

*Views
and
Reviews*
Special Edition.

KIDDERMINSTER

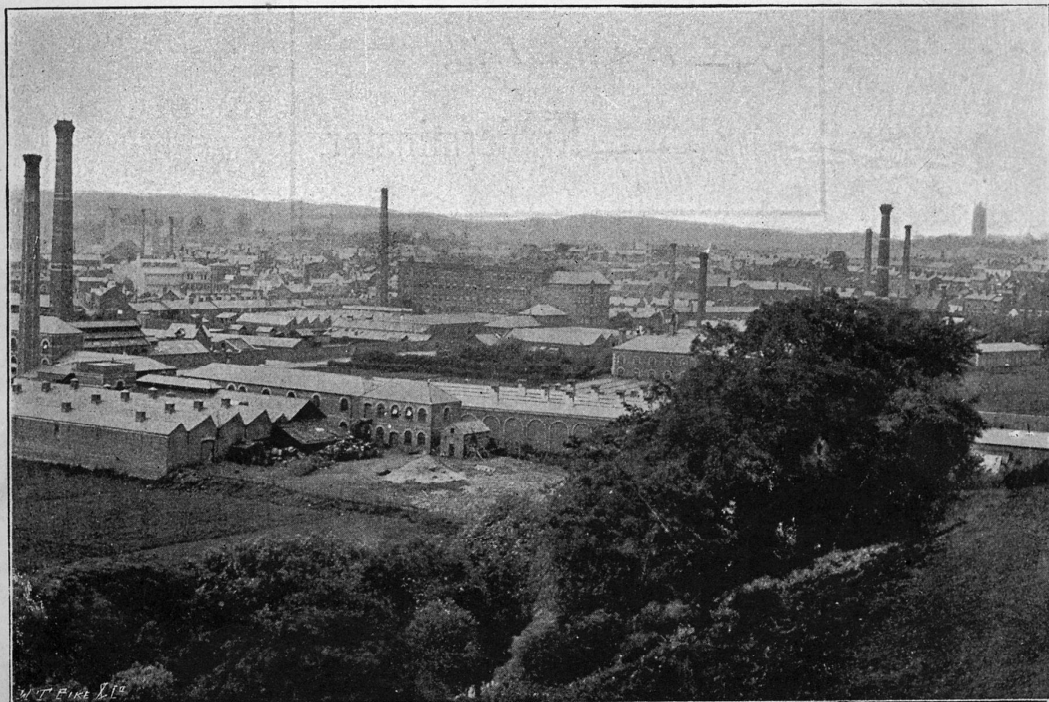


Photo by]

GENERAL VIEW OF KIDDERMINSTER.

[Thos. Ball.

Front cover

About this document

An illustrated Business Directory published in 1897. It includes information about the history of the town and many of the local businesses existing at that time. The text is supplemented by a variety of interesting photographs, a number of them attributed to local photographer Thomas Ball.

My thanks are due to Jeff Higgott for allowing me to copy this directory.

Bob Millward January 2014



HENRY LINECAR,

DEALER IN

Ale, Wines, Spirits,

And all kinds of MINERAL WATERS,

35^A, Comberton Hill,

— *Kidderminster.*



Inside front cover page

VIEWS & REVIEWS

Special Edition.

KIDDERMINSTER.

W. T. PIKE & CO.,

PUBLISHERS,

GRAND PARADE, BRIGHTON.

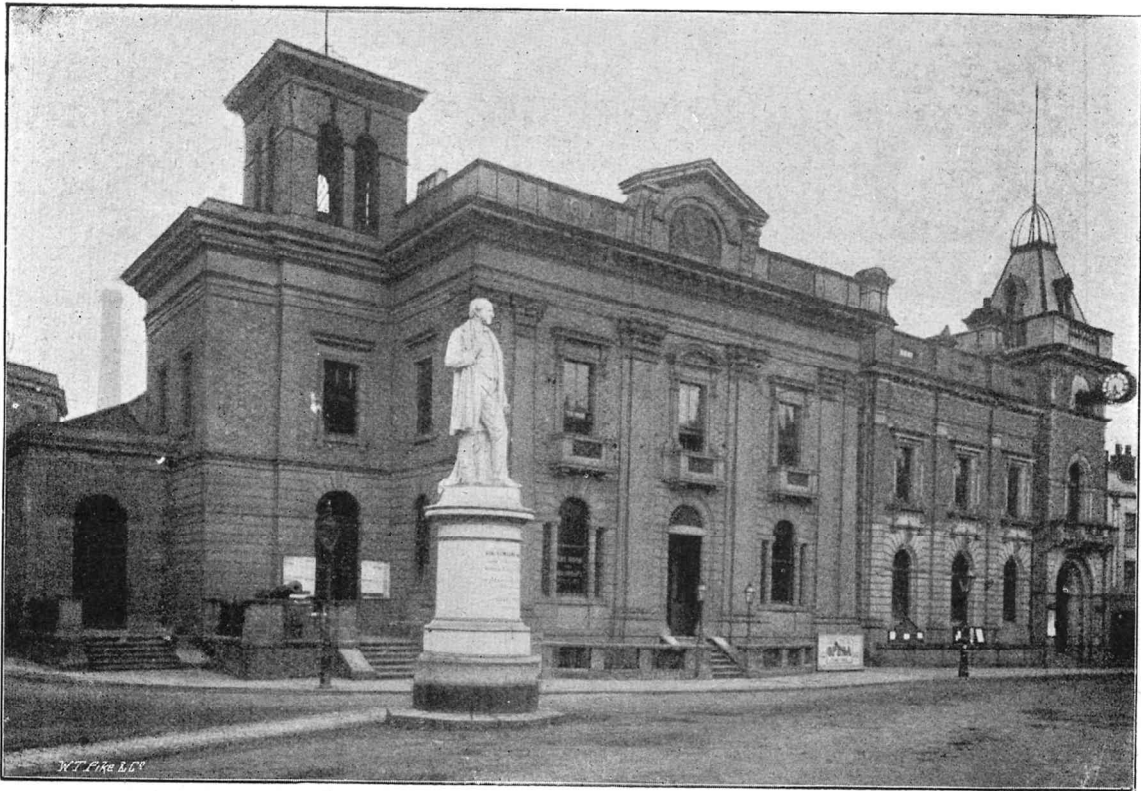
Estimated 1897 from contents

Title Page

KIDDERMINSTER.

“ . . . Time doth consecrate,
And what is grey with age becomes religion.”—*Schiller.*

THOUGH Kidderminster is essentially a manufacturing town whose staple products have a world-wide celebrity, it would be a mistake to imagine that its industrial activity is confined exclusively to the production of its far-famed carpets. It would equally be an error to assume that the town as a whole bears any family resemblance to the majority of the industrial towns scattered over the Midlands, and which are, for the most part, nondescript combinations of gloom and grime, shadowed over by a perennial canopy of smoke and fog. On the contrary, Kidderminster is a singularly picturesque town, with bright blue skies and a clear pure



CORN EXCHANGE, CORPORATION BUILDINGS, AND TOWN HALL, WITH SIR ROWLAND HILL'S STATUE.
Photo by] [Thos. Ball.

atmosphere, the very irregularity of its plan and the unevenness of its site, combined with the wonderful contrasts of antique and modern buildings, giving it a peculiarly quaint and interesting appearance. It stands, too, in the midst of a rich, varied and beautiful district abounding in charming scenery, fine mansions, and historic associations, and there are very few districts in the Midlands that offer greater attractions to the student of botany or geology, or the lover of legends and folk-lore. The history of the town itself is eminently one of industrial enterprise, and the borough does not appear at any time to have been prominently or directly associated with the wars, intrigues, and revolutions that marked the early and middle ages of our national history. Its quaint legends, traditions and customs have therefore been mainly associated with peaceful, homely or supernatural achievements, and its local customs, which are now fast disappearing, have

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had nothing to do with wars or statecraft, but rather with civic, parochial, religious or industrial associations. No doubt there yet lingers a legend that the Round Hill at Caldwell was thrown up one night by Cromwell's soldiers as a point of vantage from which to batter down St. Mary's Church, but that story involves the inference that Cromwell's troops were armed with boomerangs instead of ordinary cannon balls, as the marks of the alleged bombardment are all on the side of the church most remote from the Round Hill. Possibly this legend owes its existence to the imagination of some ardent Parliamentarian who desired to associate his town with military glory, or who wished to elevate his hero to the architectural dignity of the alleged founder of the Devil's Spadeful, near Bewdley. There are, however, such a number of these isolated hills or mounds in the Kidderminster district, whose origin seems so unaccountable, that they almost seem specially designed by Nature as subjects on which an imaginative people might legitimately exercise their abundant powers

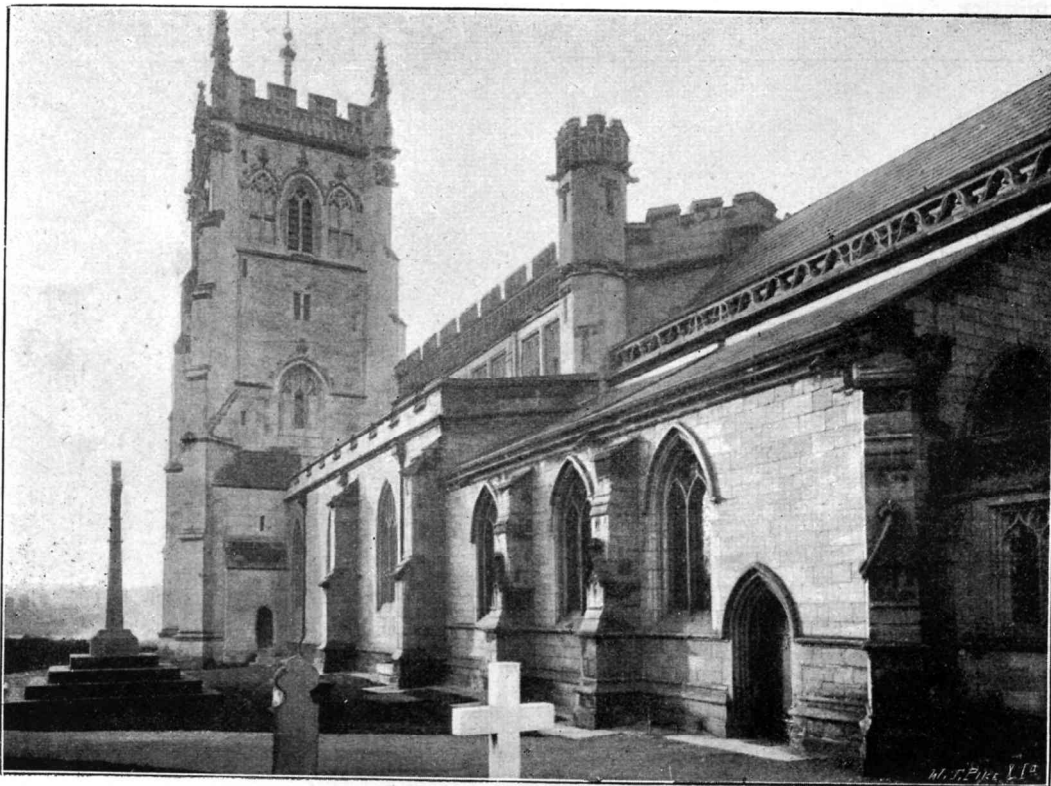


Photo by]

ST. MARY'S PARISH CHURCH.

[Thos. Ball.

of invention. And this brings us back to the ancient origin of the town, or rather to a speculation on the pre-historic condition of the district, for the origin of the town has long been lost in

“The marvellous current of forgotten things,”

and we are thus left to our unrestricted imagination on that subject. Geologists suggest that the whole district in which Kidderminster now stands was originally the bed of an arm of the sea which stretched from the mouth of the Severn to that of the Dee. It is needless to say that that was some considerable number of years ago, for geologists are not people who calculate time in a mere retail way, in years, or even centuries, a few thousand years more or less being quite beneath their notice. Those learned gentlemen say that the land about Trimpley was the first which emerged from beneath “the primeval waters.” Eymore, Warshill, and Habberley Valley

leisurely followed suit at decent intervals, and the dates of those events, so important to the drainage and general progress of Kidderminster, may perhaps be inferred from the remarks of Dr. Buckland, who confidently states that Trimpley Hill "was a hill when the Alps and Appennines were plains." Under the circumstances it is surprising, perhaps, that some patriotic antiquary or legend-weaver has not discovered a portion of Noah's ark in the district, or claimed for Trimpley Hill or the Ridge Rock at Habberley Valley, the honour of being the real original Mount Arrarat. From those remote and misty times to the founding of Kidderminster must have been a long period. Whether it was a town or settlement during the days of the ancient Britons or Romans, is a point on which every one has a legitimate right to his own opinion, and the relics of an ancient camp at Warshill, about three miles distant, indicates, at all events, that the locality was not unknown to the warriors of antiquity. That Kidderminster was not originally founded by the Romans, however, may be safely inferred from the irregularity of its streets and general plan, and

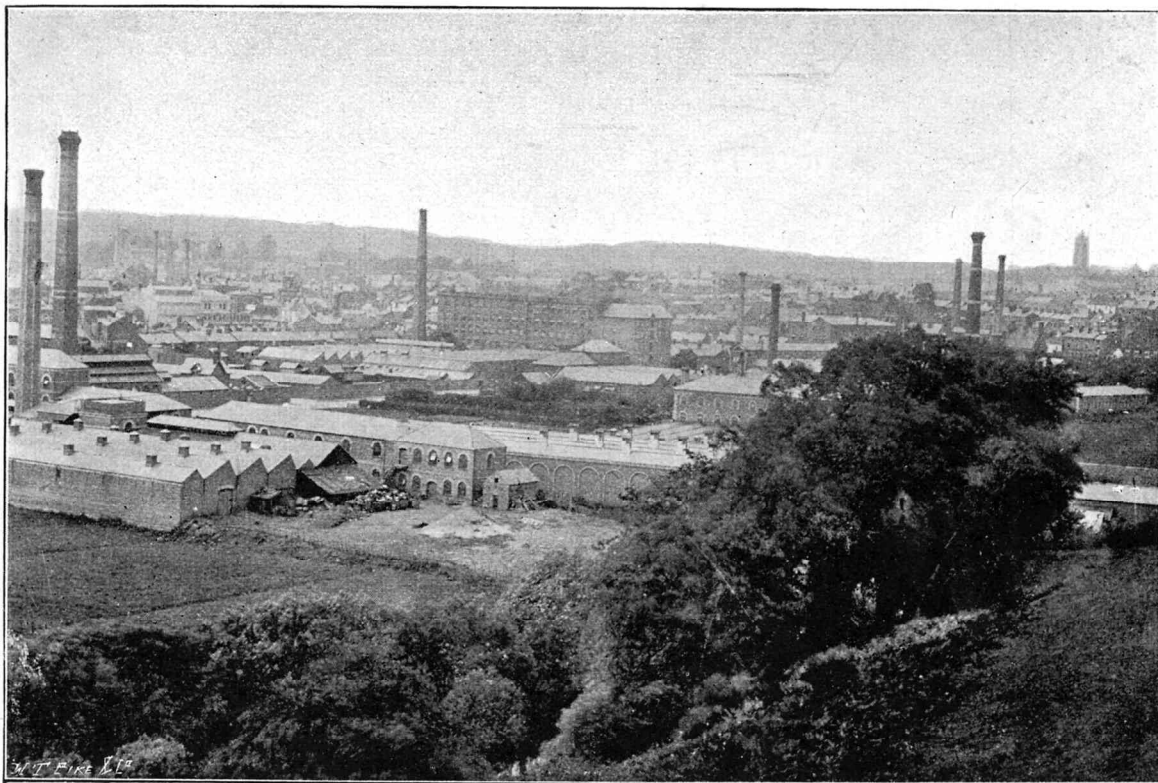


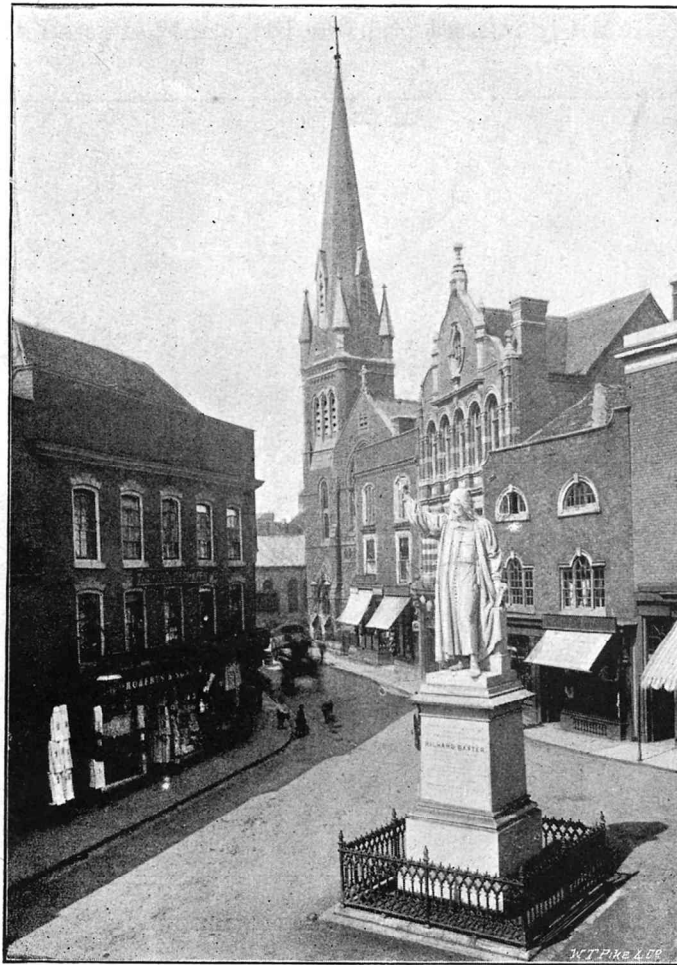
Photo by]

GENERAL VIEW OF KIDDERMINSTER.

[Thos. Ball.

possibly the town originated as a forest settlement during the time of the Saxons. At all events there can be little doubt that what is now known as Wyre Forest, and the woods of Kinver and Moreheh, are remnants of an immense forest which at one time covered the whole of this district, which, even at the end of the 13th century was infested with wolves, whose associations with the district are permanently crystallised in the name of Wolverley village. It appears that the Saxon earl, Cynebert, in the days of King Ethelbald, owned a large tract of land in this district, and he is by some supposed to have been the founder of a church here, which thence became known as Cynebert's Minster, a name which in time became corrupted to "Kidderminster." Another explanation of the name is that it is derived from three words, "kid," "dwr," and "minster," meaning respectively "the brow of a hill," "water" and "church," so that "Kiddwrminster" signified "a church on the hill overlooking the water," which would sufficiently indicate the position of the church on an eminence overlooking the river Stour. In either case the town seems to have taken both its name and its origin

from the church, around which it probably grew up gradually. It appears from Domesday Book that the demesne of "Chiderminster," with other places in the vicinity, were held by Edward the Confessor before the Conquest, and it continued to be the property of the crown after the Conquest, and indeed, down to the reign of Henry II., who gave the Manor of Kidderminster to his cup bearer, Manser de Biset. It is needless here to trace the history of the Manor through the various families of Biset, or Bassett, Beauchamp, Neville, Cooksey, Blount and Foley, until it eventually passed, in the year 1838, into the hands of Lord Ward, Earl of Dudley, although we may mention in passing that one of its lords, Viscount



THE BAXTER STATUE AND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

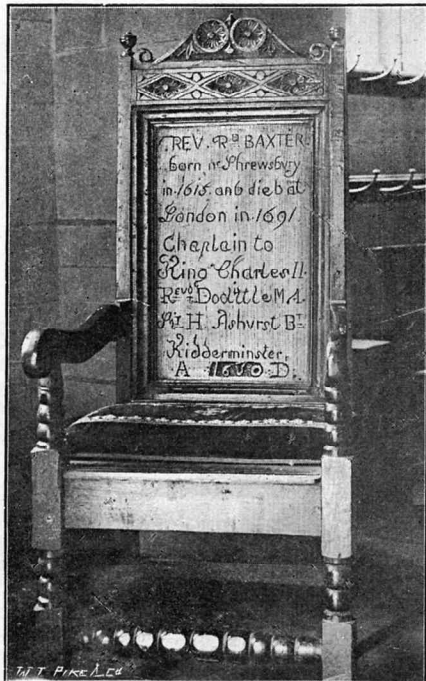
Photo by]

[Thos. Ball.

