

## An Irish Friend and the American Civil War: Some Letters of Frederic W. Pim to His Father in Dublin 1864

THE majority of Irishmen who went to America during its Civil War were young Catholics discouraged by unemployment and the economic crisis at home. Although their situation improved somewhat, they were, more often than not, grateful to America and decided to remain. When they wrote home, they very likely described the availability of employment in industry or the army, in spite of potential competition from Negroes upon emancipation. Perhaps these Irishmen also wrote about their fondness for Americans, especially Democratic politicians who taught them a new sense of patriotism and the importance of preserving the Union. In general, the response to the new country was favourable, and many decided to live there permanently. Very often the attitudes of such Irishmen are considered typical of the period.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike most of these individuals was another Irishman, Frederic W. Pim, a Friend by birth, who at the age of twenty-five visited the United States from April to August, 1864 and returned to his native Dublin. He went as a representative of his family's commercial interests and as a tourist.

Pim's response to the United States is revealed in eight unpublished letters he wrote to his father.<sup>2</sup> They are of interest for their view of America and reflection of seldom recognized Irish-American relations as presented by a member of an influential but unconventional family in nineteenth-century Ireland.

<sup>1</sup> See Joseph M. Hennon, Jr., *Celts, Catholics and Copperheads: Ireland Views the Civil War* (Columbus, 1968), pp. 1-44; Albon P. Man, Jr., "The Irish in New York in the early eighteen-sixties", *Irish historical studies*, vi (September, 1950), 87-108; and A. W. Potter, *To the Golden Door: The Story of the Irish in Ireland and America* (Boston, 1960).

<sup>2</sup> Now in the Historical Library, Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, which has given permission to quote from them. The shelf mark in Friends' Historical Library, 6 Eustace Street, Dublin, 2, is Room 4, Pim MSS. Bundle f nos. 43-49a. See Olive C. Goodbody, *Guide to Irish Quaker records* (Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1967), p. 112, para. 110 (f).

The Pims of Dublin were descended from Richard Pim who left Leicester for Ireland in 1655. In 1841 the family set up two businesses. Pim Brothers Limited dealt in wholesale and retail linen, cotton, and poplin, while Pim Brothers and Company manufactured these materials. Jonathan Pim (1806–1885), the father of Frederic Pim, was active in these enterprises and from 1865 to 1874 represented Dublin in Parliament. Highly regarded as a businessman and statesman, the elder Pim was also respected for his efforts to help victims of the recent famine through the relief committee of the Society of Friends, of which he was a prominent member. During the aftermath of the *Trent* seizure in 1861, he tried arduously, though without direct success, to convince the British government of the need for arbitration and the rights of neutral powers at a time when sympathy for the South was running high.<sup>1</sup>

Joshua E. Todhunter, Jonathan Pim's brother-in-law, was the agent for the family business in New York and while there formulated an elaborate theory requiring British recognition of the South, which he outlined in several letters to his brother-in-law, Jonathan.<sup>2</sup> During 1864 Todhunter served as business associate, host, and travelling companion of his young nephew, Frederic.

Born in Dublin in 1839, Frederic Pim attended Bootham School, York, but he had his residence in Ireland until he died in 1925. He was twice married and the father of five children. Throughout his life he was active in his family's businesses, and from 1896 to 1916 was chairman of the Dublin and South-Eastern Railway. For several years he was vice-president of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce.<sup>3</sup> His interests in the welfare of his country were broad, and he wrote a number of pamphlets and books on such topics as public health, home rule, improvements in the parliamentary system, and Irish history. Perhaps his most well-known works are *Railways and the State*, published in 1912, and "The Mites

<sup>1</sup> William H. Marwick, "Some Quaker firms of the nineteenth-century, II". *J.F.H.S.*, 1 (Spring, 1962), 17–36 and David Large, "Friends and the American Civil War: the *Trent* Affair", *J.F.H.S.*, xlviii (Autumn, 1957), 163–167.

<sup>2</sup> David Large, "An Irish Friend and the Civil War", *Bulletin of the Friends' Historical Association*, xlvii (Spring, 1958), 20–29.

