

Crawford 965(2)

FACTS AND REASONS

IN SUPPORT OF

MR. ROWLAND HILL'S

PLAN FOR A

UNIVERSAL PENNY POSTAGE.

BY

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SECOND EDITION.

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MDCCCXXXVIII.

At page 42 is a specimen
of a proposed envelope; one of
the well known early essays.

P R E F A C E.

THE Select Committee of the House of Commons on Postage have now been sitting for four months, three days in each week, and the following observations have been minuted in the few and short intervals of time, which a close attendance upon that Committee, and my attendance on the witnesses in the intervening days, allowed.

Knowing that Mr. Hill's public engagements, and the attention he has been obliged to give to the development of his plan before the Parliamentary Committee, will prevent his giving a new Edition of his valuable and important Pamphlet to the public for some time longer, I have put these memoranda together.—I know that Mr. Hill can and will demonstrate the accuracy of his calculations; and that what he was necessarily called upon to estimate upon imperfect data, is now borne out in favour of his plan, both by the returns from the Post-office, and by the evidence collected to an extent beyond his own anticipations.

Mr. Hill is just the man to go steadily onwards in the consciousness that truth is strong, and if a Post-office official should say to him, and the witnesses of experience who have been examined, as one of them said of Mr. Palmer's great improvement, "It is not *probable* that any set of gentlemen, merchants, or outriders, can instruct officers brought up in the business of the Post-office; and it is particularly to be *hoped*, if not *presumed*, that the surveyors need no such information,"

he is not likely to be turned aside by dicta of such amazing, I had almost said amusing, potency.

Unfortunately for the class who rest upon assumptions and presumptions, facts and figures are fast spunging them out. In matters of business, men will walk by sight and not by faith.

The system the officers of the Post-office have had to administer, has been imperative upon them; the Legislature imposed the heavy rates, which they have been made the instruments of collecting. The same necessity and the same influences would have produced the same effects and the same course of reasoning upon other men; but it is right that the reasons should be examined, though the men be blameless, because by canvassing each other's views, the influences operating upon particular classes of men are checked, and corrected, by those not subject to the same influences, whilst they, in turn, require it in other matters.

The witness whose name stood first on the list of names, sent in by the Post-office for examination, has demonstrated that a generation has passed away since the last improvement, without enlarging their views in an excessive degree.

I give an extract from his evidence:—*

“From the experience which your long service in the Post-office has given to you, will you inform the Committee what is your opinion, in general terms, of Mr. Hill's plan, and how it would be received by the public?—I conceive that any reduction of postage would be well received by the public, but I think that it is unwise to make *too great* a reduction.

“Will you state why you think so?—From the extreme low rate at which he fixes the prices of postage.

“Is it on account of the revenue you form that opinion?—Of course I must hold that opinion; as long as the establishment to which I belong is made a branch of revenue, I must always look to the revenue.

“Is it with a view to the revenue you think Mr. Hill's proposed reduction is too large?—Decidedly.

“There are other component and essential parts of Mr. Hill's plan

which you have not adverted to, the reduction of postage being the only one to which you have spoken; will you be kind enough to state what your views are regarding the other parts of his plan,—one being, payment of the postage in advance?—I conceive the payment in advance would be objected to by many persons; I will mention one description of letters upon which I think the payment in advance would be objected to, namely, letters applying for the payment of debts; the creditor writes to the debtor, and *very often* his having been obliged to pay the postage produces the payment of the debt, lest he should have another dunning letter; but in case of the payment in advance being compulsory, the writer would have to add that additional charge * to his former debt, without being able to recover it of the debtor; and those letters are very numerous in London alone.

“Have you any other objections to state to the payment in advance?
—No, I think not.”

Thus, the first witness from the Post-office imparts the important truism, that it is unwise to make “*too great*” a reduction; and that he has no other objection to payment in advance, than that heavy postage very often makes dunning letters effective! If this gentleman should be taken as a guide, would it not be well to double the postage, and so double their efficiency, or do the present rates of postage just hit the happy medium which makes dunning letters effective?

An official, particularly if he happens to be an aged official, is a creature of habit; if he is one whose duties confine him pretty closely to his office, that office becomes the world to him, and to propose to enlarge its boundaries shocks him like an earthquake.

If, too, he enjoys his place under an establishment which is a monopoly, his notion is, that the business of the “barbarians” without should be cut down to the measure of his office within. It may be thought that I am overrating the contractile influence of a position such as I have described.—Not so. Witness the following extract from the examination of a Post-office official.

* That is to say, one penny.

The examination from which I quote took place when Lora Lowther was labouring to obtain for merchants the opportunity of sending Prices Current through the Post-office at a cheap rate :—

“ You have been a considerable time in the Post-office ?—I am in my fortieth year.

“ Supposing it were thought advisable to circulate Prices Current through the Post-office, subject to a small stamp-duty, or at three-halfpence or two-pence postage, what do you think would be the effect of that ?—I can only say that, as regards the duty, we are so pressed for time that any considerable addition in any way would almost impede our operations. We work against time, and every thing is fitted in such a way as to bring the letters to the Post-office at the last possible moment. Generally, the public has the extreme possible time, and it is difficult, on Saturdays and Mondays, at present, to despatch the mails by eight o'clock ; *therefore we certainly look with some degree of anxiety at any increase of duty thrown upon the department.*”*

What would any tradesman do if pressed by an increase of business—say Messrs. Horne, or Chaplin, or Pickford, Deacon, or any of the great public carriers? Would they say to their customers, “ Do not increase our business,” or would they enlarge their warehouses and increase their force? Would they fear an increase of business, or a falling off of custom? The answer is obvious. They would increase their power in proportion to their business : but the anxieties of the Post-office official are reversed ; he fears he shall have too much business, and he urges that the business should be cut down to the standard of his department. To enlarge the circle of his routine confounds his notion of the unalterable fitness of things.

There are a number of places to which the Post-office do not now despatch letters beyond the nearest Post Town. To provide for the delivery to these places, Mr. Hill stated, what he appropriately termed in his pamphlet, a plan for a secondary distribution.

* Fifth Report of Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, p. 35.

Some of his friends expected that the minor points would be laid hold of to raise a multitude of objections, and smother the great good. He very shortly saw this was likely, and withdrew from before the Committee his excellent plan for a secondary distribution. To all who are familiar with public meetings or debating rooms, it is known that the smaller the point, the greater the number of speakers; the reason is, that there are more minnows than salmon—so with the Post-office officials and Mr. Hill's plan. Their first witness objects to pre-payment, for the astounding reason that it would diminish the effect of dunning letters; and it was soon seen that the Post-office officials were disposed to give more attention to the minor than to the essential features of his plan, and that there would be a great anxiety to convince the Committee that, because Farmer Clod, in Rut Lane, over Bog Common, did not find it convenient to live near a town, therefore, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, in short, the United Kingdom, should pay quintuple for their letters, every day, until the Clods should think fit to remove from Rut Lane.

Mr. Hill was therefore advised to withdraw it, that they might first grapple with the main feature of his plan, which is:—

A Penny Postage paid in advance, for carrying half-ounce weight inland, from Post Town to Post Town, for any distance long or short.

The fact is, that the Post-office has lived upon the reputation which Mr. Palmer's improvement gave to it; and have lived upon it until time has worn it out; and we (the people) have glorified it in ignorance. Mr. Hill has let in the light upon our darkness; and the public will not complain of daylight.

Commerce has enlarged—Population has increased—Education has spread; but the Post-office, into which the great stream of their combined results would have poured, had Government opened its channels to the quiet, but mighty current, has been stationary.

A witness—of great intelligence, and of extensive connexions

with the labouring classes—who was examined before the Committee, observed to me, and I have no doubt the same idea will be found in his evidence when published, that the people—by which he meant the masses, the operatives, and labouring classes—the people have not been dissatisfied with the Government, in relation to the Post-office, because they have not known that the carriage of a letter, from one part of Great Britain and Ireland to another, costs only the fraction of a farthing. When this comes to be known, they will no longer be satisfied that they, and their families and relations, shall be shut out from the luxury of communicating with each other, when they are driven by duty and necessity to separate, that they may support themselves.

Time has not enabled me to refer at length to the injury to literature. It is shown by the evidence of Dr. Lardner, Dr. Birkbeck, Mr. Richard Taylor, and others; and the evidence of Dr. Gregory and Dr. Munk, as to Vaccination, will be found highly important.

Indeed, the names of the commercial and other witnesses who have been examined at the instance of the Mercantile Committee, will, of themselves, evidence the fulness with which the Parliamentary Committee are discharging the important duties confided to it, and justify me in saying that, to all parties feeling an interest on this subject, the evidence will be found highly interesting.

13, *New Bridge Street, Blackfriars, London,*
June, 1838.

THE POST-OFFICE

AND

REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

A MORE important question of administrative reform than that involved in the question of the reduction of postage to one penny, universally, from any one post town in Great Britain and Ireland, to any other post town, can hardly be conceived. The extent of the injurious effects of the monopoly of this branch of the business of a public carrier, can scarcely be fully appreciated, until the mind has dwelt upon it for some time, for it is in the nature of the evil to *suppress* much of the evidence of the injury it works.

Oppressive and injurious effects of heavy postage.

If a law were passed forbidding parents to speak to their children, till they had paid sixpence to government for permission, the wickedness would be so palpable, that there would be an end to the tax, in that form of exaction, in twenty-four hours.

Yet what difference is there in principle when parents are prohibited from writing to their children, and children to their parents, nay, when ALL who are beyond the verbal reach of each other, are prevented from communicating their wants, their sympathies, their anxieties, and desires, unless they pay that amount of tax under the name of postage?

