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Preface

The creation of the greatest textile machinery making business the world has so far seen by a branch of the Platt family of Saddleworth and the rise to eminence of those Platts in Oldham and North Wales on the success of the business can be dismissed as yet another story of people having been in the right place at the right time. In ordinary terms such a view is true so I write in an attempt to tell the story in some detail from the beginnings in the eighteenth century to the days when the business had become a large international company and to show how the influence and vast fortune the business generated benefited not only the Platts themselves but many others along the way.

Notwithstanding these aims, I have, in order to keep the story simple, included technical and financial details and dates only as they are necessary to explain turns of events and to align the chronicles of the several aspects of the story.

The circumstances of my life made it possible to learn the facts, at first hand, in North Wales, in Oldham, at the Company in Oldham and elsewhere and in Saddleworth. Nevertheless, I would be remiss in the extreme, if I did not acknowledge my profound indebtedness to those meticulous past historians of Oldham, Edwin Butterworth and Hartley Bateson, and to the late Ogwen Williams, one time archivist to the former Caernarfonshire County Council (with whom incidentally, I was at school), and a host of others for the provision or corroboration of some of the detail pertaining to the earlier part of the story. My thanks are made to Gwynedd Archives Service, Oldham Evening Chronicle, Oldham Local Studies Library, Peter Fox of Greenfield and Lloyd Hughes, of Llanfairfechan, for the use of photographs from their collections.

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