Lisle, was beheaded for treason in the 16th century. There still remain at Caldwell the remnants of a manorial castle erected here in the reign of Henry IV., but it does not appear ever to have experienced any war-like adventures, and what remains of it now is just sufficient to interest the antiquary or the lover of the picturesque. As an ancient Royal Manor, Kidderminster enjoyed considerable privileges, and the Dudley family have, during the present century, taken a strong practical interest in the development of the town, from which the Foley family took the title of baron. Kidderminster was a borough by prescription, and sent members to parliament in the reign of Edward I., although this does not imply that the citizens "enjoyed" parliamentary representation.

In fact, they strongly objected to it, inasmuch as they had to pay their representatives, and they therefore allowed their franchise to lapse, although they were glad to have it again revived by the Reform Act of 1832. In the early seventies the borough was represented by Baron Albert Grant, the well known financier; but one of the most popular representatives the borough ever possessed was John Brinton, Esq., J.P., of Moor Hall, Stourport, a local manufacturer and a conspicuous benefactor of the town. The present M.P. for the borough, Augustus Frederick Godson, Esq., M.A., Q.C., J.P., of Westwood Park, is a distinguished lawyer, and is highly popular not only among his constituents, but throughout the Midlands.

Kidderminster has for centuries been prominently identified with the weaving trade, and although conditions have altered, trade has fluctuated, and so many of its textile industries have grown up, flourished and decayed, the town has always found new applications for its looms, and it stands to-day



BAXTER'S CHAIR.

Photo by]

[Thos. Ball.



BAXTER'S PULPIT.

Photo by]

[Thos. Ball.

pre-eminent as the greatest centre of the carpet trade in the kingdom, and in some respects the greatest in the world. So early as the year 1356 the town had a flourishing cloth trade, and it was famous for its textile manufactures before the time of Henry VIII., when special legislative protection was given to the woollen industry. At the beginning of the 18th century its productions consisted mainly of tammies, ratteens, and bombazine frieze, and afterwards poplin, woollen camlet, glossanett, and many kinds of crape were largely manufactured. Horsehair goods and cordage for looms and other purposes were also extensively produced here, but those industries have all died out, as well as the manufacture of silks and bombazines, which were brought to unrivalled perfection during the present century in Kidderminster. Indeed at the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, a piece of silk manufactured by the late Mr. William Grosvenor won the special admiration of Her Majesty the Queen, but its manufacture has long ago ceased, and the production of bombazine died out through the unaccountable vagaries of that mysterious influence called "fashion." Damask silk goods are still

made here for upholstering and other purposes, and there is a considerable industry in worsted spinning and dyeing, while the town has also its paper mill, iron foundries, wire works, tinplate works, etc., but the great staple industry of Kidderminster at the present time is the weaving of its famous carpets, an industry which is carried on with marvellous skill and enterprise.

THE CARPET TRADE.

“Fortune aye favours the active an’ bauld.”—RAMSAY.

The history of carpets is a most interesting study, as illustrating the development of our luxuries from our necessities, and *vice versâ*, especially in relation to the furnishing of our homes. The flooring of our houses seems always to have been a troublesome consideration, from the days when our remote ancestors dwelt in caves. A few centuries ago even royalty was content to have clean fresh straw or rushes, not only for carpet but for bed, although perhaps the tiger skin hearthrug of



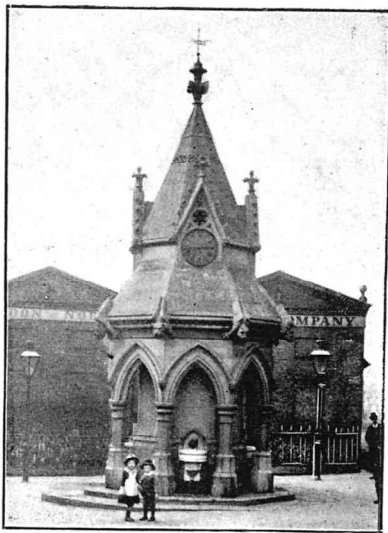
Photo by]

PUBLIC LIBRARY AND SCHOOLS OF SCIENCE AND ART.

[Thos. Ball.

the present day is but a barbaric survival of the days when our ancestors lived almost exclusively by the chase. In the days when red baize was not so plentiful as now, Sir Walter Raleigh, with true courtier-like inspiration, placed his cloak in the mud for his royal mistress to step on; but even in the days of Elizabeth it is not likely that gentlemen's wardrobes were habitually used as domestic carpets. It is not easy to fix any particular date at which fabrics came to be especially made for regular use as floor covering, but the idea of carpets seems to have come to Europe as an inspiration from the Orient. An ancient rug brought to this country from Egypt has suggested to some people that carpets in our modern acceptance of the term may have been used by the forgotten architects of the Pyramids, and Sir G. Wilkinson goes so far as to say that he has seen certain imperfectly preserved fragments of woollen stuff, found at Thebes in Egypt, and presenting all the appearance of having been used as carpets some thousands of years ago. But the modern carpet trade owes nothing directly, so far as its origin is concerned, to Egyptian inspiration, but rather to the habits of the Persian and other Oriental peoples. The Persians are largely a nomadic race, and people who are of roving habits possess

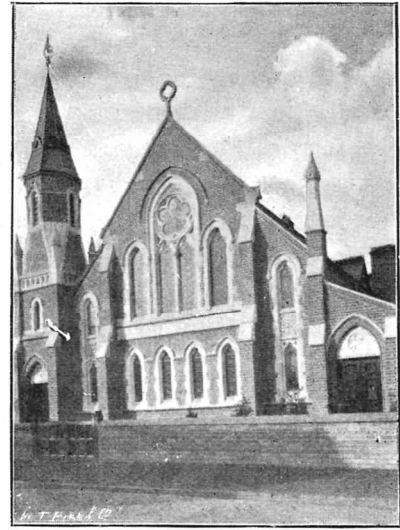
two characteristics which it seems difficult to reconcile from a European standpoint. They are remarkably fond of their ease, and yet they pay little attention to the equipment of their homes. To tell the truth, that is exactly what might be said of nomads, Bohemians, gossips, or gallivanters at home or abroad, but the Persian tramp seems to have been the first to make a real luxury out of the necessities of his mode of life. He invented the soft luxury of pile carpets, not indeed for mere domestic purposes, but as a *multum in parvo* travelling companion. To the Persian his carpet became his bed, his tent, and his household furniture generally. He unrolled it and sat or slept on it whenever or wherever the humour prompted him, he picniced on it in the open, and camped on it in the shade, and according to his taste, his means, or his vanity, he took a great pride in the softness of its pile and the beauty of its tints and texture; with the result that Per-



PUBLIC FOUNTAIN AT WORCESTER
CROSS.

Given by John Brixton, Esq.
Photo by] [Thos. Ball.

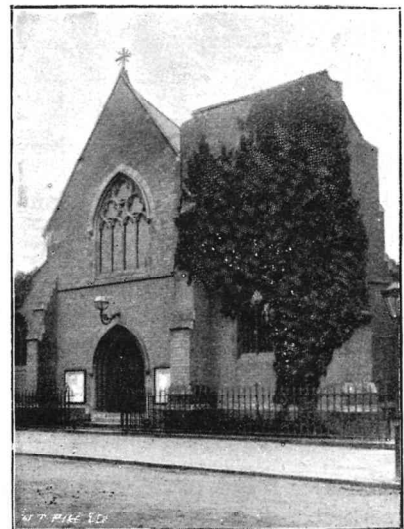
sian carpets eventually attained a perfection and a prestige which they have even yet retained. From Persia the Mohammedan conquerors brought the industry of carpet weaving to India, but how the art first came to Europe it is difficult to say. Belgium at all events had a famous reputation in the carpet trade at an early period, and the enterprising weavers of Kidderminster adopted the industry about the year 1735. At that time trade secrets were guarded more vigilantly even than religious mysteries, and between the Kidderminster manufacturers, whose operations were at first confined to the production of what are known as Scotch, or "flat," carpets (from their having no pile), and between the Wilton, Axminster, Brussels, and other carpet manufacturerers there existed a perfectly mutual and thoroughly conscientious jealousy. How the secret of making Brussels carpets is alleged to have been stolen from Belgium by Mr. Broom, the enterprising Kidderminster man who, about the year 1749, is said to have smuggled into England a live Brussels artisan, is one of the comedies of industrial history. The foreign workman, it seems, was kept a close prisoner in a secluded room in his master's house in Kidderminster, where a Brussels loom had been secretly erected, and master and man worked night and day by candle light, the windows being closely shuttered to exclude the intrusion of prying eyes; for there was as much jealousy between individual weavers as between rival towns. The excellence of the cut, or pile, carpets turned out by this weaver with the aid of his captive Belgian not only enriched himself, but had the further desirable effect of exciting the envy of his neighbours, one of whom, however, at length succeeded in taking observations through a hole in the window, and being a practical expert, succeeded in discovering the special characteristics of the Brussels loom, which soon after became generally adopted in Kidderminster. Thenceforward the manufacture of pile carpets of various kinds



BAPTIST CHAPEL.

Photo by] [Thos. Ball.

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ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

Photo by] [Thos. Ball.

became a great industry in the town, attracting to itself nearly all the skill and enterprise from the other textile trades of the town, and it is an odd commentary on the mutability and deceptiveness of names that the so-called Kidderminster carpets have now no necessary connection with the place, and are indeed chiefly made north of the Tweed, while Kidderminster has for many years been the chief seat of production for Brussels carpets, the manufacture of which, as well as of tapestry and velvet pile carpets, has been brought to unique perfection here. No doubt the trade has fluctuated considerably even in modern times, owing in part to the competition of Yorkshire and German manufacturers, but of late years Kidderminster has made gigantic strides and has outdistanced all rivals, especially in the quality of Brussels and velvet pile carpets. These highly satisfactory results have been brought about by the enterprise of the manufacturers themselves, aided by the public spirited co-operation of the Municipal Council, and all present appearances indicate that the town is determined at all hazards



Photo by]

GENERAL POST OFFICE.

[Thos. Ball.

not only to maintain, but to enhance, its prestige and pre-eminence in this great industry. The Art and Technical schools of the borough are giving the rising generation a splendid educational equipment to enable them to cope with any possible rivalry in the future; and while the manufacturers hesitate at no expense to avail themselves of any improvements that may enhance the quality or cheapen the production of their specialities, they insist on the maintenance of the highest standard of probity in the trade, so as to ensure that the character of their goods may not, for the sake of mere temporary profit, suffer any prejudice in the home or foreign markets. The improvement of communications by canal and railway, the introduction of power looms and jacquard apparatus, and the various improvements in machinery, etc., are benefits which Kidderminster manufacturers have experienced in common with those of other towns, but the highly trained skill of the Kidderminster artisans, and the inherited traditions handed down through generations among the local families of skilled workers, are special advantages, to which may be added another of a purely local character.

It is said that the unrivalled brilliancy and durability of colour for which the carpets made here are famed, are to a large extent due to the peculiar character of the water of the river Stour, which, being largely impregnated with fullers' earth and iron, is unrivalled for scouring and "striking" purposes.

But it has long been felt that Kidderminster should not depend wholly upon one industry, this having been more strongly emphasised by the keen competition that has arisen of recent years. Several projects have been started from time to time to inaugurate new lines of trade, but failure has more or less been the result until recently, when a very successful departure in cycle manufacturing has been made. The great boom in the cycle trade, and the probable brisk business that will shortly be done in motor cars, etc., has justified the new attempt, and Kidderminster being very favourably situated for such a trade, has every prospect of becoming a notable centre of the industry. The Kidderminster Cycle Co., Ltd., and Cole's Champion Cycle, stand out prominently in the new

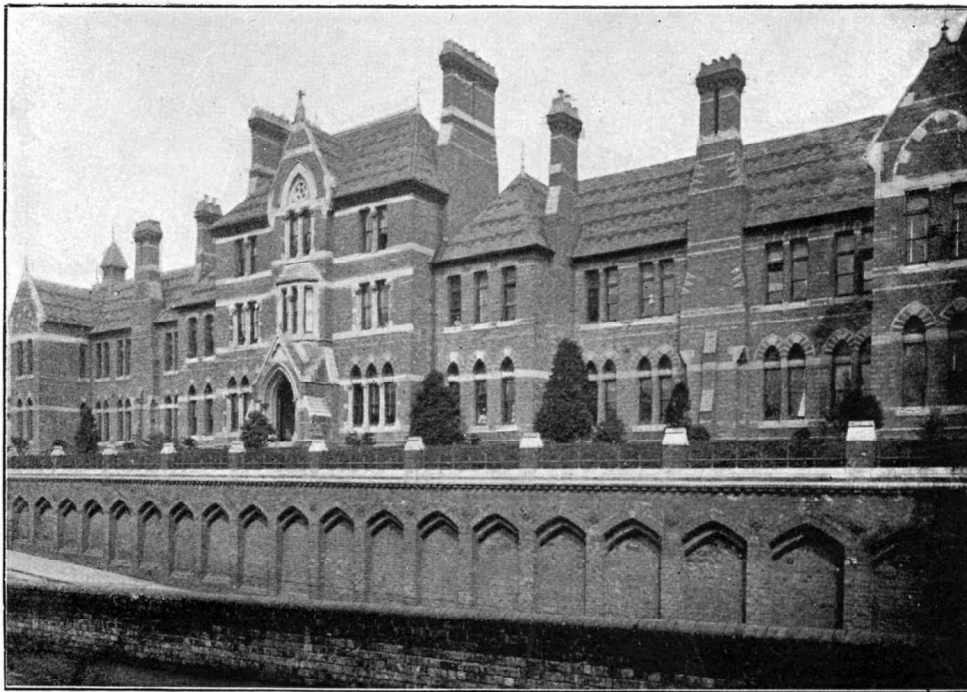


Photo by]

THE INFIRMARY.

[Thos. Ball.

movement, and no doubt they will long continue to hold a foremost position in the line they have practically created in the town.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT.

Kidderminster was a borough by prescription, but received a Charter from Charles I. in 1637. Its existing municipal government was constituted in 1888, and comprises a Mayor, six Aldermen, and eighteen Councillors, the Corporation also acting as the Urban District Council. The town has its own separate commission of the peace, its petty sessions and county courts, etc., and all the institutions of a well organised modern parliamentary and municipal borough with a population bordering on 30,000. Owing to the public spirit of the local authorities, great and indeed revolutionary, improvements have been made in the architectural and general character of Kidderminster during recent years; and judged by the mortality statistics and other indications, it is

one of the healthiest towns in England. It would of course be an exaggeration to say that there is not room for further improvement in some of its architectural features. An ancient industrial town that had existed for centuries before our modern ideas of sanitation and street architecture became adopted, even in our great metropolitan and provincial centres, could not fail to have slums and lanes,

"Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air."

Kidderminster was no exception to this rule, and indeed had at one time almost a pride in its quaint old lanes and alleys crowded with ancient tenements, and boasting of names that must have been invented by some mute inglorious prototype of Dickens, who lavished a sardonic humour on the nomenclature of some of those unassuming passages. "California," "Trafalgar," and "Jerusalem" were evidently so named in a light-hearted vein of irony, but "Gallows Lane" and "Cursefield" were obviously thus branded in a spirit of malice, while "Mud Island," "Holland" and "The Mouth of



Photo by]

KIDDERMINSTER GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

[Thos. Ball.

the Nile," may be accepted as fairly and picturesquely descriptive of the character of some of the low-lying portions subject to the periodical inundations of the malodorous Daddle Brook, which, however, has long since been arched over and converted into a useful sewer. Even the principal streets of the town, however, were very irregular, but this was more or less the characteristic of all old towns except those founded by the Romans, and the irregular nature of the site, on the uneven grounds on both sides of the Stour, also contributed to give a quaint incongruous appearance to the town. It is to be noted that most of the sarcasm about the architectural and general character of Kidderminster was home-grown, which robbed it of its sting. For instance, it used at one time to be a much appreciated witticism among citizens of the carpet borough, that a Kidderminster man could be known all over the world from his habit of walking in the middle of the road, owing to the habit he acquired in his native town of avoiding the unpaved side walks. This reproach no longer exists, and although many of the streets are sinuous and irregular in their course, they are well paved and

clean, and contain many fine modern buildings. A very efficient system of drainage was completed in 1873, and great architectural and other public improvements have been made since then, efficient sanitation receiving the attention such an important matter demands. The town has an ample supply of excellent water from the Corporation water works, on the Stourport Road, these works, which were established in 1872, being equipped with every modern improvement, and Kidderminster has been lighted by gas since 1819, the works being in Pitt's Lane. In such an ancient borough the municipal regalia has a special interest, and among the recent additions to it, the loving cup of solid silver, presented in 1894 by the Earl of Dudley, is a notable feature both as a work of art and as illustrating the interest taken in the town by the present Lord of the Manor, who is also high steward and principal landowner. The Corporation regalia suggests a reference to some of the old, and for the most part now obsolete, municipal customs, which were in some instances more quaint than



Photo by]

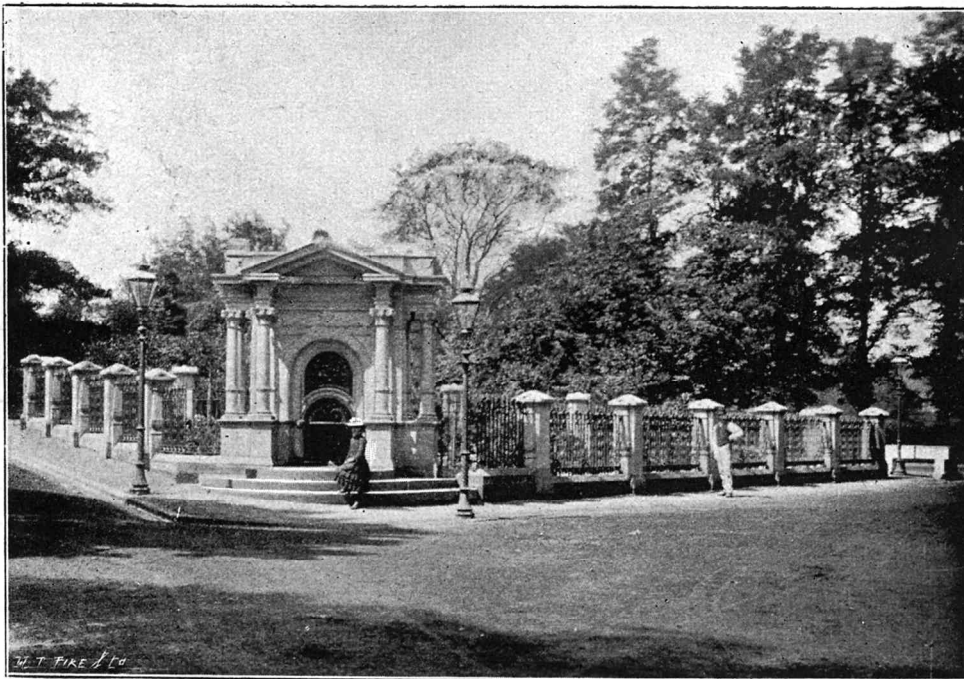
COVENTRY STREET BOARD SCHOOLS.