Mr. Rowland Hill has rendered immense service to the public, and will ultimately be considered as the benefactor of his country, for the laborious attention, and the full, clear, and conclusive exposition, which he has given of this subject, in the able pamphlet written by him.

That evil is the most dangerous which operates unperceived. Much of the evil produced by the present heavy rates of postage is of this description: it is suppressive.

Whilst the press is pouring forth instruction with a rapidity and cheapness, gratifying to all who desire the intellectual, religious, and social progress of man, there are few who know that the present rates of postage shut up the sources of discovery in science and the arts; in political and economical statistics of every kind; that they prevent the collection and diffusion of religious and moral information, to an immense extent; that they practically prohibit the communications of affection and business amongst the poor; nearly suppress them to all the independent labouring

On Science, Statistics, Religion, and Morals.

classes; and materially diminish them amongst all, except the nobility, and those of the gentry, who have the privilege of franking.

These evils are not generally observed, and my object in putting these facts together is, that they may be more generally observed, and that, of the innumerable institutions and societies for the promotion and spread of religious, scientific, and commercial knowledge, there is hardly one whose usefulness and activity is not greatly restricted, and, in the majority of instances, nearly suppressed, by the heavy rates of postage.

In every way in which it is sought by those societies to collect information, and to realize the important objects in which they are engaged, and to diffuse that information, and the results flowing from it, the heavy rates of postage interpose and check their benevolent and useful purposes.

Suppressive effects on the collection of facts.

National statistics,—I use this expression as embracing the facts and the results of every effort of the wise and the good, to promote the religious and moral progression of human beings, and the wealth, the peace, and welfare of their country—National statistics, and their result, is to a nation what account books and a balance sheet are to a business. The more enlarged field of action and the greater number of actors, and of conflicting, or apparently conflicting, interests, passions, and motives, swelling the stream of action, render the collection more difficult; but these are arguments for, and not against, the importance of collecting the facts: yet, however important, extensive, and valuable the facts, they cannot now be collected, sifted, and made useful, because of the heavy rates of postage. The commerce of a nation is dependent upon the same principles as the business of individuals; what correct book-keeping is to a business, statistical accuracy is to a nation—without the one, the individual is driven by his business; and if he succeeds, it is notwithstanding, and not in consequence of, his management;—without the other, the nation is driven by the chapter of accidents.

The knowledge of results can only be collected from an accurate record of facts: the statist records; the statesman deduces; and the deduction, to be useful, must be justly made from an accurate record of facts. The present heavy rates of postage operate against this in every conceivable way: It prevents the accuracy of individuals, in the daily and hourly transactions of business,* and nations are

* See p. 32.

made up of individuals: It prevents men of science from collecting the facts from those who principally possess them, —the operatives and labouring men of the country; the mine of facts which is now locked up in *them*, cannot be brought forth; the results of past, and the seed of future scientific, mechanical, and moral fruit is wholly unproductive; the heavy rates of postage not only prevent an accurate record of facts from being transmitted, but actually prevent their being elicited.*

The evidence taken, shows that they suppress alike the smaller and ever-occurring incidents in business, and the highest and most interesting efforts of the scientific and the good.

The carrying of letters by government for the people is no boon; it is a privation of their right to do their own business, and an assumption by government of a monopoly, for which it charges two hundred per cent. more than the people could get it done.

As statesmen of both parties have expressed themselves favourable to a great reduction of postage, there is just ground for believing that this great, important, and popular concession will be made as soon as a public mind shall be created upon the subject.

For the purpose of aiding in procuring its adoption, I have brought together some of the facts which I have minuted whilst engaged in procuring evidence to submit to the parliamentary committee.

Mr. Hill has not only done the country the comparatively easy service of pointing out the evils of the existing system, but the greater service of suggesting an easy and profitable remedy.

The proposal submitted by Mr. Hill is:—

That all letters not weighing more than half an ounce, passing from one post town in Great Britain or Ireland, to any other post town, shall be charged one penny, and heavier packets one penny for each additional half ounce, to be paid in advance.

That greater weights should be allowed for the local post.

The following is a sketch of the proposed mode of collection.

That stamped covers, or sheets of paper, and small vignette stamps,—the latter, if used, to be gummed on the face of the letter,—be supplied to the public from the stamp-office, and sold at such a price as to include the post-

Mr. Hill's proposal.

Mode of collecting the Revenue.

* See how in p. 67.

age. Letters so stamped to be treated in all respects as franks.

That as covers at various prices would be required for packets of various weights, each should have the weight it is entitled to carry legibly printed with the stamp.

That if any packet exceeded the proper weight it should be sent to the dead letter office, opened, and returned to the writer.

That sheets of letter paper of every description should be stamped in the part used for the address.

That wrappers, such as are used for newspapers, should also be stamped; and that every deputy-postmaster should be required to keep them on sale; a discount, such as is now given on stamps, would render it their interest to do so. Stationers also would be induced to keep them.

That the stamp of the receiving-house should be struck upon the superscription, or duty-stamp, to prevent the latter being used a second time.*

That for the greater weights, to be allowed in the local posts, penny covers, and sheets, should be stamped thus:—

“For local distribution.—The weight allowed is two ounces.”

Or that all penny covers and sheets might be marked thus:—

“For general distribution.—The weight allowed is half an ounce.”

“For local distribution.—The weight allowed is two ounces.”

The small vignette stamps to be issued by the stamp-office, being portable, persons could carry them in their pocket-books, and the stamp of the receiving-office being struck across the vignette, if afterwards rubbed off, it would be of no importance.

Advantages. The advantages secured would be:—

1st. That the post-office would be relieved altogether from the collection of the revenue, and from all accounts relating to that collection. Distribution would be its only function.

2nd. The present trouble of receiving money for the post-paid letters would be avoided.

* For the forgery of these stamps their low price would leave but little temptation; and the account of their issue, compared with the account of the number of letters passed through the post-office, would lead to the detection of any extensive fraud. The issuing both of stamped sheets of paper and of envelopes removes the ground for the apprehension which some persons have felt, of losing the post-office stamp upon the letter, as evidence.

3rd. The revenue would thus be collected in large sums at the stamp-office, easily, and at little cost.

The cost of stamping, by the aid of machinery, would be reduced to a mere trifle.

It is most important that the public attention, and the attention of parliament, should be fixed upon the main feature, that is, a uniform postage of one penny for every letter or packet not exceeding half an ounce, from any one to any other post town in the kingdom, paid in advance.

Importance of adopting the main feature.

The adoption of this important suggestion should not be deferred for minor considerations.

No difficulty need be felt about the distribution to places without the limits of post towns and off the mail routes, the convenience of these comparatively few places—all of them small in population, if their convenience were the real motive—furnishes no sufficient reason for deferring the immense advantages to the masses living within those limits until that convenience can be met.

In the mean time, permit those localities the post-office cannot supply to help themselves: they will be thankful for the indulgence; for let it be borne in mind, that it is the prohibition—the monopoly—that is complained of.

Only give the villagers a cheap and rapid postage to and from their post town, and they will easily communicate with that.

Let it be also remembered that the public would have the responsibility of the carrier for lost packages, if the government did not interpose, and in the fulness of its kindness enact, that the people shall *not* carry their own letters; that they *shall* pay two hundred per cent. more than they would have to pay if permitted to do their own business; and that if their property is lost, or the government servants rob or cheat them, they shall have no remedy.

Injuriousness of the monopoly.

The Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry have reported that "the restrictions which, for the maintenance of the revenue, the law has imposed concerning the untaxed conveyance of letters, RAISE AN OBLIGATION ON THE PART OF THE CROWN TO MAKE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THE PUBLIC EXIGENCIES IN THIS RESPECT."*

Report of Commissioners of post-office inquiry.

The Commissioners having so reported, the legislature has enacted, that the people shall not help themselves; shall pay after the rate before mentioned; and shall have no compensation for loss by negligence or fraud, though they should be robbed by the government servants.

Opposing legislation.

* Eighteenth Report of Public Revenue, p. 4.

The strength, the power, and the prosperity of this country, is mainly dependent upon her commerce. Commerce has arisen, subdued, and humanized, under institutions and restrictions, all tending to check its peaceful progress and benign influence. It is the peaceful and effective means by which God spreads the fruits of the earth over the face of the earth, and realizes his blessings to all.

These blessings are dependent upon the power of men to communicate with each other; and it is the business as well as duty of legislators to facilitate it. Men not allowed to communicate cannot trade, and they can only carry it on successfully in porportion to their facilities for communicating. All commerce consists in distribution. It results in carrying. Merchants and traders are but carriers, in various forms; and without the power to communicate, the carrying trade could not be put in motion.

Men who have no medium of communication, cannot barter. Debar them from writing, if at a distance from each other, and you may, for all commercial purposes, as well lock them up in solitary cells.

To tax letters is to tax speech, and yet to expect commerce to flourish. If it does, it will be notwithstanding, and not in consequence of, the restriction.

Doubts, whether facilities to correspondence, and the proposed reduction, would increase the trade of the kingdom, and whether cheapness increased the aggregate consumption, have been raised in connexion with this question.

It would be well to ask such inquirers, if they do not think the inventions of Arkwright and Watt increased the whole trade of the kingdom; and that the quantity of trade would be slightly diminished, if, deprived of spades and other machinery, men dug the earth with their nails, and emptied mines with tea-spoons? If log-rolling is not facilitated by rollers; and whether the quantity of timber consumed is not increased by the facility of getting trees from the forests to the rivers?

Such economists look at questions of commerce with the eyes of a chandler. They forget that commerce bears fellowship to the world; that it consists in diffusing the blessings of God over the universe; that its tendency is to make the world one country, and to produce, as its fruits, abundance, peace, security, and freedom, to humanity. The greatness of this country, and looking to the amount of its debt, its existence as a nation, is dependent upon its commerce. Where, but for commerce and trade, would be

the interest of the national debt? Could the landed interest raise that?

