ON THE

ESTABLISHMENT

OF

AN EXTRA POST,

FOR THE PURPOSE OF

MULTIPLYING AND IMPROVING

THE MEANS OF

POSTAGE COMMUNICATIONS

BETWEEN THE DISTANT AND IMPORTANT

PARTS OF THE KINGDOM.

BY HENRY BURGESS.

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EXPLANATION OF THE MAP.

The lines mark the routes of the projected Extra Post.

The circles mark all the material points of commercial interest in the kingdom.

The part with no colour, marks within 110 miles from London: beyond 110 miles, no postage-communication can be had, by the regular mails, without the loss of more than one day in the passing of the posts.

The part coloured yellow, at 160 and 220 miles from London, describes that part of the kingdom where the postage-communication is completed by the regular mails in four days: per ex. from Monday to Friday. The same will be completed by the Extra Post in two days: per ex. from Monday to Wednesday; losing only one day in the transit instead of three;—thus doubling the communications per annum.

In all those parts coloured green, the post communications and facilities will be greatly increased, but not precisely doubled.

REFERENCE TO THE CIRCLES.

A. Glasgow.

B. Edinburgh.

C. The collieries of Newcastle, Shields, &c.

D. The collieries of Whitehaven, Workington, &c.

E. Liverpool.

F. Manchester.

G. Halifax, Huddersfield, &c.

H. Leeds, Bradford, &c.

I. Hull.

K. Sheffield.

L. The Potteries, and the Salt-works.

M. Hosiery manufactures of Nottingham, Derby, and Leicester.

N. Birmingham.

O. Norwich.

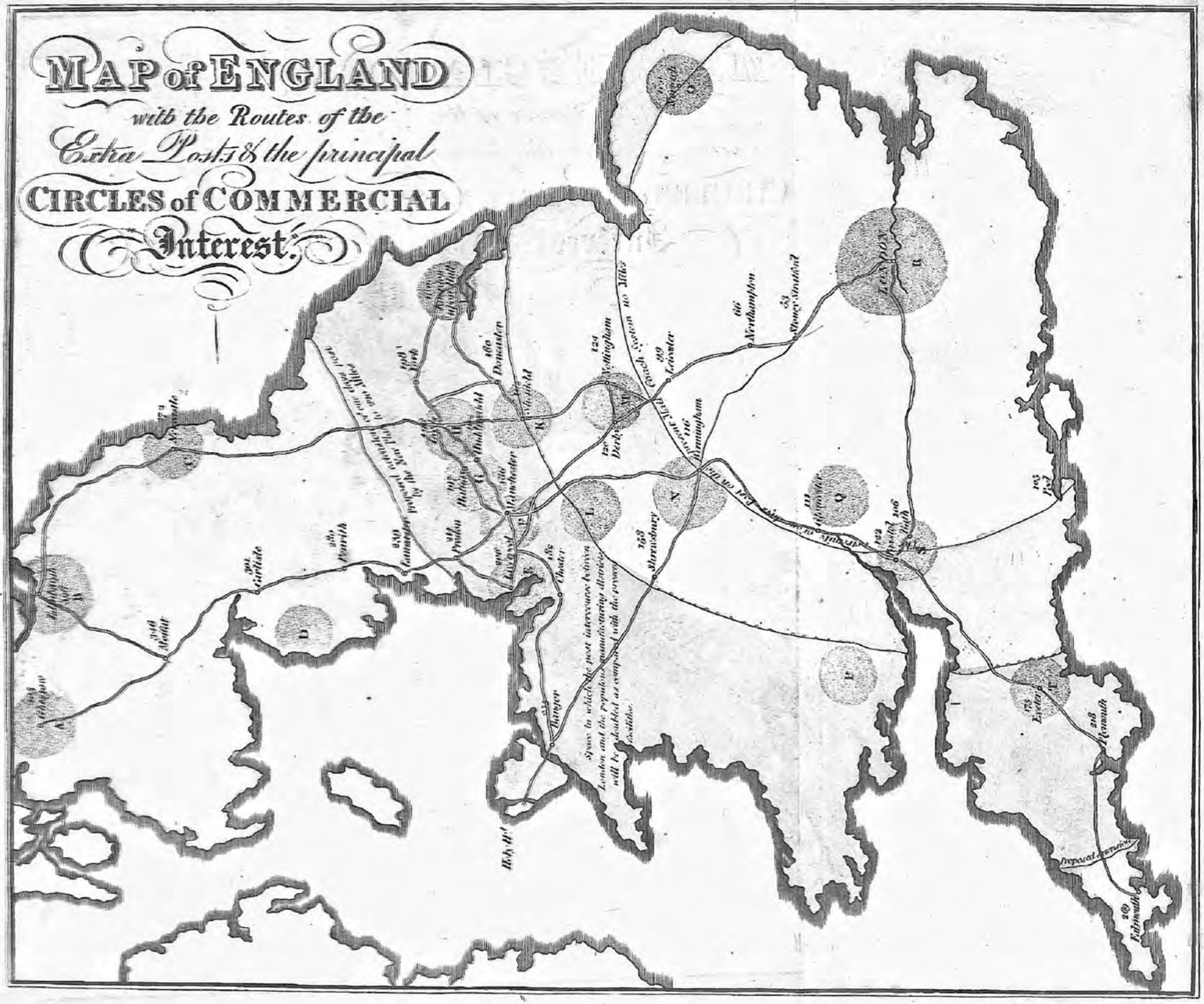
P. Iron-works of South Wales, Merthyr Tydvil, &c.