[Thos. Ball.

convenient. The "lawless hour," when, at the election of bailiff, pots of apples were scrambled for in the streets, was an institution that could scarcely survive in our present decorous times, any more than the other obsolete custom of "heaving," on Easter Mondays, when men had the privilege of lifting indiscriminately any women they met in the streets and kissing them, the ladies having also the privilege of returning the compliment or demanding a pecuniary fine. "Heaving" seems to have demanded a considerable share of athletic power, and "Bannering" was also an observance that often required no small degree of muscular activity, the parties engaged in beating the parish boundaries having not infrequently to include in the programme the beating of similar parties from neighbouring parishes who disputed the position of the scientific frontier. The Bridgenorth Fair, however, still survives as a sort of Bank Holiday by prescription. It takes place in June, and Kidderminster is for the time a scene of great gaiety, when looms are still and musicians are busy.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND INSTITUTIONS, ETC.

The Town Hall, located in Vicar Street, was erected in 1876 from designs of Mr. J. T. Meredith, and has an imposing frontage of close on seventy feet in Vicar Street. It is a handsome building of brick and stone, in the Renaissance style, and contains a spacious council chamber, with Committee and consulting-rooms, the Mayor's parlour, town clerk's offices, police courts and municipal and police offices, etc. The Corporation buildings close by form the great social centre of the town. They stand in what was the garden of old Vicarage House, and were erected as Kidderminster Public Rooms in 1853, the foundation stone being laid by the Earl of Dudley, and in 1874 they were acquired by the Corporation. They contain a large chamber, measuring sixty feet by thirty-five feet, and used as the Corn Exchange, besides a fine concert-hall measuring ninety feet by forty-five feet, and capable of seating 800 persons, the orchestra accommodating 100 performers. There is a fine



PUBLIC FOUNTAIN AT BLAKEBROOK, PRESENTED BY THE LATE D. W. GOODWIN, ESQ.
Photo by [Thos. Ball.]

organ, and the building contains retiring and dressing-rooms, news-rooms, etc., the Chamber of Commerce also holding their meetings here. The Kidderminster and District School of Science and Art, on a site given by D. W. Goodwin, Esq., J.P., at the junction of Exchange Street and Market Street, were opened in 1879, and comprise a very handsome block of buildings in the Early Renaissance style. They contain antique and painting-rooms, modelling-rooms, masters' rooms, etc., in addition to the large hall accommodating 120 students, and the various departments are very completely equipped. These schools were designed by Mr. J. M. Gething, as were also the Science and Technical Schools adjoining. These latter schools are of great importance, and since they were erected in 1887 as the nucleus of a great institute of literature, science and art, they have greatly stimulated the progress of technical and general education in the district. They contain various chemical and physical laboratories, class-rooms, and lecture-rooms, professors' rooms, etc., there being also a dye-house on the premises, and a comprehensive art gallery and museum to the rear. It is needless to

say that all branches of technical work connected with the carpet and other textile trades receive special attention here, and indeed these schools are of the greatest possible importance to the future interests of the town's staple trade. In Market Street the Free Public Library is also a monument to the public spirit of the citizens. The Libraries Act was adopted in Kidderminster so early as the year 1854, and in 1894 the present fine home of the Lending Library was opened, among the notable benefactors of this useful institution being Mr. Tomkinson, Mayor of the borough in 1895, and A. F. Godson, Esq., M.P. The building contains reference and lending libraries, news and reading-rooms, lecture-rooms, etc., and is one of the great intellectual centres of the town. The Workmen's Club and Institute, in Coventry Street, dates from 1856, and contains library, reading and recreation-rooms, billiard-room, etc., and the Masonic Hall and Club in Mill Street is also a notable institution. It was opened in 1879, and contains a spacious lodge room, dining, reading, card and recreation-rooms, etc. The whole place is furnished in very elegant style, and although considerable damage



Photo by]

HABBERLEY VALLEY.

[Thos. Ball.

was caused by the recent accidental fire, when the regalia of the Mayor and other members were destroyed, this will cause but a temporary inconvenience. The town contains many good social, athletic, and trade clubs, cricket, football, and other recreations being well organised, besides photographic clubs, musical and friendly societies, etc., and the Corporation Baths in Mill Street, the Theatre Royal and Opera House on Comberton Hill, and the Infirmary in Mill Street are also notable institutions, the latter having been considerably improved during recent years, especially in 1886, when the fever wing was converted into a children's hospital at the expense of Thomas Lea, Esq., M.P., J.P. The Post Office in Exchange Street, and the Inland Revenue Offices in Swan Street, represent the Imperial establishments of the town. Among educational establishments the Grammar School demands special mention. It was re-founded in 1637, and still later, in 1874, was re-organised under a new scheme to adapt it to the advanced requirements of modern times. Even since then considerable improvements have been made, including the opening of a special

preparatory department in 1892. The building is a fine structure, the school and class-rooms, lecture hall, etc., being designed and equipped on improved modern lines, and there is an excellent gymnasium, five courts, etc. The school provides a first class modern education in modern languages, art, and classical and commercial subjects, and there are several prizes and scholarships to stimulate the ambition of the students, including the Brinton Silver Medal, which is awarded annually to the best boy in the school. In addition, there are many very superior private schools, besides Board and other elementary schools, and in a town that cherishes associations of such distinguished residents as Richard Baxter and Waller the poet, and such native celebrities as Richard de Kidderminster, the fearless opponent of the Reformation, and Sir Rowland Hill, the originator of the penny postage, there is naturally a high standard of local patriotism. Sir Rowland Hill was born in Kidderminster in 1795, and inaugurated the penny postage in January, 1840. The handsome marble statue to this distinguished son of the borough, which stands in front of the Town Hall, was designed by Thomas Brock, Esq., R.A., and was erected by subscriptions for the most part of penny stamps. The



HAGLEY CHURCH.

Photo by]

[J. T. Barker, Stourbridge.

Baxter Statue of white marble in the Bull Ring also commemorates a notable resident, who figured conspicuously in the Civil Wars, when he resigned his position of minister of St. Mary's, Kidderminster, to become chaplain to the Parliamentary Army. He however opposed the usurpation of Cromwell, and after the Restoration became King's Chaplain, and took part in the Savoy Conference. Later on he was imprisoned, but was eventually released, and died in 1691 after an eventful career. The statue, which was modelled by Mr. F. Brock, stands on a granite pedestal, and was unveiled in 1875. The house in which Baxter resided is still shown in High Street, and the pulpit from which he preached in St. Mary's is preserved in the Unitarian Chapel, while a portrait of this famous minister is to be seen in a building adjoining the parish church. The parish church of St. Mary and All Saints is the most interesting institution in the town from a historic point of view. It is supposed that on the spot where the present edifice stands Earl Cynebert founded in the first half of the 8th century the church or monastery from which the town took its name. Many successive edifices have been since then reared on the site, the existing building being a noble pile on an eminence overlooking the valley of the Stour, the embattled and pinnacled western tower forming a conspicuous landmark

for miles around. Many improvements and restorations, etc., have been made in recent years, and among the conspicuous features may be mentioned the richly carved stone pulpit and massive font, the alabaster reredos erected in 1880 in the chancel from the designs of Mr. J. W. Hopkins, the clerestory windows of stained glass to the memory of the late Dr. Claughton, Bishop of St. Alban's, and previously vicar of St. Mary's, the memorial windows to Mr. William Charles Awdry, and various brasses and altar tombs of the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries to members of the Blount, Beauchamp, and Cooksey families, etc. In 1895 the church underwent extensive restoration at the expense of John Brinton, Esq., J.P., formerly M.P. for the borough, and a conspicuous feature is the cloister built in 1888 as a memorial to the late Earl of Dudley, the fine organ erected in 1872. The churches of St. George, St. John the Baptist, and the Holy Innocents, with the mission churches of St. Andrew's and St. James's, and the churches of St. Barnabas at Franche and of the Holy Trinity

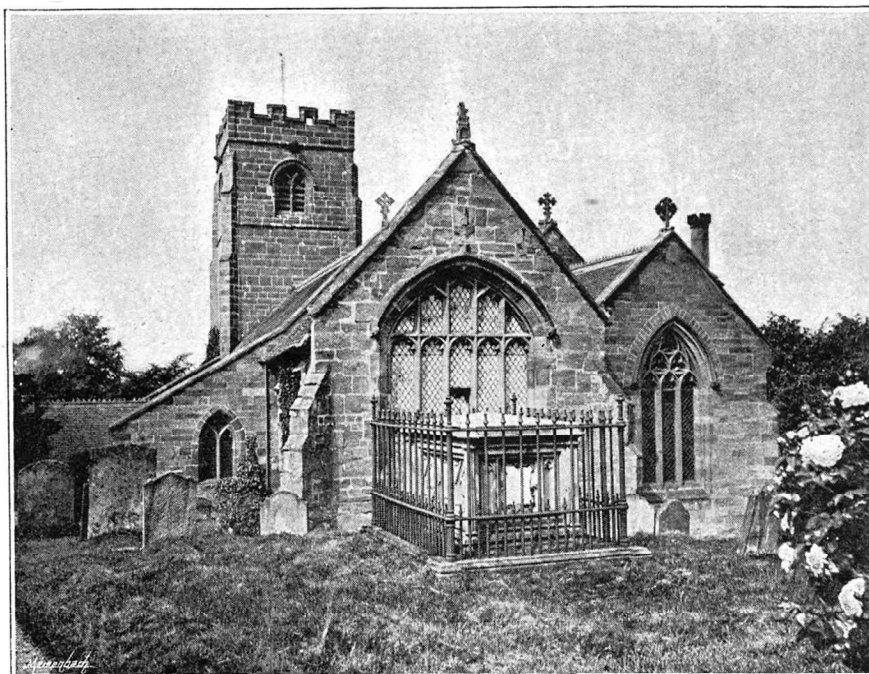


Photo by]

CLENT CHURCH.

[J. T. Barker, Stourbridge.

at Trimpley, are all interesting buildings. The Baxter Congregational Church, adjoining the Town Bridge, was erected in 1885 on the site of the Old Meeting House, and has a lofty tower and spire, rising to a total height of 140 feet. The Unitarian chapel and the baptist, Wesleyan, and Primitive Methodist chapels, are all commodious buildings, and the Countess of Huntingdon's Church is also a conspicuous architectural feature. The Catholic Church of St. Ambrose is a handsome edifice in the Early English and Decorated styles. The new cemetery of sixteen acres, opened in 1878, is kept in beautiful order under the control of a Burial Board, and contains two neat mortuary chapels, whilst among the other public features of the town the fine bridge of five arches which spans the river Stour may be mentioned, as well as the two handsome drinking fountains, that at Worcester Cross having been the gift of John Brinton, Esq., J.P. It was erected from the designs of J. T. Meredith, Esq., and forms an attractive ornament close to the railway station. The drinking fountain at Blakebrook was designed by J. M. Gethings, Esq., and was erected at the cost of the late D. W. Godwin, Esq., J.P.

One of the glories of the town is Brinton Park, which comprises about twenty-four acres of ground in a splendid position, close to Sutton Common and the Stourport Road, and commanding extensive and beautiful views. It was presented to the town in 1887 by John Brinton, Esq., and is admirably laid out, forming an unrivalled promenade and place of recreation. Kidderminster has a well equipped fire brigade, and is a great Volunteer centre, and in fact, possesses all the institutions of a progressive modern borough. It possesses an excellent service of trains both for goods and passenger traffic, with a commodious station on the West-Midland section of the Great Western Railway, and the opening of the loop line to Bewdley in 1878 has considerably enhanced the resources of the town in this respect. The central position of Kidderminster as regards Birmingham, Worcester, and other important midland centres is a great advantage, and the perfection of the communications by rail and water are of paramount importance. Even before the introduction of railways the attempt of Andrew Yarrington to render the Stour navigable, and the opening of the Staffordshire and Worcestershire

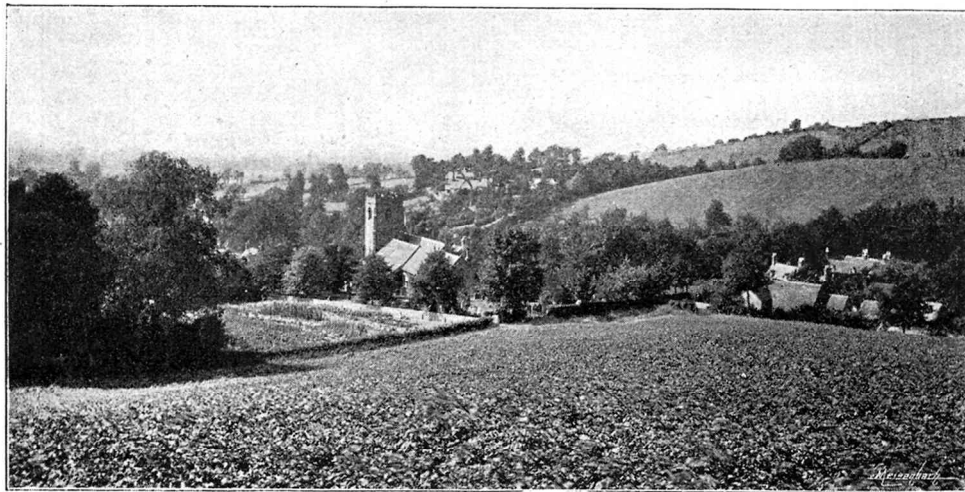


Photo by]

VIEW ON THE CLENT HILL. [C. F. Moody, Stourbridge.

Canal were very important events, and the facilities for cheap water transport by the canal, still form a great factor in the resources of an industrial town. Kidderminster, as the local capital of a rich agricultural district, has well attended fairs and markets for corn, cattle, and agricultural products, the spacious cattle markets in New Road affording every convenience for a large trade. The prosperity of the town is indicated by the presence here of three large branch banks, and the enterprise and public spirit of the residents are reflected in their three local weekly papers, the *Shuttle*, the *Times*, and the *Sun*, each of which has a large circulation throughout the district. The country around Kidderminster abounds with places of interest. Habberley Valley is a famous old established resort for pic-nic and pleasure parties, and was thrown open to the public as a Jubilee gift in 1887 by J. H. Crane, Esq., of Oakhampton. Trimpley, Upper Arley, Ribbesford, Bewdley, Franche, Chaddesley, Corbett, Stourport, Kinver, Bellbroughton, and many other places within easy reach, afford unlimited scope for interesting exploration, many beautiful mansions being scattered all over this picturesque district.

GENERAL TRADE.

THE KIDDERMINSTER CYCLE COMPANY, LIMITED, EXCELSIOR WORKS, NEXT THE TOWN HALL. DIRECTORS: MESSRS. J. PRITCHARD (CHAIRMAN), T. GRIFFIN, H. G. HENDERSON, R. JENKINS, F. C. JOTHAM, M. TOMKINSON, AND J. SANDERS; MANAGER: JOSEPH SANDERS; SECRETARY: H. G. IVENS.—For many years past practically the whole of the artisan population of the town of Kidderminster has been dependent upon the carpet trade, and it has followed as a necessary sequence that whenever that trade passes through a period of depression, the distress among the working classes is very wide-spread. The remedy for this state of things is a very obvious one—would that it were as easy to accomplish as it is to perceive it—and during the early part of the year 1896 a movement was set on foot by several of the leading gentlemen of the town in the direction of bringing about or encouraging the introduction and establishment of new industries. Unfortunately, none of the schemes considered by these public spirited men proved feasible, the company which was to have been formed to carry out any projects which might have been decided upon was dropped; then, just as the people of the town were



EXCELSIOR WORKS.

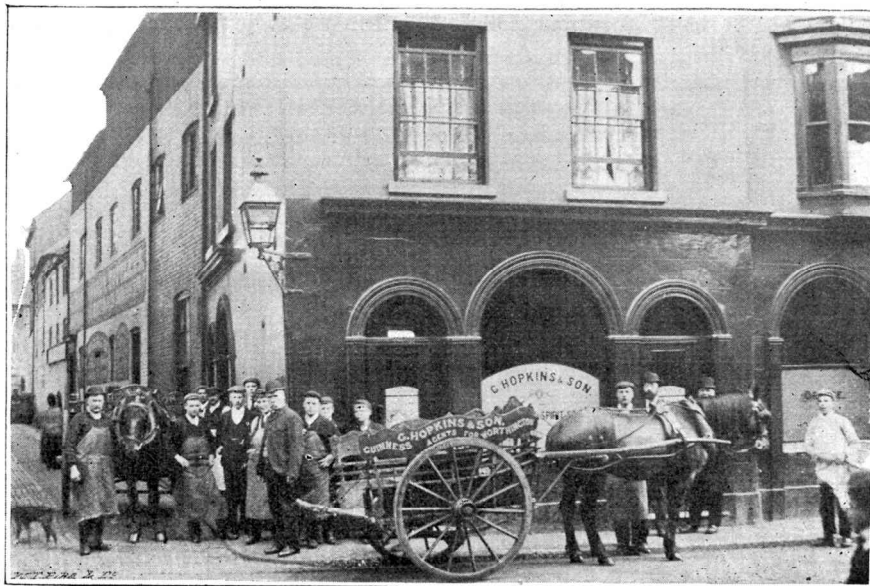
accepting the regrettable fact that so excellent an object appeared unattainable, the gentlemen whose names appear above formed this company, and their enterprise has been rewarded by a measure of success almost—if that be possible—equal to its deserts. The company was registered in August, 1896, and began operations by acquiring the business and connection of Mr. Joseph Sanders, who had for some years carried on a considerable business as a cycle maker, and who enjoys the distinction of being the only Kidderminster man whose bicycles have carried their riders in as prize-winners in races. He is also the inventor and patentee of the “Royal Severn” brake, which has recently come so rapidly into public favour. He accepted the post of manager of the works of the new company, and under his skilled superintendence bicycles known as the “Royal Severn” have been turned out in considerable quantities, and have already won golden opinions from their purchasers and all who have inspected or ridden them. Previous to the advent of this company, the selection of machines to be obtained in the town was singularly limited, in fact we have heard it said that practically only one bicycle with any pretensions to be a really first class machine was known there; but now, at the extensive show-rooms of this company, a wide range of choice is offered to those fortunate individuals

who can afford to pay the prices demanded by the advertising aristocrats of the cycle making world, as the company is sole agent in the district for the Humber, the Osmond, the Royal Enfield, and the Raleigh Companies, and also for that less expensive, but still most serviceable of moderate priced mounts, the "Wulfruna." We may be prejudiced, but we must confess that having carefully tested and compared one of the beautifully finished machines turned out by the company and bearing its tasteful emblem, the "Royal Severn" Salmon, we should not feel inclined to purchase any more expensive mount, as we do not believe that it is possible for the cycle maker's art, in its present state of development, to turn out an easier running, more perfect, or more graceful machine. The position of official repairer to the Cyclists' Touring Club is usually granted to the leading manufacturer in each town, so we need hardly say that the well known winged wheel, which is the symbol of this distinction, is to be found in Kidderminster adorning this company's premises. The premises themselves are admirably adapted for the purposes of the company's business. As will be seen from our photograph, there is a handsome plate-glass front window for the display of specimen machines, while almost the whole of the first floor is taken up by one of the finest show-rooms in the Midlands, around which stand rows of the beautiful cycles to which we have before referred. Ascending yet higher we find ourselves in the fitting up and finishing-rooms, fitted with lathes for screw cutting and turning, wheel building, etc., and the spacious stock-room, wherein are piles of tubing, bales of tyres, and quantities of rims, spokes, saddles and other components of the finished cycle. Descending to earth again, we turn into the carriage way at the side of the shop, and pass down it into a large open yard, wherein stand two extensive buildings of brick and corrugated iron. The first proves to be, to borrow a word from our horsey friends, the "stable" of the establishment, containing a large number of the machines which are daily being let out on hire by the company. The other building is the factory proper, and in it a bicycle frame is glowing with an intensity which tries one's eyes, as a workman steadily directs a hissing Bunsen jet of flame upon it and deftly coaxes a blue grey material, which under the fusing influence of the burner speedily becomes almost incandescent, and which we are informed is brass spelter, to run into the almost imperceptible joints of the frame, and which will, when cold, unite it solidly. Other men are busy filing, tapping, polishing, and the whole room presents a spectacle which, if rather trying to the ears, must assuredly gladden the hearts of those who wish to see the workers of the town well and fully occupied. In another part of the premises is the enamelling-room, and here our guide astonishes us by picking up a finished frame and striking it several hard blows with an iron rod. We expect to see splinters; but no, he has done it to show us that the enamel is nearly as hard as the metal itself, for not a mark is to be seen upon the glossy surface. Altogether we leave the works in a state of mind bordering on amazement, to find so complete a cycle factory running with such obvious smoothness in a town wherein it has only been established some six months. Before concluding our brief notice of this company, we would remark that each of the directors, and also almost everyone of the numerous body of shareholders, is a practical and enthusiastic cyclist. In these days, when the hope of making money out of "the cycle boom" is attracting into the trade men who are entirely ignorant of it, this fact is of very great weight, as "the proof of the pudding is in the eating," and the machines which satisfy the most experienced and therefore the most wisely critical riders in the district have, in that fact alone, the best of testimonials.