A diminution in price, as a general rule, leads to more than a proportionate increase in consumption. It is an established fact as to all articles of universal consumption. Instances of increase of consumption with decrease of tax.

The price of soap has recently fallen by about one-eighth; the consumption in the same time has increased by one-third. Soap.

The consumption of silk goods, which, subsequently to the year 1823, has fallen in price by about one-fifth, has more than doubled. Silk Goods.

The consumption of cotton goods, the price of which, during the last twenty years, has fallen by nearly one-half, has in the same time been four-folded. Cotton.

The coffee trade affords another striking illustration of the advantageous effect of a low duty. Coffee.

In 1783 the duty on coffee was 1s. 6d. per pound, and the revenue yielded only £2869 10s. 10½d.; in 1784, the duty was reduced to sixpence per pound, and yielded immediately £7200 15s. 9d.

The following table further illustrates the effect of a high and low duty in this trade.

Year.	Duty.	Quantity entered for Home Consumption.	Revenue.		
			£	s.	d.
1807	per lb. 1s. 8d.	lbs. 1,170,164	161,245	11	4
1808	reduced to 7d.	in 1809. 9,251,847	245,856	8	4
1824	raised in the interval 1s.	7,993,041	407,544	4	3
1831	reduced in 1824 again to 6d. 6d.	22,740,627	583,751	0	0

It will be well to repeat here some facts which cannot be too generally known, in relation to the monopoly in favour of which such enactments have been passed. Facts as to postage.

The English post-office revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly *diminished*.

The French post-office revenue has *increased more than half* since 1821.

The United States post-office revenue has more than *tripled* during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.

The vast extent to which the trade of the country has

increased within the last twenty years, *must* have been attended by a proportionate increase in mercantile correspondence, while the great spread of education, and increase of population, during the same period, must have greatly augmented the correspondence of all kinds.

As the number of post letters sent through the post-office, during the last twenty years, has not increased at all, it is manifest that the whole augmentation must have gone to swell the contraband conveyance.

The average of the present postage of a single letter (taking in all chargeable letters) is sixpence halfpenny.

The average cost of its actual carriage from any post town to *any* other post town is about one-tenth of a penny.

Penny posts,
profitable.

The penny posts of provincial towns are very profitable, even though these pence have to be collected from house to house.

The average cost of managing the two-penny post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only thirty-four per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

It is shown, by a return from the post-office, that the local penny posts in Great Britain and Ireland, about seventeen hundred in number, yield *seventy-five per cent.* profit.

An expenditure of £29,740, gives a profit of £22,873.*

Now let it be borne in mind that there are upwards of seventeen hundred little independent establishments, and any man of business would immediately see the immense saving there would be, if the whole were aggregated into one and made to work together.

The post-office had for many years taken from the many

		* ENGLAND AND WALES.		
		£	s.	d.
Gross revenue	. . . . .	43,208	2	4
Total expense	. . . . .	24,518	9	9
Net revenue	. . . . .	18,689	12	7
		IN SCOTLAND.		
Gross revenue	. . . . .	4,863	6	7
Total expense	. . . . .	1,757	17	0
Net revenue	. . . . .	3,105	9	7
		IN IRELAND.		
Gross revenue	. . . . .	4,544	13	1
Total expense	. . . . .	3,464	19	9
Net revenue	. . . . .	1,079	13	4

local towns in the kingdom, having penny-posts, two-pence instead of one penny, to which only letters were legally subject: the postage was reduced to its legal amount—one penny, and Colonel Maberly, in his evidence, states,* that, in his opinion, the loss which was made by that reduction of two-pence to one penny, will be compensated in about three years. Now let the limited range of these local posts be considered; that the carriage of a letter from London to Edinburgh costs but the one-thirty-sixth part of a penny; that upon Mr. Hill's plan the same advantage which is given within these limited circles, would be extended to the whole kingdom; that they have now in most cases but one delivery in twenty-four hours; that in the mass of cases, they will have an increased number of deliveries; and the certainty of an immense increase of letters is obvious.

The parliamentary returns supply upon this head another decisive confirmation of the effect of a reduction of postage upon ship letters: they were reduced in 1835. The following return shows an increase, in two ports of the kingdom, in four years, of upwards 250 per cent. in the number of letters.

Increase in ship letters, upon reduction of postage.

A Return of the number of Ship Letters which have been sent out of the Kingdom through the Post-office, received and made up by the Postmasters of Liverpool and Hull, in the Five Years ending 5th January, 1838.

In year ending	Liverpool.	Hull.
5 January, 1834	15,318 . . .	15,797
— 1835	21,528 . . .	18,843
— 1836	29,898 . . .	31,025
— 1837	46,577 . . .	44,371
— 1838	63,116 . . .	47,457 †

The postage collected on ship letters for the year ending the 5th January, 1834, was £84,654; and for the year ending 5th January, 1838, £116,836.—Although this table shows so great an increase in so short a period, it should be borne in mind, that of the great number who emigrate, the mass is from the middle and poorer classes, that the reduction was not such as to increase letters from the very poor, and those of limited income, in this kingdom, to the hundreds of thousands of their relatives and friends in America.

It is by no means an extravagant supposition to suppose,

* Report, p. 190.

† Ib. p. 471.

that of the letters now sent to America and the colonies, nine-tenths are upon subjects of commerce; and if the anxieties of emigrants and the friends of emigrants are considered,—the influence of so great a change in their position, and of novelty, as inducing a desire to communicate; of success, as inducing a craving for the sympathy of those who have formed their world; of difficulty or distress in leading them to seek aid from home or friends; and the many varied exigencies which flow from breaking up the old, and taking up a new position in a distant land; it is not venturing too much to suppose, that such letters would add very largely to this great increase; particularly, when we reflect, that the mass of emigrants are not from the sleepy, but from the active and intelligent of their various grades.

The post-office supplies also an instance of the effect of reduction of postage in increasing letters, and of an increase of postage in suppressing them.

When the limits of the two-penny post and general metropolitan delivery were extended in 1831, a large portion of three-penny letters were reduced to two-pence instead of three-pence, and the two-penny rate on general post letters was abolished altogether. Now as these additional rates were received at the two-penny post-office, nothing less than a very large increase in its number of letters could have saved its revenue from a most serious diminution; and such diminution was really anticipated, as appears from the following report by the superintendent of the two-penny post-office.

*“ A Return of the Gross Revenue of the Two-penny Post for the following Years.**

1830, £110,373.	This was the year previous to the reduction of postage by extending the two-penny post limits to a circle of three miles.
1831, £104,652.	This year the reduction came into partial operation.
1832, £100,873.	This year it was in full operation.
1833, £102,203.	
1834, £109,148.	This year the three-penny post limits were extended to a circle of twelve miles.
1835, £112,924.	
1836, £120,801.	

* Ninth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, p. 22.

Increase by extension of the two-penny post.

Post-office instances of the effect of reduction.

It was calculated that the extension of the limits of the two-penny post to a circle of three miles, which took place in 1831, would cause a reduction in the revenue to the extent of upwards of £20,000 per annum."

It appears, then, that instead of the calculated deficiency of £20,000, there was an increase of £10,000, making a difference of £30,000 between the result anticipated and that actually obtained. The amount is in a measure complicated by the extension of the three-penny post limits in 1834, but the actual effect of this alteration is comparatively slight.

In the year 1801, the London penny post existed, and its gross revenue was £38,422. In that year the postage was raised from one penny to two-pence on letters passing from one part of London to another; and the following year the gross revenue was only £54,893. The number of letters required to yield £38,422, at one-penny, is 9,221,280. The number of letters required to yield £54,892, at two-pence, is 6,587,160, showing a diminution of 2,634,120. This was the *immediate* effect of an increase of one penny.

The chargeable letters do not *weigh* more than about one-sixteenth of the whole mail. Chargeable letters.

By the mail is here meant the weight of the chargeable letters, the newspapers, and the official and parliamentary franks, and the sacks. Meaning of the word mail.

The official franks, and the parliamentary franks, and the newspapers, by the mails *from* London, weigh fifteen times the weight of the unprivileged letters; therefore, every chargeable letter carries (from London) fifteen times its own weight, besides giving the present revenue to the government.* Franks.

A newspaper weighs on the average two ounces, or eight letters.†

The net revenue derived from the post-office is rather more than twice the amount of the cost of management.

The tax on the transmission is upwards of two hundred per cent. on the cost of such transmission: a rate of taxation which all experience shows produces *irrepressible* smuggling or evasion. Rate of Tax.

The government assume a trading monopoly—the business of a public carrier—into their own hands, and prohibit the people from doing their own business; they then charge them two hundred per cent. beyond the amount of the actual cost even upon their own mode of doing this business. Monopoly. Its effects.

* Lord Lichfield's evidence, 2786, fol. 182.—Vide p. 16.

† See p. 14.—Note.

Frequent, punctual, quick, and cheap communication, are indispensable elements of profitable commerce. The post-office ought to secure this to the country, because the people could secure it for themselves; but, instead of this, the communications of the whole country, if they have to pass through the metropolis, are delayed one whole day in the metropolis, although there are coaches at all hours from thence to all parts of the kingdom.

Effect of mail coaches upon previous business.

The adoption of Mr. Palmer's plan, which principally consisted in the substitution of mail coaches for sorry hacks, increased the annual receipts of the post-office department nearly five-fold in twenty years; and they have since become ten-fold, notwithstanding the immense increase of newspapers, and of the official franking privilege, which has also enormously increased.

Officers of post-office.

