

THE
NOTED BREWERIES
OF
Great Britain and Ireland.

By ALFRED BARNARD,

AUTHOR OF

"The Whisky Distilleries of the United Kingdom."

VOL. IV.



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THE BREWERY, READING.

PROPRIETORS: H. & G. SIMONDS, LIMITED.

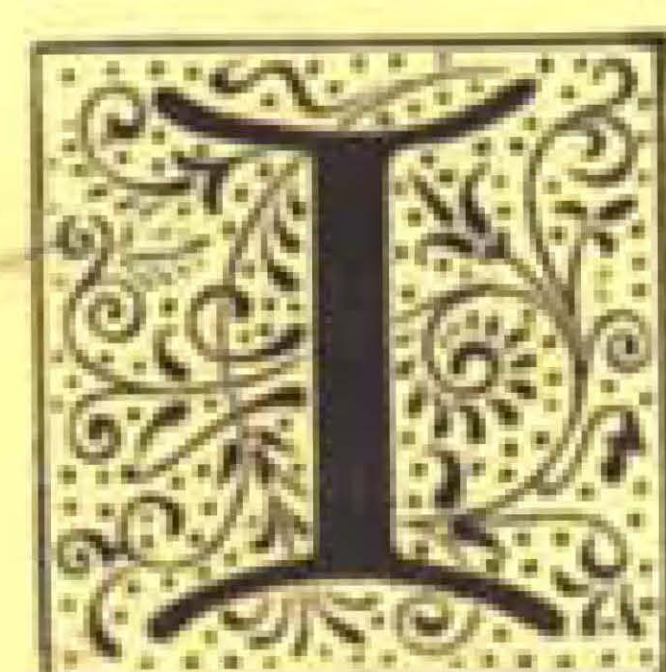
DIRECTORS: { HENRY JOHN SIMONDS (*Chairman*),
HENRY ADOLPHUS SIMONDS,
BLACKALL SIMONDS.

LOUIS DE LUZE SIMONDS (*Secretary and Manager*).

“ Now the bright morning Star, day's harbinger,
Comes dancing from the east, and leads with her
The flow'ry May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip, and the pale primrose.
Hail, bounteous May ! that dost inspire
Mirth, and youth, and warm desire ;
Woods and groves are of thy dressing
Hill and dale doth boast thy blessing !
Thus we salute thee with our early song,
And welcome thee, and wish thee long.”

MILTON.

CHAPTER I.



It was early in the month of May when we left London, by the South Western Railway, to pay our promised visit to the Reading Brewery. The season of spring had arrived, at whose magic touch the drooping sensibilities of our nature are aroused, and the heart filled with sensations of waking pleasure. Although, physically, man knows not the renewing power of the seasons, yet his mind cannot fail to acknowledge their genial and invigorating influence.

How delighted we were to turn our backs upon the busy city and make for the country, there to inhale the restoring balms with which myriads of bursting germs and blossoms were loading the soft and vernal gale. As we proceeded on our journey, how we admired the verdure of the fields and trees, the expanded and beautiful foliage of the sinuous woodbine spreading through the hawthorn hedges, the mingled hues of green, and the insensible sweetness of early vegetation. We reached our destination long before we had fully enjoyed the sylvan beauty of the scenery through which we had so rapidly passed.

Reading is unquestionably a place of great antiquity, and is supposed to have derived its name from *Rhyd*, a ford, and *Ing*, a meadow, which, from its situation on a tract of land intersected by the river Kennet, appears to be probable. It was a fortified town in 871, and during the reign of Alfred was held by the Danes, who burnt it down to the ground on the advent of Sweyn, King of Denmark, in the year 1006. From this calamity the town recovered prior to the Conquest, for in the Norman survey it formed a part of the royal demesne.

Henry I. dignified Reading by founding, in the year 1121, a magnificent Benedictine monastery, which has long since ceased to exist; and Stephen, his successor, erected the castle, demolished many centuries ago.

It was at Reading that the memorable interview took place between Herodius, patriarch of Jerusalem, and Henry II., when the former presented the King with the keys of the Holy Sepulchre and the royal banner of Jerusalem, and endeavoured, without success, to induce him to undertake an expedition to recover Palestine from the Saracens. In the reigns of Henry VI. and Edward IV. Parliament frequently assembled at Reading. The great hall used on these occasions can still be traced, and there are still remains at the abbey mill supposed to be of late Norman work.

Henry VIII. also often visited Reading, and in 1541 took up his residence for some time in the abbey, which he had transformed into a palace.

Edward VI., and the Queens Mary and Elizabeth, were constantly staying in the town, and the latter had a canopied pew appropriated to her use in the parish church of St. Lawrence. The town has undergone great alterations and improvements since those days, for its old-fashioned houses of lath and plaster, with their picturesque gable roofs, have nearly all disappeared. In their places new streets, squares and crescents have arisen, containing many handsome houses and important edifices.

In visiting a new place, one likes to become acquainted with its past

and present history ; to this end we set about exploring the town immediately on our arrival. We first drove to the Forbury, now used as a public garden, which commands a fine view of a part of Oxfordshire, and formed the precincts of the old abbey. From this point the Assize Courts may also be seen, and the County Gaol, a red-brick castellated structure, facing the terminus of the South Eastern and Western railways. In the Forbury Gardens, too, we were much struck by the sight of the fine colossal lion, which was erected to the memory of the officers and men of the late 61st Berkshire regiment, who were cut to pieces at the battle of Maiwand. This work, with its inscribed terra cotta pedestal, was designed and executed by the well-known sculptor, Mr. George Simonds, a son of one of the late proprietors of the Great Reading Brewery, whose Jubilee statue of the Queen faces the town hall buildings.

From its situation near the confluence of two rivers, Reading has, from the remotest period, been a place of commercial importance. Its trade consists chiefly in the exportation of the produce of the surrounding country—wheat, timber, bark, wool, cheese and malt. There are also foundries, the great biscuit works of Messrs. Huntley & Palmer, yards for barge and boat building, and the extensive brewery under notice.

The main streets of Reading are very spacious, and four of the lesser ones are divided by the branches of the Kennet into various islands connected together by bridges. This river—"The Kennet swift, for silver eels renowned!" as Pope well described it—falls into the Thames about half a mile from the brewery, whence it is navigable for barges of 110 tons as far as Newbury, and joining the Kennet and Avon Canal affords communication with Bath, Bristol, and the Severn. The Thames affords means of transport to the Metropolis for articles of bulk, and it is by this route that Messrs. H. & G. Simonds frequently send beer to their London stores at Millbank Wharf.

On leaving the Forbury, we drove direct to the brewery, where we received from the directors a courteous welcome, and obtained the desired permission to explore the brewery premises. At our request, also, Messrs. Simonds gave us free access to documents and papers connected with the early history of their business, which we found both interesting and useful. From these we gathered that the brewery was founded at the corner of Broad Street, now the principal thoroughfare of Reading, during the latter part of the last century, by Mr. William Blackall Simonds, the grandfather of the present directors. Here the trade outgrew the premises, which were soon found to be too small for the business; hence, in the year 1790, the brewery

was transferred to its present site in Bridge Street, on the west bank of the River Kennet, where Mr. Simonds erected a twenty-five-quarter plant, together with malt-houses and stabling sufficient for his requirements.

At this period the Duke of Wellington had not succeeded in passing what is now known as the Beerhouse Act, therefore the only channels or outlets for the trade of a wholesale brewer were by purchase of the few then existing fully licensed publichouses, which commanded an enormous price, and whose number was practically limited. What is now known as a private trade had not been called into existence; light bitter ales, such as are now produced at Burton, Romford, Reading, and elsewhere, were unknown, and Hodgson, the pioneer of that trade, had not even been heard of. As for India, Australia and the Colonies, no such thing as exporting ale was considered possible; hence, the trade of a brewer was limited to the village alehouses.

In those days no country gentleman's house was considered complete unless it had its brewery attached, and the itinerant brewer, who went from one to the other, was a notable character, whose services were as much sought after as are those of a physician now-a-days. The custom of brewing was equally general among the yeomen and farmers, who vied with each other in their endeavours to beat the squire in the quality of their brew.

Under these circumstances, it will be seen that the possession of capital alone could command business to the brewer; and although the elder Mr. Simonds had the reputation of being a wealthy man, the increase of the brewing business was necessarily slow, there being no licensed houses obtainable.

At one time, dissatisfied with this slow rate of progress, Mr. Simonds thought of selling the brewery, and confining his attention entirely to banking, in which he was largely interested. His son, the late Mr. Blackall Simonds, appears to have been more hopeful and of a different opinion, for, leaving his brother Henry in the banking firm, which still flourishes under the family name in King Street, he entered the brewery, and henceforth devoted himself exclusively to that business.

Mr. Blackall Simonds, was possessed of great business capacity, energy and foresight, and, when once the Beer Act was passed, he exercised his remarkable abilities with such promptness and prudence that the trade rapidly increased, and, henceforth, the success of the brewery was firmly established. In connection with this period of his life, his grandson told us the following anecdote.

Mr. Simonds had always been remarkably fond of hunting, and was a personal friend of that celebrated sportsman, Sir John Cope, of whose hounds he was part proprietor. Having long had an inkling that the Beer Bill would eventually be passed, Mr. Simonds, when hunting, carried with him a pocket map, whereon he, from time to time, marked spots, within a radius of fifteen miles from Reading, at which beerhouses might conveniently be opened; and in this he was often assisted by his old groom. Once having made up his mind on any subject, action, with Mr. Simonds, became a matter of necessity; hence, he took immediate steps to buy the freehold or lease of any house suitable for his purpose, situated in or near the locality marked on his map. Thus, whilst his neighbours were dreaming of the future, he had already opened fifty beerhouses. In connection with this enterprise, a clergyman near Eversley (the opposite of the late Charles Kingsley) threatened Mr. Simonds that he would soon lose his hunters, as the opening of these beerhouses would destroy the trade of his old-established brewery.

In those days skittles were permissible to the British rustic, and Mr. Simonds, who dearly loved a joke, saw his opportunity. He accordingly bought a field adjoining the rectory-garden, where, a fortnight before the passing of the Act, he put up a shed and a four-cornered alley, during which operation the foundations of the intended beerhouse rapidly rose above the ground. One morning the parson came to Mr. Simonds, in anything but the mildest of tempers, to remonstrate with him on the subject. Mr. Simonds, who received the parson in his usual courtly style, and with great affability, replied, "Why, my friend, you have frequently told me that you objected to *public-houses*, so I am erecting this beerhouse and skittle-alley for the benefit of your parishioners. I admit that it abuts on to your garden, but then you must remember that the rectory itself occupies the choicest position in the village, and I can hardly imagine that you wish to appropriate to yourself what you would deny to your poorer neighbours. The noise of 'twicers' or 'floorers' will, when you are once used to them, afford you genuine pleasure, all the more so that you have spared your parishioners a walk of over a mile to the 'Red Lion' for their enjoyment." Eventually Mr. Simonds settled the matter amicably with the clergyman, and they afterwards became the best of friends.