MESSRS. RICHARD SMITH AND SONS, THE CARPET MANUFACTURING COMPANY, LIMITED, CARPET AND RUG MANUFACTURERS.—In the development of the carpet and rug manufacture with which Kidderminster has been so long and famously identified, Messrs. Richard Smith and Sons have played an important part in securing for the products of this interesting town a wide demand at home and abroad. The firm's operations cover a period of half a century, the founder being Mr. Richard Smith, who was succeeded by his sons Messrs. W. H. Smith, Edward Smith (who died in 1892), and John Smith. An amalgamation of the two firms of Messrs. Richard Smith and Sons and Messrs. Morton and Sons, took place in 1890; and a limited company was formed with Mr. W. H. Smith as Chairman of Directors. In 1893 and 1894 the firm of Messrs. Anderson, Lawson and Co., of Glasgow, was amalgamated with the Company, Mr. Anderson becoming a Director. Mr. W. H. Smith, who still heads the controlling body, is a Justice of Peace, County Councillor, and Alderman of the Borough. He has been Mayor of Kidderminster, and during his time has made as many as forty-six passages to America. The London offices and departments are in the particular charge of Mr. John Smith; Mr. W. A. Lawson being the general manager; Mr. Thomas Cooper, manager of the Mechanical and Crompton departments; and Mr. A. G. Viney being the cashier to the Company. Besides their several large mills in Kidderminster, the Company have a mill in Stourport; and their manufactures, which are very extensive and varied, are of a uniformly high standard, consistent with the old established renown of Kidderminster, and of Messrs. Anderson, Lawson and Co., for the sterling excellence of their productions in chenille curtains and other textile fabrics. The Kidderminster products are the Wilton and Brussels carpets in piece or bordered square, Victorian Axminster (made in piece goods or seamless carpets to any shape or design), Princess seamless carpets, patent Turkey carpets, Imperial Damask, Twill and Dutch carpets, Wolseley carpets and rugs, corridor carpets, furniture coverings, patent Axminster rugs, Tanjore and Kyber rugs, beam rugs and mats, church seating and special rugs and mats for all purposes. An especial and artistic department of work has been opened out in the making of carpets, rugs, and mats with monograms and other designs and of special patterns, suitable to the decoration and styles of different places alike in houses, waiting-rooms, steamships, hotels, churches and public institutions. Particular interest attaches to the Park Wharf Works, where the firm have the famous Crompton loom department, and in which forty-six of these magnificent machines are held. It has taken twenty years' time, and an outlay of some £100,000 to invent and perfect this loom, the rights of which were secured from the Crompton Loom Works, Worcester, Mass., U.S.A., by Messrs. Richard Smith and Sons for Europe about eighteen months ago. The purchase of this loom was considered one of the largest loom enterprises known. The loom itself is one of the most wonderful pieces of mechanism ever introduced

into the carpet industry, its capacity for colouring and shading being unlimited, and its capabilities for fineness of texture and productive powers being unequalled by any other loom in the world. The worsted is first wound on small bobbins which are placed on a creel or table at the leading on or setting machine, on which they are arranged according to the pattern in front of the work, and spool after spool of most beautiful colours of worsted of the pattern desired are rolled up until the entire design is completed. Hereafter, the fabrics are taken to the threading machine—another example of clever and inventive skill—where each end of the worsted is correctly threaded into the tube frames. These frames are taken to the looms, and placed in an endless chain, from which they are brought by means of a pair of mechanical working hands in successive turns. A row of tufts of worsted, which is wound on the spool, and projects through the ends of the tubes, is woven or bound into the cloth by a remarkable contrivance, the same being cut in succession by a guillotine knife, and the bobbins re-placed on the chain. For the better utilising of these useful contrivances the Crompton department is being extended, for which purpose large building operations are presently proceeding. The Brussels and chenille departments adjoin the Crompton Loom department. The former has a production of about seven miles of carpet per week, and the chenille Axminster department is alone capable of producing as many as five and six thousand rugs and mats per week, besides seamless and other carpets. Connected with the chenille department is an invention and speciality of the firm's own in the form of a loom for the construction of the Royal Seamless Princess Carpet, seamless carpets being produced in this cloth from nine feet to thirty-five feet square, in looms constructed by the firm expressly for this work. In addition to the above brief particulars we may add that the mechanical, experimenting, engineering, and electric lighting departments of this Company are most complete, the greater portion of the works being lit by electricity. The works of the Company extend over a considerable part of the town's area, and afford employment to over 2000 people. The firm's London warehouse is situated at 33 and 34, Warwick Lane, and 4, Paternoster Square—off Newgate Street, E.C.; and they have depots at Glasgow, Paris, and Melbourne. The telegrams despatched to this house bear the abbreviated address "Smithsons, Kidderminster," and there is communication with the National Telephonic Agency (No. 8).

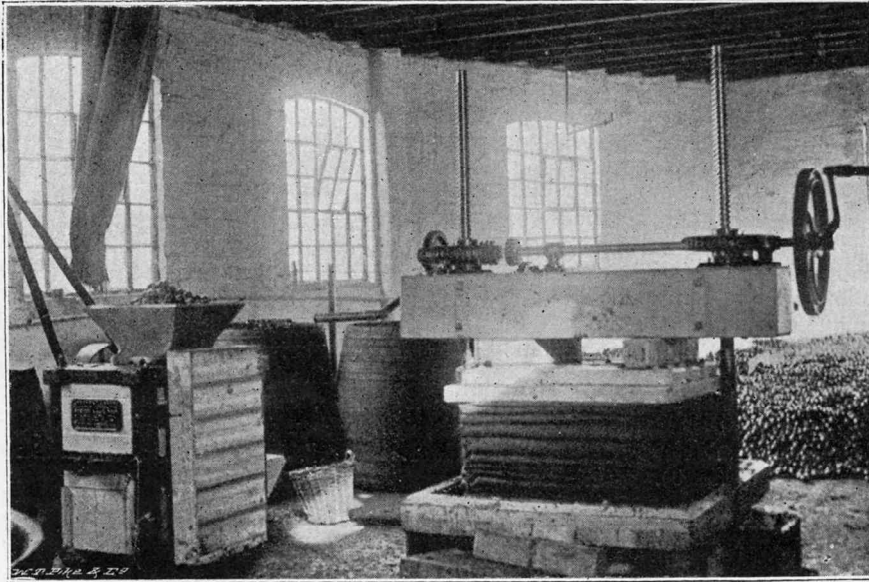
MESSRS. G. HOPKINS AND SON, WINE AND SPIRIT MERCHANTS, WHOLESALE BOTTLERS OF ALES AND STOUTS, CIDER MAKERS AND BOTTLERS, MILL STREET.—This is one of the oldest and most reputable wine and spirit businesses connected with Worcestershire. Founded as far back as 1859 by the late Mr. George Hopkins, the management passed into the hands of that gentleman's son and former partner, Mr. A. G. Hopkins, in 1889, since which time the concern has been considerably developed. The firm's head-quarters at Mill Street, Kidderminster, are centrally situated, and comprise a large amount of accommodation, including well appointed offices and stores with extensive cellarage beneath, and a commodious three storey cider factory



GENERAL VIEW OF PREMISES AND STAFF.

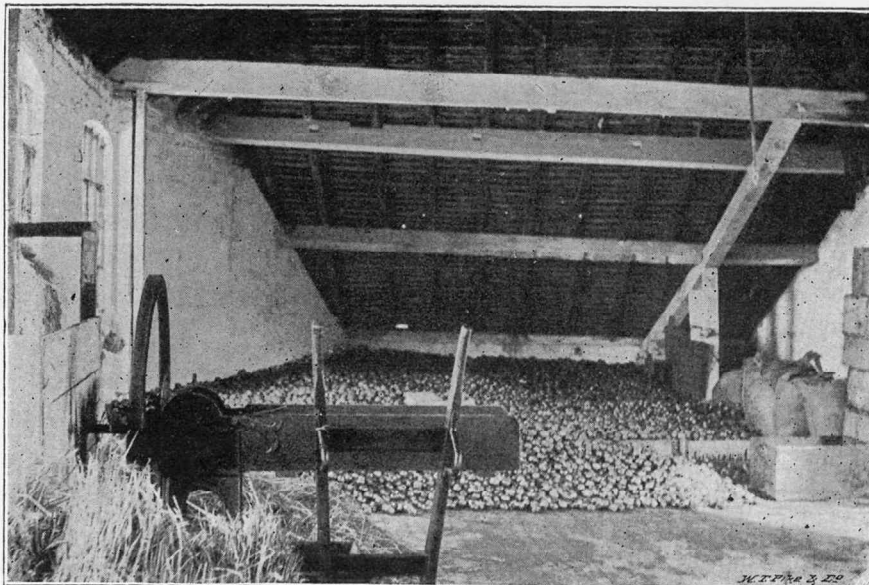
attached. The cellars have been specially re-modelled in order to ensure efficient laying down, maturing, bottling, etc., and everything is at hand that could tend to secure the best and most satisfactory results. An exceptionally complete and well selected stock is held, embracing amongst other specialities, some noteworthy qualities of fine old blended spirits, such, for example, as their celebrated White Wings Whisky, one of the most delicate and reliable blends of Scotch hitherto placed upon the market. The spirit referred to is sold in two grades, according to age, and at forty-four shillings and forty-eight shillings per dozen respectively. In each instance the value is of the soundest, and at the price, the whisky could not possibly be surpassed. The

high class character of the firm's operations as ale and stout bottlers will be inferred, when we mention that they act as the accredited bottlers in this district for Allsopp, Bass, Worthington, Guinness, and Jacob's Pilsener Lager Beer, practically the leading houses in the trade. Burton ales and Guinness' stout are also supplied in casks. Messrs. Hopkins have made a name recently as cider makers. The palat-



FIRST FLOOR OF CIDER FACTORY (STORAGE, GRINDING, PRESSING, ETC.).

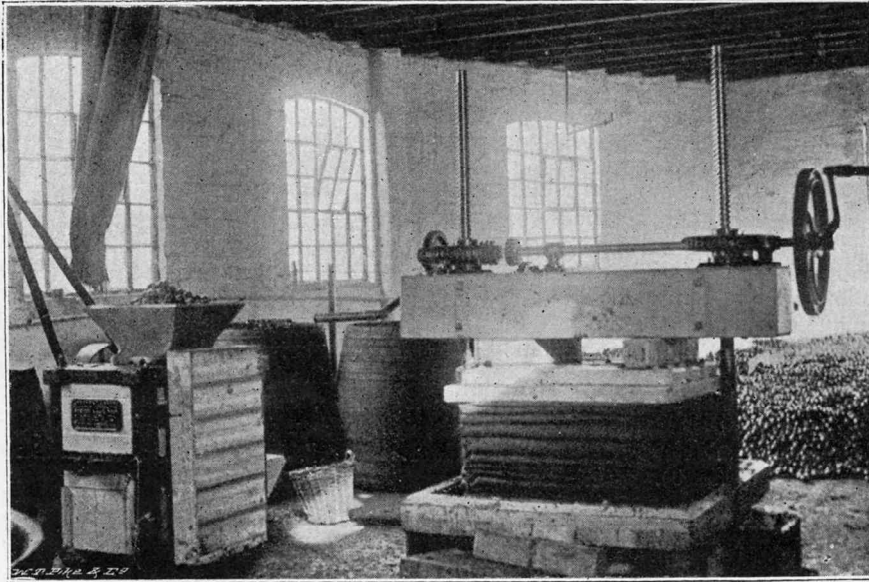
able and refreshing qualities of Worcestershire cider have long been widely recognised, but it is only within recent years, and by the firm under notice, that its manufacture has been put on anything like a proper basis. Thanks to Mr. A. G. Hopkins's enterprise, the public have now an opportunity of seeing the process of cider making carried on under cleanly conditions and in accordance with modern principles. The factory is equipped with the latest and most approved appliances, and at the proper season tons of well selected apples are ground, pressed, and the juice passed by gravitation into suitable receivers to be fermented, and duly racked from sediment, as cider. The firm are at present in a position to place bottled



TOP FLOOR OF CIDER FACTORY (STORAGE AND MELLOWING OF APPLES).

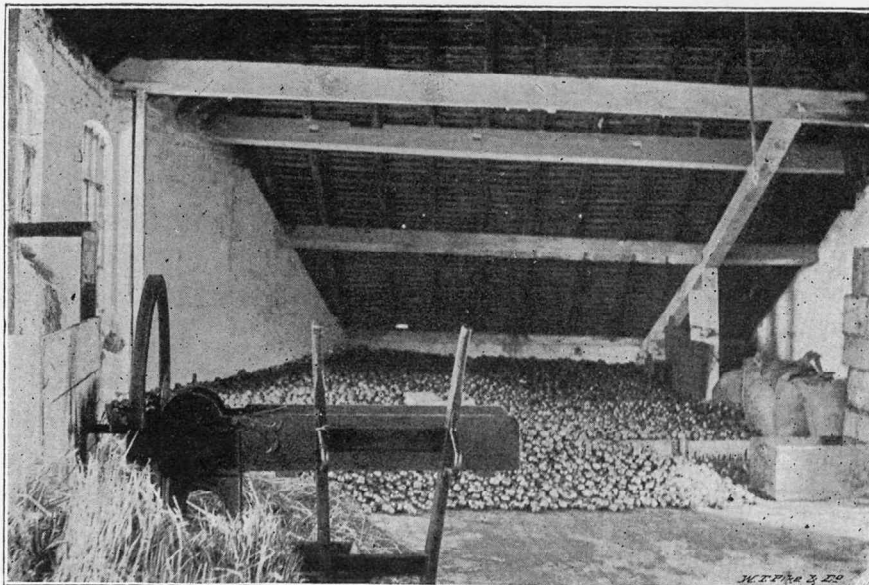
cider of the soundest quality on the market at a moderate price. It can likewise be supplied in bulk, and a pleasanter or healthier beverage could scarcely be desired. We should mention, however, that all bottled cider supplied by Messrs. Hopkins is labelled "Pomosa Corona" *Cider Champagne*. The whole details of the business are closely supervised by the principal in person, who has had over twenty years' experience of its

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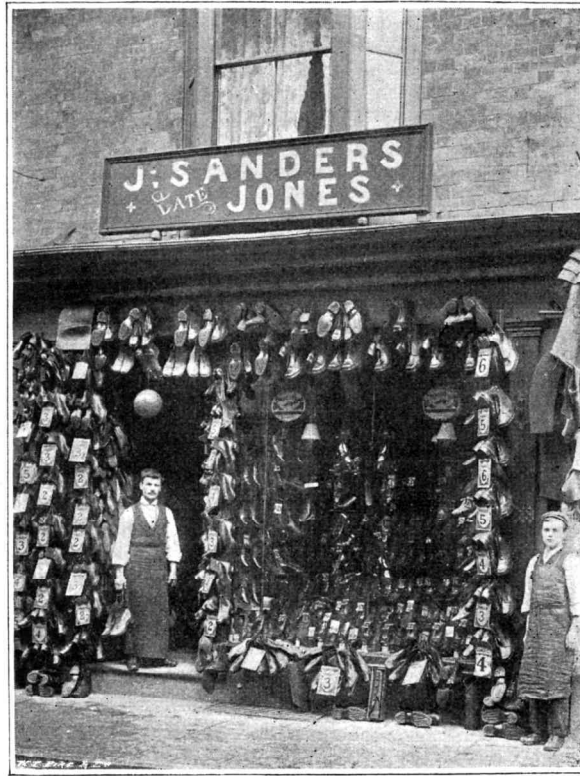
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MR. J. SANDERS, BOOT AND SHOE FACTOR, 7, VICAR STREET, AND TRINITY LANE.—This establishment does a strictly cash trade in boots and shoes, and the business, which is of old standing, was purchased fourteen years ago by Mr. J. Sanders, who is well known as a cycle manufacturer and agent, and as managing director of the flourishing Kidderminster Cycle Company, Ltd., which took over his cycle business and extensive connection some months ago. The shop at the above address has a good frontage and interior accommodation, a big store-room on the first floor adding considerably to the storage facilities. The comprehensive assortment of boots and shoes on hand strikes us as the salient feature of this house, and



7, VICAR STREET.

anyone acquainted with the apparently innumerable styles now made, and the necessity of stocking the several qualities in all sizes, will see that this is a valuable feature from the customers' point of view. As to the goods, they include best and medium fittings selected from the leading manufacturers, and an immense number of "popular lines," recommended for sound material, smart style and reliable workmanship. All goods are marked in plain figures, and the prices throughout are so moderate that it is now pretty generally admitted there is no beating the value given to all comers at this establishment. Mr. Sanders is a popular man in Kidderminster, and does not confine his interest in sports to cycling. He is an accomplished disciple of "Old Izaak" and won the championship cup of the local Willis Bond Angling Club last year.

MESSRS. THOMAS AND WILKS, PUMP MAKERS AND WELL SINKERS, NEW ROAD.—To intelligent minds there are few studies more fascinating than geology, and any firm having a practical and experimental acquaintance with such a science cannot fail to be of considerable general interest, apart from that which naturally attaches to them as exponents of a particular trade. Of such a class is the firm of Thomas and Wilks who are well known, not only in their own locality, but also throughout the country, as artesian well borers of eminence and experts in the piercing of strata and the making of geological surveys. The firm is one of old standing, having been founded many years ago by a Mr. Jinston, to whom succeeded finally Mr. Thomas, who was subsequently joined some twenty years back by Mr. Wilks, the present solo proprietor of the concern, Mr. Wilks having had the business entirely on his own hands for the last twelve years, although still trading under the old partnership name. He is a busy man, continually travelling about the country attending to orders, and yet, like many busy men, he has been able to find an outlet for superfluous energy in a subsidiary sphere of work, which takes, in his case, the form of an admirably managed hundred acre dairy farm. The majority of the artesian wells in Kidderminster have been bored by Messrs. Thomas and Wilks, and their offices are full of plans showing the wells they have sunk and the various strata they have pierced. As a Kidderminster man, born and bred, Mr. Wilks has special qualifications for knowing the capabilities of his own town in this direction, and at the present time, he has in hand a boring contract for one of the leading trading establishments in the locality. He has also been recently entrusted with a mineral finding commission on a very important estate, in fulfilment of which the geological formations will have to be thoroughly examined by the various strata being repeatedly pierced. The greatest depth to which the firm

have bored, in this neighbourhood, is about 300 feet, but that does not in any way indicate the limit of their ability in this particular line. In addition to this very important portion of their trade, they carry on a good business as pump makers, and are also the authorised water works plumbers for the town.