No material post-office improvement of any kind has ever emanated from the post-office itself; but notwithstanding report upon report, and volume upon volume of evidence, it has withstood the suggestions of commissioners and of committees.

"If the honourable member means to ask me," said Colonel Maberly, "whether I think the rates of postage too high? I certainly answer, Yes, I do think them too high, and so I believe every post-master-general has thought them for many years."*

The only thing for which the former post-office functionaries have been remarkable, has been their prompt and courteous attention to all letters of complaint, and for doing nothing important in consequence. They have remedied, in some cases, the particular grievance, but have never brought into action a general remedy, unless they have been driven to it by the pressure from without.

Notwithstanding the number of reports that have been presented on the subject of the post-office, recommending its reformation, the present oppressive rates of postage, and the laws enforcing them, were consolidated by the solicitor to the post-office, and made more penal, and the bills were passed in the first year of the present reign,† although every post-master-general has thought them, for many years, too high.

Instead of relieving the public from the oppressive rates of postage, it was made criminal to write upon newspapers, and parties have been proceeded against criminally, for

* Evidence, 2899, p. 198.

† The acts regulating the post-office now are 1 Victoria, chap. 32 to 36.

writing on newspapers with sympathetic ink ; thus acting upon the absurd and demoralizing practice of enacting that to be criminal which is not morally wrong, and that in support of a monopoly, so oppressive that it has become habitual for the people to evade and violate the law ; so habitual, that although parliament has enacted severe penalties against the violation, it is the notorious practice of its own members to set the example by giving franks for purposes for which the privilege itself was not given to them.

If the post-office were conducted on the ordinary commercial principles, and postage relieved entirely from taxation, one penny would give the carrier 200 per cent. profit.

As a step towards determining the natural cost, let the present actual cost be first ascertained. Cost of transit.

Without desiring to interfere with the franking privilege, or to relieve the post-office of the cost of transmitting newspapers, we must, in order to obtain an accurate result, consider a due share of the expenses of the post-office, as charged to the account of franked letters and newspapers.

The number of letters chargeable with postage, which pass through all the post-offices of the united kingdom per annum, is about*	88,600,000
The number of franked letters	7,400,000
The number of newspapers	30,000,000

Total number of letters and newspapers per annum	126,000,000
--	-------------

The annual expenses of all kinds at present are † £696,569

Consequently, the actual average cost of conveying a letter or newspaper, including the cost of collecting the tax, is, under the present arrangements, about $1\frac{1}{2}$.

For the sake of simplicity, it will be well to confine the attention to the *apparent* cost under the existing arrangements of the transmission of letters, &c., from post town to post town throughout the united kingdom, and the delivery

* The total number of letters, &c. transmitted through the post is a statistical fact as yet uncertain; the statement here given is the result of an estimate, now known to be sufficiently accurate for the present purpose. The post-master has given five different statements of the number.—*Vide Post.* Mr. Hill now shows eighty millions to be nearest.

† Finance accounts for the year 1835, pp. 55—57. The great increase in the number of newspapers since the reduction of the duty (already about one-fourth) must be expected in some degree to increase the expenses of the post-office; the increase cannot, however, be such as materially to affect this calculation.

within the post towns,* and to leave out of consideration, for the present, the cost of that distribution which proceeds from each post town, as a centre, to places of inferior importance.†

Taking the number of letters and newspapers to be 126,000,000, the average apparent cost of the distribution of newspapers, letters, &c., to all post towns within the united kingdom, is, for each letter, 84 hundredths of a penny.

Of which the expense of transit is one-third, or 28 hundredths of a penny.

And the cost of receipt, delivery, &c., two-thirds, or 56 hundredths of a penny.

But it must be recollected, that the cost of transit for a given distance will, under ordinary circumstances, be in tolerably direct proportion to the weight carried; and as a newspaper or franked letter weighs on an average as much as several ordinary letters,‡ the average expense of *transit* for a letter chargeable with postage, is probably about one-third of the amount above stated, or *nine hundredths of a penny*.

The smallness of the expense of transit, as here stated, will probably excite some surprise; the following calculation, however, which is founded on more exact *data*, shows that the expense of transit upon the great mass of letters, small as it appears to be, is probably loaded with charges not strictly appertaining to it, or is greatly enhanced by the carriage of letters from the nearest post town to places which are not of sufficient importance to repay the expense.

Estimate of the cost of conveying a letter from London to Edinburgh.

Estimate of the Cost of conveying a Letter from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles.§

MILEAGE ON THE WHOLE MAIL.

	£	s.	d.
From London to York, 196 miles, $1\frac{9}{8}d.$ per mile || . . . . .	1	5	6½
From York to Edinburgh, 204 miles, at $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per mile	1	5	0
Forward	2	10	6

* This, Mr. Hill calls primary distribution.

† And this secondary.

‡ I have retained Mr. Hill's language, for the purpose of showing how careful he has been, not to over-state. The return since put in by Lord Lichfield, shows they weigh on the average eight letters.

§ Since Mr. Hill published this estimate, Mr. George Louis, from the post-office, stated to the committee that he could not point out "the slightest error" in the calculation, and Lord Lichfield has stated it to be correct. This alone establishes the reasonableness of Mr. Hill's argument in favour of a very low rate of postage.

|| Seventh Report of Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, p. 50. The charges are

	£	s.	d.
Brought forward	2	10	6
GUARDS' WAGES.—Say six guards, one day each, at 10s. 6d. per week*	0	10	6
Allow for tolls (which are paid in Scotland), and all other expenses	1	18	11½
<hr/>			
Total cost of conveying the mail once from London to Edinburgh, including the mails of all intermediate places	5	0	0

Average weight of the mail conveyed by the
London and Edinburgh mail coach, say about 8 cwt.
Deduct for the weight of the bags, say 2

Average weight of letters, newspapers, &c. . . 6

The cost of conveyance is therefore, per cwt. 16s. 8d.

Per ounce and a half, the average weight of a newspaper,
about one-sixth of a penny.

Per quarter of an ounce, the average weight of a single
letter, about one-thirty-sixth of a penny.

This result may be tested thus:—Suppose one thousand
letters to be made up into a parcel and despatched from
London to Edinburgh by coach, at the estimate above
given, the weight of the parcel would be about 16lbs., and
the charge for its carriage about 2s. 4½d.: a rate of charge
which, upon a contract for nearly half a ton per day, would
furnish an adequate remuneration to the coach-master.

It appears, then, that the cost of mere transit incurred
upon a letter sent from London to Edinburgh, a distance of
400 miles, *which is much more than an average distance*,
is not more than *one-thirty-sixth part of a penny*.

Again, the expenses of receipt and delivery are not much
affected by the weight of each letter, within moderate
limits; and as it would take a nine-fold weight to make the
expense of transit amount to one farthing, it follows, *that*,
taxation apart, the charge ought to be precisely the same
for every packet of moderate weight, without reference to
the number of its enclosures.

This statement is further confirmed by the statement
given by Lord Lichfield of the weight carried by the Edin-
The above esti-
mate confirm-
ed.

taken from the returns made to Parliament. The results are matters of calculation,
and can be tested by the reader for himself.

* Parliamentary Return, 1835.—No. 442.

burgh and Louth mails, which show, with reference to the Edinburgh mail, 1,555 chargeable letters, together with fifteen times their own weight of newspapers, official and parliamentary franks, conveyed for the above sum of £5. The chargeable letters therefore *pay for carrying fifteen times their own weight*, and give the government a million and a half of revenue, notwithstanding the present heavy rates.

Lord Lichfield's statement of the average weight of the mails.

I have inserted the estimate of Mr. Hill's as he stated it, for it shows, when compared with the evidence subsequently given by Lord Lichfield, how careful Mr. Hill has been to make his estimates on the safe side—it might now be much amended in his own favour.

His lordship states, (p. 182,) that “he had one evening's return of the number of letters conveyed by the Edinburgh mail, from London to Edinburgh, and that the weight of the Edinburgh mail upon that occasion was 4cwt. 2qrs. 23lb. 13oz.,” made up as follows:—

	Cwt.	qrs.	lb.	oz.	
The sacks and bags weigh	1	0	9	8	} viz. 492 15
2,296 newspapers	2	2	3	8	
2 stamped parcels	0	1	12	0	
484 franks	0	1	19	15	
1,555 chargeable letters	0	1	6	14		34 14
	<u>4</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>13</u>	

He also took the weight of the Louth mail, on Saturday, 3rd of March, which was 1cwt. 1qr. 27lb. 12oz., made up as follows:—

	Cwt.	qrs.	lb.	oz.	
Bags	0	0	25	0	} viz. 159 12
866 newspapers	1	0	14	0	
108 franks	0	0	8	12	
365 chargeable letters	0	0	8	0		8 0
	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>12</u>	

Mr. Hill, it will be seen, had estimated the Edinburgh mail to weigh eight hundred weight; but since he wrote, the Edinburgh bags have been despatched by the Birmingham Railway. Mr. Hill averaged the unchargeable weights, to be about one ounce and a half, that is, six-fold the weight of the chargeable letters. Lord Lichfield shows the privileged weights to be 14 times the weight by that

mail, and 15 times the weight when averaged with the Louth, a light mail.

