

THE EARLY RECORDS OF A GREAT MANCHESTER COTTON-SPINNING FIRM.

THE firm on whose records this article is based has had a continuous history since 1791. Since 1795 practically all the correspondence to and from the firm, as well as the more important business books, have been preserved, giving an authentic record of a typical cotton-spinning firm, from that stage of the Industrial Revolution when the cotton industry was beginning to rise into prominence. In this article a brief account will be given of the origin of the firm, and of its development during the first twenty-five years of its existence; also, of its relations with the market for raw cotton on the one hand, and with the market for yarn on the other.

Originally the firm consisted of four partners, Messrs. James McConnel, John Kennedy, Benjamin Sandford, and William Sandford. The two former were members of a group of young men who came to Lancashire from a country district in Kirkcudbrightshire, in the south of Scotland, in the eighties of the eighteenth century. It appears that this immigration must be regarded as of considerable importance in relation to the Lancashire Cotton Industry in its early stages. Other members of the group were James Kennedy, brother of John Kennedy, and Adam and George Murray, who also succeeded in establishing themselves as prominent Manchester cotton-spinners. In addition, a brother of James McConnel became manager of McConnel and Kennedy's factory in 1799, while another brother of Kennedy played an important part in developing the commercial side of the concern in the Glasgow market. For many years at the beginning of the nineteenth century the firms of McConnel and Kennedy and A. and G. Murray seem to have supplied the bulk of the fine yarn consumed in this market; invariably the price at which the representatives of the former firm were instructed to sell was determined by the price offered by the latter. There

is abundant evidence in the correspondence that one firm was constantly played off against the other by the Glasgow consumers. Their position in Manchester is indicated by an undated valuation of Manchester factories, probably made in 1809, in which the two firms appear. Murray's factory was valued at £20,455 16s., and that of McConnel and Kennedy at £18,152 14s., the highest valuation among the other sixty-four factories enumerated being £10,130 8s., while the great majority of the remainder were much smaller in amount.

The partnership referred to above was entered into in 1791 for four years, and at the risk of repeating what is well known, it is necessary to say a word regarding the condition of the cotton industry at this time. During the preceding twenty years the inventions associated with the names of Arkwright and Crompton had made possible immense advance in the technique of cotton-spinning, which had been made still more practicable by the success which had attended the efforts of Boulton and Watt to adapt the steam-engine to the driving of machinery. In one of a number of letters preserved among these records, written by Crompton, relating to his invention and his efforts to obtain due recognition, he states that in 1780 the cotton trade was in its infancy. Between this date and 1790 considerable development took place, which he attributes to the invention of the "mule." At any rate, it is certain that a great impetus was given to cotton-spinning during this decade, and consequently to the production of the requisite machinery. It was the reports of "the great and extraordinary discoveries that were beginning to be introduced into Manchester for spinning cotton by new and curious machinery"¹ which induced Robert Owen to leave Satterfield's and become partner with his informant, as a maker of "mules" in 1789. Owen's case was typical of many others. There is much evidence that many individuals, who later became noted cotton-spinners, commenced as makers of the new machinery, or combined this function with that of mule-spinning. The firm with which this article is concerned began with such a combination, and as it expanded continued to make "mules" for its own use, long after it had ceased to accept orders for machinery from other firms. The objects laid down in the partnership agreement of 1791 are "the buying materials for cotton machines, in making and selling machinery, and buying, manufacturing, and selling cotton."

At this point one or two other interesting items in the agreement may be noticed. Each of the four partners is described as a

¹ *Autobiography of Robert Owen*, p. 22.