After carrying on the brewery by himself for some years, Mr. Blackall Simonds associated his brothers, Henry and George, with him in the business, which in due course descended to their nephews, the members of the present

firm. In the year 1885, these gentlemen, for family reasons, followed the ordinary course adopted by most large concerns, and converted their business into a private limited company.

In addition to an extensive public and private trade, the firm have for many years past established a connection with the army, which was very considerably enhanced by the formation of the camp at Aldershot. It was, however, during the summer campaign of 1872, when Messrs. Simonds



GENERAL OFFICES AND LOADING-OUT STAGE.

supplied the troops of flying columns on Salisbury Plain, that the firm acquired the reputation which has since secured them the largest military trade in the kingdom, and led to their establishing branch depôts, not only in this country, but at Malta and Gibraltar, in the Mediterranean.

Though their trade mark, the red "Hop Leaf," is now so well known, we understand that Messrs. Simonds' first trial in brewing pale ale was eminently disastrous, from a financial point of view. Having made the experi-

ment in a good strong bitter beer of the old-fashioned type, Messrs. Simonds duly consigned it to Melbourne, where it fetched quite a fabulous price. Unfortunately, the consignee stuck to the money, and had not the grace to return even the empty casks. Nothing daunted, however, the firm turned their attention to making this class of ale a specialty, and wisely cultivated a demand for it among their own more immediate connection.

At this period a taste for a lighter kind of ale had just set in; Messrs. Simonds therefore applied themselves to the task of producing a beer of much lower specific gravity, and on the identical principles now adopted at Burton and elsewhere, using a large quantity of the finest hops, and adopting what was then a novel expedient—hopping down with dry hops introduced into the casks.

To this beer they gave the name of S B, and so pronounced was its success, that the demand for it soon necessitated the reconstruction and enlargement of their brewery. Since that time the process of extension has gone on to the present day, until the brewery has become almost the largest provincial one in the South of England, and the premises cover seven acres of ground.

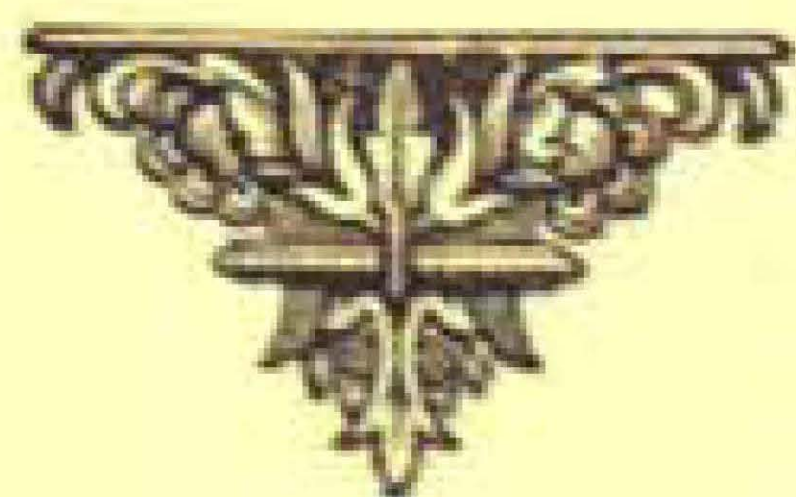
In the year 1868 the wine and spirit trade, which, since the beginning of the century, had been carried on by Mr. Henry Simonds, was acquired by the firm, and is now a valuable and considerable adjunct to the business. There is still standing, in front of the brewery, the picturesque family residence of the late W. B. Simonds, which was designed and built by his intimate friend, Sir John Soane, the eminent architect. This fine old house has been transformed into offices, for which its spacious rooms are well adapted.

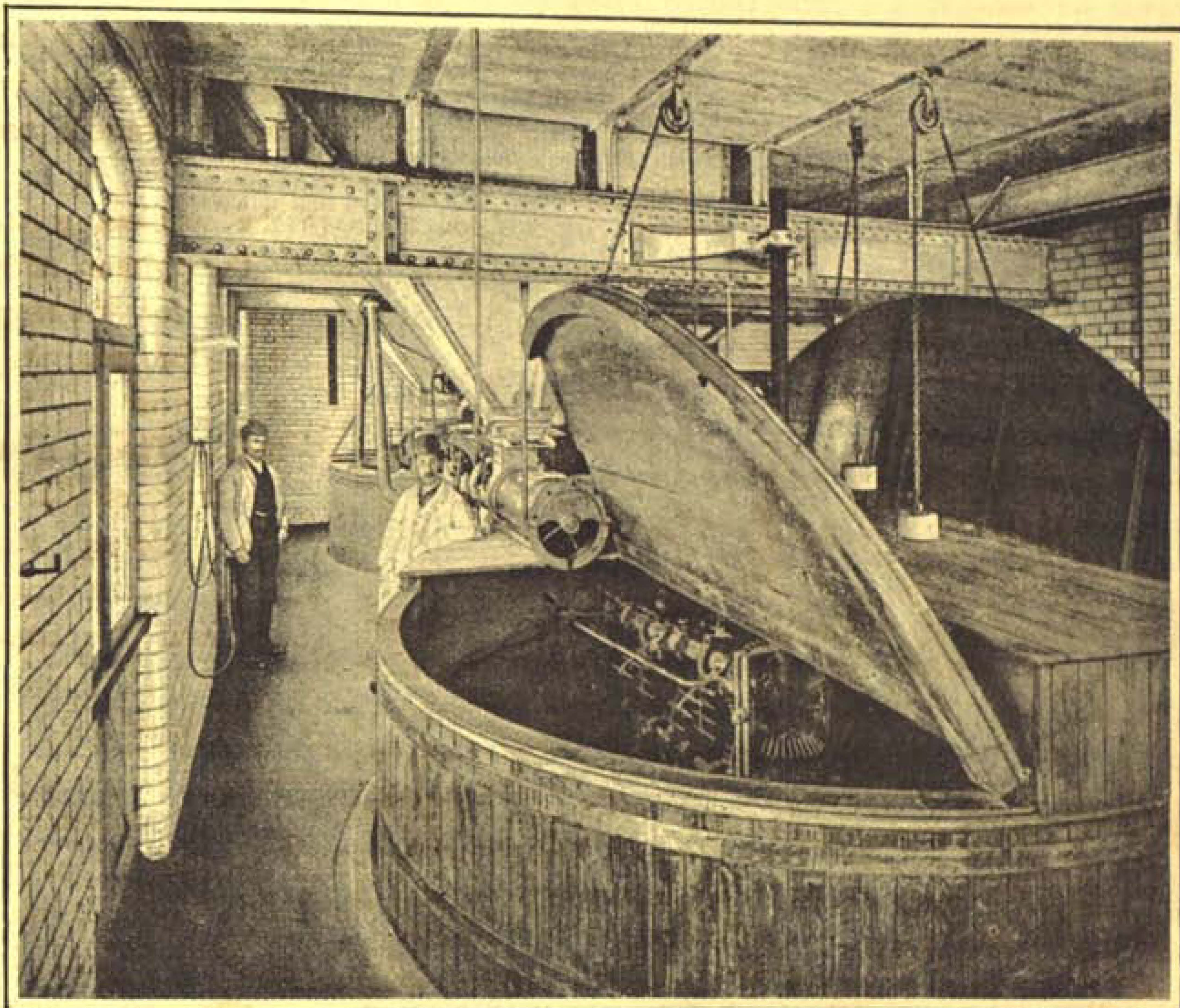
From any point of view the brewery buildings, on account of their magnitude and picturesque appearance, are most striking, particularly the lofty new brewhouse on the river side of the premises. The plant of the old brewery has been remodelled to suit that of the new, which latter is of the most costly description, and either can be worked separately or both can be used together. It is only when one sees the inside of these vast establishments, with their ponderous engines and machinery, their great cellars filled with thousands of barrels of beer, that he can form any idea of the capital employed by the brewer in the production of a good glass of ale. During the last thirty years the Reading Brewery has assumed gigantic proportions, and the present proprietors can boast of having more than quadrupled its output since their advent to the business.

It may be interesting here, before passing on to our description of the

brewery premises, to mention a few facts personal to the owners of the business themselves.

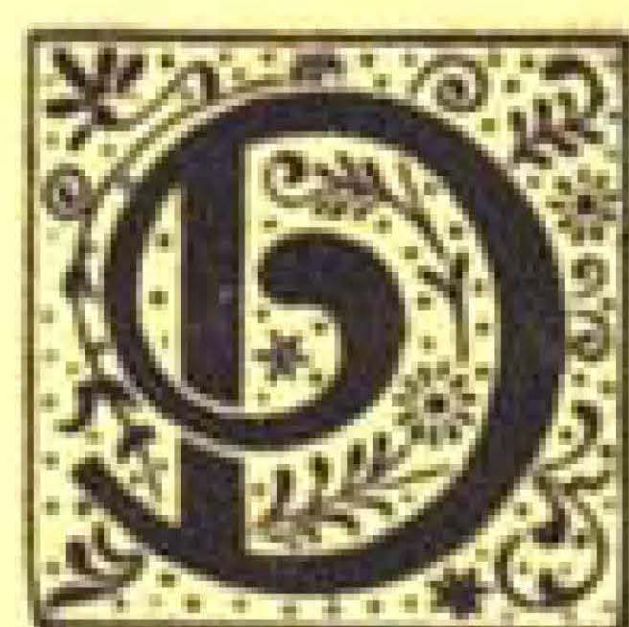
The directors consist of Mr. Henry John Simonds, the chairman ; Mr. Henry Adolphus Simonds, and Mr. Blackall Simonds. The first-named gentleman was educated at Eton, became a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and, previous to his joining the business, practised for some time successfully at the Bar. It is to his energy and liberality that the town is largely indebted for the resuscitation of the old grammar school, which flourished under the famous Dr. Valpy, in the early part of the present century, but which, at one time, had fallen to a very low ebb. The second member of the firm, Mr. Henry Adolphus Simonds, cousin of the senior member, joined the business in the year 1850, after a commercial experience in the United States. A man of most energetic habits and indefatigable in promoting the interests of the trade, he was elected chairman of the Country Brewers' Society, and, after taking an active part in the agitation against Mr. Childers' budget, in 1885, presided at the anniversary of the Licensed Victuallers' Society in that year ; and it was largely due to his spirit and perseverance that the increase of duty was abandoned. Mr. Blackall Simonds, another cousin of the chairman, and the remaining director, was educated as a civil engineer, and many of the new buildings and improvements at the brewery were carried out from his designs and under his supervision—notably the concrete ale stores, which we shall describe later on, and which have been much admired by engineers and architects from London and elsewhere, who have visited the brewery expressly to see them. We may mention that all three directors have served, in their time, the important office of mayor of the town of Reading. There are also, besides the three directors, four other members of the family who take an active part in the management of the business ; one of these, Mr. Louis de Luze Simonds, being the secretary and manager of the Company.