His lordship, in speaking of the anticipated increase, had previously said that "Mr. Hill had not calculated the great increase which must take place in consequence of the great increase of bulk, and, consequently, of weight; they (the mails) would have to carry twelve times as much in weight, and, therefore, the charge for transmission, instead of £100,000, as now, must be twelve times that amount!" Mr. Hill, in one of his published letters, quietly pointed out that his lordship had fallen into the error of supposing that to twelve-fold the number of letters, would twelve-fold the bulk of the whole mail. "The refutation," Mr. Hill proceeds, "is supplied by another part of your lordship's speech, where it is stated that, while *the average number of letters despatched by the evening mails is below thirty thousand, the average number of newspapers by the same conveyance is nearly sixty thousand.* Now, as the average weight of a newspaper is about six times that of a letter, and the average number of newspapers double that of letters, it follows that the total weight of the newspapers is twelve times that of the letters; consequently, that a twelve-fold increase in the number of letters (even if such an increase were necessary to sustain the revenue) would only make the weight of letters equal to that of newspapers, and, therefore, would only double the present load, so that, even were all the evening mail coaches at present loaded to the full, (and your lordship will find that their average is not nearly half a load,) a double number of these coaches would be sufficient."

Lord Lichfield's inaccuracy corrected by Mr. Hill.

This answer of Mr. Hill's to his lordship, is one of those quiet and conclusive answers, which, while it refutes his lordship out of his own mouth, supplies another instance of the imperfect data which the post-office had furnished, when Mr. Hill commenced his labours; of the subdued estimates given by him when using figures from imperfect data, not within his own power; and of the caution with which he has spoken of the probable advantages to flow from the adoption of his plan. Since Mr. Hill prepared his estimate, Lord Lichfield has been, as I have stated, before the parliamentary committee for the purpose of refuting Mr. Hill, and to show that his calculations were incorrect; and whilst attempting to do so, he did that which those who had studied the subject, and knew Mr. Hill, felt confident would be the result,—he made Mr. Hill's facts

Observations thereon.

and inferences stronger and clearer. For the purpose of showing this, I produce his lordship's evidence on the subject of the Edinburgh and Louth mails, at length, showing in his lordship's own words the use he intended to make of the return, and then, that it not only fails to refute, but that it confirms Mr. Hill, and demonstrates the necessity of that reform, for which Mr. Hill contends. It shows clearly the extraordinary cheapness of transit; a fact, which, almost beyond all other facts brought to view in Mr. Hill's valuable mine of facts, astonished the public, and which it was very desirable for Mr. Hill to have confirmed by a nobleman, who, from his position, is so important an authority on this subject.*

"My opinion is," says his lordship, "that Mr. Hill has founded the justice of the plan of establishing a uniform rate of postage on wrong calculations. Mr. Hill proposes a uniform rate of postage for this reason, that he imagines he has ascertained that the expense of the conveyance of a letter to any distance is of so trifling an amount, that he says it is a coin to which there is no assignable name, it is so small; and that, therefore, there would be no injustice in establishing a uniform rate of postage, it not being a question of distance, with regard to expenditure, whether a letter goes ten miles or four hundred. In that calculation, my opinion is that Mr. Hill is wrong; I think I can prove that the letters cost a great deal more.

"I am ready to take it on his own calculation; and, in the first instance, I wish to observe that I think Mr. Hill's calculation as to the number of letters passing through the post-office is incorrect: Mr. Hill makes that number 88,000,000, I believe he has since reduced it to 80,000,000; but I maintain that there are not above 48,000,000 of letters that are fairly chargeable with the expense that we are put to for conveyance. I refer to the general-post letters, Mr. Hill makes up the remainder by two-penny post letters; he over-calculates the general-post letters, and, taking the number of two-penny post letters, which he multiplies also by four, by the same ratio he does the general-post letters, he calculates upon the penny letters, on which, of course, he can expect no increase that I am aware of; they are one penny now, and one penny they would remain. Mr. Hill calculates the cost for one trip of the Edinburgh mail, £5; *he is right in that calculation, it does cost £5*; but he divides the whole expense of what is

Lord Lichfield's argument against Mr. Hill's plan and calculations.

Admits Mr. Hill's estimate to be right in the total, but objects to his division.

* Report of Parliamentary Committee, p. 182.

carried by that mail, and then says that the charge of each letter is only about the 36th of *1d.*; he reduces it to that after having calculated it in the first instance, 22-100ths of *1d.*; he then says, by other means which are not exactly stated, but which he imagines, certain reductions will take place; he says by certain arrangements, such as forced payments, and getting rid of accounts, the business of receiving, sorting, and delivering letters can be so much facilitated, as to enable the public to perform four times its present work, with a slight increase of expenditure. In order to ascertain as nearly as I possibly could what is the real amount of each letter, I have had one evening's return of the number of letters conveyed by the Edinburgh mail from London to Edinburgh; the weight of the Edinburgh mail upon that occasion was 4cwt. 2qrs. 23lbs. 13oz. In the first place, Mr. Hill deducts the weight of the sacks; he has no right to deduct the weight of the sacks any more than to deduct any one part of the correspondence which is carried for nothing, because we pay for the weight they carry, whether it is sacks or letters: the sacks and bags weighed 1cwt. 9lbs. 8oz.; 2,296 newspapers, 2cwt. 2qrs. 3lbs. 8oz.; two stamped parcels, 1qr. 12lbs.; 484 franks, 1qr. 19lbs. 15oz.; 1,555 chargeable letters, 1qr. 6lbs. 14oz.* Now, Mr. Hill defines the natural cost of postage to be that which would be charged by the post-office on ordinary commercial principles. I conceive the meaning of conducting any business on ordinary commercial principles is this, that supposing, for instance, the post-office were not a monopoly of the government, supposing it were undertaken by a private individual upon ordinary commercial principles, the person undertaking to convey letters would expect a remunerating return for his trouble and his risk; *and, therefore, if he was obliged to carry a certain portion for nothing, he must make that portion which he charges for carrying pay for that which goes free.* For instance, suppose he carries a hundred letters, or parcels, or newspapers, and he was to undertake, at all events, that the newspapers should go free; if that was the speculation, that newspapers and franks were to go free, *he must set that against the chargeable correspondence.* We will say it is three-fourths; I do not say that that is the amount, but I take that for example. Suppose he carries 75 of those parcels for nothing, he must naturally expect the remaining 25 to pay for the 75 and the 25, or he would

Lord Lichfield's argument continued.

* See this tabulated, page 16.

Lord Lichfield's argument continued.

very soon become bankrupt; therefore, the chargeable correspondence must pay for the remainder he carries. I have in this weight of the Edinburgh mail, which I have now been describing, to make the 1,555 chargeable letters account for the £5, which is the cost of the one trip of the Edinburgh mail. If that is the case, the cost of every letter, taking them at 1,555, would be, instead of the thirty-sixth of a penny, $\frac{2}{3}d.$, and one-thirty-first part of $\frac{1}{4}d.$, because one-thirty-sixth of $1d.$ is over the whole of the correspondence which is carried free; *therefore, that which is chargeable must pay for the whole.* The fact is, that one trip of the Edinburgh mail costs £5, that must be charged against the number of letters which are chargeable, and that will be found to be $\frac{2}{3}d.$ and one-thirty-first part of $\frac{1}{4}d.$ But I cannot consent to the Edinburgh mail being taken as a fair average of the cost of the conveyance of each letter, what Mr. Hill calls the transit. The Edinburgh mail is a loaded mail, and is a mail that is contracted for on exceedingly advantageous terms, because it is a mail that fills very well, and it is maintained at a cheaper rate. I have, therefore, taken another mail, which is generally a light mail, and that is the Louth mail. I have taken the weight of the Louth mail on Saturday, the 3d of March: that was, sacks and bags, 25lbs.; 866 newspapers, 1cwt. 14lbs.; 365 chargeable letters, 8lbs.; 180 franks, 8lbs. 12oz.; that came to 1cwt. 2qrs. 27lbs. 12oz. I should mention, that from London to Louth is only 148 miles; there is a great difference, therefore, between that and Edinburgh. The total cost of conveying the mail once from London to Louth by the present contract, which is just about to expire, for a new contract is just entered into, and I might be almost justified in taken the expense under the new contract, but, taking it under the present contract, one trip is £1 17s. 7d.; therefore, on £1 17s. 7d., the 365 letters being charged to it, it turns out that each letter comes to $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ and seven-tenths of a $\frac{1}{4}d.$, instead of being one-thirty-sixth of a $1d.$, for the cost of transmission, as stated by Mr. Hill. In this case, for only 148 miles, the cost will be $1\frac{1}{4}d.$ and seven-tenths; if we take the average, perhaps it would be about $1d.$ a letter. According to Mr. Hill's calculation, taking it on his own figures, the average cost of the transmission of letters is $1d.$ instead of one-thirty-sixth of $1d.$ "*

* After this, it is well to state the question in a form, that the reader may judge between Mr Hill and his lordship. If 895lb 9oz (the weight of the two mails) cost £6 17s. 7d., how much will one quarter of an ounce cost? This may be worked

“ The cost of a trip to Edinburgh is £5. The cost of a single trip to Louth £1 17s. 7d. by the present contract. The day on which this experiment was made is an average day.”

Now let us look at the facts established by his lordship, and then at his reasons.

Facts established by Lord Lichfield.

His lordship establishes—

That Mr. Hill's estimate, as to £5 being the cost of the conveyance of the mail to Edinburgh, is correct.

That the average weight of both mails is 695lb. 9oz.

That the weight of the newspapers and privileged weights is 652lb. 8½oz.

That the weight of the chargeable letters by the two mails is 42lb. 14oz.

That the number of franks by the two mails is 592.

That the number of chargeable letters by the two mails is 1920.

That 592 parliamentary franks weigh more than 1920 chargeable letters.

I proceed to examine his lordship's reasons.

The question to which his lordship is speaking, is the actual cost of the transit of a letter, which Mr. Hill had stated to be one-thirty-sixth part of a penny, from London to Edinburgh; and his lordship tells the committee, that Mr. Hill is right in his gross calculation, but wrong in dividing the amount by the weight conveyed. And why? Because, says his lordship, I carry $\frac{1}{36}$ ths of the weight for nothing; and, therefore, I am entitled to say, the other sixteenth costs the whole!