<sup>3</sup> Bootham School *Register* (Scarborough and London, 1935), pp. 305–306; *Irish Times*, January 8, 1925, p. 8.

in the Cheese", which appeared in 1918, on natural resources.<sup>1</sup> Like many Friends, Frederic Pim belonged to the Liberal Party, in which he held an executive post.

Pim was not only a prominent man, then, but he belonged to a prominent family, which maintained its English heritage in religion, schooling, and political loyalty. At a time when Catholic Ireland was impoverished, and increasingly nationalistic, the Protestant Pims maintained a remarkably high degree of wealth, prestige, and leadership. In the spring of 1864, when Frederic went abroad, the linen business was flourishing, partly because of exports to America.

Public opinion in Ireland generally favoured the Confederacy, but the Irish liberals, in spite of Southern sympathies, were inclined to be more cautious. Even though they endorsed Gladstone's pronouncement that President Davis had made a nation, they "preferred a policy of official neutrality to one of recognition and intervention by the United Kingdom".<sup>2</sup>

In going to America in 1864, then, Frederic Pim no doubt had some preconceptions about it. As a Friend, he was apprised of the importance of universal peace and the abolition of slavery, and he may have been influenced by the works of Joseph Sturge and William Tallack, Quaker travellers to America, or Harriet Beecher Stowe's very popular abolitionist novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.<sup>3</sup> As a business man, Pim was probably apprehensive about free trade during wartime, the safety of his merchandise, not to mention himself, and the possibility of increased tariffs rumoured at the time of his visit. Belonging to the Liberal Party, which favoured Southern independence, Pim probably assumed its

<sup>1</sup> *Friends' quarterly examiner*, lii, pp. 167-89 (iv, 1918). Other works he wrote include: *The Health of Dublin* (Dublin, 1890); *The Society of Friends and Home Rule: A Letter to a Fellow Member of the Society of Friends* (Dublin, 1893); *Private Bill Legislation: Suggestions for a Permanent Commission in Lieu of the Present Parliamentary Procedure* (Dublin, 1896); *The Sinn Fein Rising: A Narrative and Some Reflections* (Dublin, 1916); and *Home Rule Through Federal Devolution* (London, 1916).

<sup>2</sup> Herson, *Celts, Catholics and Copperheads*, p. 85 and J. G. Randall and David Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Mass., 1969), pp. 504-505. For general information I have relied on this latter source, as well as on E. D. Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, 2 vols. (Gloucester, Mass., 1957).

<sup>3</sup> See Joseph Sturge, *A Visit to the United States* (Boston, 1842), and William Tallack, *Friendly Sketches in America* (London, 1861).

position, although other factors, such as his religious beliefs and his commercial interests, may have tempered this attitude.

Between his arrival in New York on Wednesday, April 7, 1864, and his departure on Saturday, August 6 of the same year, Pim wrote at least eight letters to his father, dated as follows: April 8, 16, 26; May 5, 14, 17; and July 8, and 14. Six of the letters were written in New York, the other two in Philadelphia. During this time Pim was staying with his uncle Joshua E. Todhunter in Brooklyn or with a friend nearby. Although he spent a major portion of time in and around New York, Pim took an extended tour south as far as Washington, west to Independence, Missouri, and north to Canada before returning to New York by way of Boston. Apparently his intention on this expedition was mostly sight-seeing, for he visited the usual historical monuments in the cities and natural sights like Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, Niagara Falls, the Erie Canal, and the Saguenay River. Perhaps the absence of letters dated in June is explained by the demands of travel, which prevented letter writing.