SHOWING A SECTION OF THE MASH TUN STAGE, WITH TWO OF THE MASH TUNS AND STEEL'S MASHING MACHINE.

CHAPTER II.



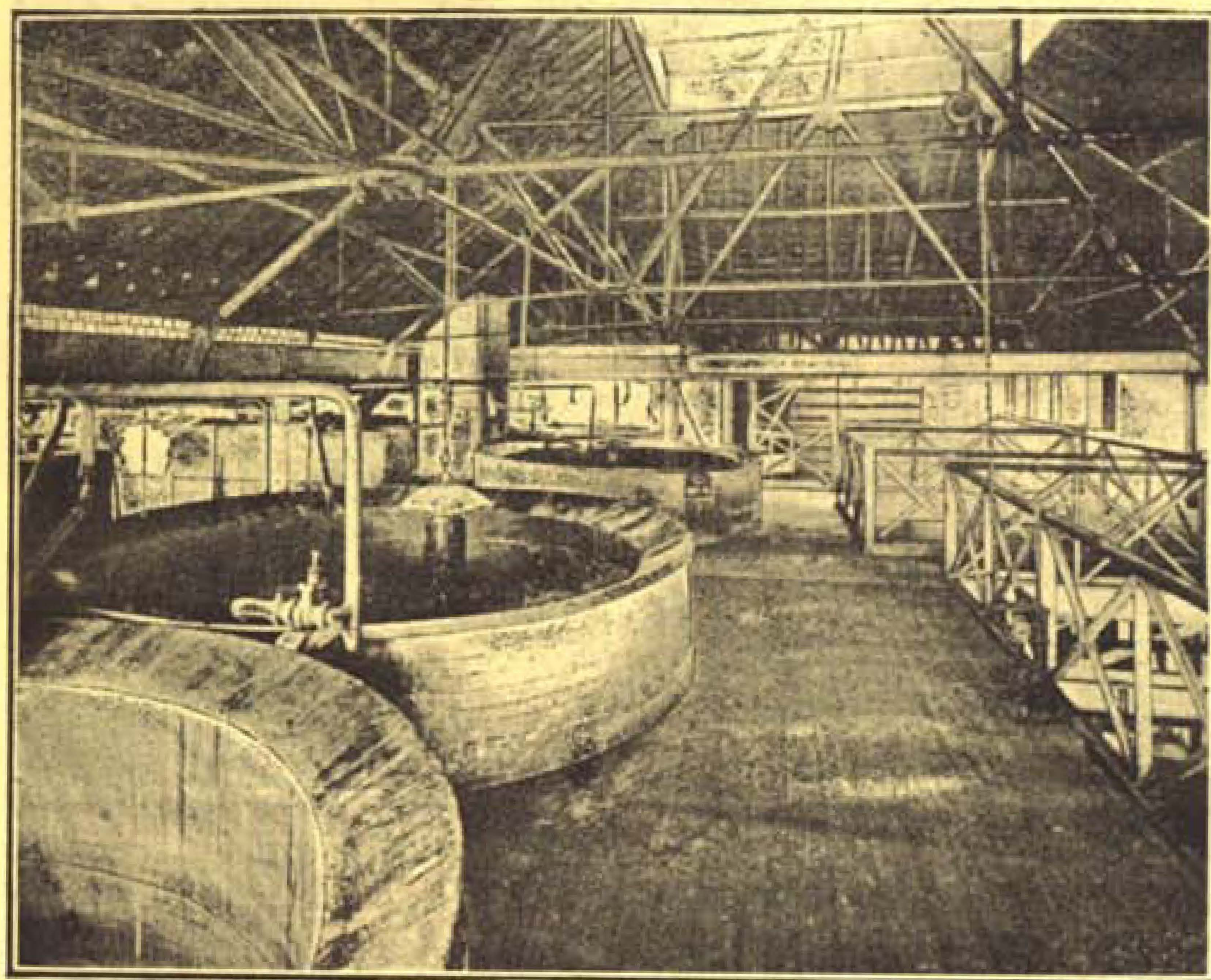
DIRECTED by the head brewer, we commenced our survey of the premises at the New Malt Stores, a three-storeyed brick building adjoining the new brewhouse, and partly erected over a broad archway. Each floor communicates with the brewery, and possesses a loading-in door or "look-um," over which is fixed a steam hoist, and together they will hold upwards of 1,000 quarters of malt. From the first floor we passed through the mashing stage, and thence climbed to the roof of the new brewhouse, where is situated the cold liquor tank-room. The water used for brewing is that derived from the new well, 400 feet

deep, which is pumped into two capacious tanks in this chamber, whilst the liquor for cooling and refrigerating purposes, derived from four other wells, is stored in a reservoir placed at a lower elevation. These tanks supply the various cisterns scattered over the premises, and their importance may be judged from the fact that over 100,000 gallons of water, on an average, are required for the services of the brewery every day.

Passing down one flight of stairs, we walked through the spacious grist-case room to the hot liquor chamber, which is floored throughout with asphalt. Here are to be seen two splendid heating tanks for brewing water, each holding 150 barrels, fitted with steam condensers for returning

the liquor to the boilers. There is a third tank, similarly fitted, holding 260 barrels, in the next room, and the coppers also are frequently used for hot water.

The department to which we were next introduced was that of grinding. It contains two powerful sets of steel rollers for crushing the malt, over which are the usual screens.



A SECTION OF COPPER-STAGE.

The grist therefrom is delivered to the floor above the mash tuns by an elevator, from whence an Archimedean screw conveys it to the grist-cases.

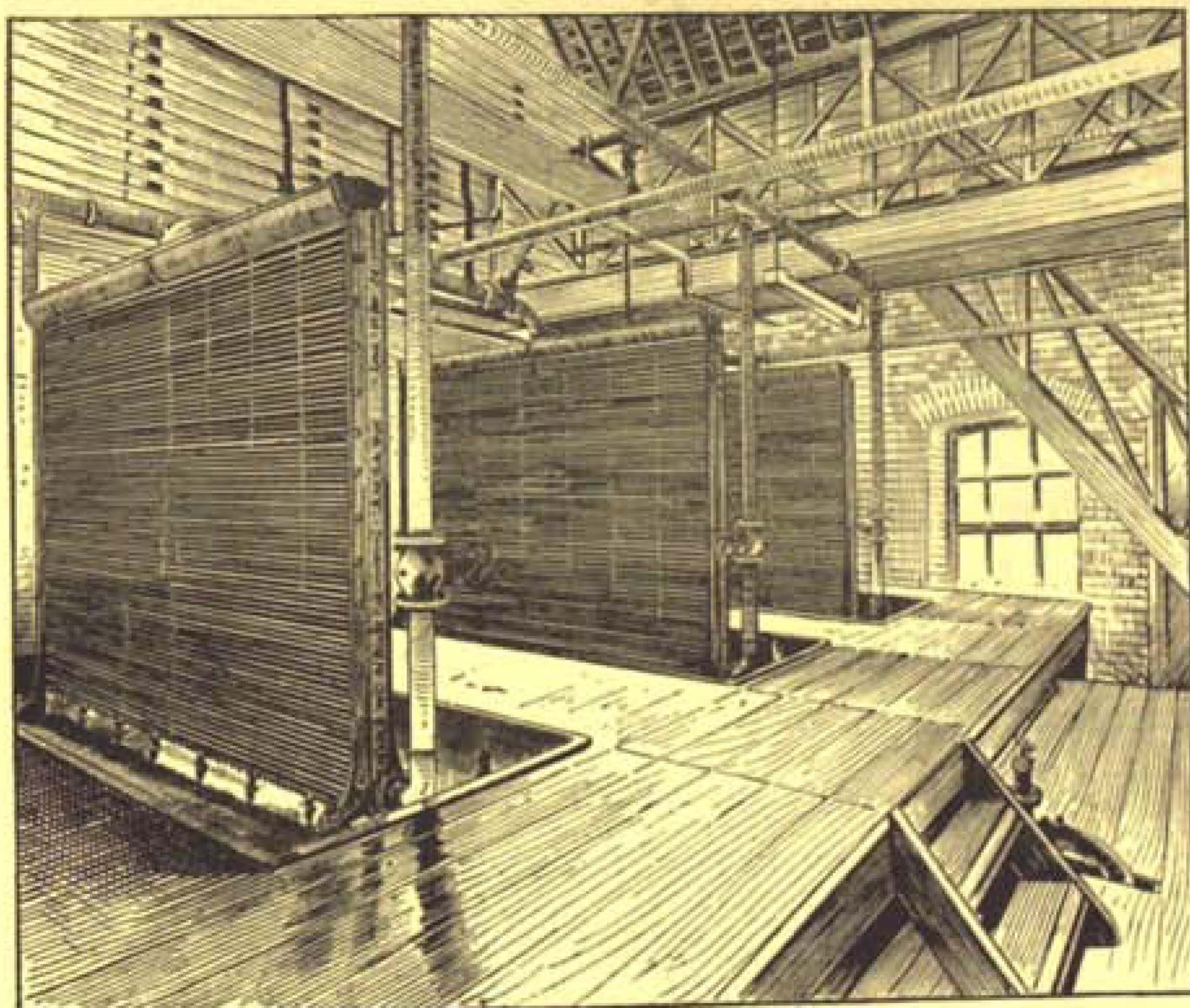
Following our courteous guide, we next entered the mashing stage of the old and new breweries, which communicate with each other. The former measures upwards of 100 feet in length, and the walls of both are covered with white glazed tiles. In the first room are placed two forty-quarter, and in the second two fifty-quarter mash tuns, constructed of iron; all contain gun-metal draining plates, spargers and mashing rakes, and each commanded by a Steel's mashing machine. These tuns are lagged and encased in white deal, the boards being bound together with broad brass hoops, kept brightly polished.