Examination of his lordship's reasons.

Now, let us suppose, that the writer of the sixteenth letter did not choose to send it on any given night,—and this self-paying class of correspondence is leaving the post-office very rapidly,—to whom would his lordship debit the letters of the nobility and privileged gentry? Could he then say, that the letter that stayed at home, put him to the expense of carrying the other fifteen?

The question being, between the people and the government as public carriers, the cost of conveying a given weight; his lordship converts it into a question between the government and himself as their servant, and then deals with his substituted question and takes no further notice of Mr. Hill's, which his lordship veiled as he passed by it. If the government were finding fault with his lordship for

mentally with great ease, and with sufficient nearness for the purpose, if the weight be taken at 700lb., and the cost as £7.

paying the mail contractor for carrying the fifteen privileged weights, then his lordship would have a right to say, I must charge you for those weights which you compel me to carry. But that not being the question before the committee, and to which his lordship professed to be speaking, his reasoning does not answer the question.

Put the case thus :—Sixteen distinct passengers start together for Edinburgh, and the gross sum to be paid for the journey is £80. The question being raised, what is the cost of each? Ordinary calculators would say £5. If the coachman were to insist upon one of the passengers paying the whole £80, I think his lordship would see the injustice of saying, that any one of them cost £80, because the coachman chose to fix the whole upon him. Suppose that the coach proprietors had issued free tickets to fifteen of those passengers, and had directed the coachman to take those tickets as cash, would the coach proprietors be entitled to say to the coachman when he presented the fifteen tickets and a £5 note, we will not receive these fifteen tickets, you must go back to the sixteenth passenger, and insist that he cost the whole expense of the journey; and if his name is Rowland Hill, persuade him that he does not understand arithmetic?

His lordship had to reconcile a great monopoly, and the effects of that monopoly, and of absurd fiscal regulations, with the principles of free trade. A clear reasoner may remove *apparent*, he cannot reconcile *actual*, inconsistencies. His lordship professes, in his opening, to put the privilege weights on one side, but he nevertheless puts them into the conclusion, and enters the result with their weight in the scale.

The tradesman, says his lordship, must make the portion which he charges for carrying pay for that which goes free, or he will soon become a bankrupt; that is true, but that would not entitle him to pass the charge which is to redeem him from the Gazette to the account of those who had paid for the carriage of their own parcels: the fallacy which runs through the whole of his lordship's reasoning, arises from his confounding his position, as the servant of the government passing his accounts, with the question of, how much does a given weight cost in carriage?

The irrelevancy of the case put by his lordship, and the fallacy of his lordship's reasoning, consists in his not debiting the parties who oblige him to carry for nothing, with the cost of the carriage they impose; it is not because

that party refuses to pay, that the account is not to be truly stated, or that the sixteenth ounce occasions the whole outlay. It is one thing to *bear* the whole outlay, and another thing to *occasion* it; and this his lordship has overlooked.

For the same cost of carriage, then, fifteen times the quantity of chargeable letters could be conveyed, for there is no propriety in language, *if* in arguing the case of the chargeable letters, any increase caused by the unpaid, is put down as an item against the chargeable.

If a mail contractor were to say to the postmaster, "I charge you for fifteen passengers, whom I think fit to take up on the road and carry for nothing," I apprehend his lordship would demur to the justice of this reasoning, if the question were how much a particular passenger cost; but there would be just as much of reason in it, as there is in his lordship's stating to the committee, that in reckoning the cost of conveying the chargeable letters he is entitled to debit them with the weight of the unpaid mass, and that, therefore, the 1,555 Edinburgh letters, weighing less than 35lbs., must be reckoned to cost in conveyance three farthings each, and the 165 Louth letters, weighing 8lbs., about a twentieth of that mail, must, on the same account, be rated at rather more than one penny farthing each.

The fact, that 592 franked letters weigh more than 2,368 chargeable letters, should be attended to. There cannot be a doubt, that if postage were reduced to one penny, a large proportion of those franks would become chargeable letters, as the indulgence of official franks is now largely granted, on account of the heaviness of postage; and as to members' franks, it is within common observation, that more than one-half of those are given away by the members, who would not be intruded upon if postage were reduced to one penny. It is, therefore, a warrantable supposition, that one-third of those franks, which would, of itself, nearly double the number of chargeable letters, would be brought into the class of chargeable letters.

Every chargeable letter, out of London, is shown by his lordship to carry 15 others, and it follows, that the mail could carry fifteen-fold the present amount of chargeable letters, without any increase of expenditure *on their account*.

An increase of five-fold and a half only is required to sustain the present revenue, and far more than that number is shown by the evidence to be certain. The increase,

Increase required and cheapness of transit.

therefore, beyond that number, will be nearly all profit, as the carrying of 2,000 letters instead of 1,000, though it would double the amount to be paid to government, would but slightly increase their expenditure for carriage and distribution, and there would be no attendant increase of dead weight.

Six thousand letters weigh about 1cwt., and the cost of their conveyance to Scotland, by weight, would be, let us suppose, 20s., the government would get for that number, at one penny, £25.

Then let it be considered, that the evidence before the committee demonstrates, that if postage were reduced to one penny, an increase in letters might be confidently looked for, to the extent of from twelve to twenty-fold. Government would then get, if twelve-fold, £50 for 12,000 letters, *paid in advance* to the stamp-office, and would have to pay less than 40s. for carriage. The masses of letters which arrive in any large town are taken by a few principal houses, and are either fetched or put into a box at the post-office for those houses, and this practice would increase as the number of letters increased; and, the distribution added, the whole outlay need not be more than a farthing per letter.

The post-office now frequently do not deliver letters when they arrive at post towns, without charging an extra penny for delivery, unless the persons addressed live within a very short distance of the post-office; they confine themselves, in most borough towns, to the limits of the *old* parliamentary boroughs. The extra penny is a constant source of complaint to the post-office authorities, from all parts of the kingdom, politely answered, but seldom remedied.

The cases of the Penny Magazine, Saturday Magazine, Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, and other cheap periodicals, afford illustrations of the very low rates at which transit and the distribution of large numbers may be effected. The Penny Magazine is distributed weekly in considerable towns, at the *houses* of its subscribers. It reaches the subscriber for ONE PENNY. Out of this penny, the following charges have to be borne:—

1. For the labour and capital of the retail bookseller.
2. For the carriage and distribution to all parts of the kingdom.
3. For the agency of the London publisher.
4. The profit of its producers.
5. The cost of actual production, viz.—

Increase of
cheapness, of
transit, and
distribution.

Composition of eight folio pages.

Engravings.

Artists' designs.

Authorship.

Paper, and

Machinery for printing each copy.

Each of these departments bearing its own profit.

If a private agency is willing to distribute any number of these papers weekly, for one farthing each, it may be readily imagined, how eager the same agency would be to do the same business *every day* for the same profit of one farthing on each paper.

If *private* establishments perform this distribution profitably at this cost, besides embarking capital and taking risk, can it be said, with any foundation, that a GOVERNMENT is unable to execute the distribution of a paper of less size and weight, for ready money, NOT for a FARTHING each letter, but for ONE PENNY, and that daily?

The preceding facts show how trifling the actual cost or carriage is to all post towns.

A great portion of the expense of the post-office now consists of three classes of servants:—

Superintendents, including post-masters and keepers of receiving-houses.

Clerks and messengers.

Letter carriers.

The expense of superintendents and clerks, in every establishment, depends chiefly on the variety and complexity of the duties to be performed.

Now, imagine the plan proposed, adopted, namely, that the postage is uniform, and paid in advance.

Then look at the present duties, they are principally as follows:—On the arrival of the mails in the morning, to see that the charge upon *each* letter for postage has been correctly made, and that each deputy post-master has debited himself with the correct amount of postage for paid letters; to stamp all the letters; to assort them for delivery; to ascertain the amount of postage to be collected by each letter-carrier, and to charge him therewith.

Previously to the departure of the mails in the evening, the duties are principally to adjust the accounts for the post-paid letters brought from the receiving-houses; to "tax" the unpaid letters; that is to say, to *write on each* the charge for postage; to stamp all; to assort them for despatch to the different post towns; to ascertain the amount

Expense and complexity of existing practice.

of postage to be collected by each deputy post-master, and to charge him therewith.

It must be borne in mind, that the public convenience requires, that the delivery of letters should follow as closely as possible the arrival of the mails; and that the receipt of letters should be continued as close as possible up to the departure of the mails. It follows, therefore, that all these multifarious duties have to be performed in the shortest possible space of time, though some, from their difficulty and complexity, involve an enormous amount of labour, while their accurate performance demands a degree of vigilance rarely to be met with. Take, for instance, the financial proceedings in the evening. First, there are the accounts to be settled with the receivers (71 in number) for the post-paid letters; then there is to tax the letters, which, without counting the franks, are frequently as many as 40,000, *and every one of which, it is said, is examined with a candle, to see whether it is single or double*;* then the proper postage is to be determined, not only with reference to such inspection, but also with reference to the distance of the post town to which it is addressed, *and to be marked on the letter with pen and ink*; and lastly, nearly 700† accounts of postage are to be made out against as many post-masters.

When the hurried manner in which these complex operations have to be performed is considered, it is manifest that errors must frequently arise. There is also an obvious danger of extensive frauds on the revenue, from collusion between some of the deputy post-masters and those whose duty it is to charge them with the postage. THE EXAMINATION OF EACH LETTER BY A CANDLE, BY REVEALING THE CONTENTS, CREATES TEMPTATIONS TO THEFT, WHICH HAVE TOO OFTEN BEEN IRRESISTIBLE.