Like most foreigners travelling in America, Pim was interested in her institutions and people, and in this respect his letters show how different he was from most Irishmen who went to America after the Famine. Throughout his correspondence one senses a degree of amusement and condescension, characteristic of many tourists in a new country. In writing about Manhattan, already famous for its large population and grand scale, he appears to be mocking it in saying that Fifth Avenue "is the fashionable street for the upper Ten Thousand" and that Broadway "is narrow, as its name implies".<sup>1</sup>

Some thirty years prior to Pim's visit another British visitor, Mrs. Trollope, found American men lacking in 'gentlemanly feeling' and deportment and women overdressed.<sup>2</sup> Although these remarks are clearly hyperbolic, Pim's reflect a similar sense of superiority when he says, for example, that he was "surprised to find so little singularity

<sup>1</sup> Pim's letter, written in New York to his father, dated April 8, 1864. The pages of the letters are not numbered; henceforth only the place and date of composition will be provided.

<sup>2</sup> Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, ed. Donald Smalley (New York, 1949), p. 420.

in the appearance of the men, except a small proportion", and the women "singularly 'plain'."<sup>1</sup>

Another example of Pim's patronizing attitude appears in his remarks on the American tendency to reverse a major decision without sufficient comprehension of the situation. In one letter he attributes the fluctuation in the gold market to this characteristic:

the people are so liable to sudden changes of opinion that a very small thing may bring the whole thing to an end and send greenbacks down to nothing in a day. In fact no change however great or sudden would surprise me, except a display of sense or wisdom in the people or Government.<sup>2</sup>

Here Pim seems to echo an earlier French observer, de Tocqueville, who associated the low calibre of political leadership with the Americans' "superficial inspection of the more prominent features of a question".<sup>3</sup>

A much larger portion of Pim's letters is devoted to his commercial interests. In his first letter he expresses a sense of exhilaration when he says that "the appearance of business is immense",<sup>4</sup> but when writing about his own affairs he is less sanguine. Once he advises his father to keep on sending damasks throughout the summer, other conditions being equal, but two weeks later he notes that advances from agents in America are down, which puts foreign manufacturers in a precarious state. Large amounts of capital and a variety of materials, he believes, are the only means for successful business ventures in America. Pim records elsewhere his concern for unsold goods, and in his last letter he registers his dismay at the news that more goods are being sent because economic instability makes the future market uncertain.

Underlying this perplexity is Pim's familiarity with the whole financial crisis, particularly its foreign aspects, which were largely precipitated by the war. Duties on foreign items had to be paid for in gold, and while Pim was in the States the price for gold premiums rose from \$1.95 in mid-June to

<sup>1</sup> New York, April 8, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> New York, July 8, 1864. Greenbacks are non-interest bearing United States notes.

<sup>3</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, ed. Phillips Bradley *et al.*, 2 vols. (New York, 1945), I, p. 201.

<sup>4</sup> New York, April 8, 1864.

\$2.84 in early July.<sup>1</sup> Since his business profits were partly dependent upon the price of gold premiums, required for duty payments in gold, he naturally devoted a lot of time and space to the gold crisis. The first time he wrote home he reported how exciting the whole matter was. He systematically quoted the price of gold, and he kept himself informed about the situation through the newspapers and his uncle's contact with the exchange. One incident, with direct relevance to family interests, was experienced by his uncle's deputies, who spent four days, including one night, at the door of the Treasury building in an effort to secure duty certificates.

Pim's fascination with the country's financial troubles extended beyond his own, and in his letters he occasionally analyses the scene and speculates on the outcome. In April, for example, the gold premium fell almost twenty points in a few days, and he explained the decrease by the presence of Salmon P. Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, in New York, which prompted rumours of dramatic intervention by the government. Actually, the visit merely coincided with the payment of dividends on government notes due on May first. When Pim wrote home again, however, he noted how nervous the "Commerce classes" in New York had become because of the speculations in gold and the advance of Confederate troops northward.<sup>2</sup>

Although the passing of the "gold act" in June and its repeal in early July helped to alleviate the economic crisis, gold premiums continued to fluctuate widely during the military encounters at Cold Harbor, Petersburg, and Richmond. Accordingly, Pim's correspondence later in the month reflects this instability and attendant anxiety. In his letter of July 8 he suggests the possibility of a crash in the value of greenbacks, which would be followed by a complete return to gold currency. Should a disaster come, however, there might be an increase in the sale of Pim materials, a tangible and thereby relatively safe investment. Nonetheless, he thought peace was in the distant future, and not till then could one expect consistently good trade.