All of them have covers, divided into three pieces, or flaps, like huge wings, either of which can be raised or lowered by balance-chains and weights. Beneath the mashing stage are as many as five underbacks, for receiving the strained wort from the tuns, from whence it is pumped direct to the coppers. The spent grains left above the draining plates are discharged from the mash tuns on to an Archimedean screw, by which they are conveyed to the grains-house in the east yard.



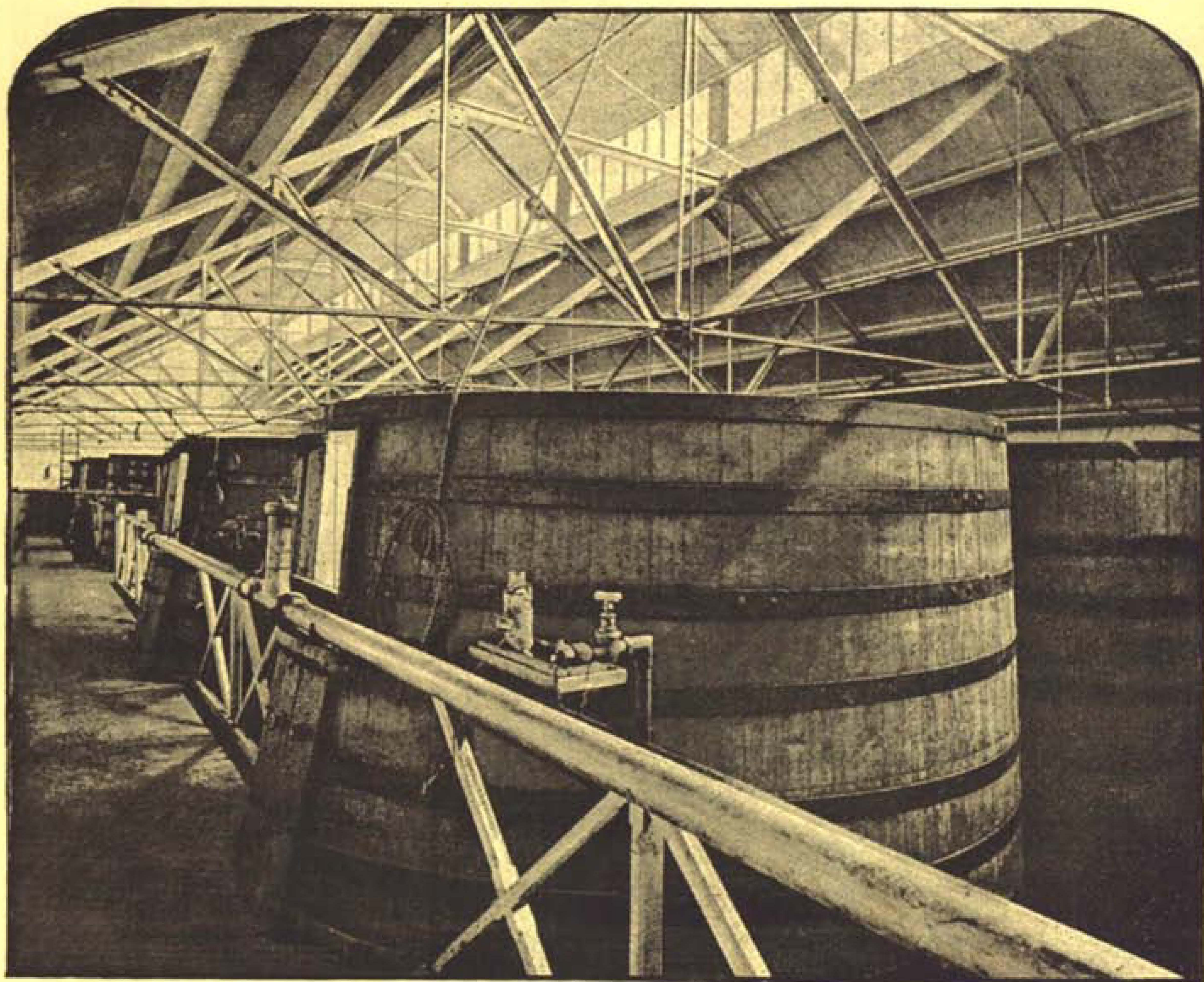
HOPBACK STAGE.

Ascending a long staircase, which leads into the upper storey of the adjoining edifice, we reached the copper-house, a lofty place 70 feet in length. It contains three splendid open fire coppers, erected on the newest principle of heating, two holding 100 barrels and the third 130 barrels, besides two steam-coil coppers, each of a capacity of about 100 barrels. The wort, on leaving the coppers, is delivered into the hopbacks, which are



No. 1 MORTON REFRIGERATOR ROOM.

constructed of English oak and fitted with spargers, from whence it is pumped through the pumping backs, by means of three-throw pumps, on to the copper coolers. Following the wort from the hopbacks to the cooling department, we made our way to the top storey of the No. 1 fermenting house, a breezy place, 160 feet long, with louvred walls and a ventilated roof. The coolers, broad but shallow, which cover the whole surface of this extensive floor, are constructed of copper.



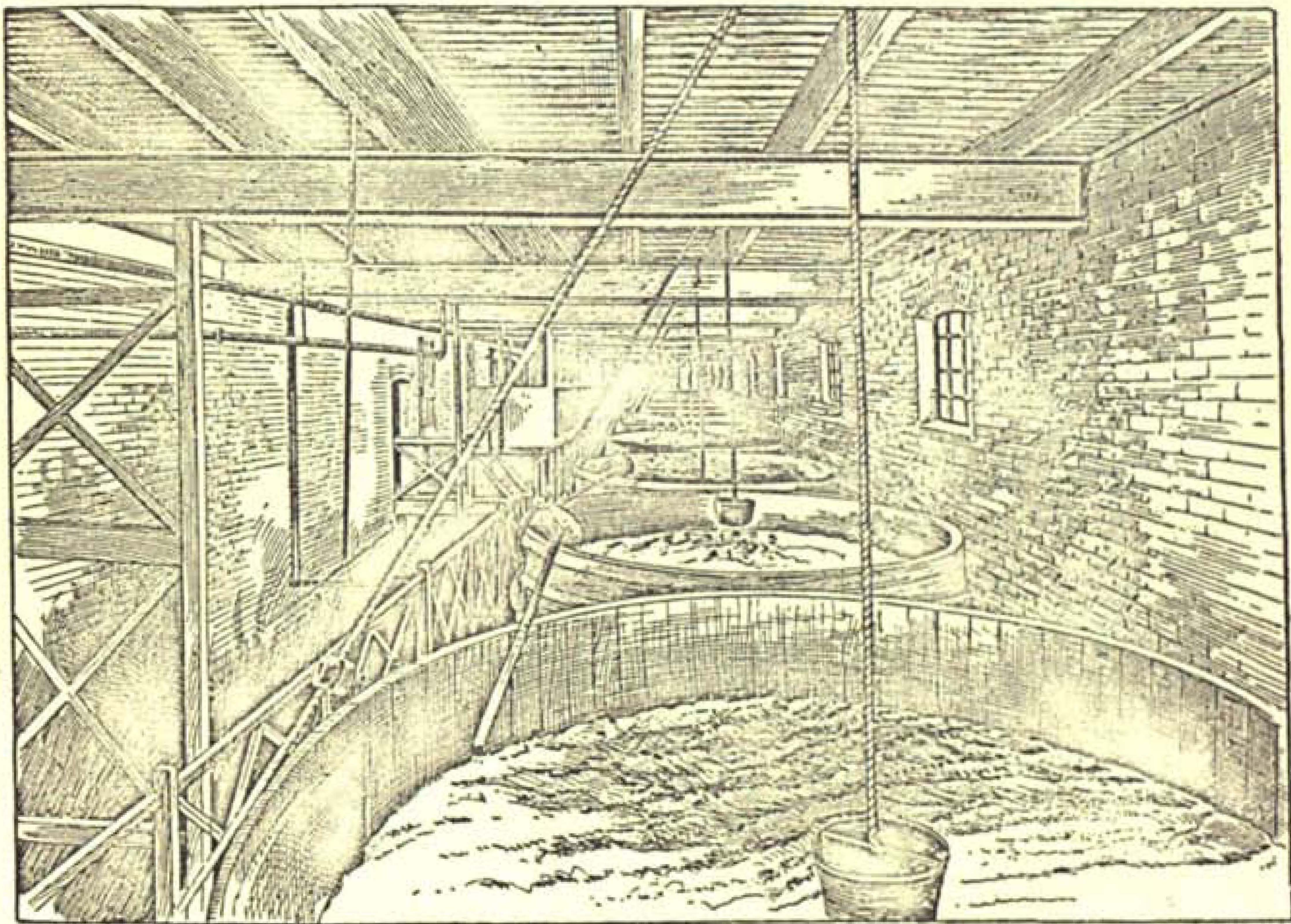
SECTION OF No. 1 FERMENTING VAT ROOM.

Our next move was downward, to the fermenting section of this fine brewery, occupying no less than six lofty rooms, each measuring from 70 to 100 feet square. On our way thither we passed through the two refrigerating rooms, one in the old and the other in the new brewery. They contain three vertical refrigerators of the newest type, by Morton, of Burton, each cooling at the rate of forty barrels per hour. On entering the fermenting rooms, which are all *en suite*, we were struck with their brightness and cleanly

aspect, all the walls being entirely covered with white glazed tiles, and the white deal floors kept spotlessly clean.

The No. 1 room, the first entered, contains six fermenting rounds, each of ninety barrels capacity, constructed of white cedar and fitted with improved rousing apparatus. They all contain attemperators, made of 2-inch tinned copper coils.

