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The Pennsylvania Historical Society, and New York State Library, though having valuable sets of autographs, secured them in their collected condition, by purchase, and were not collectors by piece-meal. Charles De F. Burns, of New York, as a dealer in autographs, and publisher of the *American Antiquarian*, has, for a long series of years, rendered singular aid to many collectors of the country.

Mr. Tefft seems to have been the precursor in the collection of autographs in this country. Born in Smithfield, R. I., February 12, 1795, he early lost his parents, and was raised on a farm. He acted awhile as a book-keeper in a manufacturing establishment. In 1816, he removed to Savannah, where he engaged in business, till misfortunes overtook him, when he served successfully as a clerk, editor of literary papers, and cashier of a bank. He commenced saving autographs as early as 1815-16, without, apparently, at its commencement, any definite purpose. "He kept it very quiet at first," as he naively said in after years, "feeling for some time very shy of being known as the collector of such things." He could not have entered very enthusiastically into the work until many years thereafter; for, Dr. Sprague says, when he visited Mr. Tefft at Savannah, in 1830, his collection was in a very incipient state, probably not numbering more than twenty or thirty letters. But some of these must have been rarities, for when Dr. Sprague made this visit, Mr. Tefft most courteously and generously offered for the Doctor's acceptance such of his autographs as he did not possess. Dr. Sprague selected quite a number, assuring his Savannah friend that he would return their full equivalent. At first, Mr. Tefft grieved not a little over the loss of the gems of his collection, and felt that his spirit for further gathering was broken, and that he should