

the promotion of American Manufactures." The title-page is well fortified with quotations from Governor Wolcott, then in command in Pennsylvania, Lord Chatham, the political philosopher Postlethwaite, and "Horat." in Latin.

That the quality of the material is of the high caliber recently given to the American public in the Hawley-Smoot campaign is evidenced by a statement in the preface that the author has "depended more on strong and decisive facts, than on abstruse reasonings. The former are almost universally safe guides — the latter mere *ignes fatui*, which too generally lead astray."

Carey begins his argument with the statement that he has been unjustly regarded as hostile to farmers and merchants whereas, he declares, there is an identity of interest between them. Rather than waiting upon a precarious foreign market subject to competition in cotton from East India, the wheat states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Ohio suffering from sales in Odessa, Virginia tobacco competing with European rivals — not to speak of potential battles in these commodities with South America — we should in an enlightened fashion give the home manufacturer a chance. Let the manufacturers who previously from want of protection returned to the soil for a livelihood go back to their native occupations. This would produce a two-fold beneficial effect — "diminish the number of producers, and of course the surplus of agricultural productions, with most of which foreign markets are over-stocked. And it would moreover furnish the farmers with a certain domestic market instead of a precarious foreign one."

## The Trotters — Colonial Importers

THE history of one of America's oldest importing houses contained in records for the period from 1798 to 1916 has been presented by Mr. and Mrs. William Henry Trotter of Philadelphia. William Trotter, Quaker, who organized the company in 1789, was an importer of metals, leather goods, textiles and miscellaneous commodities.

A prosperous business with the home country was shattered with the War of 1812, and William Trotter and then later his brother Nathan turned to the Orient and became importers of tea and spices. But trade with England was safer and more remunerative,

and the Trotters revived their earlier business, particularly in metals, when peace was declared in 1815.

The collection covers a vast amount of manuscript records. Over a thousand account books exist covering the period from 1803 to 1916. Many files of material such as the day books and ledgers are unbroken. The books of duplicate letters of the company number one hundred ninety-six, twenty-two of which are devoted to their foreign correspondence. The company was interested in a large number of subsidiary concerns, particularly mining and turnpike companies, whose records are also included.

The Trotters were not interested narrowly in their business. As importers they kept themselves well informed on the state of trade, the comparative prices of commodities and market opportunities, the effects of the tariff, and the political situation in Europe and America. We may cite as an example the comment in Nathan Trotter's letter of February 27, 1834 to Jevons Sons & Co., a British exporting firm, on business under the Jacksonian régime: "The energies of business are paralyzed by the acts of the president and his kitchen cabinet. . . . His war on the United States Bank has shaken confidence beyond precedent, but we have the faith to believe that the Bank is invulnerable against his efforts to destroy it." Although the papers still await a comprehensive history of this importing business, they have often been used by research students in studies of prices, commodity imports, the reaction of business to the tariff, and the methods of early importing concerns.

The records indicate that Nathan Trotter was the business genius in the history of this concern. For a time he was interested in "adventures" in importing and exporting enterprises with Latin America. It was he who saw that specializing in metals was more desirable than the earlier importing of all kinds of English commodities. It was his astuteness that pulled the company through the depression following the War of 1812 and the 1837 panic. And when this country placed heavier and heavier duties on foreign imports, Nathan Trotter became a dealer in home-manufactured metal goods. By the '90's the business had undergone important transformations. Its purchases in the British market were largely speculative in character. From a large wholesale house it had become a jobbing concern which shipped the goods directly from the manufacturer to the consumer. The American tariff and the inevitable development of the industrial revolution had radically affected this old importing business.

That Edward Trotter could not take the fierce pleasure which his father Nathan enjoyed in expanding the business is well illustrated in the delightful correspondence which took place between father and son when Edward went to England in 1835. Edward was sent to London primarily in the interests of the business and any "learning" he might acquire should be incidental and only after the full requirements of business had been satisfied. But Edward is charmed with the relics of an Elizabethan period and old architecture and writes of them to his father with the remark, "I might go on describing various monuments that I saw for I impressed them strongly on my memory but it might weary thy patience." A little later he writes, "Tonight we attend a grand fancy ball to be given at the Colisseum. Thee will say a fine place for young Quakers but we shall have a fine opportunity of seeing the beauty and fashion of London and as it will be attended by none but the most respectable I overlooked conscience and have concluded to go."

Nathan Trotter is somewhat skeptical of his son's application but replies with tolerant advices of caution and particular requests on business activities. Then he hears of his son's precipitate decision to travel over the continent and he hurriedly writes, "I must confess myself surprised at what I read in thine of 28 Feb. (1836) from Paris rec'd yesterday of your intention of making such a tour in Europe." Several earlier letters, he writes, list interviews with "our friends on the other side for goods, expecting thy personal attention would have placed us on better footing. This disappointment added to those on this side will, I fear, make us a slim concern this year." And then quite typically, "While I express my feeling I wish thee every possible happiness and must hope this unusual opportunity will store thy mind with every useful information and qualify thee for close application and competent management of business on thy return home and I hope as I before have told thee that business will not be discarded from thy views but that every possible pains will have been taken in gaining information that will be beneficial and if not of immediate advantage by operation of thy own personally some subsequent benefit will grow out of thy visit."

My dear Son  
 Phil<sup>d</sup>: 19 April 1836

I must confess myself surprised at what I read in thine of 28 Feb from Paris rec<sup>d</sup>: yesterday of your intention of making such a tour in Europe and the several letters I had written of 15<sup>th</sup> & 29 Feb 6 15 29 23 & 31 may & just in my own would not find it in Europe all these letters referred to business and important things ideas relative to thy actions in relation to it and concluded my making the usual application to our friends on the other side for goods expecting thy personal attention would have placed us in better footing than this disadvantage

A QUAKER'S SHOCKED LETTER ON LEARNING OF HIS SON'S ARRIVAL IN PARIS