COLK'S "CHAMPION" CYCLE WORKS, MILL STREET. OFFICES, SHOW-ROOMS, AND DEPOT, OXFORD ROAD AND WORCESTER ROAD. —It is an undisguised fact that a revolution in the carpet industry of Kidderminster with the introduction of modern and delicate machinery of a kind which calls for the employment of girls, has had a great effect upon the former demand for male labour in the town. And it is under these circumstances gratifying to all to find a new industry taking root here. The cycle manufactory, to which we refer, owes its local origin to Mr. W. H. Austin, who commenced business as a cycle maker and agent at 56, Worcester Street and Oxford Road in 1889. Four years later, Mr. Austin designed and placed upon the market the first of the now celebrated "Champion" cycles. Led by their success to further enterprise, he in 1895 designed and introduced the famous single down tube lady's "Champion" which, as its name implies, entirely superseded the usual double down tube by affording greater dress clearance, while retaining at the same time all the strength and rigidity of the old model. Mr. Austin continued to trade on his own account with signal success until July 20th, 1896, when he disposed of his business to Mr. Councillor Cole, who, with that indomitable spirit of enterprise and tact which is characteristic of him, forthwith embarked upon a scheme of great magnitude for the development of the concern upon lines which cannot fail to make it a ponderous factor, not only in the cycle industry, but in the operative sources of the district. Mr. Cole is a Kidderminster man born and bred, and was the founder of the well known Worcester Cross Brewery, which he carried on for some thirteen years, retiring on account of ill health in 1892 with a well earned and not inconsiderable fortune. But rest and foreign travel soon brought back the health of which his assiduous attention to his business had robbed him, and with renewed health his energy has seemed to gain redoubled vigour. Like many successful business men, he finds retirement is not rest, so like a true son of his native town he comes among his friends again, taking in hand this new industry for the town, not in a half hearted way, but boldly and with firm conviction. He purchased a disused carpet factory for the purpose of organising new works, and acquired premises for show-rooms, depot and offices, and his untiring energy and vast business experience, coupled with the courage he has displayed in combating difficulties which would have deterred many less determined men, have already shown results of the most promising kind. A new sphere of labour is opened to those skilled mechanics and others of the male population of the town whose prospects had become dimmed in the new era of carpet manufacturing, and it is due to Mr. Cole to remark here that his new venture is *per se* not so much a commercial one as an act of public spiritedness in seeking to provide employment of a high class for these skilled hands. The demand for the "Champion" cycles is increasing by leaps and bounds, and it is not too much to say that the products of this industry are fast gaining a world wide reputation. We venture to predict a great future for these new works. The carpet factory constituting the premises in which the manufacture is carried on, occupy a commanding frontage, which is at present being altered so as to afford facilities for the display of finished machines, and also of cycle parts in every stage of construction. The interior, which is of vast extent, is divided into numerous departments, each specially adapted to a definite branch of the manufacture, and each equipped with the most modern and perfect plant and machinery for turning out cycles of the most perfect character in every detail. We were much struck with the facilities which are provided for meeting every requirement, and with the order in every successive department. Separate shops are available for repairs, and the resources here are of the most complete possible kind, having in fact been specially organised both with a close eye to efficiency, and with a view to obviating those delays in the execution of repairs, of which cyclists have so frequently to complain. A further noteworthy feature is the department for storing and cleaning customers' mounts. For a moderate, and we might almost say nominal charge, cycles are called for at any address in Kidderminster and the neighbourhood, thoroughly cleaned, and either returned at once, or temporarily stored at customers' desire. The want of a depot of this nature has long been felt by cyclists who have not the convenience or inclination for doing their own cleaning, or who lack proper storage accommodation, and needless to remark, the facilities provided are highly appreciated by all classes of riders—particularly by ladies. We might fill page after page in describing other departments such as the smithy and brazing shop, the frame shop, wheel shop, stores, plating department, enamelling-room and testing department, but space only permits our pronouncing each and all to be excellent. In the arrangement of the works as a whole, Mr. Cole has had the co-operation and advice of Mr. Austin, the founder of the business, whose services he retained and is retaining in the capacity of manager. The establishment is in every way a model of what a cycle factory should be, and as regards the essentials which go towards the production of high class work, will bear comparison with any similar organisation in the kingdom. At the junction of the Oxford, Worcester and Stourport Roads, Mr. Cole has erected an imposing block containing show-rooms and offices, which, in point of position and arrangement, rank among the finest buildings in the town. The fronts, three in number, are of a distinctive character, massive plate glass, set in richly carved mahogany framing, surmounted by a broad fascia and chaste cornice, combine to give an imposing appearance to the elevation. The interior arrangements are in all points in harmony with the character of the exterior, ample space being afforded for the exhibition of a large stock of cycles and accessories, shown under the most favourable circumstances. The building contains every convenience for the clerical and kindred work of the house. At the time of our visit we found on view some splendidly finished examples of the "Champion" cycles in ladies' and gentlemen's models, including several machines recently ordered for exportation to Russia, together with an excellent selection of the "James" cycles, for which Mr. Cole continues the sole district agency formerly held by his predecessor. There is also a very fine show of cycle accessories, cycle parts, tyres, etc., in every stage of production, nothing indeed being wanted

to show the care and discrimination used in the design in every detail, or to show to the public and experts alike the high quality of workmanship for which the "Champion" cycles are justly renowned. All machines sold to private customers or agents are guaranteed sound and reliable in every particular, made from the best obtainable material, and constructed and finished by highly skilled workmen. Both classes of cycles produced embody the very best and most desirable improvements, and in point of lightness, rigidity, strength, easy running and steering, and smart *tout ensemble*, give place to no other make of machine which has hitherto seen the market. The terms too are distinctly reasonable, having regard to the quality of the goods, and altogether the inhabitants of Kidderminster and the county may be congratulated on the establishment of a business of such magnitude, carried on under such auspices, and capable of turning out such work as we have seen. We learn that Mr. Cole is watching the development of the motor car industry in all its phases, and that he will, so soon as it may be found to advantage to do so, commence building them on a large scale. In conclusion we may add that Mr. Cole's public career dates from 1885, when he was elected to a seat on the borough Council. We find him now representing the important ward of St. Mary's, and a member of several of the Committees of the Board. There is probably no resident in the town who is held in greater respect than Mr. Cole, and the borough is unanimous in its thanks to him for his labours in the interest of Kidderminster and its inhabitants. All wish him the success his venture deserves, and will help him to attain it. As showing the trend of local opinion in the matter, we append the following extract from the *Kidderminster Shuttle*, of March 12th, 1897:—

KIDDERMINSTER AND THE CYCLE INDUSTRY.—THE "CHAMPION" WORKS AND SHOW-ROOM.—It is evident that the cycle industry has "caught on" in Kidderminster. A short time since, Mr. Councillor Cole opened his new and attractive show-room and depot in Oxford Street, and has over thirty of the well known and highly finished "Champion" and "James" machines on view. The premises are admirably adapted for the purposes of exhibition. The show-room is spacious, with plate glass windows on three sides. The fittings are of mahogany and oak. The offices are upstairs. There is room for the display of at least fifty machines and all the necessary appliances. The alterations, which have been carried out by Mr. Parker, under the superintendence of Mr. J. M. Gething, architect, have effected a considerable street improvement, the show-room presenting a handsome exterior. Mr. Cole has secured the freehold of the whole of the spacious works formerly carried on by Oldland, Naylor, Lloyd and Co., for manufacturing purposes, and for some time past a portion of the works has been running. Some alterations have yet to be carried out. Mr. Cole proposes to open out the front of the premises, and introduce a large window for the display of machines, with a glass back to the shop, so that the actual process of machine manufacture can be seen from the street. Experts declare that if the premises had been specially erected for cycle works they could not have been better adapted for the purpose. The accommodation is ample for the production of at least 200 machines per week. The machine made is the well known "Champion," introduced to the trade by Mr. Austin, the competent manager of the new works. On the ground floor is the enamelling plant and ovens, the brazing hearths and forge, the electro-plating plant and the indispensable dynamo machines and polishing lathes. Here also is a department for storing and cleaning machines, for the convenience of persons who either have not adequate room for keeping their machines or do not care to undertake the work of keeping them clean; and special accommodation has been provided for the repairing department. On the first floor is a very spacious room, set apart for finishing purposes. Here the various parts of the machines made on the ground floor are "assembled"—to use the technical word—and the machines built ready for use. The room has a boarded floor, well supported by iron columns and girders, and there is space for at least fifty vices. There are thirteen actually erected and in use, so that the works are in a forward state of development. Near to the finishing-room are the store-rooms and a splendid show-room. One of the essential conditions with regard to "rubber" is that it shall be kept in a dark place until brought into actual use. This is well secured in the store-rooms, and when the writer went over the premises, there were rubber materials in the stores for over 200 machines. Of course there is a good deal of machinery still to be erected before the full capacity of the works has been reached, but the motive power has been laid down, drills and lathes are erected, and at the present moment from twenty to thirty machines can be manufactured and finished per week. Mr. Cole has every confidence with regard to the future of the cycle industry, and there are abundant evidences that this season will eclipse that of last year. In addition to catering for the home market, Mr. Cole is cultivating connections in foreign markets. Already a consignment of machines has been sent to Russia, and he is in correspondence with various houses on the Continent and as far away as the Transvaal. Two grades of the "Champion" are being produced, so as to meet the various tastes of the people. There is evidently a splendid opening before our new industry in Kidderminster.

MR. JOSEPH STARR, CARRIAGE-BUILDER, ETC., 62, COVENTRY STREET.—This old established concern is one of the most noted of the business houses in Kidderminster, and has a wide-spread reputation. It has been in Mr. Starr's hands for over a quarter of a century, and well maintains its premier position in the trade. The business premises, as they cover about a quarter of an acre of ground in Coventry Street, form a noticeable feature of the town. They comprise large and convenient show-rooms, fully equipped workshops, and extensive stores for the large quantities of material which are necessarily kept for a business of this description. The shops are fitted up with all the latest machinery and improvements connected with the carriage-building industry, and all branches of the work, including the metal and wood work, are executed on the premises. A good staff of workmen, all of them experienced and skilled are employed in the building, fitting, painting and finishing departments, the principal and his son exercising personal supervision over all the work. Mr. Starr turns out in first class style all kinds of carriages, dog carts, and business vans and vehicles. He does a large trade with the former for miles round, and has a reputation among county families for the general excellence of his work. He uses only well seasoned and thoroughly serviceable wood and fully tested metal in all his repairs and new work, and can guarantee that with the usual wear and tear there will be nothing in the way of loose running and shaking spokes with his vehicles. In the Black Country, Mr. Starr's name is a household word for char-a-bancs, brakes, waggonettes, etc., and in fact wherever his business relations reach, he contrives to give every satisfaction. Mr. Starr is ably assisted in the management of the business by his son, Mr. William Joseph Starr. He is ready at all times to give estimates and supply designs for new carriages and carriage work of all kinds, and his charges range throughout on a scale of strict moderation.

MESSRS. GEO. BROWN AND SONS, MONUMENTAL SCULPTORS, ETC., MARBLE AND STONE WORKS, COVENTRY STREET.—MESSRS. G. BROWN and Sons' undertaking business has been carried on in the town for upwards of half a century, and is one of the oldest monumental sculptor's businesses in the district. It was founded in 1830, by the late Mr. George Brown, and is now carried on by his widow and two sons, Henry and William Brown. The business embraces all departments of monumental and ecclesiastical sculpture, and the firm have a high standing in all branches of this work. They turn out in first class style all kinds of monuments, tablets, head and foot stones, curbs, and ornamental stone work of every description. They keep an extensive stock of these goods on show, and have also a very large number of designs of a most effective description. They carry out any special work strictly according to the plans and suggestions of their patrons, and indeed all commissions more or less connected with sculpture and monumental work are executed promptly, with the best materials,



and by skilled and experienced workmen. The premises, which cover over an acre of ground, are fitted and equipped with the necessary appliances for stone cutting and working, and large quantities of marble and stone are stored here. Marble is obtained from Italy, Africa and Switzerland, as well as from parts of this country, and we were much interested in visiting these works when our attention was called to some African marble then being worked. This marble we understand is obtained from the famous Numidian Quarries which were worked by the Romans in their days, and after lying unused for a considerable period have been recently re-opened. The firm draw their supplies of granite from Scotland and Sweden, and red, blue, and grey stone from the Forest of Dean and Yorkshire. In addition to the departments of business we have mentioned, the firm execute all kinds of ecclesiastical sculpture, they supply every description of builders' material, slates, etc., and they keep a large stock of memorial flower wreaths, crosses, tablets, glass shades, etc. We may mention

that the Browns are of Scottish descent; the grandfather of the present proprietor, Mr. George Brown, was first cousin to the poet Burns, and migrated to England with the famous engineer Telford, who built the beautiful bridge over the Severn at Bewdley, as well as the world renowned Suspension Bridge over the Menai Straits.

MR. GEORGE ROWLEY (LATE R. ROGERS), MEAT PURVEYOR BY APPOINTMENT TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN, 26, HIGH STREET.—TELEPHONE No. 41.—The business carried on by Mr. George Rowley was originally founded about twenty years ago by Mr. R. Rogers, from whom the present proprietor purchased the goodwill and premises in 1885. The latter gentleman's status in the trade may be inferred from the fact that he holds a warrant of appointment as meat purveyor to the Queen, and has on several occasions been honoured with Her Majesty's commands. He also enjoys the support of a large and wide reaching family connection, embracing many of the best people in Kidderminster and for miles around. His establishment at 26, High Street, forms one of the handsomest and most inviting butchers' shops possible. It has a fine open front, and the interior is appointed in excellent modern style, the walls being tiled throughout, the counters marble topped, the floor of concrete, and the whole place lighted at night by patent incandescent lamps, which entirely do away with the dirt and smoke usually occasioned where gas is burned. Week in and week out a splendid show of meat is maintained, and the house is noted for its prime beef and mutton, pork, lamb and veal, pickled tongues, corned beef, etc., as well as for home made sausages, which are prepared fresh daily. Needless to say, all meat dealt in is home fed and home killed, Mr. Rowley having extensive connections amongst the county farmers, from whom he procures a regular and plentiful supply of the finest cattle bred. This is a matter of special moment in these days of imported frozen carcasses, which by the way, are not infrequently forced on to the public as "genuine English." Though keeping nothing but the best joints, Mr. Rowley is not insensible to the fact that we live in an economical age, and he consequently arranges his prices on the lowest possible basis. It is to the circumstance in question, coupled with the uniform reliability and superiority of the article supplied, that he no doubt owes the gratifying measure of success which has hitherto attended his business career. Since acquiring the undertaking he has very largely developed it, and his turnover still continues to show a steady increase. Meat is sent to all parts of the neighbourhood daily, smart delivery carts being available for the purpose; families can be waited upon as often as desired, and all orders receive that prompt and punctual attention which cannot fail to give satisfaction. The establishment is connected with the local telephone system, No. 41.

MR. JOHN AMYES, GENERAL MERCHANT, IRONMONGER, HOT WATER ENGINEER, AND CONTRACTOR FOR JOINERY WORK. WAREHOUSES: NEW ROAD AND OXFORD STREET SAW MILLS AND STEAM JOINERY WORKS, PROSPECT HILL.—Mr. John Amyes commenced business in Kidderminster some twenty-seven years ago, immediately after completing his apprenticeship with the well known firm of Messrs. John Brinton, Limited. Whilst with the house referred to he had almost unique opportunities for making himself acquainted with the ins and outs of local mill construction, it being just about this time that steam machinery was first introduced into the carpet industry, a development which of course necessitated extensive alterations in the various factories. So familiar did Mr. Amyes become with the class of work involved, that when he left Brinton's he was not only an adept at mill joinery of every kind, but had also gained a sound genuine knowledge of the plant and processes then requisitioned in Kidderminster's staple manufacture. At first Mr. Amyes occupied premises in Comberton Hill, but owing to the rapid growth of his transactions, the accommodation here available speedily proved inadequate, and a move was therefore made to more extensive works adjoining the Market Hall Vaults Yard. Two years later, still larger premises became requisite, the result being that the present warehouses at the junction of New Road and Oxford Street were taken. Although the ground area of this property amounts to nearly half an acre, the development of the business has been so great that the joinery and general woodworking departments have had to be transferred to a separate establishment, specially erected to accommodate them, at Prospect Hill, where the conveniences include well equipped saw mills and works with spacious timber stores and yards attached, the whole covering about an acre of ground. As already indicated, the New Road premises are chiefly utilised as warehouses for finished goods. They contain enormous stocks of ironmongery, iron roofing sheets, iron fencing, hurdles and tree guards, hot and cold water tanks, boilers and fittings, ranges, baths, stable fittings, troughs and the like, together with all manner of prepared door and window stuff for builders, sky and garden lights, gates, oak fencing, rustic work, green-house frames and glass, timber for sheds and other buildings, and in fact everything that an up-to-date builders' timber merchant can be expected to supply. There is also a branch at New Road devoted to oils, colours, glass, paper-hangings, etc. Large assortments of ready cut timber, door frames, sills, ridges, rafters, wall plates, bars and boxes, mouldings, deals and battens, match and floor boards, planed boards, etc., are likewise maintained at the Prospect Hill yards, whilst the goods manufactured here embrace pretty well anything that can be made of wood, from a fretwork screen up to a conservatory or rustic summer-house. Office fittings are also turned out, and in addition to manufacturing on his own account, Mr. Amyes undertakes the sawing, planing and shaping of timber for the trade. Estimates can be given for joinery work of whatever character, also for the erection and fitting up of conservatories, vineries, green-houses, etc., and hot water and domestic engineering in all branches. A staff of skilled hands is employed under the personal superintendence of the principal, and the whole business is managed on lines of straightforwardness, efficiency and enterprise, which fully account for its success. As a merchant, whether in timber, prepared wood or builders' hardware, Mr. Amyes claims to be in a position to deal at prices which will bear comparison with those of any similar house in the county, and his terms all round will be found exceedingly favourable, the stock being at the same time sufficiently heavy to allow of prompt delivery without regard to the extent of the order.

