

Messrs. D. Jones, Dickinson & Co., Ltd.,

Premier Cake Works, Dowlais.



HAVING within the last two years expended over £5000 in extending and perfecting the Cake Manufactory and Bakery at Dowlais, the Directors of MESSRS. D. JONES, DICKINSON & CO., LIMITED have been prompted to issue to their many Customers and Friends this "Booklette," descriptive of where, how, and by whom, the Goods which are sent out all over the Country under their name are made, sorted, packed, and delivered, in the hope that attention may thus be drawn to the exceedingly perfect arrangements made to secure excellence in the manufacturing of Cake as well as of the many other commodities supplied by the firm; Cake Making being only one of many Branches of the Company's Business.

Throughout the busy Towns and peaceful Agricultural Districts of Wales and Monmouthshire—be it cottage home or well-furnished mansion—rural store or city restaurant—everywhere you will find in high repute some of the standard brands of Cake made by this Firm. Yet just a little over twenty years ago the Founders of the Business, which for so long a time was known as "David Jones & Co., Dowlais," were strangers to that town, unknown outside the circle of their personal friends, and the business which since has made their name so famous had then no existence; while to-day they stand at the head of a Trading Concern second to none for the excellence of its goods, particularly its varied kinds of Cake now so popular throughout the United Kingdom.

In this comparatively short space of time Messrs. Jones have wrought great changes in this Ironworks' Town, now as noted for its fragrant fruit Cakes as of old for Steel Rails, silently, yet none the less surely, have they been altering the old-fashioned methods and resolutely adopting the newer systems, carrying on all their trade with that up-to-date thoroughness ever characteristic of the Firm, which had marked them out for success from the first. And as the founder of the great Dowlais Iron and Steel Works, known as Mr. JOHN GUEST, left his native Yorkshire many years ago for the Hills of Wales, coming into a strange land, and by personal grit and enterprise transforming the barren hillside into a hive of industry; so we see just a century-and-a-half later, two sturdy Breconshire Youths crossing the border into Glamorganshire and in this breezy town of Dowlais setting up in Business with the avowed object of bringing to the doors of the people the best of food at the cheapest price, placing what had previously been a luxury to the wealthy within reach of the purchasing power of the Working Classes.

Possessed of Capital, ability, untiring energy and farsighted enterprise, each with his own department and having the fullest confidence in his Partner, is it to be wondered at that they prospered. From the small beginning of a shop in Union Street, staffed by two men and a boy, followed early by the building of a few ovens to supply their own retail Bread and Cake Trade, the Business has steadily developed until at present

they have premises with a ground area of over 1,100 square yards, a floor space of 3,544 square yards, and a total frontage to four streets of over 300 feet, this embracing the Retail Stores, Mixing, Baking, Packing and Sorting Rooms, Counting House, Mess Room and Offices; the Staff and Turnover having continued to increase at every stage of the Firm's developments.

Commencing at the top of the NEW CAKE BAKERY (which we may reach entering from North Street by means of the Lift in the flights of stairs) we find ourselves in the Flour Loft, a fine store-room capable of holding 550 sacks of flour, which being hoisted from the street below by means of a powerful crane, are here stored until required. In this room is fitted a Gardner's Patent Flour Blender and Sifter, fed from this floor and also by an elevator from the floor beneath, working at the rate of 30 sacks per hour.

Descending we come to the Workroom where are fixed three large Cake Mixers, one alone of these being capable of mixing 6 cwt of Cake at one charging; near by we see the Girls busily preparing the fruit, several picking and cleaning by hand the heaps of Raisins, Currants, and Sultanas; one apart seeing to the Patent Fruit Cleaning Machine, which, as if by magic, clears away all dross leaving the fruit beautifully fresh and sweet; another attending to the Patent Peel Cutter, with an assistant bringing supplies and taking away, this Machine receiving the drained peel, and by one simple operation cutting it into bits of the requisite thinness and length; while close to us three more are busily engaged, one splitting, another grinding, and a third blanching Almonds, each at a Machine which enables a marvellous amount of work to be turned out in an incredibly short space of time. At another table is seen one of the Girls surrounded by a number of large cases containing Eggs, and her quick hands are deftly cracking the shells and passing the contents into a dish for examination, thence to be added to the others in the pail at her side, the celerity with which each Egg is dispatched displaying the constant practice obtained, over two million Eggs (equal to 130 tons weight) being thus treated annually. From the pail the Eggs are poured into a receptacle which fits, box-like, around the whisks and, a handle being moved, the rods inside revolve at a terrific rate, the whole contents being speedily whipped into condition ready for use. What would our Grandmothers say if they could view the expeditious manner in which Eggs are being beaten by the hundred, and then remember their old-fashioned way of whipping up the yolks in a basin? After the Eggs are well beaten, they are put into a Mixer with the Butter and Sugar, and all is churned slowly for a certain time, and then at higher speed until the contents become a spongy consistent mass of rather a silky texture; after which the whole is transferred to the large Cake Machine previously referred to. Here the Flour, Fruit and Milk are added, and all is subjected to another thorough mixing.