machine-maker and cotton-spinner, but other evidence indicates that the Sandfords were already in business as fustian warehousemen. McConnel and Kennedy had both served an apprenticeship with a machine-maker, a relative of the former, at a village called Chowbent, a few miles outside Manchester, then a place of much greater relative importance than it is at the present day. On the completion of their apprenticeship both made their way to Manchester, McConnel preceding Kennedy by a year or two, during which time he appears to have worked as a cotton-spinner. It was on Kennedy's arrival at Manchester that the partnership with the Sandfords commenced. The joint-capital with which the firm started amounted to £600, of which £350 was contributed by the Sandfords, and the remainder by the other partners. The management of the concern devolved almost entirely upon McConnel and Kennedy, the Sandfords agreeing to assist in the evening and in the time which could be spared from their other business. The remuneration allotted to each of the managing partners was £40 a year. As already mentioned, the partnership agreement was for four years, and during this period no partner was to receive from the firm more than his share of any profits which might be made, but a restriction was imposed. It was further agreed that if any partner availed himself of his right to receive his share of profits, he should pay "lawful interest for such sum untill the same shall be refunded and brought back into the said joint-stock it being intended that the Profits of the said Trade (except so much thereof as is to be allowed unto the said James McConnel and John Kennedy for their extraordinary trouble in the management of the said Business as aforesaid) shall accumulate and not be taken out of the said joint-trade except in cases of necessity." There are no records of the business transactions of this early partnership, but it is fairly clear from the records of the firm of McConnel and Kennedy, which commence in 1795, that the lines of development laid down in the partnership agreement had been followed, and considerable success attained. Entries in the Day Book of this firm reveal the fact that the net gain accruing to each of the partners, as a result of the four years' working, amounted to £816 6s. 0½d.

At the beginning of the partnership the firm had rented some premises, in which they made machinery for their own use and for other firms. Their own mules for spinning were fixed up in any convenient room they could find, but after a time it was decided to rent a portion of a factory, of which the other portion was occupied by the owner. On the dissolution in 1795 the Sand-

fords continued on the same premises, which they still occupied as cotton-spinners in 1807, and the firm was in existence in 1816, having evidently enjoyed a prosperous career.¹ The chief interest, however, is with the partnership which continued between McConnell and Kennedy. They rented another building, near to the one previously occupied, and continued the two businesses of machine-making and cotton-spinning. Before the end of 1795 they were able to rent part of another factory, and for the next thirty years their record is one of continual expansion. In a Government return of 1833, made in connection with the inquiry as to the employment of children in factories, it is stated that additions had been made to the works in 1796, 1800, 1802, 1805, 1818, 1820, and 1825. In 1802 the number employed was 312, which had increased in 1819 to about 1,150, and by the time the above return was made it had again increased to about 1,600. In 1797 steam power was adopted in place of the horse, or hand power previously used, Boulton and Watt supplying a sixteen horse-power steam-engine at a price of £831 2s. In 1833, 156 horse-power was required to drive the machinery. A more vivid record of progress is given, however, by the growth of capital in the concern, from its commencement on March 2nd, 1795, to December 31st, 1810, which was as follows:—

| | £ | s. | d. | | £ | s. | d. |
|-----------------------|--------|----|-----|-----------------------|--------|----|-----|
| March 2nd, 1795 | 1,769 | 13 | 1½ | Dec. 31st, 1803 | 47,389 | 11 | 8½ |
| Dec. 31st, 1796 | 7,026 | 6 | 0½ | „ „ 1804 | 62,363 | 11 | 2½ |
| „ „ 1797 | 9,312 | 12 | 5½ | „ „ 1805 | 67,207 | 10 | 11½ |
| „ „ 1798 | 10,964 | 15 | 11½ | „ „ 1806 | 68,911 | 13 | 11½ |
| „ „ 1799 | 15,724 | 9 | 1 | „ „ 1807 | 75,038 | 4 | 5½ |
| „ „ 1800 | 21,763 | 8 | 11 | „ „ 1808 | 79,637 | 6 | 2½ |
| „ „ 1801 | 29,733 | 10 | 2½ | „ „ 1809 | 78,632 | 6 | 11½ |
| „ „ 1802 | 40,477 | 6 | 8 | „ „ 1810 | 88,374 | 10 | 6½ |

During the first ten years of the partnership of McConnell and Kennedy it is evident from their records that the policy of allowing the profits to accumulate in the business, as laid down in the early partnership, had been continued. The amounts received by the partners from the business formed but a small proportion of the total profits made. This partnership continued from 1795 to 1826, when Mr. Kennedy retired. He is now remembered by his contributions to the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. On his retirement the two eldest sons of Mr. McConnell were introduced, the firm taking the name of McConnell and Co. In 1831 the senior partner died, and a younger son became partner, the business being carried on by the three brothers until 1861,

¹ Mr. William Sandford appeared in this year as a witness before the Select Committee on the state of children employed in manufactories.

when the two senior partners retired, leaving the junior partner sole proprietor. Four years later the firm became a limited company under his management, the task being undertaken in 1880 by his son, who has retained it since that time. In 1898 the amalgamation known as the Fine Cotton Spinners' and Doublers' Association was formed, the firm of McConnel and Co., Ltd., becoming a member, as well as several other firms, whose history reaches back to the early years of the nineteenth century.

