



CRITCHLEY BROS.

BRIMSCOMBE, NEAR STROUD.

Manufacturers of Pins, Hair-Pins, and Knitting Needles.

THROUGH the courtesy of Messrs. Critchley Bros. we are enabled to include in "Industrial Gloucestershire" a reference to their extensive works at Brimscombe. The following notice will be necessarily brief, and in the limited space allowed us we can present but a few of the more interesting features of their business.

The industry, so far as regards the making of solid-headed metal pins, was originally established at Woodchester 60 years ago, under the firm name of Perkins, Critchley and Marmont, and is the oldest in the district. Upon the decease of Mr. H. Critchley, of that firm, his two sons—Messrs. F. E. and U. G. Critchley (the latter since deceased)—entered into partnership, and established their present works at Brimscombe, in the freehold premises they subsequently purchased, and still occupy, known as Wimberley Mills.

The buildings were originally used as dye-works, subsequently as a stick factory, and shortly before they came into the possession of Messrs. Critchley were almost destroyed by fire, having to be entirely reconstructed. In spite of the misfortune which seemed connected with the premises, and in the face of a competition of a trade combination, the firm made rapid progress, and to-day their premises give every evidence of stability and of prosperity. Their establishment proved an unmixed good for the industrial classes, as upwards of 300 hands are given constant employment, under the most agreeable conditions attainable.

It would be out of keeping with the purpose of this brief article to attempt a detailed description of the processes of making pins and hair-pins, and we can but allude in a few words to the more noticeable features of the Wimberley Mills, an excellent view of which is shown herewith. The motive power is supplied by a 50 h.p. water wheel, supplemented by a powerful steam engine, specially designed and constructed by a Gloucestershire engineer; the

premises are lighted throughout with gas and electricity, and are heated by steam. The several floors are connected by powerful lifts; speaking tubes and telephones unite all parts of the works with the offices; stand-pipes are conveniently placed to provide against fire, with fire buckets placed on every floor; and in every possible way provision has been made for the safety, comfort, and convenience of the operatives. The mechanical equipment is of the most modern and approved character, and within the past few years the capacity of the works have been doubled. Mr. F. E. Critchley is himself of a decidedly inventive turn, and has designed and supervised the construction of most of the machinery and appliances. The works are entirely self-contained, the printing of the pin sheets, packets and labels, box and case-making, and everything connected with the manufacture of the pins, from the rough wire until they are ready for shipment, being done under one roof.

Messrs. Critchley Bros. manufacture all kinds of solid-headed pins from 4½ inches in length, such as are used by the Kaffirs, down to the ribbon or "invisible" pins 5-16ths of an inch in length, and hair-pins 8 inches to 1 inch. They have introduced a number of exclusive designs in hair-pins, of which their "Composto," specially designed to retain the hair in position during exertion, is one of the most widely known.

In addition to the large stock of pins and hair-pins in the warerooms of the Wimberley Mills,

gow, Belfast, Dublin, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, and Melbourne. The weekly capacity of the mills is about 15 tons of pins and hair-pins, which find their way to all quarters of the world.

In addition to having become the largest manufacturers of pins and hair-pins in the district, Messrs. Critchley Bros., as has been stated, also manufacture wooden knitting-needles and crochet-hooks, this branch of their industry being carried on in what is known as the Dark Mills, one-eighth of a mile distant from Wimberley Mills. Their management of this industry has also been singularly successful, and to-day it has the distinction of being the only one of the kind in the kingdom. For 20 years the Messrs. Critchley Bros. have constantly added to their equipment and their staff of operatives, the works now doing more than ever before. Like the pin factory, the knitting-needle factory is provided with the best machinery and appliances possible, many of which have been designed by Mr. F. E. Critchley. The building is steam-heated, lighted by gas, and is thoroughly comfortable and sanitary.

