



PREFACE.

*“TO HAVE DONE is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
In monumental mockery.”*

SHAKESPEARE. (*“Troilus and Cressida.”*)



SO much has been said and written about Gloucestershire's interesting past that but few, even of the well-informed, have a fair idea of its present and everyday achievements. The large majority of the hitherto published works pertaining to the County deal wholly with its history, geology, and archæology; some are purely ecclesiastical; while in others literature and art strive to depict its scenic beauty. Thus it happens that those whose knowledge of Gloucestershire is derived from books look upon it as *having been* the scene of great events, but now interesting only for its past.

This publication is designed to correct that impression. It is an attempt to show that in the larger life of to-day Gloucestershire is still distinguished by the resourcefulness and adaptability of its people. The following pages afford convincing evidence that no like area and population are making greater progress in art and industry; that nowhere are more cherished those thorough and conscientious methods which of old distinguished the British master and man, and which first gained for British-made manufactures their world-wide pre-eminence; and that in no district in England is industry carried on in better environment.

Location and Topography.

Since this publication will be read by many who are not acquainted with Gloucestershire, however familiar they may be with Gloucestershire's manufactured products, it may be well to refer to the county's peculiarly favourable geographical position. Its natural advantages are not limited to an unusual picturesqueness and a fertile soil: for within its boundaries are extensive deposits of coal, iron, and building stone, with other minerals in paying quantities, clay suitable for making brick and tiles of the best quality, and large timber reserves. Besides these advantages is that of location, the county being intersected by the Severn, which for centuries has been a highway for traffic, and by a magnificent canal which puts it into direct communication with the seaboard. Science and invention have enormously improved upon and added to these natural means of communication, and to-day the raw material and finished product may be easily transported to and from every part of the county by rail or water. In short, a more favourable distributing depôt, as well as manufacturing county, could hardly be found in the British Isles.

Topographically, Gloucestershire contains as great a diversity as any English county, and more than most. Rising from the sea level to a height of 1,100 feet, it presents a charming variety of hill and vale, open and wooded country. Besides giving to the county an unusual picturesqueness, this configuration conserves utility; for the power furnished by scores of spring-fed streams rising in the hills afforded decided advantages to those early manufacturers to whom the uses of steam were unknown. Indeed, water power is still largely used in almost all parts of the county, and excellent manufacturing sites possessing this advantage are available.



Early Industries.

Reference is made to Gloucestershire's early industries merely to illustrate the fact that much of its present industrial distinction is due to heredity. From time immemorial the county has been noted for the excellence and variety of its manufactures. Enough cloth has been woven within its borders to clothe the present population of England. Its hillsides grew the trees which entered largely into the building of England's "wooden walls." Its mines furnished the iron used in the construction of Westminster Abbey. Its docks and mills supplied a considerable part of the Midlands with corn and flour. And in a hundred ways the inventiveness and application of its people added to the comfort and prosperity of others.



Present Industries.

The changed and changing methods brought by steam and electricity have revolutionized industrial conditions here, as elsewhere. In this change Gloucestershire in some industries has yielded the palm to more fortunate competitors, in some she has gained the supremacy formerly claimed by other localities. But, fortunately, with the change in form of industry has come an equally marked improvement in character and quantity. To-day not only a larger number, but a larger proportion, of Gloucestershire's population are engaged in some form of manufacturing than ever before, while the product of their brains and hands was never in higher repute.

Apart from the quite remarkable diversity of manufactured products, Gloucestershire industry has several peculiar features. A glance through the following pages will show that a number of industries therein described are exotics—that is, natural

conditions for carrying them on are better elsewhere than here. Thus slate quarried in the Welsh mountains is brought to Gloucester to be made into enamelled chimney pieces and other articles of use or ornament, no other city in the Kingdom having attained to our pre-eminence in this respect; wagons and railway carriages, made here of imported material, are largely sold in almost every civilized country on the globe, notwithstanding the frequent disadvantage of heavy transportation charges; and so with pins, matches, walking-sticks, iron, brass and steel articles of all kinds, and many other products which it would seem could be more economically made in centres having either natural or acquired advantages. The success attending so many and diverse industries is sufficient comment on the intrinsic worth of the product.



The car of progress so often crushes the beautiful in human life, that it is a pleasure to contemplate a district in which industry is carried on under conditions as nearly ideal as any yet attained. In this respect Gloucestershire is peculiarly blessed, particularly as compared with the more populous industrial centres.