As soon as this part of the process is complete, the mixture is drawn out into one of the heavy canary-wood Troughs; these, as well as all the Tables used in the Work Room and before the Ovens, running on wheels so as to be easily moved, in spite of their great weight. The Trough with its load is now run into the Lift, and after the massive collapsible steel gates are closed, the whole is lowered to the floor below, where the ovens are.

In all the Firm have sixteen large Scotch and Combination Ovens, eight in the Bread Bakery and eight in the Cake Bakery. All of these Ovens, as well, for that matter, as the entire new Premises which we are now describing, have been put up under the supervision of Mr. John, the Manager, who accompanied Mr. David Jones to all the chief Bakeries in the Country, thus having the advantage of observing all the latest machines and newest labour-saving appliances; it having been determined by the Firm to obtain the best and most economical system of Cake-making regardless of cost.

In one corner of this Bakery is a Dough Divider, by the side of the Proving Cupboard for Fancy Bread, which being heated by steam coils has accommodation for a gross of trays, their capacity being equal to 5,000 Buns in one proving.

From the Ovens the Cakes are loaded after Baking on to Patent Cake Racks, which run smoothly over the floors, and by means of the Lift are reconveyed to the Packing Room over another part of the Building. Here each day's Baking is left on the Racks until the following day, when the quick fingers of the packers fasten on the paper wrappings, and the parcels are then put by on the shelves ready for dispatching. In this

portion of the Premises is the Circular Saw, where the long pieces of board are cut into lengths for box-making, and also the gas-heated Branding Machine, which burns into the wood sides and ends the Firm's name and trade mark; all the boxes used for packing purposes being made on the premises.

In connection with the Firm's Registered Trade Mark, which consists of the imprint of a Welsh Maiden, it is interesting to note that this was adopted because at an earlier stage of the history of the Bakery the Factory Hands were dressed in Welsh costumes for advertising purposes.

From the shelves the Cake is put into boxes according to the customers' requirements, the same being then labelled and taken to the Delivery Platform in North Street, from thence to be carted to the different Railway Stations, their contents in due time to grace a thousand tea-tables, many of the packages travelling the entire length and breadth of the British Isles and Colonies, several consignments having lately been sent to South Africa.

Coming to the BREAD BAKERY in North Street, where previous to the erection of the new Premises the whole of the Baking was done, we have again eight Ovens, with a full complement of machines, including a Cake Mixer, a Batter Machine, Egg Whisk, and Patent Reversible Paste Roller, and also the series of Hot Plates for small goods heated by gas jets, where Pancakes, Pikelets, Muffins, and Scones are being turned out by the thousand.

Before quitting the CONFECTIONERY DEPARTMENT we visit the Icing Room where a fine assortment of Wedding Cakes is always in evidence, there being at all times a quantity of these in stock, owing to their being kept on the shelves for many months before being sent out.

A very interesting Department is that where the Sausage and Pork Pies are manufactured, this being situated in the Basement. Here we have the Meat Cutter and Sausage Filler, the knives in the Cutter revolving at a high speed; both machines in conjunction being capable of manufacturing toothsome Sausage at the rate of over 350lbs. per hour.

Close by are the Cookers, the large enamelled Cauldrons, where the water being heated to boiling point by steam, cooks the Hams and other Meats. Here also the Plum Puddings are boiled, and already (it is October when we are writing) a large quantity have been cooked in anticipation of next Christmas' demand. These six Boilers can cook from 3,000 to 4,000 lbs. of meat or over 1,000 puddings in one boiling, the system of heating the water by steam enabling an even continuous degree of heat to be maintained throughout the entire time of cooking.

To illustrate the scope of this Department, we may just give a few figures from the books against a recent order when the Firm catered for a monster Beanfeast to 5,000 adults and 4,500 children, the boiled meat supplied in beef, ham and tongues weighing 4,000 lbs.; there being sent in addition 14,000 tarts, pastries and rolls, and over two tons of cake.