Through a wide doorway we entered the No. 2 room, unusually lofty, with an elegant iron-framed roof covered with tiles, in the centre of which is a continuous box-louvre, with draught shutters controlled from the floor. Herein



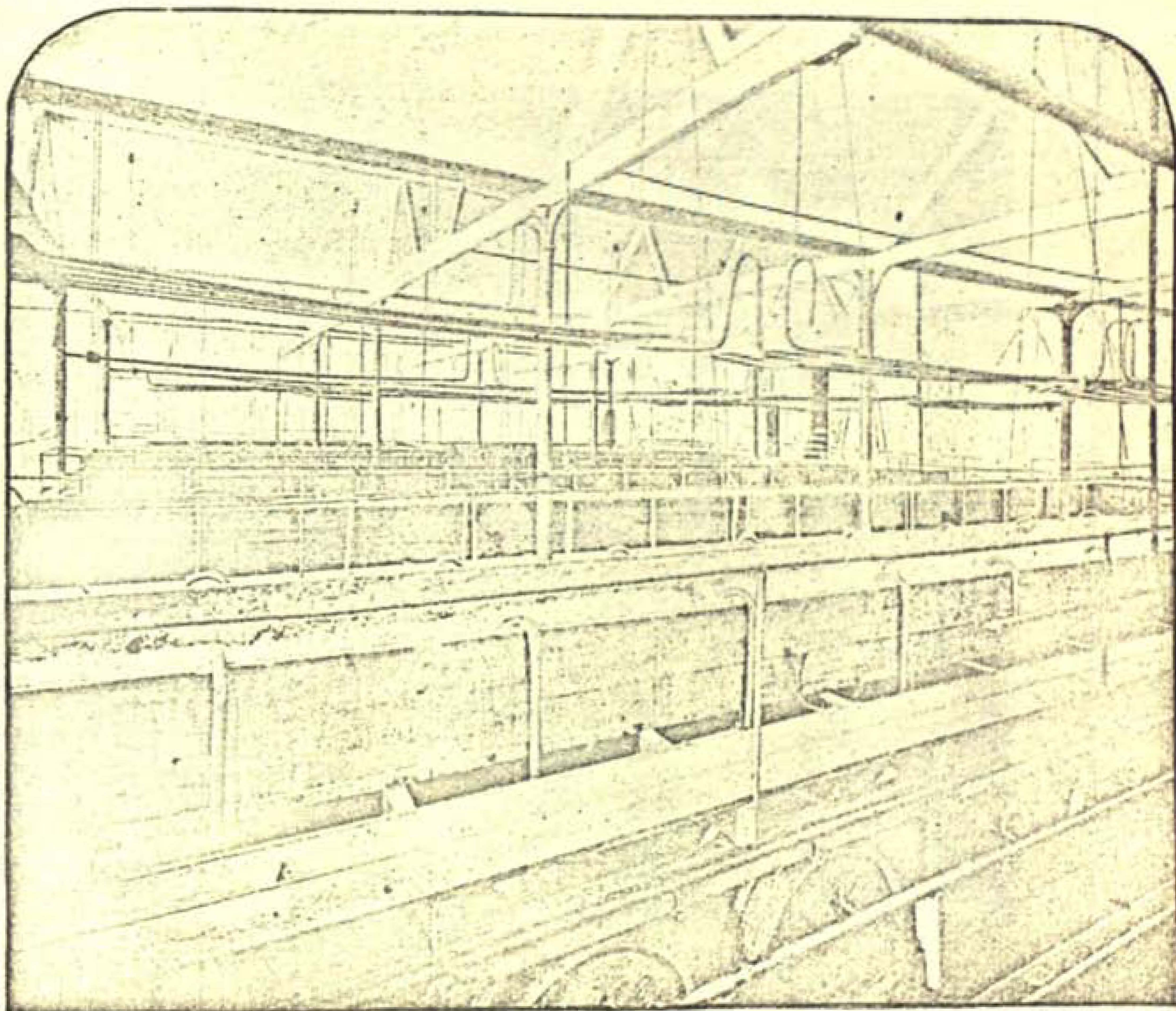
A SECTION OF No. 2 FERMENTING ROOM.

are fourteen oak fermenting rounds, fitted in the same manner as the others, and of an average capacity of about 125 barrels each. All these vessels are erected on substantial iron girders resting on massive columns, and in the centre of the room is a great open space, for supplying light and air to the floor below.

Still progressing forward, we came to the No. 1 union room, which is 100 feet by 60 feet, and has the appearance of a great saloon, with its four open roofs and numerous windows. It is built on the model of the Burton union fermenting rooms, with which it will compare favourably, and contains

eight sets, or 208 Burton union vessels, resting on iron standards, and each holding four and a half barrels. To the right of this is another room, containing 104 unions, all fitted with attemperators, and over them the usual yeastbacks.

Retracing our steps, we entered the lower floor of the No. 2 fermenting room, where are to be seen fifteen skimming squares, made of white pine, where fermentation is completed. These vessels are fitted with skimming

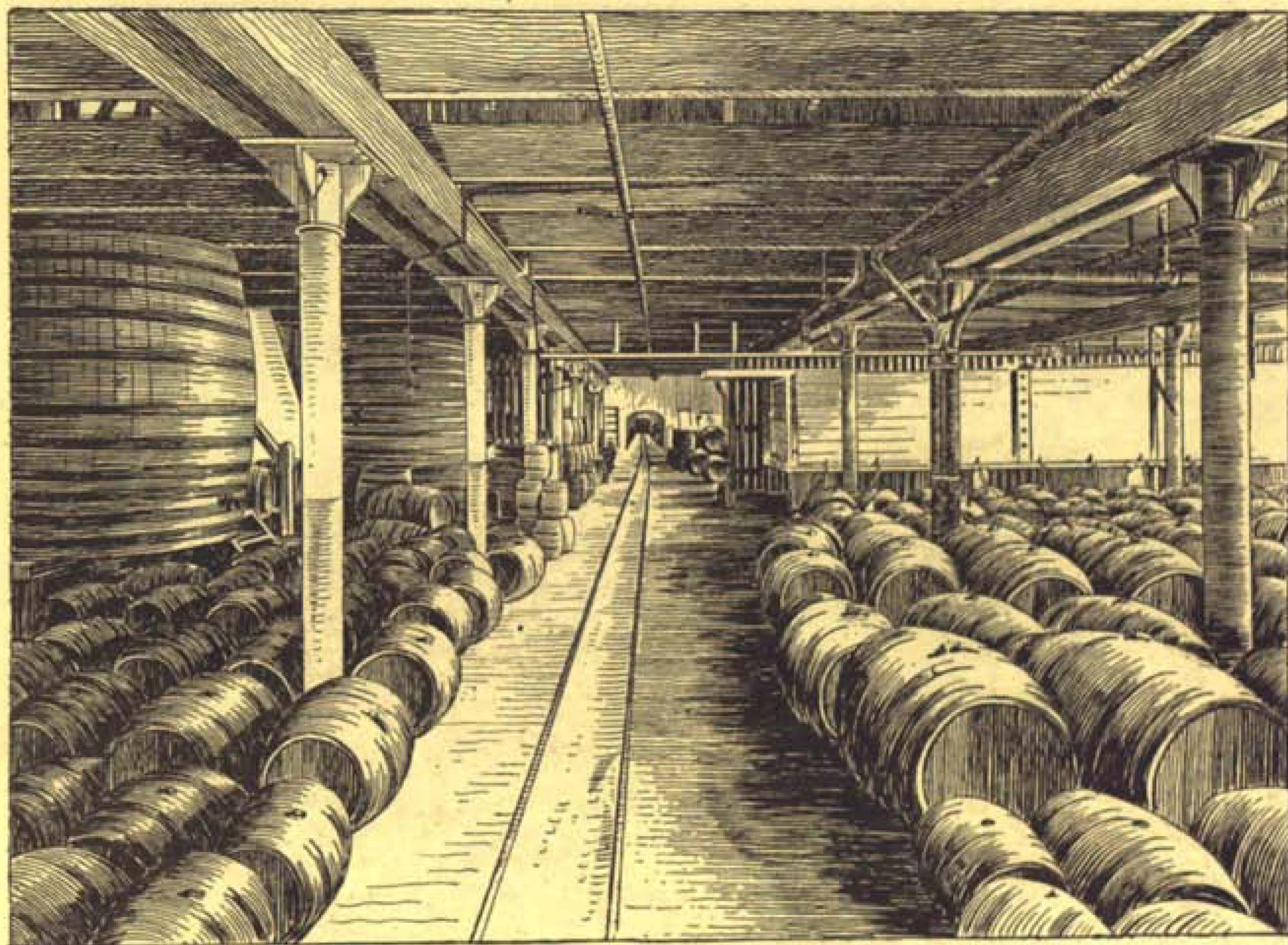


A SECTION OF THE No. 1 BURTON UNION ROOM.

apparatus, and possess sluices at the sides, for conducting the overflow yeast to the barmbacks placed on the ground floor. In the adjoining room, beneath the fermenting squares in the No. 2 house, there are nine more of these skimming vessels, each holding seventy-five barrels.

Descending to the ground level, we inspected the barmbacks referred to, and two of Johnson's yeast-pressing machines, and then, walking through

an assemblage of vats and vessels of various sizes, we descended a flight of stone steps to the beer cellars, covering the entire basement of the brew-house, fermenting rooms and wine stores, all of which are well lighted and ventilated. The floors are of asphalt throughout, and a long line of rails, on which the casks are rolled, intersects them all. In one of the largest there are four capacious racking vats, from whence the beer is drawn into the barrels. Standing in the centre of these vast stores, we beheld at a glance upwards of 12,000 barrels of ale maturing for the thirsty Briton.