Pim's scepticism about a stable economy and its effect on the people apparently lingered throughout his stay in

<sup>1</sup> Randall and Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, p. 349.

<sup>2</sup> Philadelphia, May 5, 1864.

America. The last time he wrote home in the middle of July he echoed an earlier remark but added a degree of passion in suggesting the possibility of riots pursuant to an economic collapse:

The fact is—I do not consider anything here as at all safe. Whenever the crisis comes I have no doubt there will be serious outbreaks in New York and probably in all other large Cities. Not insane party riots as before; but bread and gold riots, when men will rob the banks and compel merchants to give up the gold they may have in their safes, actuated by absolute want of means to procure the necessaries of life, when the paper currency is found to be worthless, and there is nothing else to substitute for the moment.<sup>1</sup>

Closely tied to Pim's concern for the economy, especially the value of gold, was the increase in tariff regulations during the period. Following the precedent of the Morrill Act, passed in 1861, which provided for an appreciable increase in duties over those stipulated in 1857, the Federal government proceeded to raise throughout the war its revenue as more funds were required for military use.<sup>2</sup> Although this action would not diminish profits enough to force liquidation of the family business because losses could be balanced in domestic enterprises, Pim was naturally worried about the changing legislation, which permitted some tariffs to reach 100% at the end of 1865. On arrival, then, Pim was sufficiently alarmed to write that the Republicans wanted to raise the tariff on linen to 40% and soon thereafter noted that the House of Representatives approved a resolution raising the linen tariff to 45%. This prompted him, he told his father, to reserve £3,000 for necessary payments in gold despite a rumour of exemption for bonded materials. Perhaps this cautious action was related to his continued lack of faith in the government, for he concludes with this statement: "... so little reliance can be placed in the Government or Congress, that we do not think it wise to leave any goods remaining [in bond] on the chance".<sup>3</sup>

In passing, it is interesting to note that like most aliens involved in the import and export business during the Civil War, Pim bought cotton and wheat. At one time, for

<sup>1</sup> New York, July 14, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> Randall and Donald, *The Civil War and Reconstruction*, p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> New York, April 26, 1864.

example, the young Irishman wrote that he had considered investing revenues from the sale of materials in New York in cotton, but he decided not to because of current military activity and the fluctuations in monetary exchange. At another time, he requested clarification about the procedure for shipping and paying for a quantity of corn to his Uncle Thomas in Ireland.

In spite of the large amount of material that has been written about the impact of "King Cotton" and "King Wheat" on British-American relations during the Civil War, there has been little real agreement about its importance. At one time historians claimed these items were crucial in the establishment of British alliances with the North or South, but more recently the opposite position has been argued.<sup>1</sup> Martin P. Claussen, for example, believes that

in British foreign policy, national interest, with the corollary of commercial self-preservation . . . appears as the dominant factor in support of peace and non-intervention in the American war. The interest in peace was essentially an interest in the promotion and maintenance of Britain's foreign commerce. Peace and trade were inseparable, thus ran the axiom of the free traders whose tenets were becoming the accepted policy of the government.<sup>2</sup>

As a matter of fact, Pim never mentions political alliances when writing home about cotton and wheat, which suggests that his interest in them, like the businessmen Claussen describes, was a function of a pragmatic response to favourable markets and not to any partiality for the South or North. If this is true, Pim's letters support these recent theories about the relative insignificance of cotton and wheat in international relations during the Civil War period.

<sup>1</sup> For example, see Louis B. Schmidt, "The influence of wheat and cotton on Anglo-American relations during the Civil War", *Iowa Journal of history and politics*, xvi (July, 1918), 401-439; Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War*, ii, 4, 13 n. 2, 17; Frank L. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy* (Chicago, 1931), 562-578; Martin P. Claussen, "Peace factors in Anglo-American relations, 1861-1865", *The Mississippi Valley historical review*, xxvi (March, 1940), 511-522; Eli Ginzberg, "The Economics of British neutrality during the American civil war", *Agricultural history*, x (October, 1936), 147-156; Robert H. Jones, "Long Live the King", *Agricultural history*, xxxvii (July, 1963), 166-169; and Amos Khasigian, "Economic factors and British neutrality, 1861-1865", *The Historian*, xv (August, 1963), 451-465.