In another part of the Basement the Heavy Goods are stored, these being received from the street above by means of a Goods Lift capable of handling many tons weight, it being a noteworthy feature of this Factory that all raw goods are received at the one end of the Building, the finished article being delivered at the other. As the class of goods stocked in the Basement is bought in large quantities, much room is required for storage, and here it is to be had. These extensive Cellars have piles of heavy cases containing a great variety of raw materials, and the opening of them would reveal Butters from Siberia; Leaf Lard, specially prepared for Cake-making; Raisins, Currants, Lemon Peel, and Glace Cherries; the quantity of these Cherries in stock at the time of writing being over five tons. The most careful attention is paid to the storing of Provisions, nothing being either sent for use or put into stock until after the most minute examination, for immediately on receipt of a consignment of goods each package, however small, is opened, the goods are weighed and inspected, and if found in any way inferior they are immediately rejected; it being easily seen that it is only by observing these strict precautions that the Firm is able to maintain its high reputation for the purity and excellence of its manufactures.

From that day when it was decided to make the manufacture of Cake a special line, no effort and no cost have been spared to produce a first-class article, the eventual success of this policy having proved its justification. The exceeding popularity of the goods can, in a great measure, be attributed to the fact that none of the deleterious matters, so common to confectionery, are allowed to be used: only butter and eggs being put into the batter, the chief aim being to produce a cake as plain and homelike as possible. As early as 1887 Messrs. Jones were well known for the superior quality of their manufactures, as in that year they supplied Cake to Windsor Castle, and the Firm now have in their possession a letter from Sir Henry Ponsonby declaring that Her late Majesty the Queen was pleased with the consignment.

The premises are all lit by Electricity, the 120 incandescent and 8 arc lamps being generated by a steam-driven dynamo of 16,500 Watts, the main driving pulley being 7 feet diameter.

The whole of the Buildings in their present arrangement have been very efficiently planned, the present working of the Factory being most economical, reflecting great credit upon the Architects, Messrs. James and Morgan, Cardiff, and the Consulting Engineer, Mr. John S. Brown, Swansea, the latter having also seen to the fitting up of the Electric Light Installation.

The Machinery throughout the Establishment is driven by shafting from a 50 H.P. Steam Engine, fed by a Vertical Boiler tested to 200 lbs. pressure. In the same Engine Room is a 12½ H.P. Gas Engine of Crossley's make, this being kept in readiness for an emergency.

From the Boiler, pipes convey steam to all rooms, cold water being also within easy reach everywhere; the mere turning of a tap in the steam pipe injecting a flow of steam into a pailful of cold water, giving at once a plentiful supply of hot water; an item so essential in securing the cleanliness which is so prominent a feature of the whole Establishment. For the convenience of the Factory Hands and Bakers, &c., two very fine suites of Lavatories have been put up, one in either side of the Building.

It is worthy of note that from the earliest period of the Firm's history the relationship between employers and employed have been of the most cordial nature, a close personal attachment having always prevailed between the heads of the Firm and their staff; both Mr. Watkin Jones in his Wholesale Warehouse at Cardiff and Mr. David Jones at Dowlais having won the affectionate esteem of their servants, as is evidenced by the presentations made on several occasions; this attitude on the part of the Partners having secured the attachment of several faithful servants who have proved to be devoted to their interests. On the occasion of the transfer of the Business from the original Firm to a Limited Company (following in the trend of all the great commercial undertakings of the day; thus giving a much-coveted opportunity to all interested in the Firm's well-being to participate in the profits) the Partners at a Banquet, given in the Oddfellows Hall, Dowlais, to celebrate the occasion, made a formal gift of £1000 from their private account to their employees, and there distributed that sum in shares in the New Company, each receiving his proportion *pro ratio* in accordance with the length of service rendered; the staff as an acknowledgment presenting both Mr. David Jones and Mr. Watkin Jones each with a cabinet containing a solid silver dinner service in commemoration of the event.

And since the transfer to Messrs. D. Jones, Dickinson & Co., Ltd. in 1895 we are glad to say that the Business has continued to prosper, the New Company having retained the services of both members of the original Firm as joint Managing Directors, and they trust by faithfully adhering to the principles of fair and honest dealing, giving best value for money, and bringing the costliest of provisions within the reach of all—which principles have proved so successful in the past—to merit the continued confidence of their many patrons.