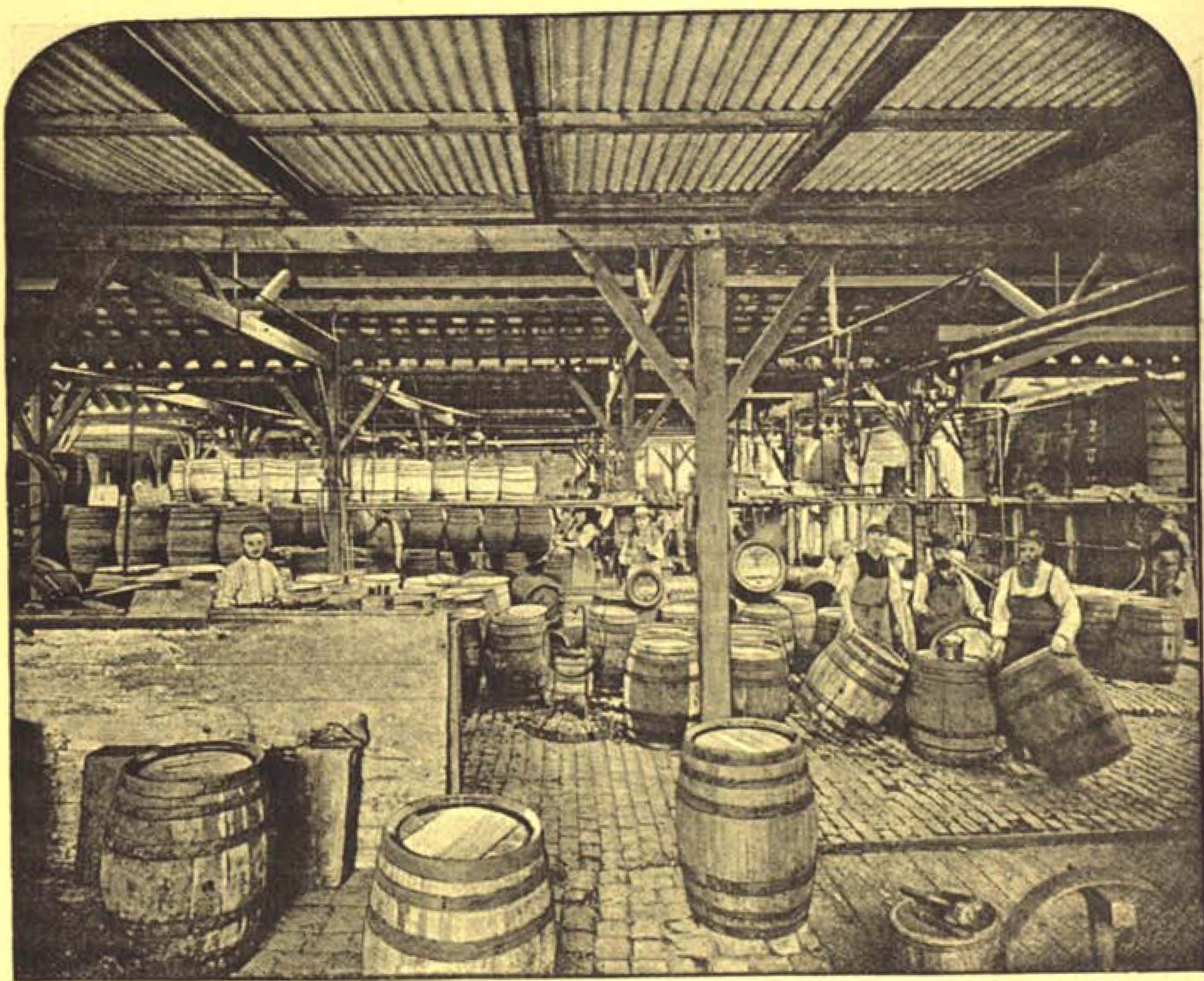


A VIEW IN ONE OF THE RACKING ROOMS.

Before leaving the cellars, we were conducted to the sample room, where a cask of every brew is stored for tasting purposes. Our guide handed us a sample of the firm's S B pale ale, which we found to be well flavoured with the hop, and, in our judgment, a beverage suitable for hot climates. The intermediate pale ale is a rich and full-flavoured tippie, but for the labourer and artisan's drink there can be none to beat Messrs. Simonds' XX ale, a beverage as rich and nutritious as it is wholesome. We tasted the export stout, principally sold in Malta and Gibraltar, a generous and pleasant drink, but a little too strong for our own palate.

Messrs. Simonds brew quite a dozen varieties of ales, to suit the tastes of their numerous customers, and those brewed on the Burton system most certainly are quite equal to the ales of the Trent-side town. The most notable ale brewed by this firm, is their IPA, or India Pale Ale, which bears the label with the hopleaf trade mark—a nutritious tonic liquor, light, brisk, sparkling and agreeable, sold principally in London.

. “He took and drank, and hugely pleas’d
With that delicious bev’rage, thus exclaimed,
‘Give me again, and spare not.’” —*Odyssey*.



CASK-WASHING SHED.

Pursuing our way, we next came to the cask-washing shed, some 100 feet square, a very perfect one of its kind, containing as it does all the best appliances for cleansing the casks. Within the walls are three large tanks holding 300 barrels, heated by steam-coils, which supply hot liquor to this department. Here thirty men are constantly employed in cleansing casks with scalding water, and then steaming them to facilitate drying.

There are also two cradle machines, for washing casks; but most of the casks are unheaded by coopers and vigorously scrubbed, afterwards being reheaded and put through the same process. Every cask is then inspected by the foreman, who, with a gas-jet, examines the interior, and if satisfactory, sends it away to be tested by steam for leakages, after which it is rolled away on a line of rails down to the cellars, to be again tested and finally examined prior to filling.

Next to the cask-washing shed is the No. 1 cooperage, abutting on to the river Kennet, which is fitted up with all the necessary appliances, including a large band-saw for cutting coopers' staves, and a patent shive-cutting machine. The large room overhead is a carpenters' shop, and contains a circular saw-bench, driven like the other machines in the same building, by steam-power.

The No. 2 cooperage is situated in the yard opposite, and in the two places sixteen coopers are constantly employed on repairs only. Next to the No. 1 cooperage is a large bottling store, and an office for the superintendent of this department, which is carried on in what was, in olden times, the Brewer's House.

On the opposite side of the yard, next the gateway, is the famous concrete building, to which we have before referred, said to be the most unique structure of its kind in the kingdom. The walls are firm and substantial as adamant, and the floors, also of concrete, supported by iron columns, are each calculated to carry a weight of a hundred tons. It is four storeys high, and by the accompanying illustration our readers will obtain a general idea of its magnitude and design. In front of the building, and within the walls, is a hydraulic lift running through the various floors, for raising or lowering casks and cases, and, by its side, a concreted staircase leading to all the floors.

On the ground floor there is an office for the manager of the wine and spirit department, and, in front of the building, covered by a flat roof, is a loading-out shed. Eight vans can draw up to this place at a time, and it is used both for beer and wine, etc., as the stores open out upon it. The ground and first floors are used as beer cellars, the third as wine and spirit stores, and the fourth as a general warehouse, etc.

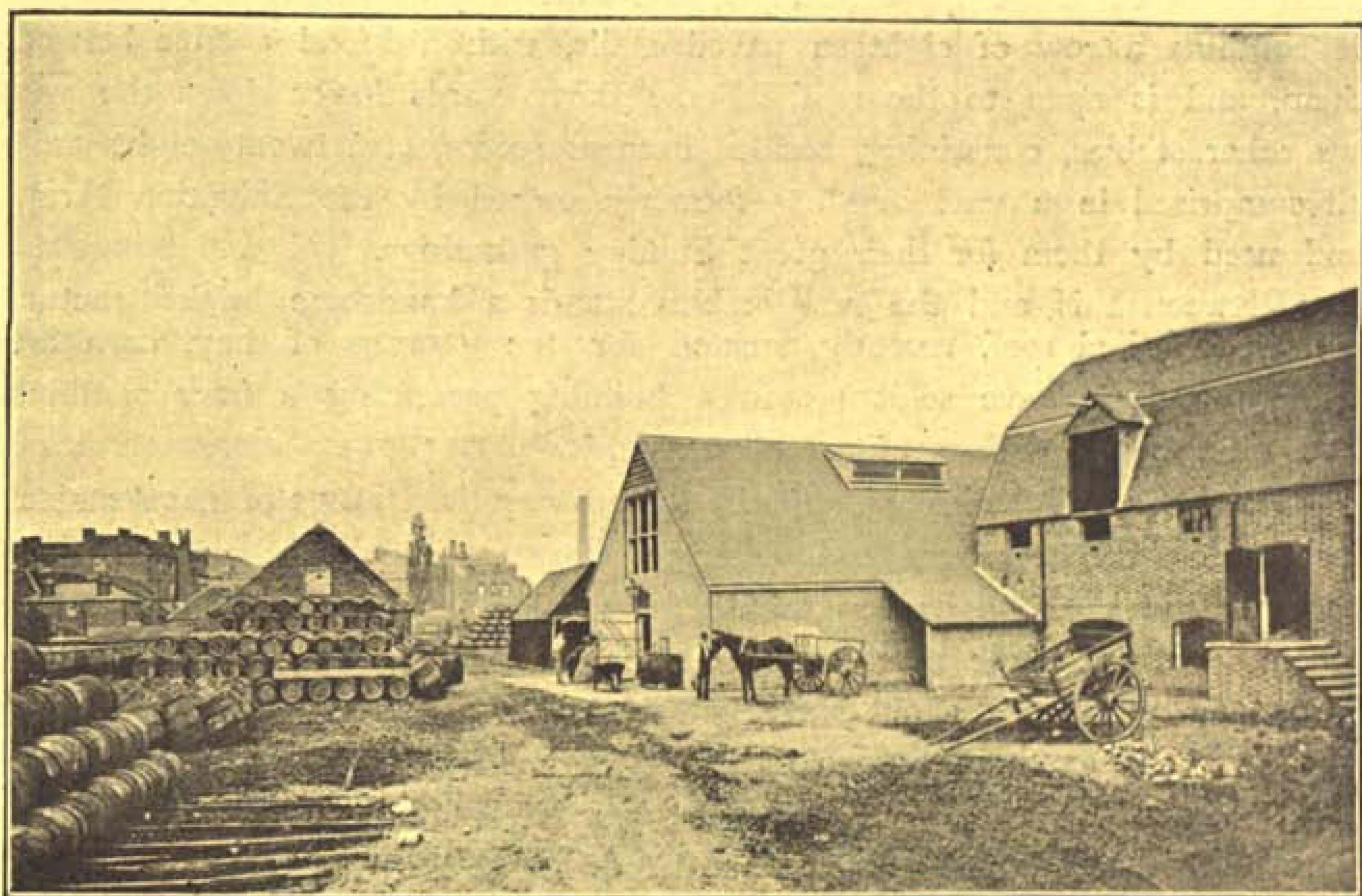
Near the entrance to the wine stores is a room where bottles are washed, and which contains a heated chamber for drying them. The extensive flat floor of the loading shed, 80 feet by 40 feet, is on this level, and is utilised for storing empty bottles, stone jars and crates.

On leaving the bottle-washing room, we entered the first of three rooms *en suite*, where a large number of hogsheads of wines and spirits are placed in rows, each fitted with a brass tap, from whence the cellarmen were busy



CONCRETE STORES.

drawing their contents into bottles, afterwards corking and waxing them with great celerity. On shelves, reaching from floor to ceiling, we noted many hundreds of dozens of every kind of bottled spirits, ready for sending out to the firm's private customers and public-houses. The next room is for cordials, champagne, and other wines in cases; and, in the large room beyond, are stored wines of every description in bulk and bottle. Here hundreds of casks of ports, sherries and other wines, of various ages and quality, await their turn for bottling, whilst the walls all round are covered with bins containing upwards of 12,000 dozens of port, sherry, claret and Burgundy. Although



STABLE-YARD, NEW GRANARY, AND A DISTANT VIEW OF THE OFFICES AND BREWERY.

the solid walls of this building secure an evenness of temperature in summer, it is heated throughout in the winter time, 60 degrees of heat being maintained all the year round. But it is at their bonded warehouses, at the South Eastern Railway Station, that the firm keep the bulk of their large and valuable stock of spirits, of every description, in wood, to mature. Our time did not permit us to visit these, but we understand that they are very extensive.

