnership, which continued until 1823, when, on the death of the Smiths, Robert Hoe succeeded to the business. It increased in his hands until failing health compelled him to retire in 1832, his death taking place in the following year. Richard M. Hoe, the eldest son, born September 12th, 1812, who had served an apprenticeship with his father, then became a partner with young Matthew Smith; and the firm, which had entered on the manufacture of cast steel saws, further prospered. The death of Matthew Smith in 1842 led to the introduction of Richard Hoe's two brothers, Robert and Peter. Richard's mechanical genius, and Peter's in various inventions,

and Peter's mechanical genius, had been displayed in various inventions, but it was not until 1846 that he perfected his "Lightning Press," or Type-Revolving Printing Machine, that was destined to attain world-wide fame and make cheap newspapers feasible by the rapidity with which they could be produced. Ten years, however, elapsed before, in June, 1856, the first of Hoe's Rotary Presses was introduced into England for the

purpose of printing *Lloyd's Newspaper*. But once the great advantages of the machines were made manifest, a large demand for them sprang up. Recognising the important fact that in an age of progress one invention paves the way for another, Colonel Hoe then applied the full power of his practical mind to meeting the further demand for a "perfecting press"—that is, one capable of printing both sides of a newspaper at the same time. Improvements in stereotyping, by which an entire page was cast at once in a curved plate adapted to Hoe's cylinders, came into use; and helped on the completion of those vast machines, printing from an endless roll of paper, now generally employed. As far back as May, 1864, Messrs. Hoe sent over to *Lloyd's News* a perfecting machine, the principle of which the Americans truly say "was immediately appropriated by both French and English press-makers, and heralded to the world as a new invention of their own." Changes of a useful kind have been introduced by all modern machine manufacturers; but to the deceased, Richard March Hoe, unquestionably belongs the supreme credit of inventing and carrying to the perfection of the present day the great Rotary Presses, which print 20,000 copies per hour of the largest newspapers published. Genial, kindly, and hearty in all circles of life, it is gratifying also to know that Colonel Hoe's relations with his army of over a thousand skilled workmen were of the most amicable kind. He leaves a name that will be ever honoured among the band of illustrious inventors who have spent their lives in perfecting the art of Caxton, and thus helping to shed the light of knowledge through the world.

JUNE 10, 1864

purpose of printing *Lloyd's Newspaper*. But once the great advantages of the machines were made manifest, a large demand for them sprang up. Recognising the important fact that in an age of progress one invention paves the way for another, Colonel Hoe then applied the full power of his practical mind to meeting the further demand for a "perfecting press"—that is, one capable of printing both sides of a newspaper at the same time. Improvements in stereotyping, by which an entire page was cast at once in a curved plate adapted to Hoe's cylinders, came into use; and helped on the completion of those vast machines, printing from an endless roll of paper, now generally employed. As far back as May, 1864, Messrs. Hoe sent over to *Lloyd's News* a perfecting machine, the principle of which the Americans truly say "was immediately appropriated by both French and English press-makers, and heralded to the world as a new invention of their own." Changes of a useful kind have been introduced by all modern machine manufacturers; but to the deceased, Richard March Hoe, unquestionably belongs the supreme credit of inventing and carrying to the perfection of the present day the great Rotary Presses, which print 20,000 copies per hour of the largest newspapers published. Genial, kindly, and hearty in all circles of life, it is gratifying also to know that Colonel Hoe's relations with his army of over a thousand skilled workmen were of the most amicable kind. He leaves a name that will be ever honoured among the band of illustrious inventors who have spent their lives in perfecting the art of Caxton, and thus helping to shed the light of knowledge through the world.