Excluding Bristol, to which no reference is made in the following pages, the County of Gloucestershire has an area of 1,224 square miles, with an average population of slightly less than that of the Kingdom at large. Of this population, according to the latest published report of the Inspector of Factories, over 60,000 are engaged in industrial pursuits, the larger part of this army living and working in towns and villages having populations of less than 12,000.

This distribution of operatives is a point to be emphasized. Stroud, Dursley, Woodchester, Stonehouse, Nailsworth, Lydbrook, Winchcombe, Chipping Campden, Toddington, to mention but a few of many similar instances, would to the ordinary traveller seem to be but picturesque country towns and villages, whereas they are the sites of great manufactories whose diverse products are known and used the world over. Nowhere in the county is there a congested centre in which the humblest toiler is obliged to live in overcrowded and unsanitary surroundings. On the contrary, nearly all have at all times ready access to the healthful pleasures afforded by the open fields and wooded hills of an exceptionally picturesque country.

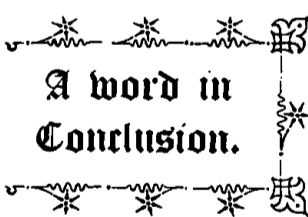
This general distribution of operatives over a wide area conduces to their efficiency, as well as to their comfort. While the modern automata of iron and steel have largely taken the place of muscle, there is still much in every creative process that human fingers can make or mar, and the conditions in which an article is fashioned are indelibly stamped upon it. It is a pleasure to add that as a rule the relations between master and man have been cordial, and the entire county has been singularly exempt from the labour disputes which too frequently retard progress.

In the past few years Gloucestershire's environment, naturally favourable as it is, has been greatly improved, and transportation, water supply, and sanitation have been given a great deal of attention. The Gloucester Electric tram system, a municipal undertaking involving a large expenditure, has just been completed; the Cheltenham electric tram system has been materially extended; the Great Western Railway has

recently completed a main line extension, passing through the southern part of the County, connecting Swindon with South Wales, and it is now laying a line from Honeybourne to Cheltenham; this road has also recently introduced a new tram service, operated over its own line, between Chalford and Stonehouse, affording hourly service between those and intermediate points; extensive railway improvements are projected in connection with the new Bristol Docks at Avonmouth; a line of motor omnibuses is soon to be established in the populous Stroud Valley; the Thames and Severn Canal has been greatly improved under the auspices of the Joint County Committees Association; water supply systems at Winchcombe, Lydney, Chipping Campden, and other towns and villages have been provided for or are under way; a very extensive sewage scheme for Stroud is nearing completion, and similar improvements for Dursley, Kingswood, and other places are in hand; several bills authorizing Companies in various localities throughout the County to provide and use electric power will be passed upon by the present Parliament; and in many ways, of which the foregoing are but a few instances, the comfort and convenience of the population are being greatly increased.

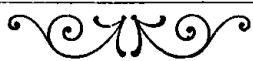


The casual visitor to Gloucestershire finds it difficult to believe that many of its existing industries were established centuries ago. Many of the more imposing factory buildings are entirely new, while a still larger number show evidences of having been extensively altered and enlarged to adapt them to modern requirements. In respect of the construction and arrangement of factory buildings and equipment no industrial centre in England excels Gloucestershire. It is but just to say that our manufacturers, as a rule, have not been content to yield a forced assent to Government regulations, but have been quick to utilize any device or appliance which could add to the comfort of the operatives or the quality of their work. The leading firms in the County are very largely increasing the capacity of their plants, and several have completed plans for entirely reconstructing their works on model lines. Through the courtesy of our manufacturers we are enabled to present in this publication a number of excellent engravings, showing in detail many interesting phases of our factory environment, processes and products.



But this brief preface is not designed as a summary of Gloucestershire's achievements. It is intended merely to call attention to the following pages, in which the story of the County's present industrial life is interestingly portrayed. One hundred of our leading industries, representing almost every form of production and embracing every section of the County, have been made the subjects of as many descriptive articles. Whatever the literary merit of these articles may be, the matter of which they treat is of the highest interest.

It but remains for us to acknowledge the public spirit of our manufacturers, to whose generous support the completeness of this work is due, and to express a hope that the publication will bring its own reward in the way of a larger and wider interest in Gloucestershire's manufactured products.



To
Those who
believe that British
Energy and Resourcefulness
are still Equal to any in the World,
and who preferably support those Industries
which are carried on on a high
plane, This Publication
is Respectfully
Dedicated.

