

# A MODEL VILLAGE INDUSTRY.

BY T.G. JAGGS.

FOR many years past Social reformers and others have been preaching what may be termed "The Gospel of Getting Back to the Land." They have pointed out, on the one hand, that year by year the population of the countryside is growing smaller and smaller, while, on the other, the physique of the town-dweller, although constantly recruited by the stamina of the countryman, grows poorer and punier.

It has, therefore, naturally occurred to reflective minds that if it were possible to retain the workers on the land, not only would the output of the soil be immensely increased, but

our present dependence upon foreign sources for our enormous food-supply would be appreciably lessened, whilst the material and moral conditions of the people would be greatly improved. The ideal of re-establishing industries on the land closely connected with agriculture—away from the dirt and dust of our great cities

—has been constantly held up to view.

About sixty miles from London, on the borders of the old University town of Cambridge, is situated the quiet little village of Histon, and here amongst the fruit plantations, which stretch away for miles on every side and extend even up to the very doors of the University, are carried on the operations which have made the name and fame of Messrs. S. Chivers and

Sons' products a household word.

In Messrs. Chivers' enterprise, this ideal has been realised in so remarkable a degree that it forms an object-lesson which may be studied with advantage.



MR. STEPHEN CHIVERS, SEN.,  
Founder of the Firm.



THE FARMHOUSE FACTORY IN 1873.  
*From a Photograph.*

The Chivers family have been connected with the land for over a hundred years. It was in 1806 that Mr. Stephen Chivers, the great-grandfather of the present members of the firm, purchased a small holding of a few acres at Histon, and commenced the fruit-growing part of the present enterprise, which was gradually extended over a wider



MR. STEPHEN CHIVERS, JUN.,  
Director.



MR. JOHN CHIVERS,  
Managing Director.

and wider area of land and continued for seventy years. About thirty years ago the present Mr. Stephen Chivers, senr., sent two of his sons into the North to find a market for raw fruit. At this time there was a "glut" of fruit in the Metropolis, but a great demand for it in the North. While there, the idea occurred to them to embark on the making of jam themselves. Prior to this, part of the fruit grown at Histon had gone to other jam-makers, but sooner or later the idea was bound to occur to the enterprising members of the Chivers family, "Why not make the jam ourselves?"

The first experiment in this direction was made in 1873, when jam manufacture was started in some old buildings attached to the farm and plantations. In 1875 a new building was put up, and additions were subsequently, from time to time, made to it. The new industry, however, proved so remarkably successful that it became necessary to reconstruct the whole factory, and the present handsome building, the front of which is shown at the end of this article, is the result.

The consequences of the establishment

increasing, and thus Histon is one of the few rural villages throughout England whose population is not on the wane. It now numbers nearly 2,000 inhabitants, and a fourth of these are regularly engaged in the Chivers' industry.

Of course it is only by successful administration that the regular hands can be fully employed during the winter months; but not only have the firm partially erected the present handsome factory themselves, by utilising their own men, but nearly all the articles used in the production and packing of their various manufactures are made on the premises by the members of their own staff.

The goods manufactured by the firm comprise not only jams and jellies, for which Messrs. Chivers are now world-famous, but fruits preserved in syrup, custards, blanc-manges, cake powders, baking powders, and mince-meats. Both the jams and jellies are prepared in special silver-lined pans, which ensure absolute freedom from copper in the process of manufacture, and are made from the finest materials obtainable, the latter flavoured with ripe fruit juices.

A practical chemist of high standing, who,



THE LATE  
MR. WILLIAM CHIVERS, J.P.