This liability to error and fraud renders it highly important that some sufficient check on the operations under consideration should be practised. The fact is, however, that *no such check exists*, the only security being in the conscientiousness of the deputy post-masters, whose duty it is, on receipt of their bags, to examine the charges placed to their accounts, and to correct any error which they may discover.

Now if the letter was put into a stamped envelope, or written on stamped paper, or a stamp similar to medicine

* Eighteenth Report of Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, p. 63.

† Parliamentary Return, 1835.—No. 512, p. 6.

stamps allowed to be gummed on, the revenue would be paid beforehand, and therefore secured. There would be no letters to be taxed; no examination of those taxed by others; no accounts to be made out against the deputy post-masters for letters transmitted to them, nor against the letter-carriers.

There would be no candle scrutiny to tempt poverty or excite cupidity; no want of checks; no necessity to submit to frauds and numberless errors, for want of means to prevent or correct them. In short, the whole of the financial proceedings would be reduced to a simple, accurate, and satisfactory account, consisting of a single item per day, with each receiver and each deputy post-master.

At the time of the investigation of this part of the subject, there was an "early delivery" to persons who paid the postman a gratuity; the letters were left without the payment of postage—that was called for afterwards; and it appeared that out of 637 letters deliverable in the same district, 570 were delivered in half an hour, where the man had not to collect the postage, and that it took one hour and a half to deliver the remaining 67 where he had to collect the postage; consequently, the one delivery was about twenty-five times as quick as the other.

Early delivery
and saving of
time.

It appears, then, that the great desideratum is, that the postage of all letters should be paid in advance. There would, then, not only be no stopping to collect the postage, but probably it would soon be unnecessary even to await the opening of the door, as every house would be provided with a box* into which the letter-carrier would drop the letters, and, having knocked, he would pass on as fast as he could walk. By this means a man would go through a district of moderate extent in half an hour, and deliver within it almost any number of letters; for it must be borne in mind, that in a town (and at present we are only considering the arrangements for towns) a letter-carrier's walk would scarcely be lengthened by an increase, however great, in the number of letters to be delivered; and that even the number of houses at which he would have to call, would be increased but in a low ratio; and the greater the number of letters the shorter need be the walk given to each man, and the better for the government, as a profit of two hundred per cent. is paid by each letter, and that profit in-

* A very trifling inducement would suffice to effect such a change. It would be obviously fair to instruct the letter-carrier to pass any door not so provided, and to deliver the letter on a second round, charging a small sum, say a halfpenny, for his trouble.

creases as the number of letters increase. Every tradesman knows that the same establishment, when once organized, can do double the quantity of business without any thing like that increase to the outlay.

The cost of primary distribution under the new arrangements being only about one-third of a penny per letter, a profit or tax of two hundred per cent. on such cost might be added, without raising the postage above one penny.

A uniform rate of one penny would be sufficiently low to neutralize all *pecuniary* objection to its being invariably paid in advance.

Parliamentary
committee appointed,—public shut out.

A select parliamentary committee is sitting upon this subject, especially charged to inquire into Mr. Hill's plan: that that plan is deemed, by the House of Commons, of grave importance, is thus proclaimed to the country; yet this committee sits in secret, and the public are, upon a public question involving neither private interests or feelings, shut out from hearing the evidence of their own servants, given before a committee of public representatives, and that committee sitting not only to hear evidence, but to test its truth.

The people's representatives sitting to inquire into the conduct of a public establishment, and examine public servants upon business especially belonging to the public, prohibit the public from informing themselves as to what they are doing, until the knowledge is *comparatively* useless. It is an absurd rule of the House of Commons—not a prohibition of the government. What can there be in such a case that ought to be kept from the public? Yet the public is kept from the room, and, as a consequence, from giving that aid and information which the hearing and the publication of the testimony would bring forward, to an extent that would not merely go to establish a probability, but would amount to an overwhelming proof of the increase that must result to trade and commerce, and of the advantage to religion and to morals, from the reduction of this most oppressive impost.

As to the revenue, it is demonstrable that it will not only be safe, but that it will be increased, and largely increased, if the postage be reduced to one penny; but the evidence which would be most pertinent to this subject, the public are at present prohibited from seeing, because of the wise decree or practice which requires members of parliament to shut themselves up in a private room to discharge their public duties.

Publicity is wholesome and useful to all committees, and to all men discharging public duties.

Why should the poor law committee sit in public, and the postage committee sit in private? Publicity should be the rule—secrecy the exception—to all parliamentary committees. It ought to be necessary to assign a reason for sitting in private.

There cannot be a doubt but that it would be to the public, who take a strong interest in the subject, very satisfactory and beneficial if the committee were sitting in public, and the evidence were reported daily.

This is not a rule imposed by this committee, but is the practice of the House of Commons, to which, of course, they must conform. A harder working and more anxious committee, could hardly be found. They have sat now upwards of four months, for three days in each week.

Publicity is the only security for responsibility, and no men are wholly free from those influences of position and prejudice which act upon all other men; and, particularly, I do not believe that any twelve members of parliament can be free from such influences, earwigged and baited about as they are during the session, by parties having conflicting interests, particularly upon questions involving the details of any great monopoly.

It is owing to this practice of sitting in private, that so little fruit results from the ponderous volumes of various, and oftentimes valuable, matter, entombed in the parliamentary reports. Evidence is not heard of until long after it is taken, when the interest it would have excited has been arrested by the passing incidents of public moment, and the public mind has been diverted from the continuous attention which is essential to the practical and really useful advancement of any important subject.

The evidence is reported at the end of a session, and creeps forth during the recess; conclusions are drawn, and probably drawn accurately, by the committees, from the matter before them, but the matter itself is not tested as it would be if the committee sat in public. Many witnesses venture upon theories and assertions which they would not dare to utter in the presence of those who knew the whole subject, and who, if the press were allowed to publish, would be drawn to the committee room because their interests were involved. The means that would bring conflicting interests into collision, and strike out the truth, are thus excluded.

It is to this practice of exclusion that the labours and usefulness of such excellent *working* representatives as those on the parliamentary committee are hidden from their constituents and the public.

The valuable reports presented by the present* and late† commissioners of inquiry, and that of Lord Lowther, exclude the possibility of continuing the rate of postage as it now is. Severe laws cannot secure monopolies in the face of such reports, any more than heavy penalties can secure the revenue; and unless the post-office establishment is prepared for the coming change which rail-roads *will* introduce into all business arrangements, the effect upon the business monopoly committed to its charge will be, that the shop in Saint Martin's-le-Grand may put up its shutters within five years after their coming into operation, for the establishment by that time will not pay, or very little more than pay, its expenses.

Effect of rail-roads.

Rail-roads will nearly annihilate space, in these small and densely populated islands; and if it be imagined that when places within one hundred miles of the metropolis, and of each other, are accessible within four hours, and men and parcels can be forwarded, perhaps more than twice in twenty-four hours, to places three times that distance, that the government may still start its laggard despatches but once in twenty-four hours, and seek to hold in check the whole correspondence of the kingdom, her Majesty's post-office will be found without customers, and her attorney-general unable to enforce the penalties fulminated against the communications of mind with mind.

A change, then, must come, and come quickly, or the whole inland postage will be as quietly and effectively taken from the post-office, as the mass of correspondence outwards by ship letters has been. Is it wise to allow the people to go on thus practically repealing the laws, and leaving to parliament only the ungracious task of repealing them in form, and that because they cannot enforce them?

As a change must come, and that shortly, and the people now seek it as an act of grace, why not make it at once, instead of deferring it until it becomes an act of necessity, and is received with the bilious remark, "It was because they could not help it?"

Lord Lowther, one of the Commissioners of Inquiry, in his Report, says:—

Lord Lowther's Report.

* Lord Seymour, Lord Duncannon, and Mr. Labouchere.
 † Lords Lowther, Rosslyn, and Stormont.

“The principle of the post-office, at its establishment, as is distinctly laid down in the 12 Charles II., was TO AFFORD ADVANTAGE TO TRADE AND COMMERCE. The direct revenue to be derived from the post-office was not the primary consideration.”

The Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, in their Eighteenth Report on the Post-office, remark that—

Report of Commissioners of Finance.

“The restrictions which, for the maintenance of the revenue, the law has imposed concerning the untaxed conveyance of letters, RAISE AN OBLIGATION ON THE PART OF THE CROWN TO MAKE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THE PUBLIC EXIGENCIES IN THIS RESPECT; and in effecting this object, it falls within the province and the duty of his Majesty’s post-master-general to *create*, as well as to guard and to collect, a revenue.

“The facility of frequent, punctual, and quick communication, which the institution of the post-office was calculated to secure, may be justly classed among the elements of profitable commerce. It is essential to the purposes of government, and subservient to all the ends of national policy.

“In this view, the establishment of the post-office possesses a character distinct from, and an IMPORTANCE SUPERIOR TO, ITS TITLE TO CONSIDERATION AS A PRODUCTIVE BRANCH OF THE REVENUE. Nor is its utility in this respect to be appreciated solely by the revenue derived directly from it, for it may be considered also *as auxiliary to other branches of the public income.*

“But whatever distinction may be observed between the more general and primary purposes of this institution, and its value separately regarded as an immediate source of revenue to the Crown, it will be found that the same means may be employed to promote its several objects; and that in a prosperous state of the country, its productiveness, in a financial calculation, will be measured by the proportion in which, under judicious management, it is made to contribute to the interests, the convenience, and the habitual indulgence of the community.

“To prove the truth of this principle, it might be sufficient to refer to the immediate results of the well-known improvements introduced in the year 1784, upon the suggestions of Mr. Palmer, in the circulation of letters within the now United Kingdom.

