

ing system in this country, to show its origin, to trace its progress—to examine its character, point out its evils, and suggest the appropriate remedy. They propose to execute this task with all possible brevity and simplicity, sensible that the subject is too well understood in all its bearings to require at this time a very elaborate investigation.

In the natural course of human affairs, the period would have been very remote when the people of the United States would have engaged in manufactures, but for the restrictions upon our commerce which grew out of the war between Great Britain and France, and which led to the non-intercourse act, the embargo, and finally our own war of 1812. Cut off by these events from a free commercial intercourse with the rest of the world, the people of the United States turned their attention to manufactures, and on the restoration of peace in 1815 an amount of capital had been already invested in these establishments which made a strong appeal to the liberality,—we might almost say to the justice of the country for protection; at least against that *sudden influx* of foreign goods which it was feared would entirely overwhelm these domestic establishments. When therefore in 1816 it became necessary that the Revenue should be brought down to the peace establishment, by a reduction of the duties upon imports, it was almost by common consent conceded to the claims of the manufacturers, that this reduction should be *gradual*, and three years were accordingly allowed for bringing down the duties to the permanent revenue standard, which (embracing all the ordinary expenses of the government,) with liberal appropriations for the Navy and the Army, an extensive system of fortifications, and the gradual extinction of the public debt, (then amounting to \$130,000,000,) was fixed at 20 per cent. If the manufacturers had at that time even hinted that permanent protection was deemed indispensable to their success,—if the slightest suspicion had been entertained that instead of the gradual reduction expressly provided for by the act of 1816, there would be claimed a *gradual increase* of the protecting duties, and that instead of being brought down in three years to 20 per cent. the duties were to be carried up to 50 or 100 per cent, and in many cases to prohibition, the painful contest in which the country has been engaged for the last ten years on this subject would have commenced immediately, and it is confidently believed that in the temper of the public mind at that time, ample security would have been