<sup>2</sup> M. P. Claussen, "Peace factors in Anglo-American relations, 1861-1865", 516.

Pim devotes most of the space in his letters, of course, to the war. He writes a lot about the actual events, but he is also fascinated by their meaning and implications for the future. Apparently, he had a fairly clear comprehension of the major incidents of the period, which he carefully conveyed to his father.

By the spring of 1864, Grant's command of the Union armies, coupled with the numbers of recruits available to him, had the edge on Confederate depletion in leadership and men. In early May, Grant and Meade, commander of the Army of the Potomac, encountered Southern forces led by Lee in the neighbourhood of Fredericksburg. During the ensuing Battle of the Wilderness, Grant crossed the Rapidan River in Virginia and fought steadily south, ending the campaign victoriously but with a good deal of bloodshed, at Cold Harbor in early June. Thereafter, Grant concentrated on the siege of Petersburg until he and his men headed west toward Appomatox in the spring of 1865.

On other fronts there was less dramatic action. Beginning in March, Union forces, under the leadership of General Banks and Admiral Porter, penetrated the Red River in an unsuccessful attempt to gain control of Louisiana and East Texas and to seize large supplies of cotton grown there. In May and June Sherman and his men met the forces of Joseph E. Johnston in a series of battles, culminating in Sherman's ultimate capture of Atlanta, while Sheridan and Custer were involved in tactical raids on Lee's army in Virginia.

Although the contents of the letters, taken in sequence, do not correspond to the actual sequence of events, they do demonstrate Pim's understanding of the significance of almost all of them. In the letter of April 26, for example, young Pim reports that "there is now no doubt that the affair on the Red River was a serious defeat and that Banks has turned out rather an ass than otherwise. It is probable he will be at once suspended".<sup>1</sup> Even though Banks' future did not depend on this debacle, the defeat was considered relatively crucial until Grant and Meade intensified their campaign in Virginia. Pim's sense of the proportionate value of these activities, *vis-à-vis* those following, is clear in later correspondence. In the letter of May 5, the only military event mentioned is Grant's strategically significant removal

<sup>1</sup> New York, April 26, 1864.

of the Army of the Potomac across the Rapidan, which began the day before and signalled the beginning of his final thrust to victory. Then, twelve days later, after the Battle of the Wilderness was over, Pim reported the relative insignificance of the Red River fiasco in comparison to events in Virginia:

The taking of Fort Pillow, was a success which coupled with the disastrous ending of Banks' cotton expedition on the Red River, would be felt as very severe blows were we not so intent upon the theatre in Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

Also during the spring of 1864 naval operations of the Union and Confederacy brought danger to maritime activity. By then the Northern blockade prevented commerce with Southern ports all the way to the Gulf of Mexico, with the exception of Charleston, Mobile, Wilmington, and Galveston. Confederate cruisers, such as the *Sumter*, *Florida*, and *Alabama*, caused countless damage to the Federal navy and merchant ships bound to and from Northern ports. The *Alabama*, built at Liverpool, was for over two years an especially dangerous vessel, before being sunk by the *Kearsarge* at Cherbourg on June 19.

As a British subject and merchant of foreign goods, Pim was naturally interested in the exploits of the *Alabama*, and its loss prompted him to write about it. He thought Captain Semmes' leadership was overrated and that the ship's sinking was more a result of the *Kearsarge's* iron equipment than Semmes' ineptitude or its British construction. Later, when commenting on the threat posed by another Southern vessel, the *Florida*, Pim suggested that she, too, would be sunk before long, and then realizing she was responsible for sinking a merchant ship carrying Pim merchandise he wisely recommended an increase in the company's marine insurance.