Q. Clothing districts of Gloucestershire and Wiltshire.

R. London.

S. Bristol.

T. Exeter, &c.


MAP of ENGLAND
with the Routes of the
Extra Posts & the principal
CIRCLES of COMMERCIAL
Interest.
Northampton
Leicester
Nottingham
Doncaster
Manchester
Chester
Shrewsbury
Birmingham
Derby
York
Carlisle
Penrith
Moffat
Bangor
Plymouth
Falmouth
London

ON THE

Establishment of an Extra Post, &c.

Since the period when Mr. Palmer awakened the attention of the public to the means of improving the postage communications of the kingdom, this has been a subject of interest and acknowledged importance, with all intelligent men in public life.

A Report was printed, by order of the House of Commons, in May 1808, abounding with just principles, important facts, and able illustrations, on the subjects of roads, wheels, carriages, &c. The Committee, in their first report to the House, say, "Next to the general influence of the seasons, upon which the regular supply of our wants, and a great proportion of our comforts, so much depend; there is, perhaps, no circumstance more interesting to men in a civilized state, than the perfection of the means of interior communication. It is a matter therefore to be wondered at, that so great a source of national improvement has hitherto been so much neglected." A letter being the most interesting communication which can pass between men in a civilized state, any further illustration of the importance of the object of my plan is superfluous.

In submitting to the public the following observations upon this plan of improvement, I shall not enter at all into the consideration of revenue. Every body knows that the multiplying and improving of the means of postage-communications tends greatly to increase the correspondence of a country; consequently it is clear, that, if the additional charge upon letters sent by the Extra Post were barely sufficient to pay the expenses of the establishment, the Post-office revenue would, notwithstanding, be exceedingly augmented.

Looking at the various important advantages embraced in the operation of the mail-coach system, I am a decided advocate for that establishment; but, after the most deliberate and mature consideration of the subject, I am convinced that no *material* change can be introduced into the arrangement of mail-coaches, for the benefit of the public, without sacrificing some advantage of greater moment in other parts of their operation; and that it is altogether impossible to attain, by any arrangement of mail-coaches, the important results which I contemplate, from the establishment of an Extra Post.

The regulation at the General Post-office of the time of arrival and departure of all the mails, is probably as well arranged as it can be for the general advantage of the community; and any person may inform himself of the degree of accommodation in the country afforded by the mail-coach

establishment, by a reference to the actual time of arrival and departure of the mails at any of our post-towns. It will be seen, that it is the *most defective* in the *most important districts* of England, viz. between 160 and 230 miles from London; and including all the important and most populous parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire, as well as Devonshire.

With the exception of Bristol, and (by a very recent regulation) of Yarmouth, no town situated at a distance from London exceeding 110 miles, can have a communication with London without the loss of more than one day in the passing of the posts; and even at 110 miles, the time between the arrival of the down-mail and the departure of the up-mail, is too short, to be adequate for the general correspondence of the place.