The general method by which the Lancashire cotton-spinner of the present day obtains his raw cotton is through the agency of "buying" and "selling" brokers who connect him with the Liverpool cotton merchant. In the early years of the firm with which we are concerned a method somewhat different prevailed. Transactions through brokers do not become common until after the first decade of the nineteenth century. The usual method was that of purchase from a Manchester dealer, who bought the cotton in the markets at Liverpool, London, and Glasgow, or imported it himself, and retailed it in small quantities to the spinners, allowing them long credit. The importance of these dealers in the development of the cotton industry is obvious. The usual terms when cotton was purchased through a Liverpool broker were ten days' credit and payment by a three months' bill. These terms are usually spoken of as a cash payment. It is evident that the rapid expansion of the cotton industry which did take place would have been almost impossible on this basis. Long credit on purchases of cotton was essential to the progress of firms with a small amount of capital at their disposal, and there can be little doubt that this was the position of the typical firm at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The experience of McConnel and Kennedy as revealed in their records may be regarded, in all probability, as the general experience. Between 1795 and 1815 there are three well-defined stages in their methods of purchasing raw cotton. Until about the close of the eighteenth century the purchases are made in small quantities from Manchester dealers, ten bags being a large purchase; more often it was from one to five. The usual terms were two and two months, meaning a credit of two months and payment at the end of that time by a two months' bill. During the early years of the next century the purchases became much greater. Instead of two or three bags, some of the purchases extend to fifty or sixty, involving a sum of £2,500 to £3,000, instead of the £250 or less which had been the case hitherto. But with the increase in the quantities purchased there also takes place an extension of credit. Instead of two

months we find four, and in some cases as much as eight months' credit allowed, five or six months' being by no means uncommon. Part of the explanation is, no doubt, that by this time the firm had secured the confidence of the dealers, who were willing to risk much larger sums for a longer period; but the importance of the lengthened term of credit to an expanding business requires no emphasis. The third stage is definitely reached about 1812. From the beginning of the century periodic reports had been received from a Liverpool broker, which became more and more frequent, until one is received every three or four days, regarding the price of cotton, public auctions, the buyers, particularly when they happen to be Manchester dealers. Occasionally the broker is asked to send samples of cotton, and when the price and quality are suitable instructions are given for him to make purchases on commission. By the date mentioned this method becomes usual. What it meant to the buyer was, of course, that instead of the long credits allowed by the Manchester dealers he had now to be satisfied with the invariable Liverpool terms of ten days' credit and payment by a three months' bill. As regards the Glasgow market, instances occur in which cotton is purchased through a broker, and long credit still allowed. The obvious inference is that by this time McConnell and Kennedy were so placed in respect of capital that they could afford to ignore the terms of credit. Evidently it was more profitable to pass by the Manchester dealer and pay the broker the customary half per cent. for making purchases. But there are strong reasons to believe that the change did not apply only to particular firms; it is probable that it was general. Within the next few years we find some of those from whom the firm had bought in previous years sometimes acting as buying brokers on its behalf, and at other times selling to it on terms which differed from the Liverpool terms only in the fact that fourteen, instead of ten, days' credit was allowed.

During the early years of the nineteenth century there is, however, another movement traceable in the records of McConnell and Kennedy, which is of some interest at the present time, in view of the insistent claim that the Manchester cotton-spinner might avoid much unnecessary expense by the adoption of the system of direct purchase. In 1806 a commission merchant from Charleston had been in Manchester and had pointed out the advantages of buying cotton direct from America. On his return periodic reports were received, somewhat similar to those received from the Liverpool brokers, which contain much interesting information. In 1807 a trial order was given by McConnell and

Kennedy between 1795 and 1815 were five in number: Manchester and district, Nottingham, Glasgow and Paisley, Belfast and district, and the foreign market. Only the conditions of trading as regards the British markets will be indicated in this article. In the first place it should be noticed that from the beginning the firm devoted itself mainly to the spinning of fine counts. In the early years the reluctance to spin coarser counts was not so great as later; usually, however, a demand for numbers below 70's was supplied by purchasing from other spinners, for which a commission of two and a half per cent. was charged. The counts upon which the firm concentrated ranged from 80's to 200's, the bulk of the spinning being about 130's. This probably accounts for the fact that the amount of yarn supplied to the local market seems to have been comparatively small. In the last years of the eighteenth century several individuals were supplied with "rovings"—cotton after it has passed through the processes preparatory to spinning—but they were men, evidently in a small way, living in some of the villages a few miles round Manchester. It was not uncommon for them to return the box in which the rovings had been sent, filled with yarn, with a request that McConnel and Kennedy would sell it, reimburse themselves for the rovings, and return it, again filled with rovings. So far as this firm is concerned, such customers disappear with the beginning of the nineteenth century. There were, however, several customers for fine yarn in such towns as Preston, Bolton, Bury, and Chorley, but the quantities supplied were small compared with those supplied to other markets, and from the difficulty often experienced in securing the settlement of accounts, it may be assumed that many of them were not very prosperous. All these local firms traded directly with McConnel and Kennedy, the terms on which the transactions were carried on being two months' credit and payment by a two months' bill.