MR. JOHN FINDON, TEA BLENDER, COFFEE ROASTER, FAMILY GROCER, PROVISION DEALER, WINE, SPIRIT AND BEER MERCHANT, 92, WORCESTER STREET.—The most essential branch of enterprise, and the one on which all others must inevitably depend, consists in supplying the public with foods and beverages. In this connection the grocery and provision trade is the one of greatest importance to all classes, and one of the leading representatives of this trade in the Kidderminster district is Mr. John Findon, of 92, Worcester Street. Mr. Findon controls a very large high class business that has been established in Kidderminster for upwards of half a century, Mr. Findon himself having been practically connected with it for almost a quarter of a century. This business was originally founded by the present proprietor's father, the late Alderman John Findon, who, on his death about ten years ago, was succeeded by his two sons, who carried on the business in partnership, under the title of J. and A. Findon, until the autumn of 1896, when the partnership was dissolved by mutual consent, Mr. Alfred Findon becoming the sole proprietor of a large coal business that the firm had built up, while Mr. John Findon remains as sole proprietor of the grocery and provision trade. He is a practical, enterprising, and experienced business man, with a thorough knowledge of each department, and being well acquainted with the wholesale markets and best sources of supply, he has not only maintained but steadily enhanced the prestige of the house, and has now an extensive connection among the best classes of



92, WORCESTER STREET.

patronage in the Kidderminster district. The premises in Worcester Street comprise a large handsome shop with three spacious show windows and two good entrances, the entire frontage being about fifty feet in length. The interior is arranged in two main departments, both spacious, lofty, well lighted, and appointed throughout in first class modern style, the provision section, with its fine marble topped counters and smart cases, stands and fittings, being specially attractive. With capacious basement cellars and large stores and warehouse to the rear, the premises afford great accommodation, which is, however, all needed for the requirements of the large and steadily growing business. It would be invidious to particularise any department as being more specially regarded than the others, but we may mention that tea and coffee hold their accustomed important position among the general stock. In the tea department a large trade is done in the famous Mazawattee, Ridgway and Tower teas, for which Mr. Findon is agent, as well as in his own popular blends of choice India and Ceylon teas, all of which are quoted at very low prices. Of coffee also Mr. Findon makes a great feature. The berries are sound, young, but well matured, and are ground and roasted at frequent intervals during the week, so that customers have an opportunity of enjoying that most delicious of beverages, pure, fresh coffee, whenever they choose. This is no slight boon, much of the coffee (so called) usually sold being of such a character as to have largely discredited the article as a beverage. The stock also embraces chocolate, cocoa, spices, dessert fruits, Findon's specially prepared castor sugar, confectionery, Scotch oatmeal, tinned and potted goods, etc. In the

provision department Mr. Findon has an equally good selection. He has specially constructed rooms for drying and storing hams and bacon, and there is always a fine stock of choice Canadian smoked bacon and ham, and pale dried home cured Wiltshire smoked bacon and ham, lard, pure butter, English and foreign cheese, etc. The premises are laid out with the utmost regard for convenience and despatch of business, and are occupied from basement to roof, either with the stock or with appliances for manipulating same. The basement, for instance, is used as a store-room for dried fruits and also contains the special machinery used for washing and drying the fruit, which is here sold over the counter ready for immediate use. There are rooms devoted to Italian goods, general groceries, stationery and packing paper, etc., and everything is done on a systematic and orderly plan that ensures rapid and economic working. The goods are all of the most reliable quality, Mr. Findon's motto being "Quality is the true test of cheapness," though even in a literal sense everything is quoted at very moderate figures. An interesting branch is the garden and agricultural seed department. The price list issued contains a series of good useful seeds which have been carefully tested and found satisfactory, and the kitchen gardener, whether cultivating an allotment or several acres, will find here a capital selection of seeds from which to raise his crops. Horticultural requisites, manures, fertilisers, etc., also come within the scope of this department, which has been a great success. Mr. Findon is agent for Messrs. Gilbey's noted wines and spirits, and holds a large selection of choice vintage ports, sherries, claret, hock, Burgundy, champagne, etc., besides pale and brown brandies, fine mellow old blends of Irish and Scotch whiskies, rum, gin, British wines and cordials, etc. The stocks also include a large selection of high class ales and stout in bottle and cask, comprising the specialities of Bass, Guinness, Allsopp, Whitbread, Barrett, Showell, Worthington, and Wheatley's hop bitters, Ross's aerated waters, the Kinmond and Royal Malvern waters, for all of which Mr. Findon is agent. The bottled goods are largely put up in screw stoppered bottles which are now in such general use. A large family and general trade is done both in the town and throughout a large country district, all goods being delivered at customers' houses by the firm's vans when desired. Mr. Findon, though not on the borough Council like his late father, takes a public spirited interest in all matters affecting the welfare of the town. He has filled the office of churchwarden for St. George's parish for four years, has been superintendent of Sunday schools, and is universally respected in Kidderminster.

MR. MAURICE SMITH, M.P.S., PHARMACEUTICAL AND ANALYTICAL CHEMIST, LICENSED DISPENSER OF THE SOCIETY OF APOTHECARIES, THE PHARMACY, 48, OXFORD STREET.—It is no doubt in a large measure to the services of the trained pharmaceutical chemist, not only in the cure but also in the prevention of disease, that we owe the vast improvement in the public health in modern times. This very desirable result is owing to the scientific and professional training received by chemists during recent years, and the policy of the Pharmaceutical Society in raising the standard of qualifications from time to time has not only tended greatly to the public benefit, but has almost revolutionised the status of chemists themselves, whose training and education now entitle them to professional rank rather than to the position they formerly occupied as more or less skilled tradesmen. However, we need not concern ourselves here with the professional dignity of chemists, but rather with their qualifications and ability to serve the public. One of the most rapid successes ever achieved in this line in the Kidderminster district has been reserved for Mr. Maurice Smith, of The Pharmacy, Oxford Street, who commenced business here only a few months ago, and has now a connection that most men might be proud of after ten years' hard work. It must be admitted that Mr. Smith is a native of the town, where his family have been known and respected for many years, his father being a prosperous farmer in the district, and having formerly been lessee of all the market tolls. Family influence, however, counts for very little in a business of this kind without sterling ability, and Mr. Smith possesses exceptionally high qualifications and great practical experience. He is not only a member of the Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, a position which can only be attained after passing severe examinations entailing prolonged study and scientific training, but possesses the distinction of being the only Pharmaceutical Chemist in Kidderminster, and he is a Licensed Dispenser of the Society of Apothecaries, London. In addition to this, he has had great practical experience both in London and the provinces, and before commencing business on his own account, spent a considerable time with Messrs. Savory and Moore, chemists to the Queen, and the leading firm of chemists in London. Mr. Smith has also the special advantage of being a qualified analytical chemist, so that he is able to analyse and test the purity and quality of his goods, and can thus select his drugs and chemicals with scientific accuracy. The Pharmacy has therefore become noted for the excellence of all drugs and preparations supplied, and with his intimate knowledge of the wholesale trade in London and elsewhere, Mr. Smith is able to lay in stock on specially favourable terms, and to quote all articles at very low prices. The Pharmacy itself is a handsome corner building in a capital position at the junction of New Road with Oxford Street, and the interior is fitted up in high class modern style. Pure drugs and chemicals of all descriptions are in stock, besides patent and proprietary articles, surgical and medical appliances, nursery requisites and perfumes, soaps, and general toilet and household requisites. Among the specialities that have a noted popularity may be mentioned Smith's Cough Balsam, Tic and Neuralgia Mixture, and there is also a very valuable selection of horse and cattle remedies. Photographic chemicals are also stocked, besides all the leading brands of natural and artificial waters. The dispensing department is a very important feature, and physicians' prescriptions and family recipes are promptly and accurately compounded under Mr. Smith's personal supervision, only the purest and freshest drugs being used. As an analytical chemist Mr. Smith undertakes the qualitative and quantitative analyses of water, foods, milk, agricultural manures, etc., at low charges. Altogether the Pharmacy is an important institution in a town like Kidderminster, and Mr. Smith has gained the confidence and respect of the medical profession and of all classes of the public.

MR. T. BALL, PHOTOGRAPHIC ARTIST, 7, COMBERTON HILL.—There is no more substantial evidence of the popularity and usefulness of photography than the fact that notwithstanding the immense vogue the practice of the art has amongst amateurs, the professional photographer is called more into requisition than ever. Not only is this the case as regards portraiture, but in every application of the art to commercial and miscellaneous purposes. From the crude efforts of a quarter of a century ago—admirable though they were from the standpoint of the time—to these days of “X” rays is a wide transition; but hardly less remarkable in its way is the advancement which can be recorded in the professional aspect of the art as practiced in our provincial towns. Now many, if not most of these, are placed on a plane of something nearly approaching to equality in regard to the excellence of the results obtainable with the best resources of London. Eighteen years ago, when Mr. T. Ball first commenced business in Kidderminster as a photographer, he was the only one in the town who could execute landscape and group photography. Even now when the number of photographic artists in Kidderminster has greatly increased, and competition is very keen, he probably has still the lion’s share of the work of that kind which is locally available. His productions in portraiture as in other branches of his art, have a high repute in the town and district, and a considerable business, which is conducted on a strictly cash basis, is done at his studio at 7, Comberton Hill. Mr. Ball and his wife, who ably assists him, were both born in Kidderminster.

MR. W. JACKSON, MUSICAL INSTRUMENT DEALER, PIANOFORTE AND HARMONIUM TUNER AND REPAIRER, VICAR STREET.—Few arts have so progressed in modern times so rapidly as music, and in this matter Kidderminster has not been left behind. With the advance of musical taste and culture has come a wide-spread and increasing demand for instruments of a superior class, and this public want has been very efficiently supplied by Mr. Jackson, whose pianoforte and music warehouse in Vicar Street has become a recognised emporium for the best instruments of all kinds by the leading makers. Mr. Jackson has a thorough practical knowledge of the trade, and his intimate connections with the leading houses enable him to lay in his stock on specially favourable terms, so that he is able to quote very low prices. To meet the requirements of persons of limited means he supplies pianofortes and harmoniums, either on sale or hire, on easy terms of payment, and he has a very large connection not only in the town, but throughout a wide country district. The business has been established over thirty years, and has been conducted with much enterprise from the start. Mr. Jackson is a native of Birmingham, but has resided in Kidderminster for over forty years, and the business which he now controls was founded and entirely built up by himself and under his constant personal supervision. Mr. Jackson declines to hold any “sole agencies” so that he is perfectly free, and in no way influenced in recommending or “pushing” the instruments of any particular makers, and he purchases all his goods for ready cash. He is therefore not tied to any firm, and in this respect is quite disinterested in advising intending purchasers, his main object being to maintain the reputation of his establishment for the supply of genuine reliable high class instruments. The warehouse is a fine double fronted building in a good central position, and the spacious, well lighted show-rooms are admirably adapted for the business, the acoustic properties being very good, so that the instruments can be tested under favourable conditions before purchasers make their selection. The stock includes a splendid selection of grand and cottage pianos by the best makers, besides harmoniums, American organs, violins, concertinas, and band and orchestral instruments of all kinds, with strings and fittings of every description. As a practical tuner and repairer of pianos and harmoniums, Mr. Jackson employs a competent staff of skilled men who travel throughout a wide district, and carry out all work in a prompt and efficient manner, and at very moderate charges. All the latest publications in classical and popular music are stocked, and the connection is a most extensive one, including the best classes of patronage in the town and district.

MR. ERNEST PERRY, MERCHANT TAILOR, 14, MILL STREET.—Besides being one of the oldest tailoring businesses in Kidderminster, Mr. Perry’s is a distinctly high class trade, patronised by the leading town and county families, gentry, merchants, and farmers, etc. It was established about half a century ago by the late Mr. Hammond, uncle of the present proprietor, and has from the beginning been conducted on advanced high class lines. Mr. Perry succeeded his uncle about four years ago, and since that time has steadily extended the connection. He has a thorough practical knowledge of the trade, and employs first rate cutters and tailors, every garment being carefully inspected by himself before leaving the premises. The business is carried on in a handsome shop at 14, Mill Street, readily accessible from all the principal hotels and places of interest in the town, and the interior is commodious and well appointed, including well lighted show and stock-rooms, fitting, cutting and work-rooms, the whole of the work being done on the premises, special attention being given to the cleanliness and sanitation of the surroundings. Large stocks of fashionable cloths and suitings are held, these goods being the productions of the best looms in the kingdom, and as they are obtained direct from the wholesale houses, they can be quoted at very reasonable prices, while the quality is guaranteed, and the latest fashionable patterns are stocked. Orders are promptly executed, and business and lounge suits, evening dress suits, clerical and professional outfits, military uniforms, riding breeches, hunting outfits, ladies’ riding habits and tailor made costumes, liveries, etc., are turned out in the best style and perfect in fit and finish. A first class selection of gentlemen’s hosiery and underwear, including pants, undervests, ties, scarves, shirts, cuffs, collars, pyjama suits, sweaters, and general athletic wear, etc., form an important part of the stock, which also includes a show of fashionable silk and felt hats by Lincoln and Bennett and other noted makers. Shirts are made specially to measure, and altogether as a leading gentlemen’s tailoring and outfitting business, the house is one of the foremost in this part of the country.

MR. C. F. HOLDER, THE PEOPLE'S CASH DRAPER, 5 and 6, BULL RING.—At the above address, opposite the statue of Richard Baxter shown in our view, we have one of the oldest drapery establishments in the town, founded by a Mr. Roberts so long ago as 1832, and wonderfully developed during the last ten years under the régime of the present owner, Mr. C. F. Holder. Mr. Holder gained his business experience in Birmingham—a city noted for enterprising drapers, and on taking over the business—then conducted at No. 5 only—soon made his mark as a popular general draper, and an adept in the art of buying and catering for the large middle class population of a manufacturing town, that being especially his *forte*, making a strict rule of only supplying reliable goods, and never allowing himself to be undersold, whatever they may have cost. The old shop would not do for the big trade thus quickly developed, and some four years ago Mr. Holder took part of the adjoining premises, and opened it as a Mantle Warehouse with very great success, and recently acquired the freehold of the whole property. With the same spirit of progress he transformed it into splendid modern premises, with entirely new front, mosaic paved entrance, looking glass ceiling, and marble facia, etc., and re-arranged the establishment on modern lines. At the same time he had the electric light installed throughout; and so far this is the only shop so lighted in Kidderminster. Both shops are double fronted, and have their own separate entrances, giving a fine range of windows for the display of general drapery, dresses and Manchester goods, including Irish linens, fancy drapery, and mantles, blouses, corsets, hosiery and other goods worthy of shoppers' attention. The mantle show-room is upstairs, and is one of the very special features of this establishment, Mr. Holder sparing no trouble or expense to secure the latest Berlin, Paris, or London models in coats and jackets, capes and mantles. Another speciality is the Manchester department, dealing with longcloths, calicoes, Irish linens, blankets, flannels and similar fabrics, of which there is an immense stock on hand. Dress goods, ladies' underwear, hosiery, fancies, gloves, haberdashery, etc., also receive special attention. The business is conducted on distinctly popular lines and on a strict cash basis, with the usual result that prices are markedly in favour of the customer, without any depreciation in the freshness or quality of the goods supplied. Mr. Holder does a brisk trade, and is able without loss to keep his stock up to date, as it does not lie on his hands long. In short, he is a typical modern draper, and deserves, as well as commands, the liberal patronage of a large *clientèle* of regular customers.

THE BLACK HORSE: MR. ALFRED COTTON, PROPRIETOR.—This interesting and old established house is the principal agricultural and commercial inn of Kidderminster. It has been under the popular and enterprising management of Mr. Alfred Cotton for the past three years, and enjoys a reputation of the highest order. The Black Horse occupies a prominent position in Mill Street, and comprises a fine three storeyed, squarely built block, with convenient yard and stabling connected. To the right of the house as one enters, there is a large archway leading into the spacious yard, where there is stabling accommodation for forty horses, with coach-houses and all necessary appointments to agree. Overlooking this yard there is a quaint, old fashioned balcony running across the archway, and along the side of the hotel on a level with the front floor. Entering the hotel, the visitor finds on the ground floor a well fitted bar, comfortable coffee-room, a cosy smoke-room, and all the usual offices. On the first floor there is a large and convenient commercial-room, a private commercial-room, and a market-room. There is also a fine billiard-room, equipped with two first rate tables, and all the usual appointments. On the same floor there are several bed-rooms. The second and third floors are devoted to the bed-rooms, all of which are well furnished, airy and comfortable. The whole of the public and private rooms are fitted up with every modern convenience, and there is telephonic communication between the hotel and all parts of the town as well as with the trunk lines. The hotel is a very popular house, both for families, for commercials, and for agriculturists, and a good table, well served, and excellent liquors are characteristics of the house. Mr. Cotton is in many respects an ideal host, and he occupies a good position in the town. He is a native of Kidderminster, and was churchwarden of the parish church for three years. He is a prominent Freemason, being a P.M. of Hope and Charity Lodge, Kidderminster, and member of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Worcester. In addition to these recommendations, it should be mentioned that as a baritone vocalist he stands very high in favour, and his services are in great request in musical circles.

MESSRS. CRUXTON AND BROOKES, COACH-BUILDERS, ETC., DUDLEY STREET.—Nearly fifty years ago this important and well known business was started by Mr. Roberts. It was taken over by Messrs. Cruxton and Brookes twenty-two years ago, and is now one of the leading commercial enterprises in the town. The premises are located in Dudley Street, and comprise a long, lofty, two storeyed carriage factory and extensive yards, the yard space being about twenty yards by forty yards, and a carriage shed or show-room forty-eight feet by eighteen feet. The firm undertake and carry out all departments of the coach making industry, both repairing and new work, about twelve hands being constantly employed. Extensive stocks are kept of well seasoned wood and carriage fittings, all materials used in the work being of the best quality. The principal feature is the manufacture of dog carts, phaetons, and all kinds of two and four wheeled carriages of the lighter description. Many superior vehicles are manufactured at these works, and an inspection of the stock on show soon proves that the characteristics of the firm's work are high class finish, excellent style and first rate workmanship. They send carriages all over the neighbourhood, and the waggonettes they build are in considerable demand for many miles around. Special attention is devoted to repairs, their work in this department being characterised by the same features as those which have gained such popularity in the carriage-building department. The members of the firm are personally well known, and highly respected in the town and district.

MRS. W. RANDLE COOPER, COOK AND CONFECTIONER, BAXTER'S HOUSE, HIGH STREET; AND AT BEWDLEY. —A high class confectionery business is conducted under the management of Mrs. Randle Cooper at the above address. Founded something like half a century ago, the house has always enjoyed an excellent reputation for the supply of superior goods at moderate prices, and in the hands of the present proprietress, who succeeded to the control about twelve months back, its prestige and popularity bid fair to be steadily maintained. Prior to coming to Kidderminster, Mrs. Cooper had considerable experience in Cambridge and other important centres. She devotes particular attention to the production of such specialities as wedding and christening cakes, raised pies, ices, jellies, crèmes and soups, being also noted for the excellence of her lunch cakes, curd cheese cakes, tarts and general pastry. These goods are prepared fresh daily, nothing but the choicest and most reliable ingredients being used. The recipes are in many instances peculiar to the establishment, and the result is that the various items which go to make up the stock are without exception as wholesome, and as pleasing to the palate, as they are undoubtedly tempting to the eye. Quite apart from their smart appearance, and the appetising nature of the window display, the premises possess an interest as having been the birth-place of the Rev. Richard Baxter, author of "The Saint's Rest," and other well known devotional works. As Baxter was born in 1841, the fabric of the building is necessarily of some antiquity. The frontage and interior, however, have been re-modelled, and decorated and appointed in modern style, and the place ranks amongst the handsomest confectioners' shops in the town. In addition to the sales department on the ground floor, which is stocked to repletion with every description of pastry, cakes, sweetmeats, chocolates and kindred dainties, the accommodation includes elegantly furnished dining and refreshment-rooms, where luncheons, dinners, afternoon teas, etc., are served at separate tables. A wine and beer licence is also held. At Bewdley, some three miles from Kidderminster, and a great boating resort, Mrs. Cooper has organised a successful branch establishment, which, like the parent house, is conducted under her own immediate supervision, and supplied with precisely similar goods. A further department of the business has to do with public catering, in which connection viands, wines, plate, table ornaments and all other requisites are provided for wedding breakfasts, ball suppers, Masonic and civic banquets, garden parties, picnics and kindred functions, on the most reasonable terms.

MR. WILLIAM FAWKNER, JOBBING MASTER, 14, BULL RING.—In so old a borough as Kidderminster, we may expect to find many old established business places occupying a considerable share of the interest which invariably attaches to those old townships. Of such a character is the above business, which has been established for about three centuries, and what is more, in the hands of the same family through continuous succession from generation to generation, and from father to son. It is the oldest established concern of the kind in the town, of which it has formed part and parcel for so long a time. It is, perhaps, the principal hiring business in Kidderminster, and the office being situated in a central part of the borough, every facility is offered for giving that prompt attention to orders so indispensable to a posting establishment. The stables are at Prospect Hill adjoining, as are also the coach-houses, and there is stabling for thirty horses and accommodation for between seventy and eighty conveyances. Mr. Fawkner is licensed for the let of post horses, cars, cabs, broughams, hearses, mourning coaches, shillibiers, and single, pair, and four horse breaks, as well as waggonettes for picnic and pleasure parties. Funerals are conducted throughout with due regard for the special requirements of such an occasion, and the business, which is under the active supervision of Mr. W. B. Fawkner, is under a system of attentive management and regulation which ensures due satisfaction. The business has grown to such dimensions that both the number of horses and carriages kept have been increased, most of the conveyances having been fitted with solid rubber tyres, this adding greatly to the riders' comfort. In cases of telegraphic urgency the abbreviation, "Fawkner, Kidderminster," is a sufficient address. Nat. Telephone, 22 and 22a.