Manchester is 186 miles from London. The mail to that important manufacturing capital leaves London, for example, at eight o'clock on Monday evening. It arrives at Manchester at eleven o'clock on Tuesday evening, long after the hours of business; consequently, there is no delivery of letters till the succeeding morning, Wednesday; they are answered in the course of Wednesday, and the answers depart for London at two o'clock on Thursday morning; these arrive at the General Post-office at six o'clock on Friday morning, completing the postage-communication between London and Manchester from Monday to Friday,—

four days' post. The same mail arrives at Loughborough, 109 miles from London, about twelve o'clock on Tuesday noon; and the up-mail departs from Loughborough in little more than an hour afterwards, viz. about half-past one o'clock: so that Loughborough is the utmost point at which a letter can be answered, without the loss of more than one day in the transit. Leicester, 98 miles from London, is the most distant place which may be said to be well accommodated with the post. The down-mail arrives at Leicester at ten o'clock in the morning, and the up-mail departs at three o'clock in the afternoon. It results from this statement, that 100 miles from London is the utmost distance which is, at present, *completely* accommodated with the post.*

Leaving the mail-coaches to be regulated as they

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* Since this paragraph was written, an alteration has taken place in the arrangement of this mail, by which, from increased speed, and the mail arriving at a later hour at the General Post-office, Derby, 126 miles from London, stands in the place as above described for Loughborough. There is now at Derby nearly two hours between the arrival of the down-mail and the departure of the up-mail. The same mail, instead of arriving as heretofore at eleven, arrives at Manchester before eight o'clock in the evening. There is no general delivery of letters that night at Manchester: but all persons who send for them to the post-office, and who choose to be in their business from eight to twelve o'clock at night, have the advantage of saving one post by this arrangement; the answers in this case arriving in London on Thursday instead of Friday;—an arrangement which corresponds with a suggestion contained in a pamphlet on this subject, which Mr. Burgess printed and caused to be privately circulated in the spring of the present year.

are at present, that all persons may have the option of sending their letters by the regular mails, or by the Extra Post, I recommend that a light machine, constructed with a particular view to strength and speed, drawn by two horses a-breast, and carrying neither passenger nor luggage, shall leave the General Post-office, London, every evening at six o'clock, and proceed with the Extra Post-bags to the most populous and wealthy districts of Great Britain, at the rate of eleven miles in the hour, including all stoppages; that the same shall arrive from the principal districts of the kingdom at the General Post-office at ten o'clock every morning, which, by management, will admit of that portion of letters carried by this conveyance being delivered in the principal parts of London and Westminster by about eleven o'clock in the day. It is presumed, that a subsequent part of the communication will show that this rate of speed is perfectly practicable without any oppression to the horses, according to the management recommended.

Contrasting, therefore, the accommodation of an Extra Post with that just cited from the arrangement of the Manchester mail, it will be seen that the Extra Post, which would leave London at six o'clock on Monday evening, would arrive in Manchester about half-past ten o'clock on Tuesday morning; it would depart from Manchester, on its return to London, about half-past five o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, and would arrive in London at ten o'clock on Wednesday morning: thus com-

pleting the communication between London and Manchester in two days instead of four, as at present; and, of course, *doubling the number of postage-communications per annum.*

This description for Manchester will serve to describe the circumstances of all towns situated between 160 and 230 miles from London; the accommodation rendered by the Extra Post being more or less complete, in proportion as the town is situated near to the one or the other of these distances.

Consequently, the plan will bring Yorkshire and Lancashire, as well as Devonshire, to a communication with London, with the loss or intervention of only one day instead of three days, as at present, in the passing of the posts: thus, in effect, reducing the time requisite to complete the postage-communication between London and the most interesting districts of England to ONE-THIRD of that which is required by the mail-coach establishment. In regard to all places where the mail *out* and *in* occupies, for example, from Monday night to Friday morning, *Tuesday*, *Wednesday*, and *Thursday*, are wholly lost: whereas, in completing the same communication by the Extra Post, from Monday to Wednesday, *Tuesday* only will be lost in the operation.