We next visited the hop stores, in a large brick building adjoining, which occupy two extensive floors, and will hold 1,000 pockets of hops. Here also is the cask office, seating a dozen clerks, reached by a staircase from the yard.

The wharf-yard, as it is called, covering upwards of an acre of ground, on the banks of the river Kennet, is opposite the brewery gates, and thither we next bent our steps. Near the entrance is an office for the foreman of the works, and the Company's yard's manager, and adjoining is the No. 2 cooperage, to which we have before alluded. Next to it there is a sign-painters' room, a plumbers' and glaziers' shop, and a veterinary surgeon's office, and further on, some stabling and a forge.

Opposite this long range of buildings, and on the banks of the river, is to be seen a neat structure containing a range of model stables, fitted up in the most approved style, and ventilated on the newest principles. It contains a row of eighteen paved stalls, with a broad avenue between them, and is open to the roof. Some thirty yards lower down the yard are other stables, containing, besides harness rooms, etc., twenty-eight stalls, all comprised in a vast building formerly owned by the Salvation Army, and used by them for their great Sunday gatherings.

Between this and the new stables stands a handsome brick structure, with a red-tiled roof, recently erected for the storage of hay, corn and fodder; and we have seldom seen a building presenting a finer combination of strength with neatness of design.

At the foot of the bridge, opposite the brewery, is a range of nags' stables, for stalling the travellers' and collectors' horses, with subsidiary coach and harness houses, and a dwelling-house for the head stableman. The stabling accommodation, ample as it may seem, is all needed, as the Company has always an average of about sixty horses on the premises.

Near the south entrance to the wharf yard is the head brewer's house, at the back of which, in an enclosure, is a horse hospital, stabling, a wood store and other buildings, together with an empty cask yard, covering half an acre of ground.

Having seen these, we returned to the brewery, to pay a visit to the laboratory, situated at the end of the yard, in a neat detached house, and occupying the ground floor of the building. It is under the charge of a practical chemist, and is on an extensive scale. The several rooms are completely fitted and equipped with all the paraphernalia appertaining to that scientific department, and include, besides, a large combustion furnace and a Sprengall's mercury furnace pump. Here yeast is tested daily under the microscope and polariscope, beers sampled, and water analysed.

CHAPTER III.



STEAM plays an important part in this brewery, or wherever it has been found possible to carry on the operations by machinery, this power is immediately brought into operation. Accompanied by the head engineer, we made a circuit of the premises, to see the extent of his interesting department.

We commenced our inspection at the engine rooms, which are grouped together on the ground floor of the brewhouse. The No. 1 or main engine house, a lofty and spacious paved chamber, was the first entered. It contains a twenty-five horse-power horizontal high pressure engine, with the governor controlling the expansion valves. Near to it is a six horse-power vertical engine for auxiliary purposes. Next to it is the No. 2, or old engine room, containing twin engines, each of twelve horse-power, both horizontal and condensing, and capable of being used separately in case of a breakdown. All the above engines drive the principal shafting and pumps. In addition to these there are three steam-pumps, used for wort circulation; also, in an adjoining room, a large steam-pump, an engine for drawing the water from No. 2 artesian well and pumping it into the tanks at the top of the brewery.

Under the main staircase is a duplex Worthington pump, which has many advantages over ordinary pumps, and is here used for supplying the liquor tanks from three other wells on the premises: we also noticed a two-throw pump connected with the same wells. In the covered yard just outside the engine rooms is the celebrated well, 400 feet deep, bored by Isler, which yields excellent brewing water.

Over this well, enclosed in a room with glazed sides, is a ten horse-power vertical engine, for driving the pump by which the brewing water is lifted to the reservoir in the roof of the mashing house. In addition to the steam-pumps mentioned, there are a number of three-throw and other pumps about the brewery, driven off the shafting.

Crossing to the boiler-house, we were shown three Lancashire boilers, 27 feet by 7 feet, with patent furnaces and economisers. Also a five horse-power engine, driving the water-softening plant for the boiler feed, and, to the right, two steam feed-pumps. Besides these there is a six horse-power engine in the cooperage, a four horse-power vertical engine in the fitters' shop, and an Atkinson gas engine in the granary, for cutting chaff and driving the grinding mills. After seeing all these, we bent our steps to the yard

at the back of the brewhouse, where, in a long range of buildings, are the engineers' and fitters' shops, containing lathes, drilling machines, etc., worked by steam-power. Here also is a forge, and a large room for storing engineers' and fitters' material. Throughout the premises are water-mains, stand-pumps, fire-hose and hand-grenades, for use in case of fire.

Finally, we walked through the fine old house referred to, containing the offices, which are admirably arranged and fitted up. The ground floor is mostly occupied by the general counting-house, and contains desk accom-

modation for sixteen clerks. Next to it is the accountant's room and cashier's office, and, beyond, a board room and private offices for the partners.

A staircase leads from the lobby to the upper floor, where is the auditors' department, also travellers' and managers' rooms, and a reception room. This last is a pleasant and well-furnished apartment, whose walls are covered with photographs of the Company's branch establishments at home and abroad. Some of these the directors kindly lent to us, for reproduction in the pages of this work.

Our guide informed us that the Company have branch offices and stores at London, Aldershot,



LONDON OFFICES.

Brighton, Farnborough, Hastings, Oxford, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Sandgate, Slough, Woolwich, Gibraltar and Malta. These have the advantage of being all under the direct management of the Company, and are not in the hands of agents. As a staff of some 170 persons, with over sixty horses and mules, is employed on them, their importance will readily be imagined.

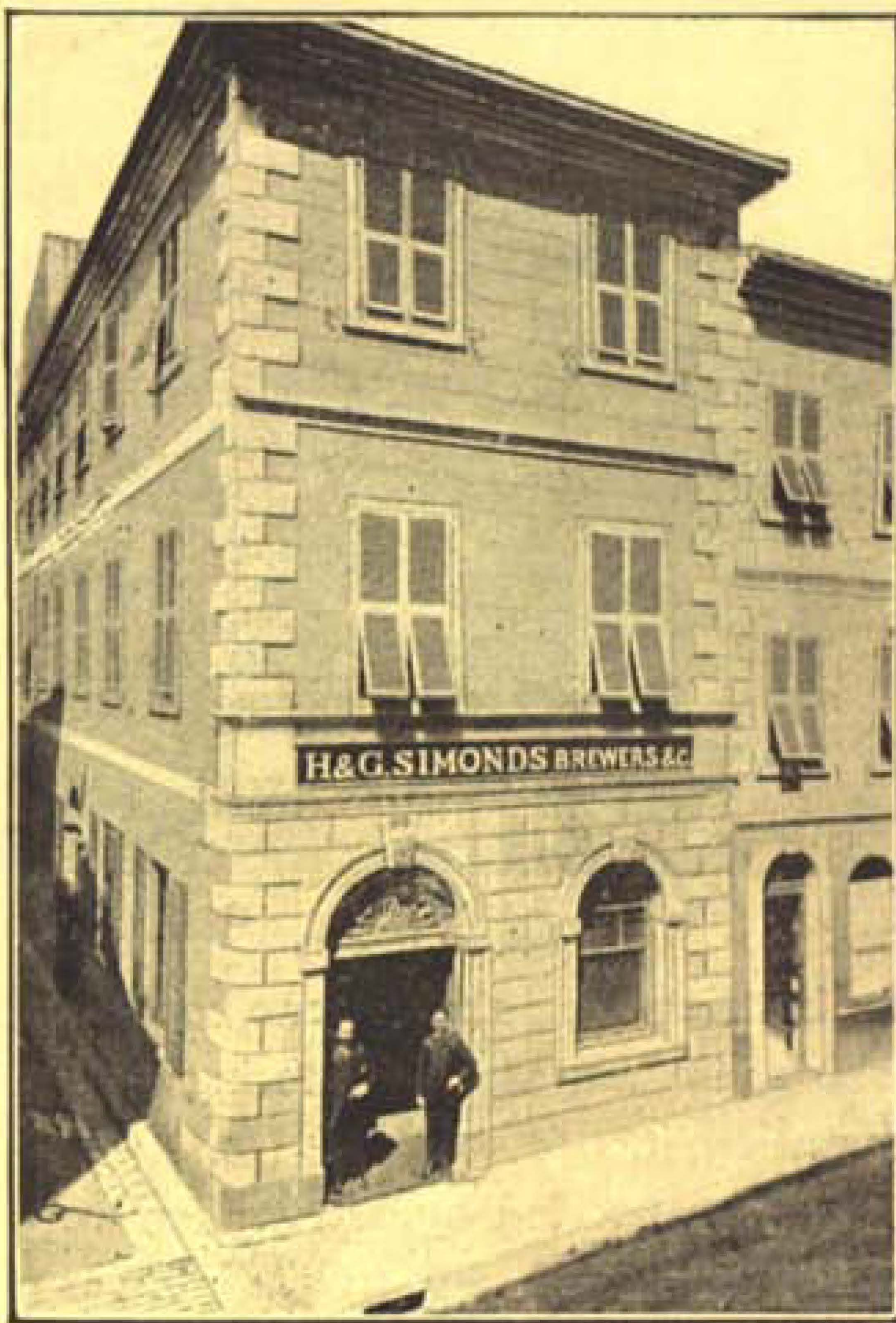
Thus ends the account of two pleasant days spent in one of the completest and best-managed breweries in the kingdom.

After arranging with Messrs. Simonds to visit their London house the next day, we bade these gentlemen adieu and hastened to the station.

