

CHAPTER V

THE MACHINERY OF THE EASTERN COUNTIES

THE origin and development of the engineering works of the Eastern Counties of England constitute one of the most remarkable chapters in British manufacturing enterprise. The firms who created the great Eastern Counties engineering industry, though now in part amalgamated under central managements, were all originally privately owned and concerned mainly with the manufacture of agricultural machinery and light locomotives. Their works were, not inappropriately, established in that part of England in which arable farming still holds its own and which covers an area stretching from the Thames up as far as the Humber River.

It may cause some surprise to those who associate East Anglia and Lincolnshire chiefly with partridge driving, sheep grazing, turnips, drainage levels and other agricultural activities, to learn that the capital invested in engineering east of the main line of the London and North-Eastern (formerly Great Northern) Railway from London to York amounts to almost as much as that engaged in marine-engine construction on the Clyde or in shipbuilding and engineering on the north-east coast. The capital invested in Eastern Counties engineering is in magnitude scarcely exceeded by the whole registered share capital of the railway locomotive establishments of Glasgow, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle put together. No fewer than 20,000 skilled hands find employment in the various centres of the industry. Its founders were all