

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PETROL MOTOR

THE development and construction of the internal-combustion engine for use in light and heavy motor-cars, motor sea-going craft and the aeroplane cannot be considered as confined to any particular district. Coventry, which was the first home of the bicycle trade, was, curiously enough, the town in which the first light motor engine was constructed by the Daimler Co., founded in 1896 for that purpose. From Coventry the trade spread in various directions, until there is hardly an engineering centre in the country which does not aspire to produce a good class of work in one or more of these lines. Every year at the Motor Show at Olympia new firms enter the field with an amazing fertility of inventive power in the modification and development of the motor mechanism. In the year 1900 there were 184 exhibitors, in 1913 there were 334 and the figure in 1925 was 532. In magnitude and importance this Exhibition has now become the chief gathering of the European motor-car world. To judge from the increase each year of the number of persons who crowd into Olympia, it is evident that there is a growing demand for the light and heavy car, and that, although marine engine-building and agricultural machinery may be under a cloud at the moment, the internal-combustion engine for road traffic can command purchasers at all prices among a public still far from "saturation."

This industry embraces the motor for passenger car transport and aeroplane purposes, and the internal-com-