

exhibitions since 1851, and have seen with concern the gradual loss of position which England has suffered, until now she finds herself closely challenged in every department of industry, and in some, according to the judgment of experts, she holds the first place no longer, or holds it doubtfully.

I perfectly agree with the writer of the letter which appeared in the *Times* of the 31st ult., over the signature of "A Manufacturer," that the *Americans are on the point of becoming our most dangerous rivals*, and I indorse every statement that he makes in support of this view. I have watched closely during the last few years their rapid progress as a manufacturing people. *Their spirit and enterprise are boundless*. They have imported the very newest and best machinery of England, Belgium, Germany, and France; *they have tempted away, through agents sent over for the purpose, skilled workmen from each of these countries, giving preference, however, to those of England; and they are rapidly training an army of skilled workmen for themselves*. I can say, from my own knowledge as a practical man, and from the statements of friends upon whom I can rely, that in the departments of iron, wool, cotton, and a certain class of silk they can produce work which, in quality, is fully equal to our own. That the cost of production is greater than with us is very little to the point. That is a difficulty that will right itself. The great matter for us to note is that they can produce the article required. We may depend upon it the rest will follow in due time. *Out of their present commercial chaos order will surely come, and, I fear, in a form for which we are quite unprepared*. I marvel that so few of our leading manufacturers have as yet been over to Philadelphia, and I can not too strongly urge those who are interested in the branches of industry just named *to go and judge whether the alarm that is at last being sounded is a false one*. No descriptions, however graphic, no reports, official or otherwise, ought to be allowed to stand in place of a personal inspection. Nor is America the only country to be thus critically observed. France, Belgium, and Germany are old rivals, and have long been formidable; but countries hitherto almost unthought of as manufacturing centres are now taking a very respectable position, and are producing work which, if not equal to our own, is, at any rate, of sufficient excellence to shut out our goods from these markets. There are the woolens and porcelain as well as the wrought iron of Sweden; the hosiery, cotton, and woolens of Spain; the silks of Russia, the machinery and woolens of Canada, and the porcelain and metal work of Japan, all of which are admirable, and make a formidable list of addenda to our