The second market, which we have called the Nottingham market, consisted of customers located in the counties of Derby and Notts. Up till 1815 the demand was not very great, but it became more important towards the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century, which may be connected with the fact that Heathcoat's lace-making machine was not patented until about this time. Afterwards firms situated at Chesterfield, Matlock, Retford, Tideswell, Hathersage, Draycott, and Hucknall expressed a demand particularly for the finer counts of yarn. These firms were engaged in the doubling trade for the Nottingham market, and their correspondence reveals the fact that they were

carried on by men who were rather illiterate, and the frequent failure to meet accounts when due suggests that they were not overburdened with capital. As with the firms in the Manchester district, the yarn was purchased directly, the terms of credit and payment being also the same.

But throughout the period from 1795 to 1815 the chief market for fine yarns was the Glasgow market, which included Paisley, and here two methods of selling were in vogue. Direct purchasers bought on the terms of two months' credit and payment by a two months' bill. As the credit period was calculated from the receipt of the invoice, and yarn often required a considerable time to reach Glasgow, the actual length of credit was much shorter, as was frequently pointed out by the purchasers. Only those who possessed a fair amount of capital could buy on these terms. Many who did so were manufacturers, but it appears that they did not always use all the yarn themselves. A portion was re-sold, and evidence points to the fact that it was sold in small quantities on long credit. But there were also yarn merchants who bought solely for the purpose of re-selling. In the early years of McConnell and Kennedy, as might be expected, the aim was to dispose of as much yarn as possible on the short credit terms. From 1795, however, the firm had two or three agents to whom they consigned for sale on commission, and it is in regard to these that the second method of supplying the market is seen. On consigned yarn a credit of six months from the month of sale had to be allowed, as well as a commission of five per cent. to the agent, half of which was regarded as payment for selling, and half for guaranteeing the debts. Sometimes the agent would remit before the end of the period, but in the early years there does not seem to have been any definite agreement on this point, and when it did take place interest was charged on the amount until the account was due.

In the early years of the nineteenth century the number of agents to whom yarn was consigned increased, which is no doubt explained, on the one hand, by the increasing capital of McConnell and Kennedy, and on the other by the system of remitting before the accounts were due becoming part of the agreement with the agents. In 1807 consignments were being made to seven or eight different firms in Glasgow and Paisley. Some of these were manufacturers, others were simply commission agents, but they were not merely yarn agents. They inform McConnell and Kennedy of the state of the cotton market, send samples for inspection, and effect purchases when required. They were general agents rather

than agents for a particular commodity, just as were the Liverpool brokers who acted for the firm. In 1815, when a printed circular had taken the place of a written letter regarding the state of the market, cotton was only one among a number of commodities for which prices were given, and to which reference was made in the report. By 1807 the usual length of credit allowed by the Glasgow agents was seven months, but the arrangement was that they remit at the beginning of the month following the sales, charging interest at the rate of five per cent. for the six months which had to elapse before the accounts became due. All the yarn was not sold on these terms. Much was still purchased directly from Manchester, and also for cash from the agents. On the latter sales a commission of two and a half per cent. was allowed, as there was no necessity for a guarantee of debts.

After the great collapse of 1810, concerning which a list was sent by the Glasgow agent, giving the names of 115 firms which had failed or stopped payment, a list which was by no means complete, as letters contain accounts of numerous failures for a considerable time afterwards, the spinners supplying the Glasgow market called a meeting in order to secure joint-action to reduce the credit to five months. The proposal did not meet with much encouragement from McConnell and Kennedy, and ultimately it was allowed to drop, as was a similar proposal made five years before. The significance of this long credit should not be lost sight of and the importance of the commission agents in regard to it. Evidently they were fulfilling the same function as regards the manufacturers who required credit, as were the Manchester cotton dealers in relation to the spinners.