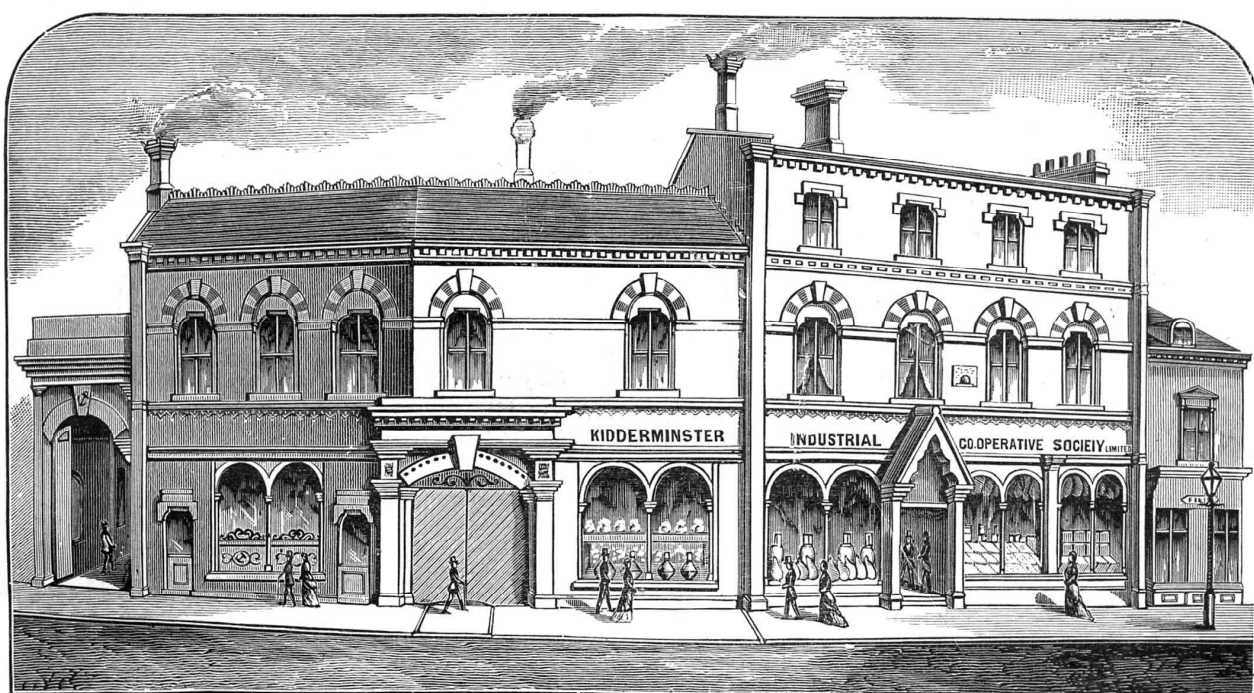
MESSRS. HARPER AND CO., CORN, SEED, CAKE, AND GUANO MERCHANTS, WHOLESALE STORES, STATION HILL; RETAIL STORES AND OFFICES, NEW ROAD.—Kidderminster constitutes the market centre of an extensive agricultural district, embracing some of the richest arable land and pasturages in the country, and thus offers plenty of scope for such a business as that carried on by Messrs. Harper and Co., of Station Hill and New Road. The business has already proved a distinct success, and is still making rapid headway, a circumstance which, taking into account the severity of modern competition, says all that need be said for the efficiency of the management. The principals in the concern are Messrs. John and Louis Harper, the former of whom was for many years with Messrs. J. P. Harvey and Co., where he gained a wide and exhaustive knowledge of the corn trade in all its branches. The offices occupy a capital position close to Kidderminster Cattle Market, and here wholesale orders are received, and a brisk trade done in the retail supply of flour, barley, meals, bran, pollards, split peas, malt, oatmeal, peas, beans, pastry whites, bird and garden seeds, dog and poultry foods, under each of which heads heavy stocks are maintained, and first rate quality and value forthcoming. The wholesale stores at Station Hill contain large reserves of grain and agricultural seeds, linseed and cotton cake, guano, agricultural salt, etc., and orders to any extent can be executed on the shortest notice, and on the most favourable terms, bottom prices being indeed the rule all round. The house is specially noted for the excellence of its clover and grass seeds, which are procured from the most dependable sources, and guaranteed of high germinating power, and also for garden seeds, and prepared pig meal and horse corn, the last mentioned items having come into steady demand throughout the district. We should add that the partners personally supervise each department, thus ensuring the proper service and satisfaction of customers, and that one or other of them regularly attends the county markets, and is, of course, always open to transact business.

M. REUBEN JENKINS, WHOLESALE SCHOOL STATIONER, THE NEW BOOK STORES, 15, MILL STREET.—The scholastic requirements of a large community are provided for satisfactorily at the New Book Stores conducted by Mr. Reuben Jenkins. The establishment, which is large and of single frontage, is divided into two compartments, one being reserved for use as a library, while the other is devoted to general stationery. In the window is a select display of fancy goods; and a fine collection of books in the library window forms an interesting index to the literary character of the large book stocks held. Books in great variety confront the visitor alike in the glass encased fittings on the left, the shelves on the right, and behind the counter. Most of these are handsomely bound volumes, embracing every branch of educative and general literature. General stationery is also heavily stocked, and at the end of the shop are displayed some choice specimens of Worcester china, Mr. Jenkins being the sole agent in the town for the Royal Worcester china—an agency he has held for several years. A leading feature of the business is the scholastic department, all the schools in the town being supplied at this establishment, and as a book depot generally, there is much to attract both the reader and scholar. It may be added that Mr. and Mrs. Jenkins take an active part in cycling matters. They are both ardent cyclists; and to Mrs. Jenkins is due the initiative of ladies' cycling in the Midlands, whilst it is of interest to note also that Mr. Jenkins was one of the prime movers towards the getting up of cycle works in Kidderminster, and is one of the directors of the Kidderminster Cycle Co., Ltd.

MR. GEORGE WEAVER, COOPER AND BASKET MAKER, 52 AND 53, OXFORD STREET, AND BRIDGE STREET.—Mr. George Weaver's business was established about half a century ago, the founder being a Mr. David Williams. In 1870 the control passed into the hands of Mr. J. Weaver, nephew of Mr. D. Williams, and on the latter gentleman's death, which took place some eight years back, he was succeeded by his son, the present sole proprietor. The premises at 52 and 53, Oxford Street, are mainly utilised as show-rooms and stores. They have a commanding double frontage, with ample window accommodation, and the interior is literally packed with stock of all kinds. Every description of plain and fancy baskets, bent ware, brushes, brooms, turnery, cooper, basinettes, mail carts, washing and wringing machines, wood ware, hollow ware and domestic sundries will be found here in great variety, and at prices adjusted to the economical necessities of the times. The whole of the wicker and wooden goods are manufactured at Mr. Weaver's own works in Bridge Street, so that the quality and finish may be absolutely depended upon, and any special article which does not happen to be in stock, can be made to order on the shortest notice, and at the lowest possible cost to the customer. A substantial turnover is done in the supply of dairy utensils, barrel and box churns, butter workers and prints, milk cans, pails, strainers, tins and the like, whilst a further important department has to do with the construction and fixing of copper furnaces, iron underbacks, false bottoms, wort pumps and refrigerator for breweries, fermenting rounds, mash tubs, vats and casks being likewise manufactured. All manner of repairs are executed, and the general operations of the house have expanded with such rapidity of late, that Mr. Weaver is just now building supplemental workshops in Anchor Fields, which, when completed will form about the largest and best equipped establishment of the kind in the county. The principal devotes his entire energies to the business, and besides supervising the activeness of a numerous staff, personally attends to the purchase of material, the arrangement of contracts and the practical management of affairs. He is in a position to estimate for the supply of cooper, woodware, travelling hampers, clothes baskets, dollies, etc., in any quantities, and accustomed to deal with the largest trade orders in this connection. A Kidderminster man born and bred, he is well known in the town and district, and his transactions extend to every quarter of Worcestershire and the adjoining counties.

MISS F. E. BASFORD, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL DEALER IN TOYS, FANCY GOODS, DOLLS, CHINA, STATIONERY, ETC., "THE NOAH'S ARK," 76, WORCESTER STREET.—"The Noah's Ark," 76, Worcester Street, forms the centre of a very old established business, taken over by the present proprietress. The premises are centrally situated, commodious, and well fitted up, and as their name suggests, constitute a veritable El Dorado for the juveniles, whose tastes in the matter of toys, games, dolls, picture books and amusing and instructive novelties of all kinds, are catered for with a degree of liberality and up-to-dateness which it would be impossible to surpass. For children of a larger growth there are equally comprehensive assortments of cabinet and leather goods, jewellery and electro-plate, art china and inexpensive fancy knick knacks, every description of stationery, brushes and plain and ornamental basket ware being likewise stocked. The bulk of the articles offered for sale are specially suitable for presents, and an idea of the exceptional range of choice available may be inferred from the fact that in addition to the main show-room on the ground floor, there is an extensive toy and general bazaar upstairs, whilst the whole place is simply packed with goods. Miss Basford deals direct with the leading factors and importers in the trade, and as a result, is not only able to secure the newest introductions as rapidly as they appear, but also to offer them at the very lowest cash prices. Her establishment is always worth a visit, because it always contains something new and something attractive, and a cheaper house does not exist in the town. The estimation in which "The Noah's Ark" is held by the youth of the local community, as well as by their elders, is amply indicated by the circumstance that it is invariably busy, and finds inclusion in the shopping itinerary of many of the best families connected with the district. The establishment has also a special interest for anglers. Kidderminster being the centre of a splendid fishing district, which includes the Severn, Miss Basford makes a speciality of keeping everything required by the disciples of Izaak Walton from the most expert wielder of the rod down to the merest tyro. Rods, flies, hooks, reels, gut, lines, creels and all fishing impedimenta are fully stocked, and the house is quite a recognised centre for goods of this description among anglers who frequent the locality.

THE INDUSTRIAL CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, LIMITED, 3, 4, 5, OXFORD STREET, AND 79, 80 AND 81, WORCESTER STREET.—The co-operative system of trading has always found considerable favour in our larger manufacturing centres, Kidderminster of course being no exception to the rule. The town has boasted the possession of an Industrial Co-operative Society ever since the year 1866, and to judge by the 123rd Quarterly Report now before us, the concern is in an exceptionally prosperous and flourishing condition. From the document referred to we gather that the number of members at present on the books is 1859; the Capital amounting to £27,269, and the Reserve Fund to £845 19s. The total sales during the year 1896 reached £40,187, an increase of £2532 on the year previous. Members received £273 13s. 4½d. in the way of interest on share capital, and a bonus or dividend of two shillings and eightpence in the pound was paid on all purchases, the Society's customers thus having over an eighth of their actual cash payments returned to them. Obviously, therefore, co-operation means something more than a mere name, at any rate in Kidderminster, and residents possessed of an eye for economy may be safely recommended to avail themselves of its advantages. The Society has no fewer than six places of business in the district, viz., the Central Stores and offices at 4 and 5, Oxford Street, and 87, 88 and 89, Worcester Street, with branches at Cookley, Bewdley Street, Horsefair, and Foundry Street, Stourport. Each of these establishments is well situated, commodious, and smartly fitted up, and each is stocked with the very best goods obtainable, the items dealt in including every description of groceries, provisions and Italian wares, domestic chandlery and drysaltery, drapery, bedding and household linen, and ladies', gentlemen's and children's boots and shoes. A department has also been organised for gentlemen's



bespoke tailoring, hats and outfittings, and coals are likewise supplied. A further important feature is the building department, the committee having lately made arrangements whereby members may acquire allotments and building sites on four per cent. mortgage, extinguishable by weekly or monthly instalments. The central stores and offices at the address already named, were specially erected to meet the requirements of the undertaking, about twenty years ago. They occupy one of the most central and commanding positions in the town, presenting lengthy frontages both to Oxford Street and Worcester Street, with entrances from each thoroughfare. The interior is suitably divided into departments, and an inspection of the stock and a comparison of the prices at which the various articles are offered, will speedily convince any unbiassed observer that one could do one's shopping here with distinct and substantial advantage, even if there were no bonus to take into consideration. Indeed it has always been the Society's aim to compete in the matter of quality and value, with the most enterprising firms of private traders in the country, and the returnable dividends are paid out of profits and profits only. We should add that the qualification for membership is the taking up of one fully paid one pound share, and that the present Committee of Management includes the following gentlemen, all of whom are residents in Kidderminster or neighbourhood:—Messrs. Mills (President), Arnold, Durrance, Lowe, Stradling, Kemp, E. Tanner, A. Tanner, Lloyd (Cookley), Bibb (Stourport), and H. Pagett (Secretary). Mr. W. Scott is the Cashier and Accountant, and Mr. R. Smith is the Manager; these gentlemen were both appointed in 1894. The Society was registered under the Limited Liability Companies Act in 1865.

MR. RICHARD WOOD, PURVEYOR OF THE BEST ENGLISH BEEF AND MUTTON, 92, COVENTRY STREET. TELEPHONE No. 40.—This substantial business was established ten years ago by its present proprietor, Mr. Richard Wood, and has its head-quarters in a large, single fronted, open built shop, at No. 92, Coventry Street. A large stock of prime joints of Shorthorn and Hereford ox beef and Southdown mutton is always maintained, and from the rails hang carcasses of mutton in splendid table condition, and sides of beef of the finest procurable quality. Mr. Richard Wood owns the Shrubbery Farm, situated about a quarter of a mile out of Kidderminster, where he fattens his cattle before slaughtering them. There also he raises most of his pork, which is of the finest dairy fed description, and of which he makes something of a speciality. One end of his shop usually contains a fine show of joints of fresh pork, and also prime portions of the pickled variety. Pickled tongues also form a leading line. Mr. Wood is well known in and round about Kidderminster, and much respected. His shop at 92, Coventry Street is a popular emporium in Kidderminster, and is the centre of a large and increasing trade.

MESSRS. T. BROOKE AND SONS, TAILORS AND WOOLLEN DRAPERS, 12, OXFORD STREET AND 69, NEW ROAD.—Messrs. T. Brooke and Sons have carried on business as high class tailors and woollen drapers for eighteen years past, during which period they have secured the support of a valuable and representative *clientèle*. Their principal establishment at 12, Oxford Street, consists of a smart, single fronted shop, with ample window accommodation, and spacious interior convenience. An excellent stock of materials is maintained, the items embracing Scotch, Irish, Yorkshire and West of England tweeds, serges, vicunas, diagonals, fancy trouserings and waistcoatings, and fabrics adapted for uniforms, liveries, cycling costumes, etc. The whole of these goods are of the newest and most fashionable pattern, obtained direct from the manufacturers, Messrs. Brooke being consequently in a position to retail them at very reasonable prices. In the tailoring department gentlemen's suits and single garments are made to measure by skilled hands, and in accordance with the latest *modes*, and the house enjoys an enviable reputation for fit and style, as well as for promptitude and moderate bills. A leading feature is the supply of business suits, trousers and overcoats for everyday wear, but in addition the firm turn out more expensive garments, such as dress suits, frock coats, etc. They do a brisk and progressive turnover both at the Oxford Street establishment, and at the branch in New Road, which latter is similarly stocked and similarly organised and conducted under the personal supervision of the senior principal.

MR. F. O. EDWARDS, THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL WATCHMAKER, SILVERSMITH AND JEWELLER, 9, VICAR STREET.—Mr. F. O. Edwards' establishment at 9, Vicar Street, Kidderminster, is well known to the townspeople of Kidderminster, and the inhabitants of the surrounding country side. The business which finds head-quarters there was originally founded some fifteen years ago, and was acquired by Mr. Edwards three years ago. Mr. F. O. Edwards, who, besides being an essentially "popular" tradesman, is a theoretical and practical watchmaker, silversmith and jeweller, served his apprenticeship to his trade at Dudley with his father, who has a wide reputation as a watchmaker throughout the "Black Country." The premises in Vicar Street include a well appointed single-fronted shop, having a mirrored-in and glass-cased window, on the glass shelving of which is a representative display of gold and silver watches, clocks, and miscellaneous jewellery. The interior of the shop is copiously stocked with similar goods, and also with articles of plate, cutlery, etc., and a goodly array of timepieces. A leading feature of the business is the attention devoted to repairs, for which Mr. Edwards specially lays himself out. He has a full equipment of repairing tools and accessories, including lathe and mandril, and he is prepared to thoroughly overhaul every description of watch and clock, and such repairs he guarantees for one year. In this and in the other departments of his business, Mr. Edwards does a brisk trade with a numerous *clientèle* amongst the townspeople and the agricultural population of the surrounding district. Apart from his capacity of tradesman, Mr. Edwards is widely known as a successful swimmer. He was formerly captain of the Dudley Swimming Club, and has been the winner of prizes of the aggregate value of more than £50. He secured the coveted honours of the $\frac{1}{4}$ -mile championship at Walsall, and the championship at Dudley, and was for many years regarded as "the scratch man" in these contests. He has also been a prize-winner at Cheltenham and Portsmouth, and at many meetings held throughout the midlands.

MESSRS. B. PEARSON AND Co., GENERAL BUILDERS' MERCHANTS, ETC., COAL MERCHANTS, GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY STATION.—Messrs. B. Pearson and Co., the subjects of our present notice, succeeded to their present business some three years ago, it having been founded by Messrs. Allen and Co. six years back. The business has been under the management of Mr. S. J. Allen since it has been in the hands of the present proprietors, and it is now about the largest concern of the kind in the town and district. The firm devote themselves to both the wholesale and the retail departments of the coal trade. Their coals are obtained from the Cannock district, and are the best that the market contains. Their specialities, for which there is a brisk and extensive demand, are household deep coal and special engine slack. They do a wide-spread and important trade in all kinds of fuel, coal, coke and breeze, and they contract for all varieties to large consumers on the most favourable terms. In addition to the coal trade, Messrs. Pearson have a large and important concern as builders' merchants, and they have a speciality in this line in the way of Staffordshire red building bricks, which are much in requisition throughout this neighbourhood. They supply all kinds of builders' materials in any quantity required, and are open to contract for supplying builders in all parts of the country. Mr. Allen, the manager of the business here, is a popular and well known man. He is an enthusiastic sportsman, and is chairman of the Izaak Walton Angling Society. The firm's telegraphic address is, "Pearson, Coal, Kidderminster."

MESSRS. JOHN LAMB AND Co., ENGINEERS AND GENERAL MACHINISTS, MAKERS OF CARD STAMPING MACHINES, JACQUARDS AND BEAMING MACHINES, ETC., COMBERTON HILL.—Kidderminster has been noted for its carpet manufacture time out of mind, and in connection with this important industry there have naturally arisen several subsidiary ones, prominent amongst them being that concerned with the construction of card stamping machines, jacquards, beaming machines, loom fittings, and the like. One of the oldest local houses connected with the last named branch of activity is that conducted by Messrs. John Lamb and Co., of Comberton Hill. The firm referred to dates from the year 1836, when it was founded by the late Mr. John Lamb, famous as the inventor of numerous valuable improvements in carpet and general textile machinery of all kinds, by whom it was carried on down to the time of his death about five years ago. The control then passed into the hands of Mr. Lamb's son-in-law, Mr. W. Prunell, who had been associated with the business for over a quarter of a century previously, and who is now the sole proprietor. Messrs. Lamb and Co.'s works cover a considerable area of ground, fronting on the main thoroughfare of the town, and within easy distance of the railway station, and the principal factories. They comprise the whole of the departments usually found in an up-to-date engineering establishment, the accommodation including turning, fitting and erecting shops, smithy, stores, model shops, offices, and a good yard. An excellent plant has been laid down, steam power is available throughout, and nothing is wanting that could conduce to that high standard of efficiency which the nature of the operations engaged in demands. Every description of mechanism and accessories incidental to the modern system of carpet weaving are turned out to order in the best style, special attention being given to the making of jacquards and kindred apparatus, in which connection it may be mentioned that at the beginning of last year the firm constructed the largest jacquard machine ever made in the district. This machine is now at work in one of the leading mills of the town and has given every satisfaction. At the present time Messrs. Lamb are busy on an extensive order for similar machinery for the continent, their trade indeed extending to all the chief carpet manufacturing centres whether at home or abroad. Card stampers and beaming machines are likewise produced, whilst further features embrace the supply of loom fittings, the repair of portable engines, the re-boring of cylinders, the grinding and re-setting of lawn mowers, and the execution of all kinds of smithing and engine repairs. A staff of skilled hands is employed under the personal supervision of the principal, and commissions of whatever character are invariably carried through with the utmost promptitude, on thoroughly satisfactory lines and at the lowest possible cost to the customer. Taken as a whole, Messrs. Lamb's works form about the best organised establishment of the kind in Kidderminster, and their reputation for sound results is entirely commensurate therewith, the productions of the house being noted wherever the carpet industry has attained its highest development. We should add that prior to his decease Mr. John Lamb took an active part in local Wesleyanism and acted as superintendent of the Kidderminster Wesleyan Sunday Schools for a period of over half a century.