The basis of the plan which I have presumed to recommend, resting mainly for its support upon the *defective accommodation* rendered by the present mail-coach establishment to the *most populous*

and important part of England; I must, at the hazard of some repetition, impress upon your attention, that the district situated between 160 and 230 miles from London, is precisely that part of England in which the accommodation of the post is, at present, the *most defective,* as has been seen in the example cited of the Manchester mail. It includes besides Manchester,—Liverpool, Warrington, Wigan, Preston, Blackburn, Bury, Bolton, Stockport, Macclesfield, Rochdale, Oldham, Huddersfield, Halifax, Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield, Barnsley, Sheffield, York, Hull, &c. as well as Devonshire. Of these, Sheffield, Stockport, and Manchester, may, by the increased expedition of the mail-coaches, have the very imperfect advantage of a delivery of letters after eight o'clock at night; but no other town of any consideration can have this accommodation: and a delivery after eight o'clock inevitably drives business to such a period of the night, that this convenience can admit of no comparison with that which my plan would render, because, *this plan* admits of letters being delivered at these particular places before eleven o'clock in the day, it saves *two posts* instead of *one,* and includes in the same advantage, not Sheffield and Manchester merely, but *the whole of the manufacturing and commercial part of Yorkshire and Lancashire;* and it embraces, moreover, proximate and remote improvements in the posts, which can never be effected by mail-coaches.

The Glasgow mail, which leaves London at eight o'clock on Monday night, arrives at Glasgow at seven o'clock on Thursday morning. It returns from Glasgow at three o'clock on Thursday afternoon, and arrives in London on Sunday morning, losing, when Sunday thus intervenes, six days; when Sunday does not so intervene, five days, in the passing of the posts. This description for Glasgow will serve for Edinburgh. Upon my plan, the Glasgow Extra Post, which would leave London at six o'clock on Monday evening, would arrive at Glasgow at seven o'clock on Wednesday morning; it would return from Glasgow at eight o'clock on Wednesday night, and arrive in London at ten o'clock on Friday morning, losing only three days instead of five, in the passing of the posts.

It is obvious that London will also be benefitted, in a corresponding degree, by any improvement in the means of postage communication with the wealthy and populous parts of the country.

Abstracting, therefore, London from the circumference of 100 miles round the metropolis, which, we have observed, is the *only part of the kingdom at present completely accommodated with the post*, let us see what remains of commercial interest, or in any view of national wealth, of leading importance within this circuit. There is not a *single mineral production obtained within* 100 *miles* of London. Of course, excepting such as chalk, fullers'-earth, flints, &c. there is not a *single mineral*

wrought into manufacture within 100 miles of London. There is an extensive manufacture of cloth in Gloucestershire and Wiltshire; there are also some other small decaying branches of the woollen manufacture. Stockings are made at Leicester, and silks at Coventry. But let any man, acquainted with the great commercial interests of the kingdom, observe the relative importance of the population within 100 miles of London, and that which exists between 100 and 220 miles from London.

The population returns do not enable me to state, with any precision, the relative number of persons living within 100 miles of London, and those who live in the space between 100 miles and 220 miles from London. But, taking the routes of the principal distant mail-coaches, I have no doubt that the population on the latter, would, on the average, exceed the proportion of six to one. I would state 100 miles from London to be just that point of distance beyond which population begins to increase rapidly. It would be fair, however, to take, as a criterion by which to judge of the importance of any scheme for improving the posts, the number of letters sent to persons residing at places between 100 miles and 220 miles from London, not merely those from London, but including letters from all places, as well distant as near. In this case, I have no doubt the argument in favour of my plan of improvement would have still greater weight than I

have assumed for it, in stating the relative population. The population, in a circumference of seventy miles round Manchester, far exceeds the population of the same distance round London, including the metropolis itself. And this is, besides, the most important part of the population of the kingdom. It contributes more than any other to the resources, power, and greatness, of the state; because the inhabitants are exclusively employed in bringing forth, fabricating, and maturing, the productions which constitute individual and national wealth.