A major event in early July was a raid on Washington by Confederate forces under Jubal A. Early. Although the capital was virtually unprotected, hasty intervention by Grant's men repulsed Early in time. Pim also clearly understood the motivations behind and ramifications of this incident. In one letter written at the beginning of the month he noted that such an invasion would "do much to restore the somewhat flagging spirits of the North [and] force Grant

<sup>1</sup> New York, May 17, 1864.

to detach re-inforcements, and perhaps they may succeed. . . ."<sup>1</sup> In the next letter he mentioned the ensuing excitement; men had failed to rally to the cause by enlisting, as they had in earlier crises.

As generally complete as Frederic Pim was about the military events during his visit to America, he was not always clear, at least in his letters, about his own alliance with either the North or South. Throughout the ambiguity suggests the complexity of his attitude.

In several places one senses his loyalty is with the North. In May, when writing about the lack of decisive battles on both sides, he assumes the mask of a Northerner and says:

Of course we talk here as if Richmond were already taken, and are beginning to think, whether we shall turn our attention at once to turning Maximilian out of Mexico and upon what sort of tree Jeff Davis is to be hanged, along with a few minor matters; not including the manner of governing the conquered South or the settlement of the currency.<sup>2</sup>

Pim uses the same pose when commenting on the future outcome of the *Alabama's* encounter with the *Kearsarge*: "we are of course in great glory about the 'Alabama' and are now satisfied that having sunk an 'English Man of War' we need not fear the British Navy".<sup>3</sup> Implicit in both of these quotations, however, is a good measure of irony mixed with sarcasm. By contrasting the apparent with the actual, Pim shows in the first instance how the Northerners construed the status quo to mean conclusive victory and in the second case how they confused a victorious battle at sea with maritime supremacy. In doing so, Pim is indirectly criticizing the Yankees' lack of judgment, misguided enthusiasm, and false priorities.

Objection to the hypocritical leaders of the Union, which reflects Irish popular opinion, is also discernible in the correspondence. If silence is any measure of disfavour, Pim implies lack of respect, if not distaste, for Lincoln in his descriptions of him and his activities, which are void of any comment whatsoever. More specific intolerance of Northern leadership and its irrational followers is evident in the

<sup>1</sup> New York, July 8, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> New York, May 17, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> New York, July 8, 1864.

suggestion that should Grant take Richmond "he will possibly be elected by the popular insanity of the moment".<sup>1</sup> Pim also indirectly criticizes Congress whenever he refers to increased tariffs.

Pim's dislike of the North is sometimes indirect, but his partiality to the South is obscure and uneven. Some remarks on a variety of its reversals and conquests, for example, are objective in tone. "The affair on the Red River was a serious defeat", he reports, and then says that several victories in the vicinity of Plymouth, North Carolina "may be of great advantage to Lee" and are, along with other victories, "encouraging to the South".<sup>2</sup> In another letter, with no apparent enthusiasm, he claims "that nothing but continued Southern victories will end the war".<sup>3</sup>

Southern partisanship is nonetheless implicit in a few places. In writing to his father about the sinking of the British-built *Alabama*, Pim actually rationalizes the loss by citing its limited value as a man of war and the relative strength of the *Kearsarge*. Nonetheless, he adds that the Confederate cause justified the *Alabama's* endeavours.

The event which caused Pim to express his Southern sympathies the most, however, was the attempted invasion of Washington by Confederate soldiers in July. During the preliminary stages Pim explained his reservations about such an endeavour; it would be "very imprudent and mischievous".<sup>4</sup> Then, after the Southern troops withdrew, he wrote of his relief: "the risk was great and the chances of advantage small".<sup>5</sup> Clearly, comments like these indicate a sincere identification with the underdog, untinged with sarcastic irony. When Pim is ironic with regard to the South, as he is in surrounding the word rebel with quotation marks, he is actually criticizing the Yankee appellation and thereby demonstrating his Southern alliance.

If Pim were against the North and in favour of the South, why are his letters so ambiguous? Why the pretence? Why isn't he consistent? Was he confused, or a Laodicean? Or was he reluctant to adopt a single position because he was unable, as an alien and because of idealistic and pragmatic

<sup>1</sup> New York, July 8, 1864.

