

THE BRITANNIA WORKS

form the next object possessing a claim to the notice of a stranger, and have contributed of late years to render Banbury as deservedly celebrated for the manufacture of Implements of Agriculture, as it was wont to be for its cakes and ale. But lest it should be supposed by those who are unacquainted with the town that such a description of these works as the author of this brochure might be tempted to give, was too highly coloured, or of a more flattering character than their importance deserves, he will take the liberty of extracting the following graphic account from the *Official Guide to the London and North Western Railway*: –

“Great credit is due to the enterprising energy of the proprietor, who has, in ten years, raised the Works from the limited extent of a few small shops, employing two or three dozen men, up to its present eminent position, of one of the most extensive and justly celebrated manufactories in England, employing nearly 300 work-people, many of whom it must be remembered are attending steam-worked machinery which does the work of many times their number. The ceaseless activity of all concerned reminds one of a hive of bees; there is apparently an incessant transferring from one department to another, of the different component parts of machines with the same regularity that bricklayers’ labourers unload and stack their bricks; every thing is orderly and systematic, from the moment the workman enters the premises on Monday morning, and sees his ‘number’ entered by the door-keeper, up to mid-day on Saturday, when the paymaster, by an excellent plan, pays the wages to all employed in less than five minutes.

“The buildings are on two separate plots of ground of more than four acres, the iron-foundry in one division, and the other shops occupying the second.

“The engine is centrally situated, transmitting its wonderful power to the range of machine tool shops which form one side. In this department will be seen numerous self-acting and other lathes; planing and shaping machines, – slipping through and cutting plates of iron with the same apparent ease that a lady pierces and clips the fabric with her needle and scissors; screwing and tapping machines giving ‘threads’ to bolts and nuts; and the everlasting ‘whir-r-r’, at fearful velocity, of immense grindstones, imparting sharpness and brightness to the wonderful quantities of machine-knives made here. Power is given from the same source to the lofty wood-working shop, 200 feet long, where the hissing circular saws are cutting their rapid way through the hardest masses of