In entering upon the part of the subject regarding the PRACTICABILITY *of the undertaking*, I shall offer no remarks upon the modes of *assorting*, *delivering*, *collecting*, and *taxing* letters, as well as upon the method of distributing the letters contained in the different small road-bags at distinct places of rest on the roads into their respective channels. These points of consideration, though important to the prosperous issue of the undertaking, are, it is obvious, entirely technical, with which the public cannot be interested. I shall therefore confine myself principally to showing, how totally inapplicable the present mail-coaches are to the conveying letters with the rapidity requisite for the object I have in view, without, at the same time, endangering the safety of the passengers and the public, and inducing oppression to the horses. Then I shall explain briefly the construction of the machine in which I propose to convey the Extra

Post, and show, from the known powers of horses, that the plan may be executed without oppression.

Any carriage constructed to move on the road upon four wheels has, in that respect, many inevitable disadvantages. Two wheels must have sufficient strength to bear the whole weight; because, upon bad uneven ground the whole weight is frequently thrown upon two wheels; the momentum of the weight as it descends into a hole, with the jirk or force required to pull the wheels out, adding greatly to the strain upon the machine at that particular point of time when nearly the whole weight of the loaded coach is pressing upon two only of the wheels. To facilitate turning, the fore-wheels must be small. A small wheel requires greater force to surmount obstacles. The friction upon the axle-tree is also much greater; it would be precisely double that of the hind-wheels, if the diameter of the fore-wheels were exactly one-half the diameter of the hind-wheels. This friction is much augmented by the practice of placing upon our mail-coaches nearly three-fourths of the load to rest upon the fore-wheels: a practice attended with other obvious disadvantages in a mechanical point of view. The luggage in the boot, and the persons on the box, (always the first to be loaded, as is the fore-seat in the coach,) are made to project forward, beyond the extreme point of bearing the centre of the fore-wheels; thus acting in constant opposition to the progress of the fore-wheels, which

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ought unquestionably to be guarded against additional impediments, because their size renders them less capable of surmounting obstacles, and they have to level a track for their more powerful followers. The great consideration, however, which will ever prevent the mail or stage coaches of this kingdom from being vehicles adapted to rapid motion, arises from the size and unwieldiness of the machines, and the utter impossibility of affixing horses to them in any manner that will not, on comparison, be seen to be dangerous, inefficient, and at variance with correct mechanical principle. Mail-coaches are far less dangerous and defective than stage-coaches: and these observations are made solely upon the impracticability of applying mail-coaches to this object, and not with the remotest intention of depreciating their various acknowledged excellencies. The whole length of the mail-coach and four horses is about 28 feet. A loaded mail-coach weighs, on the average, about 40 cwt. A great portion of the weight is placed much above the centre of gravity, projecting forward;—a most serious inconvenience on sudden checks becoming requisite to such a machine in rapid motion.

The strongest objection of all, however, is to the mode of fastening the horses to the coach, because that occasions the greatest risk; and the waste of power it induces also, will, by contrast, be manifest. The leaders draw from the extremity of a

pole 13 or 14 feet from the centre of the load, which gives them a tremendous power to upset the coach, if they swerve from the right line in which the machine should move. This is the reason why so many coaches are overturned, on passing corners of streets, or at sudden turns on the road, or from swerving athwart a hard-frosted road when some snow lies upon it. The wheel-horses stop the coach at the extremity of this pole by chains fixed to their collars; breechings are not good things, and are almost universally laid aside; so that, in descending hills without dragging, the only force which can be applied to stop the great weight of a loaded coach, is that which can be applied by the necks of two horses. This is a mode of using the power of the animal so improper, and indeed so directly in opposition to his natural motion, that many horses never can be trained to stop by their necks; and all, in descending a hill that is hard and steep, show very clearly the temporary pain it gives them.

