



GLOUCESTER RAILWAY CARRIAGE AND WAGON COMPANY, LTD.

A Brief Description of Gloucestershire's Largest Industry.

THE fact that the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Works are the largest single industry in Gloucestershire, employing a greater number of hands and paying out a larger sum in wages than any other one concern, should at once explain the necessity for including at least a brief reference to them in "Industrial Gloucestershire." At the same time the great extent and importance of the industry preclude anything like an adequate description, and we can merely indicate a few of the more interesting features connected with its establishment and subsequent remarkable development.

The Industry was established in 1860, when a capital of £100,000 was subscribed and the erection of suitable buildings in Bristol Road was begun. The original workshops were designed and erected exclusively for the construction of railway carriages, the new Company having secured contracts for the London, Chatham and Dover, and the South Eastern Railway Companies. At that date there were in England not more than five Companies engaged in similar work. Though provision was at first made for the employment of less than one hundred workmen, the new industry at once gave a decided stimulus to the industrial life of the city, and with each succeeding year it has become more closely identified with our prosperity. It may be of interest to state, in passing, that this was the first limited liability Company in England established for manufacturing purposes.

In 1866-7 the first addition was made to the buildings, a paint shop on the north side being

who are familiar with Gloucestershire's industrial history will remember that Messrs. Eassie and Company were noted for their general joinery and portable buildings, and it was this Firm that constructed the huts used by the British troops in the Crimean War. When the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co., Ltd., took over the business they continued it with great success, their joinery work having since become a very important department. At about the same time, the principal Railway Companies having erected works for the construction of their own coaches, the Company, to fully utilize their large plant and to retain

found necessary to erect additional buildings for that purpose at the South end of the Works. During 1900 to 1902 the modern system of working all machinery by electric power was adopted, and a central electric power station with range of boilers of modern type was erected.

The offices of the Company becoming unsafe, owing to continual alterations necessitated by their being found to be inconvenient and quite inadequate for the business of the Company, it was decided to erect a new block, together with more conveniently situated time and pay offices, stores, etc. A large mess room has also been erected capable of seating 800 men to meals, or 1,000 when it is used for a concert.

From a small concern employing less than a hundred hands, the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Works have thus grown, in the short space of four decades, to an industry requiring the services of 1,400 employees, with premises covering an area of 21 acres. Besides the works in Gloucester, the Company have over 40 head depots in other cities and towns throughout the country, while their repairers attend hundreds of stations on the different lines of railways.

Co-incident with the almost constant addition to the buildings and equipment, the Company have improved upon the methods of manufacture, every device and appliance being used which could in any way promote economy or efficiency. The heads of the various

departments have so elaborated their system that not the minutest detail is overlooked. Every piece of iron or steel, from the time it enters the yard in its rough state until it plays its part in some complicated piece of mechanism, is closely followed. The work that each man and each machine does and ought to do is definitely known, and every precaution is taken against the use of faulty material or workmanship. No superintendent or foreman is appointed to his responsible position without having demonstrated his peculiar fitness for it, and nearly all those who stand in close relation to the heads of the Company have served in the works for many years, advancing through subordinate positions to posts of responsibility. The provision that has been made for the workpeople, as regards recreation as well as the conditions under which they perform their work, is also deserving of comment. In this respect the works may be fairly said to be an excellent illustration of Gloucestershire's best industries.

From the foregoing inadequate reference to the work the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Company have performed, one may realise the important part they have taken in railway construction throughout the world. It is not too much to say that they have materially assisted in the development of the most distant countries, by providing apparatus which facilitates the construction and the safe and economical management of railways. Upon the satisfactory performance of the work for which their manufactures are designed human life itself is frequently dependent, and it is gratifying to know that during the half-century of existence their work has uniformly been

of the highest standard. The Company publish several expensive and attractive illustrated catalogues, which to those versed in the technical features of the work are very interesting and instructive.

