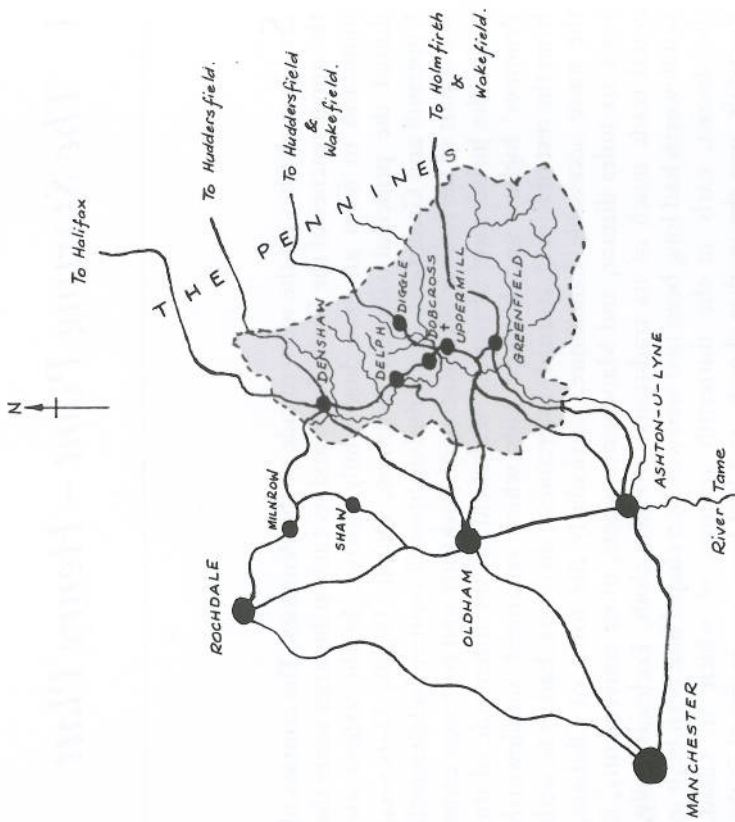




† Chapel/Panish Church.

Upper Mill to Wakefield: 27 1/4 miles.

THE DISTRICT OF SADDLEWORTH.

chapel had been superseded by the church of St Chad and Saddleworth had become a parish). The broad Platt family was scattered about Saddleworth but for the purpose of this story no useful reason would be served by proceeding to include a detailed description of the connections between those Platts on whom the story centres and the broad family though, shortly, a key relationship is mentioned from which the connections can be established.

It stands to reason, somebody had made the simple machines on which yarn and cloth were produced under the long practised domestic system. This had been done by local craftsmen, in an ad hoc way, as the machines were required, even by the intending users themselves if they had the skills. Basically, the machines – the age old carding board

(a hand comb), spinning wheel and handloom – were constructed from wood, only a modicum of vital parts being fashioned from metal. But change was the order of the day in the second part of the eighteenth century and amongst the earliest changes, spawned by the Industrial Revolution, was the factory system, born from the example set by Richard Arkwright, for the processing of cotton fibres. The concentration of textile manufacture in “mills”, as the factories were termed, called for a more powerful and constantly transmitted means of prime movement – because of the features of the terrain the water wheel predominated the horse in Saddleworth – and, in turn, the machines to be operated in the mills needed to be of a more robust construction to align with the more powerful means by which they were to be driven. Furthermore, inventions had been, and were being, made which the factory system could exploit: Flying Shuttle (Kay), Carding Machine (Paul), Spinning Jenny (Hargreaves), Spinning by Rollers and the Waterframe (Arkwright) and the Mule (Crompton); a machine which “crossed” the principles of operation of the Jenny and the Waterframe. Inevitably, such a situation could only lead to the emergence of the specialist machinery maker, who, moreover, would have to be more adept at working in iron, from which material a much higher proportion of the machinery’s parts had now to be made. One such, a blacksmith, was making at Dobcross, in 1770, carding machines for the



Smithy adjoining Bridge House, Dobcross where the Platt family first made textile machinery. The Building carries a commemorative “Blue Plaque”.