<sup>2</sup> New York, April 26, 1864.

<sup>3</sup> New York, July 8, 1864.

<sup>4</sup> New York, July 8, 1864.

<sup>5</sup> New York, July 14, 1864.

reasons, to identify completely with either faction? Was his fondness for the South coupled with an outward sense of neutrality?

It may be that these last two questions contain the best answers. As a British subject in the midst of a country at civil war, Pim understandably could not assume a thorough feeling of partisanship, nor as an unofficial representative of Britain, which maintained, if unofficial, neutral relations with America during the period, could he outwardly show any other attitude. Some indication that he actually held this view is apparent in these letters which contain no hint of disagreement between him and his father, who tried so hard to promote neutrality at the time of the *Trent* affair. As a matter of fact, the tone of all the letters indicates a congenial rapport of mutual understanding between father and son.

Idealistically, too, a neutral attitude was a reasonable one. As a Friend Pim supported abolition, yet the apparently insincere motives of Northern leaders, especially Lincoln, to preserve the Union by enforcing abolition, was anathema to most Irishmen, Protestant and Catholic alike. Nonetheless, Pim's affiliation with the Liberal Party and the possible influence of his Uncle Joshua Todhunter, so dedicated to British recognition of the South, may have reinforced his fondness for the Confederacy.

From the point of view of economics, neutrality also permitted Pim to carry on business as usual and avoid embarrassment and loss of business, especially since his base of operations was in a Northern city. Nor would victory for either faction require compromise of principle. In any event, Southern cotton would again be available, an idea implied in one of the letters. After telling his father that the war would not end for another year, Pim continues by saying that then "the South will be open, with her cotton, and though goods may fall somewhat, there will I expect be a good trade".<sup>1</sup>

Other evidence suggesting Pim harboured a Southern loyalty tempered by neutrality is found in the journal he kept while in America. On May 11, he records a conversation he had with some Quaker acquaintances in Philadelphia:

<sup>1</sup> New York, July 8, 1864.

In the course of the evening Mrs. W[right] suddenly asked whether we were for North or South, which rather took me aback, had to get out of it by an evasive answer, or we should have been into a regular fight, of course they, like nearly all the Friends, especially the orthodox body, are fierce republicans and abolitionists.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps Pim's reliance on decorum had not prepared him for such an abrupt question, and maybe he equivocated because of this and his own dislike of Republicans. At any rate, his reluctance to discuss partiality in such a context and the content of his letters further support the argument that Pim's alliances were close to his countrymen who shared the same political and religious convictions.

A study of these letters shows that the attitudes toward and relations with America during the Civil War they contain are not typical of Irish Catholics who emigrated here and became Northern patriots. Instead, they are the result of the author's own heritage, personality, and the nature of his mission. As an Irish Friend with English allegiance, Pim's response to America is exemplary, and the implicit neutrality is similar to the official position of Parliament. Accordingly, this private correspondence is valuable to historians who have relied primarily on public documents, such as the Parliamentary debates, to understand British neutrality, particularly as it developed within the context of Ireland. The letters are also helpful because their contents are representative of the interests of a British subject concerned with Anglo-American relations during the period.

With regard to the life of this important Friend, moreover, the letters reveal a remarkable amount of wisdom from someone only twenty-five years old. No doubt Pim's experience in America was invaluable in his later years as a leader in the financial and political spheres of Dublin. During the time of the First World War, when he wrote on the subject of war again, he stated that sincerity, frankness, and good faith are the requisites for international peace.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps Pim learned such wisdom many years earlier during his American visit.

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<sup>1</sup> Frederic W. Pim, "American Notes", Vol. I, 85. See Olive C. Goodbody, *Guide to Irish Quaker records*, 1967, p. 134, para. 157. This journal, in manuscript, is in the archives of the Historical Library, Religious Society of Friends in Ireland, which has given permission to quote this passage.

<sup>2</sup> Frederic W. Pim, "The Mites in the Cheese". *Friends' Quarterly Examiner*, lii (1918), 187.