The advantage to be derived from the momentum of a carriage with springs, moving at augmented speed, has not, till of late years, been properly appreciated. The most familiar illustration of its importance may be had by contrasting the caravans, now coming into general use, with the heavy land-carriages ten years ago. At that time waggons, containing, with their load, about 110 cwt. were drawn by nine ponderous horses, at the

rate of 2 miles or $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, having at this slow rate to overcome the *vis inertiæ* of matter at every step taken by the horses. Wherever the caravans have been fairly introduced, they have entirely superseded the use of waggons. They are drawn, as in a coach, by four light horses. The weight is all upon springs; and each of these light horses draws in the caravan at the rate of six miles an hour, a greater weight than each of the horses drew in the old waggons at the rate of two miles an hour. The loaded caravan seldom weighs less than 56 cwt. This illustrates forcibly the advantage which may be derived from the momentum of a heavy carriage on springs, in comparatively rapid motion: at the same time, the operation is attended with considerable risk; for, notwithstanding all is done by the proprietors of these machines which skill and judicious management can achieve, it is known that the caravans, from their ponderous weight aloft, are much more frequently overturned than stage-coaches, which would, if the loading were any thing but goods, entirely frustrate their use.

I adduce this example, from the practice of the most public-spirited carriers, to shew the great advantage that may be derived from the point under consideration, in a machine properly constructed for that purpose. Stage and mail coaches do, like the caravans, avail themselves of it to the uttermost; but, from the dangerous leverage given to

the leaders by the pole, the defective power the wheelers have to stop or regulate the coach suspended to their necks, and so much of the load raised above the centre, it is impossible, with any regard to safety, that they can have all the effect of this force of which it is capable. Every coachman knows the danger of suffering his load to overcome his horses. From the combined operation of these disadvantages, it is evident that the mail-coach, though excellent for the general purposes to which it is applicable, is not in any manner adapted to attain the important results which I contemplate from the establishment of an Extra Post.

The *construction of the machine* for the Extra Post will partly depend upon the manner in which the plan is to be carried into execution. But it will not essentially differ from a well-built gig, excepting in having two pair of shafts for horses running a-breast; these shafts, being united together, will supersede all objection that I can perceive to this kind of vehicle. Contrivances will also be introduced, for the purpose of increasing strength without increasing weight. Some other unimportant improvements may be adopted, and the mode of putting the horses in must be rendered more simple. In this light machine, its whole length, not more than 14 feet, with the shafts resting upon the backs of two horses, and no weight placed, as in coaches, dangerously above the centre of gra-

vity, the full force capable of being derived from the velocity of the carriage, may at all times be applied with perfect security. Suppose the mail-coach to be passing on the road at the rate of 9 miles an hour, and the Extra Post at the rate of 11 miles; and, unexpectedly, a child, or any animal, comes in your track, whom, at all hazards, you must avoid running over. This can only be done by stopping suddenly, or by an abrupt deviation from your course. To stop a mail-coach suddenly by the necks of two horses is absolutely impossible, even if the leaders are consenting, which must always be presumed; and, to swerve much from the line, is, from the weight aloft, the leverage of the pole, and the inequality of the road, full of the risk of upsetting the coach. The Extra Post, one-fourth of the weight of the mail-coach, is stopped by the backbands, which rest upon the backs of two horses. The horses continue in their natural position while exerting themselves to stop the machine. The weight, instead of hanging to their necks, is so placed, (on their backs,) that every muscle, sinew, and power, of the animal, may instantly be made subservient to the object in the most effectual manner. If swerving be requisite, you may safely run anywhere, no ordinary inequality of the road is of any consequence; because there is no superincumbent weight raised above the centre of the carriage to endanger its overturning. Suppose, in the same circumstances,

the carriages are going, on descending ground, each at the rate of two miles an hour more. Now, let any mathematician take the above comparative statement, and add to it all that fairly belongs to the consideration, from the force of the relative momentum of the two bodies, the mail weighing 40 cwt. and moving at the rate of 11 miles an hour, and the Extra Post weighing 10 cwt. and moving at the rate of 13 miles an hour; and I think there will be no difficulty in saying to which the greater risk appertains in casual untoward circumstances.