MR. G. PEARSALL, STATIONERY AND FANCY REPOSITORY, 31A, COMBERTON HILL.—A leading position amongst the stationery and fancy goods emporiums of Kidderminster, is held by that conducted by Mr. G. Pearsall, at No. 31a, Comberton Hill. The business thus represented was established about twelve years ago by Mr. Payton, and was acquired last year by Mr. Pearsall. The premises at Comberton Hill are well adapted for their purposes, the glass cased-in windows providing accommodation for the display of a liberal assortment of fancy goods and miscellaneous stationery. The interior of the shop is well appointed and contains a goodly stock. Air-tight counter glass cases and wall cases provide facilities for the exhibition of current novelties in albums, photograph and other frames, fancy china, and ornate ware of various kinds, and articles of an allied character. Elsewhere are fixtures devoted to stationery of all kinds in demand at present; and the end portion of the shop is utilised for the display of a varied and comprehensive collection of toys. The stock further includes an excellent selection of purses and other leather goods, scissor cases, and a host of other goods more or less allied to stationery and fancy wares. Mr. Pearsall also undertakes the prompt execution of commissions entrusted to him for bookbinding and printing on the most favourable terms, and also the punctual supply of newspapers and periodicals.

MR. A. NUTTER, WORSTED YARN FACTOR AND COMMISSION AGENT, 28, CHURCH STREET.—As a centre of textile production Kidderminster enjoys an almost unique reputation. Relatively speaking, the town is of no great size, and yet its name has become a household word wherever civilisation to the extent of carpets has found a footing. The local textile interest of course embraces several distinct departments, not the least amongst them being that which has to do with the supply of yarns and worsted staples to the various mills. A rising business in this particular line is conducted by Mr. A. Nutter, of 28, Church Street, who, though only recently established on his own account, is well known throughout the district as having formerly been manager for Messrs. Watson Bros., worsted spinners, of Pike Mills, a position which he occupied from January 1st, 1885, to September 26th, 1896, or something over eleven years. He relinquished the post referred to, simply in order that he might be free to start for himself, and much, we believe, to the regret of his employers, with whom his relations had always been of the friendliest character. At present Mr. Nutter acts as sole agent in Kidderminster for Messrs. W. Blackburn and Co., Ltd., worsted spinners and top makers, Clarence and Brook Mills, Cleckheaton, and Mr. W. Haigh, manufacturer of cotton spinning bands, grossing and papering bands, etc., Cleckheaton. Other first class agencies will be taken up as opportunity offers, and judging by the success already attained, the enterprise bids fair to play a very prominent part in the commercial future of the neighbourhood. Yarns or tops in any shade, and whether in mixed or solid colours, can be supplied on the shortest notice and at bottom prices. Orders receive prompt attention, and samples and full particulars can be had on application at the offices, 28, Church Street.

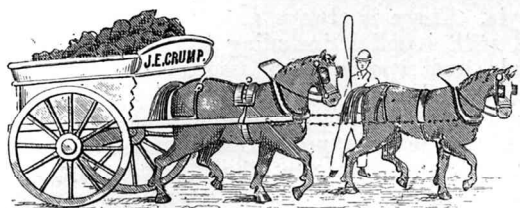
MR. W. STEVENSON, FANCY AND GENERAL DRAPER, COSTUMIER, MANTLE MAKER, MILLINER, ETC., 7, PARK BUTTS.—Nothing more forcibly illustrates the influence of the personal element in trade than the rapid development of this business since it was acquired a couple of years ago by Mr. Stevenson. The business itself has been established here over forty years, but on its acquisition by Mr. Stevenson a fresh and vigorous impetus was given to its development, and in the short interval of about two years the trade has been almost doubled. Mr. Stevenson is a Birmingham man, and has had almost a life-long connection with some of the best drapery houses in the Midlands. Trading on cash lines, and thoroughly conversant with the great wholesale markets, he is able to quote all his goods at prices that will give him only the slightest margin of profit on each sale, while supplying the very best value in the trade. The premises at 7, Park Butts are in a central and prominent corner position, and the large double front of plate glass affords opportunities which are now fully availed of for an exceptional display of high class drapery goods, mantles, jackets, dresses, millinery, etc. The main show-room on the ground floor is efficiently lighted and fully stocked with fashionable dress materials, hat and bonnet shapes, flowers, feathers, ribbons, and all the latest novelties in French and English millinery, besides ladies' and children's underclothing, baby-linen, hosiery goods, corsets, gloves, blouses, skirts, dresses, jackets, mantles, and fancy drapery and Manchester goods in great variety. The goods are of high class throughout, and, looking at their quality and the wonderfully low prices at which they are quoted, one can readily understand why the business has developed so rapidly. Table cloths and other household linen are also largely stocked, and on the first floor, in addition to the fine show-room, there are spacious, clean, and airy work-rooms in which a staff of highly trained dress and mantle makers and milliners are employed. Costumes and dresses, mantles, jackets, wedding trousseaux and mourning outfits, etc., are promptly made to order in the perfection of style, fit, and finish, and the connection now includes many of the leading families in the town and district.

MR. W. T. HODGES, PRACTICAL GILDER, PICTURE FRAME MAKER, MOUNT CUTTER, PICTURE RESTORER, ARTISTS' COLOURMAN, ETC., 21, WORCESTER STREET.—Mr. W. T. Hodges' establishment has for many years been a well known centre of supply for artistic productions, and also for artists' materials, and accessories of all descriptions. Mr. Hodges is a well known specialist in gilding, picture frame making and picture restoring, and he controls a steady going trade, which has developed rapidly in recent years. The business is an old established one, and the leading one of its kind in the town. As it outgrew the accommodation in the original premises, a move was made some time ago to the present establishment, which is neatly fitted up and very conveniently situated. The shop contains a comprehensive assortment of colours and artists' materials of all descriptions, besides picture frames in various styles, as well as some first class specimens of high class gilding; and the stock also contains a notable selection of works of art, photos, oil and water colour paintings, drawings, prints, engravings, etc. Mounting of pictures and other works of art, the manufacture and renovation of picture frames, and the cleaning and restoration of oil paintings, etc., are executed on his premises, and the connection extends throughout the town and district.

MR. W. PRITCHARD, TAILOR, ETC., 51, OXFORD STREET.—A good tailoring business is carried on at No. 51, Oxford Street, by Mr. W. Pritchard, who is an old Kidderminster man, and established the business of which he is proprietor six years ago. It is housed in excellent premises with a demi-cased-in window, and lit at night by incandescent gas lights. On entering the shop one finds a large counter on the left, and the wall fixtures contain a goodly stock of serges, Cheviots, tweeds, Vicunas, West of England cloths, linings, etc., used in the production of bespoke garments. These Mr. Pritchard turns out at moderate charges. That he succeeds in giving satisfaction to his patrons is evidenced by his increasing business, for in nothing more than in the clothes a man wears is a good recommendation likely to bear better fruit. Mr. Pritchard devotes the whole of his attention to his business, which he finds fully occupies his time.

MR. BENSON WALDRON (LATE W. HARTLAND) FAMILY BUTCHER, MILL STREET: TELEPHONE No. 46.—Mr. Benson Waldron successfully continues a business which was originally established by the late Mr. W. Hartland many years ago. Acquired by the present principal in 1882, the undertaking has since been largely extended, and its reputation to-day is second to none in the town. The premises are centrally situated, and comprise a smart looking single fronted shop, the interior of which is appointed in superior modern style, and affords every convenience for carrying on a substantial high class trade. Only one quality of meat is kept, viz., the best, and the house is noted far and wide for the excellence of its prime English and Scotch beef, and Southdown and Radnor mutton, which with grass lamb, veal and dairy fed pork in season, constitute the chief specialities dealt in. These latter items, it should be mentioned, are procured from a large farm at Upper Arley, about six miles from Kidderminster, where Mr. Waldron's family have been engaged in the grazing interest for generations past. From the farm, too, considerable quantities of poultry and new laid eggs are obtained, and customers can always be supplied with the goods referred to, in the pink of condition, and at very moderate prices. Calve's heads, sweetbreads and kidneys, pickled tongues, home made sausages, brawn and kindred delicacies are likewise purveyed. Being an experienced judge of live stock, and personally visiting the local and district markets every week, Mr. Waldron is in a position to guarantee a thoroughly reliable and superior article, and that his endeavours to give satisfaction meet with due appreciation in the right quarter is amply indicated by the influential character of his *clientèle*, which includes numerous well known county families, as well as the leading gentry and tradespeople resident in Kidderminster and district. Orders of whatever nature receive prompt and careful attention; and punctual delivery, liberal weight and reasonable bills may be depended upon. To anyone requiring really good meat or poultry on economical terms, we can say without hesitation, "Go to Waldron's, and you are bound to get it."

MR. JOHN E. CRUMP, AGENT FOR THE CANNOCK AND RUGELEY COLLIERY COMPANY, HEDNESFORD; WOOLPACK INN, BROAD STREET.—Mr. John E. Crump, who is a native of Kidderminster, commenced business here about twenty years ago. He has two departments of trade, the one connected with his coal agency, and the other



with the Woolpack Inn, of which he is the proprietor. As regards the coal business, Mr. Crump has a wide-spread reputation for all the best kinds of fuel, and the fact that he is the local agent for the Cannock and Rugeley Colliery Company is in itself a guarantee as to the high class quality of his goods. Coals are sent by him all round the country by boat and truck, and the lowest market terms are charged, manufacturers and others being supplied with coal and slack at the most moderate figures. As regards the Woolpack Inn, this is, as many of our readers will know, one of the oldest houses in the town, and it is celebrated for its fine home

brewed ales. These are extensively in demand throughout the town and district, and are made from the best malt and hops. Mr. Crump does not go in for public life, as the claims on his time and energies made by the two branches of his business do not admit of attention being given to other matters. He, however, takes an interest in all movements for the welfare of the town, and is a popular member of the community.

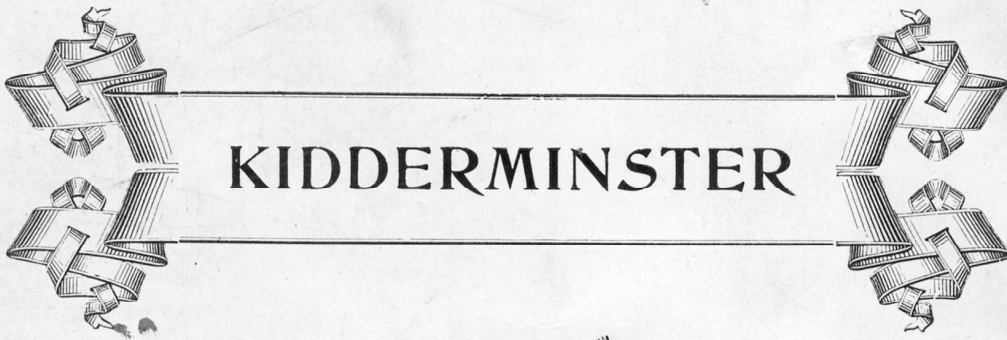
MR. JOHN NICHOLLS, AUCTIONEER, VALUER AND ESTATE AGENT, COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS; ALSO AT BEWDLEY AND STOURPORT.—Mr. John Nicholls, a well known Kidderminster man, succeeded to an old established business about fourteen years ago. He served his articles with one of the most famous firms in the West of England, a firm which has turned out some of the best men in the profession. Mr. Nicholls himself has built up a valuable and influential connection throughout this district. He has a very large estate agency, is land agent to many of the principal land owners in the county, and manages the properties of numerous landlords in the borough. As an auctioneer he is held in high repute, his sales usually commanding good attendances and realising excellent prices. His cattle sales in the Kidderminster cattle market, every alternate Tuesday, are largely patronised, and help to maintain the popularity of the town from an agricultural standpoint. Among the other special features of the business we may mention Mr. Nicholls' popularity as a valuer for mortgages and tenant right, hotel transfers and licensed houses. He does a considerable amount of work in these branches, as well as valuations for probate, his decisions carrying great weight. He is entrusted by the Official Receiver in Bankruptcy with the sales and valuations of insolvent estates, he is also an authorised bailiff under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

MR. B. L. GRIFFITHS, GROCER, TEA DEALER, SEEDSMAN, CHEESE, BUTTER, AND BACON FACTOR, 6, SWAN STREET.—This concern is one of the oldest and soundest established businesses connected with the grocery, provision and allied trades of Kidderminster. It was founded in 1833, and acquired by Mr. B. L. Griffiths, its present proprietor, eighteen years ago. It is housed in an excellent shop at No. 6, Swan Street, and the window displays a capital assortment of high class groceries. Entering the spacious shop, we find on the right a long range of counters, which extend the entire length of the shop. Two handsome glass cases find accommodation on part of the counters, and contain a tastefully arranged display of toilet soaps, chocolates, and high class and very toothsome confectionery. A third handsome case is dedicated to candied fruits and kindred goods. Behind the counter the fixtures are correspondingly elegant and effective, and display ornate canisters of tea, bottled pickles, sauces, and preserved goods of Messrs. Crosse and Blackwell's and other celebrated manufacturers. The end portion of the shop is mainly devoted to English provisions, hams, bacon, Cheddar, Gorgonzola, and other cheeses, lard, butters, etc., of which large stocks are held. As a seedsman, Mr. Griffiths transacts a considerable business in garden seeds during the season. He is also an agent for Messrs. W. and A. Gilbey, the well known firm of wine importers and distillers. Mr. Griffiths does an excellent and good class trade. He has also been something of a cycling enthusiast in his time, and was one of the first to ride a "safety" in Kidderminster.

MISSSES E. AND A. PENNY, MILLINERS, DRESSMAKERS, ETC., 4, COVENTRY STREET.—The established millinery and dressmaking emporium conducted by Misses E. and A. Penny is one which has the confidence and fast increasing support of a wide circle of ladies throughout Kidderminster and district. The business was founded by Mr. Fehrenbach, sixteen years ago, and purchased by its present proprietresses, the Misses E. and A. Penny, six years later. These ladies hailed from Plymouth, but not unnaturally selected Kidderminster as the scene of their later business operations, as their mother was an old and respected inhabitant of the latter town. The premises occupied are at 4, Coventry Street, and consist of an appropriately appointed shop, which serves as a suitable head-quarters for a growing business. The window contains a liberal selection of millinery goods, millinery being the Misses Penny's leading speciality. In this department they have proved themselves most skilled and dependable, and have built up an excellent connection. Practical dressmaking forms a further leading feature, and in this branch they have also earned for themselves a reputation for superior production and for the prompt execution of orders entrusted to their care. A feature of the interior of the shop on entering is a large, handsome, air-tight glass case containing a choice assortment of ribbons, feathers, laces, gloves, and miscellaneous fancy goods, while a second case is exclusively devoted to the display of ribbons, for which the establishment has an especial local reputation amongst the fair sex in Kidderminster. In the shop is a carefully selected stock of corsets, hosiery, gloves, feathers, flowers, fancy mob caps, ribbons, and miscellaneous fancy goods and small wares. Much credit is due to the Misses Penny for the enterprise and vigour with which they conduct their eminently progressive business, and for the readiness with which they meet the requirements of their patrons.

MR. FRED. TAYLOR, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL TOBACCO AND CIGAR MERCHANT, OXFORD STREET.—The wholesale and retail tobacco and cigar trade is well represented in Kidderminster by Mr. Fred. Taylor, of the Oxford Street Cigar Stores, who has been established in business here for upwards of twenty years past, and needless to say, enjoys the support of a valuable and wide-reaching connection. The premises consist of a handsome and commodious shop, appointed in smart modern style. There is always an attractive show of novelties in the window, whilst the interior is literally packed with supplies, including loose and packet tobaccos of all kinds, cigars and cigarettes of the choicest brands, and representative assortments of pipes, pouches, cigar and cigarette tubes, tobacco jars, snuff-boxes, and smokers' requisites generally. Reliable quality and condition are the rule, and the prices will be found exceedingly reasonable, no similar house in the town providing either better choice or sounder value. Besides stocking the productions of the leading manufacturers, Mr. Taylor has several excellent specialities of his own, amongst them being Taylor's celebrated "Bobby's Mixture," which is admittedly one of the finest and most economical smoking mixtures obtainable. This article is manufactured from selected, sun-dried American tobaccos; it contains nothing in the way of artificial flavouring or scents, it smokes coolly and evenly in the pipe, and the price is 3½d. per ounce. Mixtures of far less merit are regularly retailed at 1½d. Another important line is Taylor's Irish Twist, the real thing, and of one uniform quality, viz., the best; whilst splendid value is also offered in 2d. and 3d. cigars, of British or foreign brands. In addition to his retail business, Mr. Taylor does a brisk and increasing trade in the wholesale department, supplying tobacco, cigars, etc., to licensed victuallers and small retailers in all parts of the district. Specially low terms can be quoted to purchasers in quantity, orders are promptly and punctually executed, and first class goods may invariably be depended upon. The business as a whole is capably managed, and in every way deserves the support which has hitherto been accorded it.

MRS. C. STEWARD, DEALER IN TOYS, FANCY GOODS, ETC., 8, OXFORD STREET.—The above business was established by the present proprietress, Mrs. C. Steward, about eighteen years ago, and is highly popular both amongst local residents and visitors who come to Kidderminster during the summer months. Situated at No. 8, Oxford Street, the premises are very central and comprise a handsome single fronted shop, the exterior and interior of which have been entirely re-modelled within the last six months, and are consequently thoroughly smart and up-to-date in point of appearance. The stock may be fairly described as the completest and most attractive of its class to be met with in the town. It embraces every description of dolls, toys, and games, together with representative selections of fancy leather goods, photo frames and albums, art china and stationery, brackets, picture frames, fancy basket ware and, in brief, all manner of knick-knacks adapted either for ornament or personal use. The whole of these goods are of first rate quality, being procured direct from the leading manufacturers and importers; they will be found to represent the latest novelties in their respective lines, and the prices throughout are moderation itself. We have seldom seen a prettier assortment of dolls than is here disposed to view, and the same excellence characterises the stocks in other departments, brightness and elegance being the rule in each. A further feature is the Berlin and fancy wool department, which affords a wide range of choice in fingering, embroidery and knitting wools of the newest art shades, also a good assortment of tracings, needles, bodkins and kindred accessories for the work-basket. Mrs. Steward has had extensive experience of ladies' requirements in this connection, and she spares no pains to provide the soundest possible value, and an article of the most recommendable quality. During the summer a brisk turnover is done in the supply of view-china to excursionists, whilst at Christmas, the New Year, and Easter, Mrs. Steward always has a splendid show of appropriate cards, private greetings and the like, in the most tasteful designs.



KIDDERMINSTER



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in all Departments.**



NEW WORKS: MILL STREET.

DEPÔT, SHOW-ROOM & OFFICES: No. 56, OXFORD STREET.

Inside back cover page

Appendix

This booklet was not dated by the publishers W. T. Pike & Co. However, information contained on pages 17 and 18 lead us to the conclusion that it was published sometime in 1897 around February.

Three line beneath the picture on page 17 it states that the Excelsior Works was first registered as a company in August 1896. Then on page 18, seven lines up from the bottom of the first paragraph, it states, in the present tense) that the cycle company "..... has only been established some six months" i.e. about six months after August 1896.

Bob Millward 4 February 2014