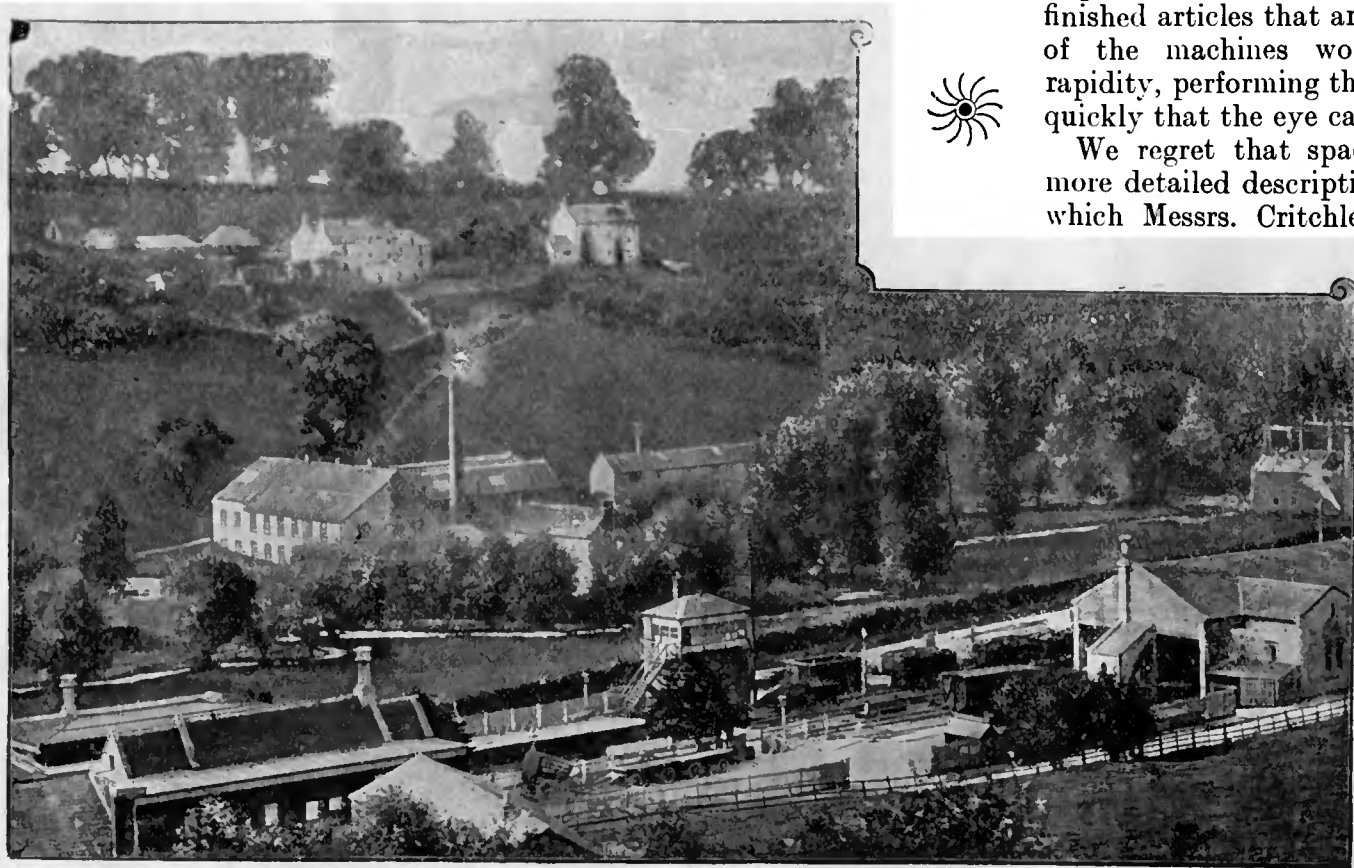
Besides making knitting-needles and crochet-hooks, many hands are employed in the manufacture of sticks, fishing rods, floats, wooden handles of every kind, skewers, and scores of turned articles. Timber is bought in the rough, the Dark Mill containing every machine for converting it to the finished shape, from a circular saw to a sand-papering machine.

In going through the factory one is greatly impressed with the enormous quantity of the finished articles that are turned out daily. All of the machines work with the greatest rapidity, performing the various operations so quickly that the eye can scarcely follow them.

We regret that space has not permitted a more detailed description of the two industries which Messrs. Critchley have developed, but

we trust enough has been said to show the important part they take in Gloucestershire's industrial life. As has before been intimated the industries are a type of our best concerns in point of environment, and the provision which the Firm have made for the comfort of the operatives—a point which we have in these pages frequently emphasized as distinguishing Gloucestershire industries from those which are so often

met with in crowded industrial centres. It but remains to acknowledge the marked courtesy shown the writer by Mr. F. E. Critchley.



WIMBERLEY MILLS, BRIMSCOMBE, NEAR STROUD. (Critchley Bros.)

the firm also maintain an office and distributing depot at 40, Monkwell Street, London, E.C., and have reserve stocks at Manchester, Glas-

ROBERT GIFFORD, GLOUCESTER.

Proprietor of the "Forward" Motor and Cycle Works.

THE "Forward" Motor and Cycle Works, Bristol Road, were established thirteen years ago by their present proprietor, who has demonstrated his fitness to successfully compete with manufacturers in larger cities. From having started with no connection, his business has steadily increased in both volume and extent, his patrons now being found all through this and the adjoining counties.

Mr. Gifford's premises, which directly face the Bristol Road, contain ample storage and work rooms, and are equipped with all tools and appliances necessary to the execution of the high class work for which the proprietor has become known.

As the name of his works would suggest, Mr. Gifford makes a feature of the manufacture of the "Forward" motors and cycles. These machines, which are made after exclusive designs, embody every valuable feature contained in the highest priced machines, while they also possess several distinct advantages. They are made up with fittings supplied by the leading cycle fitting and accessory manufacturers in

England. Since these parts, which are of all sizes and are interchangeable, are always kept in stock, a "Forward" cycle or motor can be made at the shortest notice.

Re-rubbing tyres, and executing the more difficult repairs and alterations which require special skill, have become a very important part of his business, his patrons sending their machines from all parts of the surrounding country. He is the official repairer to the C.T.C., the well-known Cycling Club. He also repairs oil and gas engines and the more delicate and complicated machinery, his services in this line being in frequent request.