

CHAPTER III

SHEFFIELD STEEL

PART I

THE position of Sheffield in the metallurgical and engineering world is a peculiar one. It is the centre of an immense steel industry, but not of the iron trade. Within a distance of 30 to 50 miles a greater quantity of pig iron is produced than in any part of the kingdom outside the Cleveland district, and yet very little enters into the manufacture of the steel on which the reputation of the city depends, although the iron of the district was the original source of supply. Sheffield produces more engineering tools and parts of engines, perhaps, than the rest of England together, yet built-up engines do not count for so much in its trade outside the district as the productions of towns of far less importance. The story of the steel industry of Sheffield is the whole story of the scientific manufacture of steel of the last thousand years.

To make steel like Sheffield steel is the dream of home and foreign competitors alike. To make tools or parts of engines like Sheffield, or a machine equal to the requirements of Sheffield, is an ideal to be aimed at, and also an advertisement worth almost any outlay. Situated at the junction of the rivers Sheaf and Don, the city has a double reputation. The world that buys its cutlery hears only of Sheffield on the Sheaf; but the store departments of the great railway companies and engineering firms, the British and Foreign Admiralties and War Departments, and the British shipbuilding centres