In 1808 a change was effected in the system of agency. Owing to the events on the Continent, and particularly to the restraints which had been imposed upon American trade, McConnell and Kennedy became dissatisfied with the amount of yarn which had to be lying idle in the hands of so many agents. An arrangement was entered into by which one firm became their sole agent in Glasgow. At the same time an alteration was made in the commission. Instead of five per cent., with a guarantee of debts in full, a reduction to three per cent. was made, the guarantee to extend only to one-third of the debts. The system had the advantage of giving the agent a sufficient interest in the sales to prevent indiscriminate selling, and, at the same time, to reduce the expenses attendant upon sales. A method was also introduced of remitting at the end of four or five months, when the accounts had only two or three months to run, interest being deducted for

this period instead of for six months as hitherto. The firm had now reached a stage at which it could afford to have some of its capital lying out on interest.

The usual method of dispatching the yarn from Manchester was by road or canal to Liverpool, then by sea to Glasgow. In the case of those firms which bought directly, the yarn was consigned to their shipping agent at Liverpool, who undertook the necessary arrangements for shipment, insurance, &c. With consigned yarn a similar procedure was followed, except, of course, that the accounts were sent to McConnell and Kennedy. When urgent delivery was required the yarn was sent by road, the charge for this mode of conveyance in November, 1808, being 14s. per cwt. for one cwt. and over, and 16s. below. On the other hand, goods would be carried from Glasgow at 12s. per cwt. In November, 1812, the charge was increased to 16s. per cwt. from Manchester to Glasgow. The rates of carriage were, however, a matter of constant contention, and it is probable that the list charges were often somewhat reduced by the process of bargaining.

Between 1795 and 1815 McConnell and Kennedy carried on a large trade with the North of Ireland. Yarn was supplied to about fifty different firms. By far the larger number were situated in Belfast, but there were others at Londonderry, Greencastle, Lisburn, Bangor, and Dublin. Until the beginning of the nineteenth century the most important customer was a Bangor muslin manufacturer. In the early years of the century this place had evidently become of some importance as a cotton-spinning centre. In 1807 a correspondent informs McConnell and Kennedy that he can get all his yarn under 100's from Bangor, and a Bangor list is quoted in opposition to Manchester prices. But, although there were some large customers in Ireland, the market never assumed the importance of the Glasgow market. Until 1803 customers were only supplied directly from Manchester. In this year an agent was appointed, but the system of purchasing through him never seems to have become very popular with the more affluent customers. One of the reasons for his appointment was the difficulty of securing the payment of accounts, which was a very prominent feature as regards several purchasers. The commission allowed to the agent was the same as at Glasgow: five per cent., including the guarantee of debts. The system continued until 1809, when a change was introduced similar to the one at Glasgow.

From the commencement of the agency constant trouble arose regarding remittances. It is apparent that the facilities for

negotiating bills were not very good, and the Belfast agent is so obscure in his explanations that it is not easy to discover what was the system in vogue. Apparently the bulk of the yarn was sold on terms of six months' credit, the remittances being made two months after sales. From 1803 to the middle of 1806 interest was not charged for the remainder of the period, as at Glasgow; instead, there was a charge for discounting, which ranged from four and a half to eleven and a half per cent. In 1806 the method of charging four months' interest was introduced, and, at the same time, a premium ranging from one quarter to one and a quarter per cent. charged with each remittance. In answer to an anxious inquiry, the agent explained that no bank existed in Belfast, but only a discount office, and the premium was a charge made at this office for negotiating the bills, the amount varying according to the period over which they had to run. This system continued until the middle of 1809, when the change in the commission allowed to the agent took place. A reduction to three and a half per cent. was made, but instead of guaranteeing the whole of the debts, his liability was reduced to one quarter. On direct sales to Irish customers a commission of one and a quarter per cent. was allowed in return for a similar guarantee. But, in addition to these charges, throughout the whole period for which the account sales have been examined, the exchanges on London were apparently unfavourable, as the following table, giving the average amount deducted from the sales owing to this cause, will show :—

| | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|-----------------------|
| 1803—6 % | 1807—7 % | 1810—8½% | 1813—8½% ¹ |
| 1804—6 % | 1808—8 % | 1811—9 % | 1814—5 % |
| 1805—6½% | 1809—8½% | 1812—8 % | 1815—9½% |
| 1806—8½% | | | |

At the end of 1815 the exchanges were unfavourable to the extent of thirteen and three-quarters per cent., and the agent was very dubious about remitting in face of the dissatisfaction often expressed by McConnel and Kennedy. He proposed that the funds should be kept in the Belfast Bank, until the exchanges were more favourable, but pointed out that no interest would be paid for a shorter period than three months, but for this length of time interest would be allowed at the rate of four per cent. per annum. At this time the exchanges were unfavourable to the extent of ten and a half per cent., but the agent was advised to remit if the bank would allow no better terms.