The London stores and offices are situated in Grosvenor Road, facing the

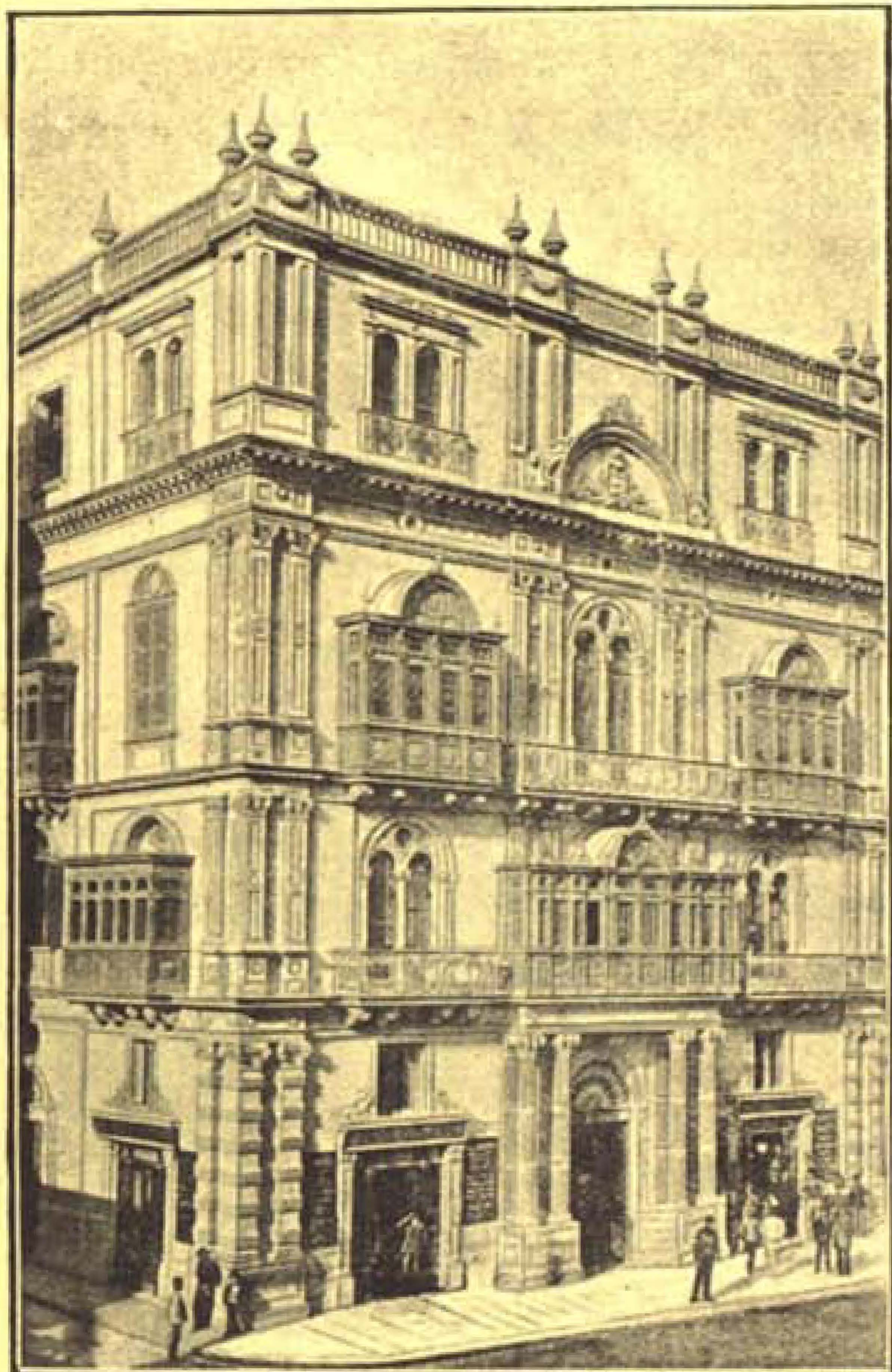
river Thames, and the stables are in Grubb Street. There is a wharf, some 50 feet in length, where the beer is delivered from Reading in barges, and from which it is rolled direct into the cellars. On presenting ourselves at the office, we were received by Mr. W. J. Muller, the manager, and son-in-law to Mr. H. J. Simonds, the senior partner, by whom we were conducted through the premises.

We first walked through the house containing the offices, which is a notable one, inasmuch as it was built by George I., and is certainly a fine old place. It contains many large and lofty rooms, embellished with elegant cornices, panelled walls, and massive mahogany doors. In the principal apartment there is a splendid white statuary marble mantelpiece, 10 feet long, and splendidly carved, which would grace any nobleman's mansion. This fine old house, which faces Lambeth Palace, has been in the occupation of Messrs. H. & G. Simonds since the year 1868, when the ground floor was turned into offices. The upper rooms are occupied by the head clerk and his family, and the lower ones divided into a general counting-house, cashier's office, a sale and sample room, and the manager's private office. This last is a noble and lofty apartment, 30 feet square, with tall windows and panelled walls.



GIBRALTAR OFFICE.

Passing the wide staircase we made our way into the courtyard at the back of the offices, where are the stores, with frontage and communication to Page Street and Horseferry Road. Facing the gateway is a place where, beneath a galvanised iron roof, the beer is loaded-up from the cellars by a powerful hydraulic lift into the delivery vans. The stores building, to which this roof is attached, is two storeys high, and is used for storing public-house beer. Next to it is a messroom for the workmen, and, beyond, a large empty bottle store. The bottle-washing house, fitted up with the usual



MALTA OFFICES.

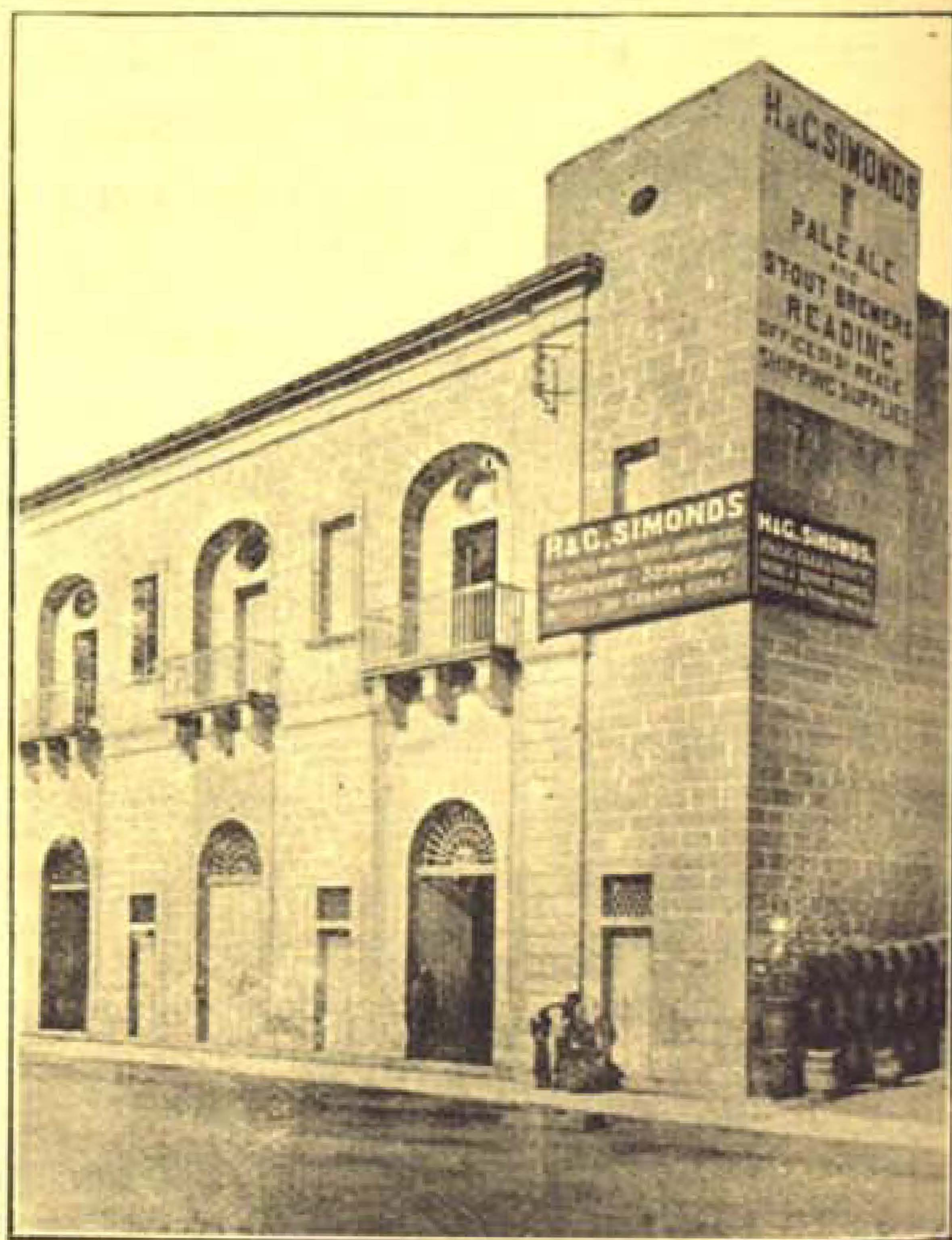
for bottling beer, and the one beyond, which is heated, for storing and maturing it.

Accompanied by Mr. Muller, we next made our way to the stables in Grubb Street, some fifty yards distant. They are comprised in a fine old building, two storeys high, 50 feet square, covered by two lofty roofs. They contain eleven stalls, with accommodation for fifteen horses, a dray-shed, and, overhead, spacious corn and haylofts, and a large beer store for winter use.

And here our notice of the

appliances, is at the right of the gateway.

Entering the lift, we were quickly lowered to the basement of the premises, where, right and left, extending beneath the offices to the roadway, are five beer cellars. Two of them, beneath the old house, which are some 30 feet square, have an opening to the road by which the beer is loaded-in from the barges. They are used for storing beer for delivery to the private trade, and the ceilings are supported on the original groined arches. No. 3, which is situated in the basement of the next building, is the largest, and is used principally for a loading-out cellar. The next cellar is used



MALTA STORES.

Reading Brewery must conclude. It would have been interesting to us to have visited some of the other branch establishments of the Company, but the time at our disposal was limited.

However, to give our readers some idea of the magnitude of this business, we may state that, in addition to the seven members of the Simonds family who take an active part in the concern, there are employed, at Reading alone, six managers, three superintending brewers, a staff of twenty clerks, five travellers, and over 200 workmen. Adding to these the 170 persons employed at the firm's eleven branch houses in England, and those at Malta and Gibraltar, and the separate staff of 140 people engaged on their railway and pier contracts, it gives us a grand total of more than 500 persons, a number of which the proprietor of any business may well be proud.

"Tho' the purple juice of the grape ne'er find
Its way to the cup of horn,
'Tis little I care—for the draught to my mind,
Is the blood of the Barleycorn.
Then hey, etc.

"Tho' the Justice, the Parson, and eke the Squire,
May flout us and hold us in scorn,
Our staunch boon friend, the best Knight in the shire,
Is stout Sir John Barleycorn.
Then hey for John Barleycorn,
The merry John Barleycorn,
Search round and about,
What Knight's so stout
As bold Sir John Barleycorn?"

ELTON'S "*Paul the Poacher*."