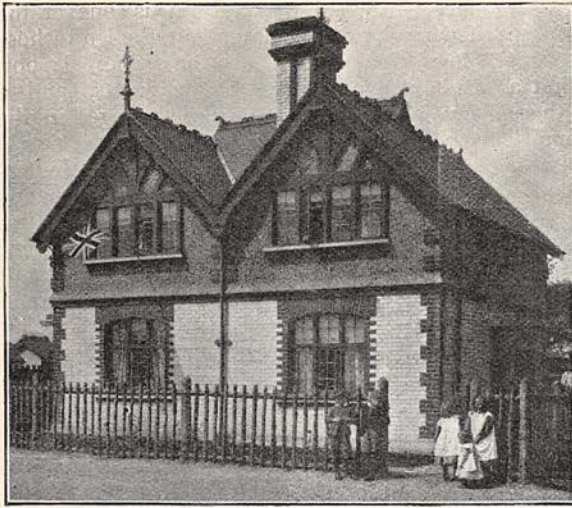


THE NEW SCHOOLS AND BAPTIST CHURCH AT HISTON.  
*Photo by Mason and Basbøe.*

of this successful fruit farm factory, the first of its kind in England, have been extremely beneficial. The success of the firm has stimulated the growth of fruit for miles round, and during the fruit-picking season the greatest activity prevails in this ordinarily quiet village. The population is steadily

amongst other qualifications, holds the post of an examiner to the University, tests all the materials employed in the firm's manufactures, supervises their preparation, and thus guarantees their purity.

In the preparation of all these articles purity and quality are the watchwords kept



ONE OF THE MODEL COTTAGES.  
*Photo by Mason and Basbø.*

in view—while economy in production, and consequently comparative cheapness in price, are secured by the use of all the most “up-to-date” labour-saving appliances.

It is significant of the methods employed by these successful “Captains of Industry,” that having established “a Model Village Industry,” they should still sigh for more worlds to conquer, and after due experiment have added to their other well-known products the manufacture of what we firmly believe, after personal trial, will prove to be the most universally desired of all existing temperance beverages in their “Cambridge Lemonade.”

After numerous experiments by the firm’s practical chemist, it was found possible to extract from the lemon the essence which it contains, and without the admixture of any other substance than sugar, to embody it in a crystal so perfect and in such a state of purity that its delightful flavour instantly pleases the palate of the consumer. This last development is one of the most interesting of all, and although the “Cambridge Lemonade” was only introduced last season it is already a general favourite wherever it is known. Large quantities of lemons are imported from Sicily, and in the manufacture

of this beverage no fruit other than the lemon is used, and, a great point, no acid other than that obtained from the lemon is added.

The Chivers family have been long and honourably connected with the Baptist denomination, and its members have actively engaged in religious and philanthropic work for many years.

The development of Histon is bound up with that of the Chivers’ industry, and an opportunity is afforded to the members of the firm to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of its inhabitants of which they have not been slow to avail themselves. Model cottages for the workpeople, and handsome new schools and a church have been erected.

The late Mr. William Chivers, whose portrait is here given, and whose untimely decease last year is widely lamented, was a well-known figure in his denomination, particularly in the eastern counties.

The foundation stone of the schools was laid by him last year, whilst that of the handsome new church adjoining was laid by Mr. Stephen Chivers, senr., a year previously. A new Wesleyan Chapel has also been built during the last few years.

The old Baptist Chapel and schools have been purchased, and will be used for reading-rooms and evening classes. The larger



A JAM FILLING ROOM.  
*From a Photograph.*

building will be used for lectures and entertainments in the winter season.

About seventy acres of land have been bought adjoining the railway station for building purposes. On this it is intended to erect model cottages, similar to that shown in the illustration on the preceding page, for additional workpeople. Cottage-building has also been undertaken by private enterprise.

A "run round the factory," to which the visitor may be invited, is seemingly as simple a matter as any invitation to take a walk. One, however, grows wiser by experience. The extent, resources and variety of occupations carried on in the establishment to be seen, make the "run round" a rather arduous undertaking not to be lightly indulged in. From the railway siding alongside the building a train-load of bottles is in course of unloading; store-rooms on the ground floor containing thousands of bags of sugar are passed through; here we pass a group of men who are building a cold store, and yet another group putting down a fire-proof floor. The boiling rooms, with their beautifully polished silver-lined pans; the filling rooms and store-rooms kept cool by Blackman fans driven by electric motors; the box-making rooms and packing rooms; the chemist's department, where everything is tested and examined; the printing department, in which the lithographic and letterpress printing used by the firm is produced;