¹ Owing to different currencies, this figure represented the par of exchange between England and Ireland, which neither party clearly realised. In 1813, however, the agent agreed to remit at this rate, but as the average rate proved lower the old system was re-adopted.

As might be expected, in face of these difficulties, a great difference usually existed between the price of yarn in Manchester and the price in Belfast, which was a great source of controversy. On one occasion the charges on an imaginary consignment were sent to the agent, to show that the net price realised in Belfast was little different from that realised in Manchester, which is, perhaps, of sufficient interest to be reproduced :—

| | £ | s. | d. |
|---|------|----|----|
| One bale, 360 lbs., 120's yarn sold in Belfast at 9s. 9d. per lb. | 175 | 10 | 0 |
| Discount 5% | 8 | 15 | 6 |
| | 166 | 14 | 6 |
| Commission and Guarantee 5% ... | 8 | 6 | 9 |
| | 158 | 7 | 9 |
| Exchange 9¼% | 15 | 8 | 10 |
| | 142 | 18 | 11 |
| Packing : tea chests, sheets, cords, etc. | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Freight to Liverpool and expenses..... | 12 | 6 | |
| „ „ Belfast, duty, etc. | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Insurance at 1¼ guineas | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| | 7 | 15 | 3 |
| | £135 | 3 | 8 |
| One bale, 360 lbs., 120's yarn sold in Manchester at 7s. 6d. per lb.... | £135 | 0 | 0 |
| | 3 | 8 | |

In conclusion, it may be noticed that McConnel and Kennedy always insisted, with very rare exceptions, that the bills received by them should be drawn on a well-known London house, and this applies not merely to the Belfast market, but to all the markets which they supplied. This was often a sore point with some of their customers, who not infrequently stated that bills drawn upon themselves would be equally safe. So far as McConnel and Kennedy were concerned, however, the system had the advantage of enabling them easily to pass on the bills to their creditors, and comparatively few were returned for non-payment. Most of the bills received were disposed of in this way, the others being paid in to their banker, who again provided them with drafts upon a London banker when they desired to make a payment for which they had no bills on hand.

Throughout the period it is evident that very little coin was used, even for small payments, except for wages, and difficulty was not infrequent in this respect. The greatest difficulty which McConnel and Kennedy seem to have experienced was in May, 1812, when they applied in great distress to their agents in Glasgow and Belfast, requesting them to attempt to collect some silver coin to help them over the critical period. The Glasgow agent succeeded in sending about two hundred guineas in silver,

stating that he might be able to accumulate a little more in a month or two. The agent in Belfast had to reply that the only silver in circulation in that town were bank tokens for *5d.*, *10d.*, *2s. 6d.*, and *6s.*, which would be of no use in Manchester. He further stated that *4d.* in the £ premium had to be paid to obtain change of a note, and that he could scarcely obtain £5 mint coin in shillings and sixpences if he collected all that was in circulation in Belfast. In a later letter McConnell and Kennedy complain that a portion of the coin received from Glasgow could not be passed into circulation.

During 1806, 1807, and 1808 it was customary to receive casks of copper coin fortnightly from Boulton's mint. Other Manchester firms also adopted the same system, but in the latter year it caused dissatisfaction among the Manchester shopkeepers, who sent a letter to Boulton, inquiring whether the practice would soon be discontinued, as it was causing great loss and inconvenience. The letter also contained a threat that if the coin continued to be sent, effectual means would be taken of preventing its circulation. In reply, Boulton stated that he could not understand the situation, as no bonus whatever was allowed on the coin, and that he could not conceive anything which would induce those who received supplies to introduce a superfluous quantity. On inquiry from McConnell and Kennedy, he was informed that it had been customary for the shopkeepers to accumulate small change, which they disposed of at a premium of one penny to threepence in the £ for the purpose of paying wages, but, since the new coin had been introduced, they had been compelled to part with their change at par.

G. W. DANIELS