It is to be regretted that the limited space allowed here has permitted us to give only a bare outline of the continuous growth of the industry. This mere record, however, is probably as impressive as a more detailed description would be; it is certainly a striking evidence that Gloucestershire still presents unlimited opportunities to those manufacturers who have the ability to adapt themselves to changing industrial conditions.



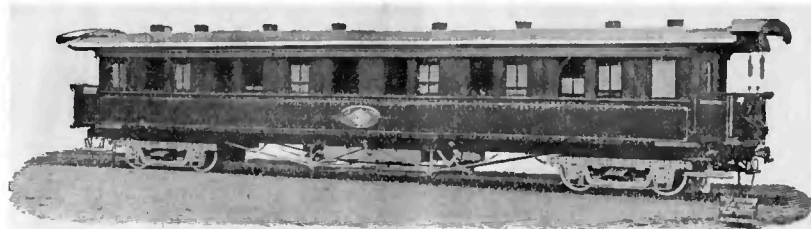
SINGLE LANDAULET. (ELECTRIC MOTOR.)
Built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co., Gloucester.

their staff of workmen, began the manufacture of railway signals and signalling apparatus, in addition to their other work.

The next important addition to the buildings and equipment was in 1878, when the forge, with furnaces and steam hammers, was erected on the north side next to the Midland Railway boundary. In 1887 the opportunity occurred of acquiring as much land as the Company then required for extensions. They therefore erected the Hydraulic Riveting and Machine Shop at the south end of the Works, thus admitting of the whole of the work being done at one establishment, and what were known as the "T" Works were sold.

In 1894 the Company made another extensive addition to their list of manufactures, and took over the business of Messrs. Mousell and

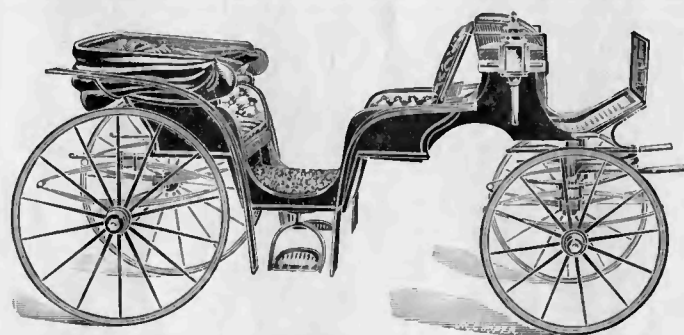
Co., manufacturers of road vehicles of all kinds. This business they continued, largely adding to it from year to year, until it has become a very important industry in itself. In 1895 they erected for this class of work handsome show rooms in George Street, near the Great Western Station. In that year they erected railway wheel shops at the north end of the Works, on the ground forming part of what was known as Elming Row. In the following year, there being no department suitable for the construction of large modern Bogie Carriages, it was



BOGIE CORRIDOR CARRIAGE. (SOUTH AFRICAN TYPE).
Built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage and Wagon Co., Gloucester.

erected for the finishing of carriages under construction for the Midland and the Great Eastern Railway Companies. A year later, in consequence of not being able to obtain more ground in the Bristol-road district, it was decided to erect the works near the "T" Station of the Great Western Railway, the Company having taken a succession of large contracts for Russia which extended over five years for their execution. The contract for the Russian Government was the first foreign contract the Company secured, though they have since constructed a great number of carriages for all the British Colonies, Brazil, and other South American States, Turkey, and other countries. Their railway carriages, indeed, are known all over the world, and they have received gold medal awards at many of the principal Exhibitions both at home and abroad.

In 1876 the works of Messrs. Eassie and Co., Ltd., sawmill owners and joinery manufacturers, were taken over, as the Company required additional means of dealing with their timber converting, and these works being adjacent to the then existing boundary were found to be most convenient for the purpose. Those



"SOCIALE."
Built by the Gloucester Railway Carriage & Wagon Co., Gloucester.