I must again protest against any inference being drawn, from these observations, adverse to stage or mail-coaches, for all their useful purposes, or intending any reflection upon the manner of conducting them. Whoever has been much abroad, is struck with the superiority of British workmen in all occupations not sedentary. Wherever muscular power is required to be suddenly exerted, it is manifest. But, in no department of active life, is the skill, promptitude, power, and presence of mind, of an Englishman, so conspicuous, as at that point of time when the driver of a stage or mail coach is obliged to provide on the instant against the effect of some untoward accident, or the unruliness of four powerful horses full of spirit. Looking at the machine passing in rapid motion, and regarding it as totally unfit for that velocity which is attempted to be obtained by

it, I am so far from feeling surprise at the number of accidents, a small part of which only we hear of through the medium of the papers, it is to me a matter of astonishment, that accidents are not more frequent; and this because I know something of the practical difficulties.

My remarks upon *the powers of horses* will be brief, because this branch of the subject does not, like the foregoing, admit of positive demonstration. Some credit must be given to the assertion of experience, until the time shall arrive that absolute proof can be established, by a reference to the practical effects of the system.

Therefore I assert, that the Extra Post shall be so conducted as not to require exertion from the horses equal to that which is now required in many of the mails, and that it shall not exceed that degree of exertion which was requisite in the mails previous to the increase of their speed, enforced during the last twelve months. All the most important mails now go at a rate of speed, which, while they are in motion, exceeds 9 miles an hour: there is consequently a difference against the Extra Post of two miles per hour, *but not exceeding that.* I assume that this difference will be balanced, and a surplus of strength will remain in the argument in favour of the Extra Post, by the following considerations. Each horse will have to draw in the Extra Post less than one-half the weight that each horse has to draw in the mail-coach. He will be able to apply his powers in the most effectual man-

ner, aided by every mechanical advantage ; while, in the mail-coach, the power of the horses must be applied in a very defective manner, and with numerous mechanical disadvantages. And, though the two horses in the Extra Post are thus compared with four horses in the mail, we must observe, that two horses so harnessed are greatly more than the half of four. In the mail, four horses keep the coach in motion, while they can be made to act together ; but two only must always be employed to stop or regulate it ; and, during this operation, the leaders sometimes act in direct opposition to the efforts of the wheel-horses.

Some persons have misapprehended the expression of eleven miles an hour, and have supposed that by it was meant that a horse would be compelled to go 11 miles within an hour ; whereas, it means that, that is the *rate* of speed at which a horse would work for 35 or 40 minutes only. No horse in the Extra Post will work more than seven miles in a day : he will not do this every day, but will rest about every third day, making an average of daily labour of about five miles ; consequently, his greatest daily labour will be completed in less than 40 minutes.

It is known that many horses can trot, for a short time, at the rate of 16 or 18 miles an hour. Many that could not trot 14 miles in one hour would go at the rate of 16 for a short time. And no one acquainted with the subject can doubt,

that great plenty of horses would readily be found that could trot for 30 or 40 minutes, at the rate of 11 or 12 miles per hour. That *rate* being less than *three-fourths* of the rate of trotting speed which they have the power to accomplish when required.

In conclusion, if "the means of perfecting the interior communication between men in a civilized state be interesting to mankind," this plan, going directly to effect that object, must, in a commercial country, be considered of great importance. By bringing Yorkshire and Lancashire to a communication with London, in *one-half* the present time, it renders *to the two most essential portions* of the community the power of corresponding by post, with the loss or intervention of only *one* day instead of *three* in the passing of the posts; bringing Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, and Leeds, in this respect, as near to London as Bristol, Birmingham, and Norwich, now are. And, in effect, it also brings Glasgow and Edinburgh as near to London, as York, Leeds, and Liverpool, are at present.

I presume, finally, to assert, that the advantage *of this plan* to the *government* is *not of less moment*, than it is to the commercial interests of the kingdom. A great portion of the population is collected into masses at a considerable distance from the seat of government, and in those particular districts where the ordinary establishments

of the post are the most defective. The people, in these parts, are very generally employed, either in mining or in manufacturing; and their habits, consequently, lead them to congregate and unite. Is it not of vast importance to all magistrates, and persons in authority, to have the power of a quick communication with government in the ordinary course of post? By the establishment of my plan, any event occurring so late as *five o'Clock* in the *afternoon*, in the great manufacturing towns of Manchester, Sheffield, or Leeds, may be known, in the usual course, in all the government offices, *at Eleven o'Clock the succeeding morning*.

J. and C. Adlard, Printers, 23, Bartholomew Close.