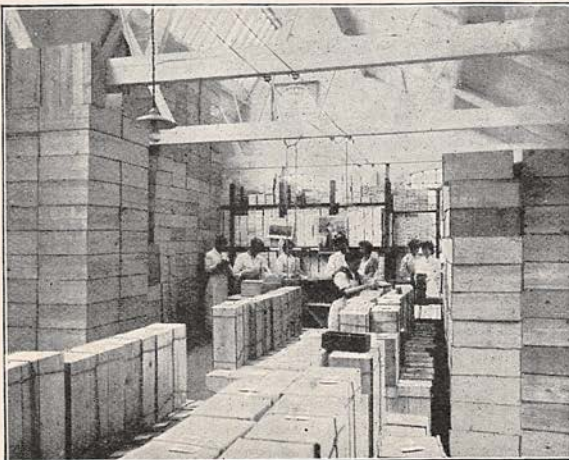
THE JELLY PACKING ROOM.  
*From a Photograph.*

the silver plating room and the engineer's shop, all form a scene of almost bewildering interest and activity.

The labour-saving appliances and general organisation of this most successful industry, in their variety and completeness, are bound to excite considerable admiration. There is a telephone in every room, and the rooms of the factory are endless; miniature tramways run in all directions; the electric light is everywhere. In the printing department a wharfedale machine is fed, not as in many even first-class printing offices throughout the country at the present moment, by hand labour, but by a special ingenious attachment which automatically delivers a sheet of paper to the machine at the precise moment when it is wanted. In the box-making room an equally ingenious machine is busy nailing together the pieces of wood presented to it, the nails being accurately driven in to the desired position by the machine itself. The whole forms an object-lesson in the art of "How to do it."

The number of workers in the factory and on the farms is nearly doubled during the fruit-picking season by the employment of several hundreds of persons from Cambridge and adjacent villages, this arrangement fitting to a nicety the local labour conditions, it being a slack time in Cambridge during the busy fruit-picking season at Histon.

This invasion on a small scale resembles that of the hop-pickers in Kent, but unlike that of the hop-pickers, the additional workers who pick the Histon fruit farms are not drawn from the slums of a great



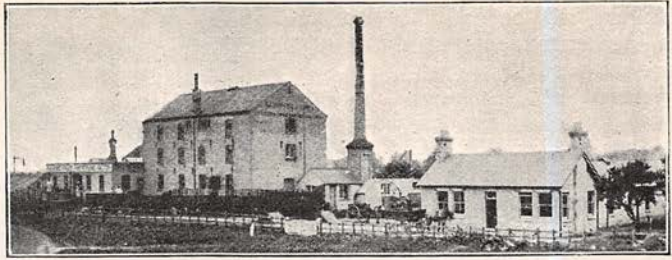
THE JELLY DESPATCH ROOM.  
*From a Photograph.*

city, but are distinctly of a cleaner and more respectable class, in fact the fruit-picking excursion of the Cambridge people is regarded more as an annual holiday than anything else.

Building operations in connection with the factory are still going on, and, guided by an expert, a fireproof floor was being laid down by the jam-makers during our visit, and an inquiry addressed to Mr. John Chivers, the managing director, as to when he thought the factory would be finished, elicited the smiling response of "Never!"

It will be seen from the facts described in this article that the successful village industry carried on at Histon presents features of the greatest interest. To the sociologist and political thinker it offers a striking example of a manufacturing industry, closely connected with agriculture, through whose

agency not only have the original inhabitants been retained on the land, but whose ranks have actually been augmented from the population of the towns and villages adjacent. There is no talk of the rural exodus at Histon. There is no agricultural depression. A peaceful, prosperous air hangs over the place, and in its past history and future development may unsuspectingly lie the key to the next step in the path of industrial progress in the century just begun.



MESSRS. CHIVERS' FACTORY IN 1889.  
*From a Photograph.*



MESSRS. CHIVERS' WORKS AS THEY ARE TO-DAY.