“Various causes have subsequently contributed to the vast progressive increase of the annual receipts of this department, which, in twenty years, dating from the adoption of

Mr. Palmer's plan, were trebled, and have since become five-fold their previous amount. But a general comparison of the extent of the accommodation afforded, and of the quantity of correspondence maintained through the post-office at different periods, will establish the principle already assumed, that the growth of this correspondence (and of the attendant revenue) naturally keeps pace with the amendment and extension of the means of intercourse, and with the increased wealth, commerce, and prosperity of the country, and will show that this effect, although it may have been in some degree counteracted, has not been prevented by the restraints of augmented taxation.

"In looking at the post-office, therefore, with a view to its regulation as a department of the revenue, it is indispensable that attention be principally directed to its more important uses, and to the efficiency of its arrangements for the attainment of those purposes."

With such reports from the commissioners of the Crown, it is impossible but that a change must be near at hand—a wise administration would hasten it.

I now proceed to show some of the effects of the system.

The present rates of postage have induced a general practice:—

Of saving postage.

Of evading it, and of suppressing or withholding correspondence, which would otherwise be written.

The description of correspondence suppressed or withheld are such letters as the following:—

Letters advising of the drawing of bills or small accounts.

Letters transmitting statements of small accounts.

Letters containing small orders.

Letters correcting errors and advising of many smaller points.

Letters acknowledging the receipt of many that are now left unacknowledged.

Letters requesting explanations of ambiguities, and to answer the ever-occurring exigencies of business, which would bear and repay a postage of one penny, and would immensely facilitate business, by enabling it to be done off hand, and done well, because done quickly.

They also suppress letters:—

By inducing travellers to postpone the transmission of orders home, until they can get a number of orders to communicate in the same letter.

By the well known practice of transmitting orders for

Effects of the present system in suppressing letters, and inducing evasion of postage.

Description of letters suppressed.

different houses to one, so written that they can be cut off into slips, and distributed by the house to whom they are superscribed: thus compelling tradesmen to trouble parties who have no interest in the orders they are asked to circulate, and unnecessarily exposing business transactions to third parties.

The modes of evading postage now practised, and which these rates have induced, are:—

By sending letters in parcels, boxes, and trusses.

By availing themselves of each other's parcels.

By commercial travellers.

By persons, when known to be going to particular places.*

By steam vessels.

By sending circulars in large parcels to be put into local penny posts.

By nearly all houses who are in the habit of sending parcels at stated times to London or other places.

By converting every house or establishment, having branch establishments, into a sort of auxiliary post-office, through its parcels, for all its retainers, friends, and connexions.

Under these heads, the facts and information which have come to my knowledge, show an extent of injury, which I feel confident has not been fully appreciated. I will take some of the heads enumerated for illustration.

To men engaged in trade the importance of advising a party of the fact that a bill is drawn upon him for acceptance, need not be stated. But such is the effect of the oppressive rates of postage, that in the largest houses of business, and, consequently, in proportion to the extent of their dealings, evidencing the generality of the practice, and the loss to the post-office, letters advising the drawee have been almost wholly suppressed, and may be said to be entirely suppressed as to small bills; so much so, that in many houses a margin has been left on the left-hand side of the bill plate for a short statement of the account, and neither that statement, which all mercantile men know to be an important means of accuracy, and very satisfactory as furnishing the means to correct any error in the account, can be forwarded previously to the bill being drawn, nor can a letter advising the fact of the bill being put into circulation, be sent through the post-office. The inconvenience flowing from this is, that when the bill is pre-

Instances.

Not advising bills drawn.

* Letters may, lawfully, be sent "by a private friend, if delivered by such friend to the party to whom they shall be directed."—7 Wm. IV. and 1 Vict. c. 33. s. 2.

sented for acceptance, if any inaccuracy appears in the account, either the bill is refused acceptance, and the inconvenience, expense, and trouble of those who have forwarded it, is considerable; or else the drawee must acknowledge, by accepting the bill, that which he does not owe, or believes he does not, trusting that those who draw it, will correct the error after he has acknowledged its accuracy, and passed his liability for the amount.

In addition to the loss of letters to the post-office, this suppression of these necessary communications is the fruitful source of annoyance, expense, and trouble:—Annoyance, in that it prevents business from being done with that habitual quickness and accuracy with which, when communication is free, it usually is done, and creates disputes as to which party ought to bear the heavy postage, and cost, and inconvenience arising, and that it frequently leads to the severance of a business connexion, which otherwise might have continued with profit and satisfaction to both parties:—Expense, in the explanatory postage which *must* then take place, under circumstances of unpleasantness instead of satisfaction, as would have been the case had the previous advice been forwarded, and which at a penny postage would have been sent:—Trouble, and expense also, in the delay of the acceptance, and perhaps the return of the bill by an indorsee to the previous indorser, and, by possibility in many cases, a loss of credit, and not unfrequently legal proceedings.

It was shown by one gentleman,* that the regular course of proceeding in such cases, namely, to transmit the account, to advise the drawing of the bill; and to have that bill transmitted to the drawee for acceptance, and returned accepted, would involve upon a bill of two months, *a greater sum in postage than the amount of the discount of the bill for that time.*

But suppose, as is often the case, the tradesman's channel for discount is in the country, he has to transmit the bill for that purpose, and here again he is fleeced of a double postage each way. In this, as in most other fiscal regulations, those who are the least able to carry the load have the greatest weight put upon them.

Then there is the stamp duty on the bill, and as small bills are taxed at a much higher rate for the value they

* Mr. John Dillon, of the firm of James Morrison and Co. The whole of this gentleman's testimony and that of Mr. Richard Cobden of Manchester, is most important, and will amply repay the perusal.

carry than larger bills, the pressure upon trade, particularly upon the smaller tradesmen, receives, in this instance, a strong illustration.

Again, letters transmitting statements of accounts from nearly every manufacturing town in the kingdom are now transmitted, by some mode or other, free of postage, and these accounts are transmitted in all trades periodically, and in most trades monthly; they therefore form a serious item of loss to the revenue; for as the silk and cotton trades, and, indeed, nearly all trades, have now introduced the practice of short credit, small profits, and quick returns, and draw on the first of the month, this occasions an immense *monthly* loss to the revenue. On this subject the same witness—and it is important to quote his testimony, because his house is known to be one of the largest establishments of the kind in the kingdom, and the witness is well known for his ability, knowledge, and mercantile experience—was examined as follows:—

Description of letters which evade the post-office.

“Can you inform the committee whether a similar practice [of evading postage] prevails as to the statement of accounts, or any business transaction?—It is our practice, and I believe that of other houses, to insist that statements of accounts sent to them for payment should be sent post-paid, it being for the benefit of the parties sending the statements; the consequence is, that we, in London, receive from the manufacturing districts a very great number of statements of accounts, which are left in the box placed in our counting-house for the purpose: it is evident, by their directions, that they do not come through the post-office.

“Can you exhibit any of those accounts to the committee?—I have examined our statements for the current month; and I have before me no less than twenty-three statements sent to us from Manchester, Nottingham, Coventry, and various manufacturing towns, all of which have been left at our house, and bear no post mark.

“*Mr. Thornely.*—Those statements do not even pass through the two-penny post?—They do not.”*

The witness having stated that the practice of evading postage in the transmission of money prevailed to a great extent, was examined as follows:—

In transmission of money and suppressing acknowledgments.

“Be kind enough to explain what you allude to as regards the transmission of money?—I have before me a letter, dated the 7th of July last, in which a house writes to us as

* Question 3521, &c —p. 247.

follows: 'Enclosed you will receive counterparts of notes value £670, which you will please to dispose of as at foot, and return us receipts in the next parcel.' They then give us the names of eight houses, to which we are to pay the money; I will distinguish them by numbers:—

	£.	s.	d.
No. 1	9	9	0
No. 2	4	0	0
No. 3	27	0	0
No. 4	18	0	0
No. 5	20	0	0
No. 6	21	11	0
No. 7	20	0	0
Your own account	550	0	0
Total	£670	0	0

The committee will perceive that there are eight remittances made in that letter, with a request that the eight receipts should be returned to them in the next parcel. This, I apprehend, would have occasioned sixteen letters by post, if there had been a very material reduction of the postage. The next case before me is a similar instance in which remittances were made through us to eight houses. I have another in which a remittance is made to us to be divided between five houses; it is a remittance of £3,022, of which we were to keep two thousand pounds, and distribute the rest among four other houses. I have several other similar cases before me, all occurring within a very short space of time.

“Is the two-penny post employed in that distribution?—Certainly not: we have the trouble and run the risk of sending a clerk with the money in transactions not our own.

“Have you any cases as to the acknowledgment of monies sent to you?—As to acknowledgments, people are constantly in the habit of remitting money, or orders for money, and requesting that they may not be put to the expense of postage in return, in the way of acknowledgment or receipt: many such desire us not to acknowledge the money at all; others desire that the acknowledgment should be kept till a parcel is sent to them; others, that the acknowledgment should be sent to some other house with whom they do business, and who may be sending

parcels to them. I have been told by persons carrying on very extensive business in the city of London, that they scarcely ever receive an acknowledgment, because they will not pay the postage of the acknowledgment or receipt from the people with whom they deal, or from the manufacturers to whom they remit the money.

“The committee are to understand that the present rates of postage bear so heavily on the description of trade and transactions to which you allude, that parties really forego receiving acknowledgments rather than pay the postage?—To a very great extent indeed; I have here a number of letters upon that subject.

“Be pleased to state the nature of those letters you allude to?—As I have already stated, persons request us to hold the acknowledgments till goods are going to them, and so on.

“*Mr. Parker.*—The letters you allude to were not sent to you in reference to the present inquiry?—They are letters we have received in the course of the past year, certainly without reference to the present inquiry, in the common course of our business. I may be allowed to state to the committee that my attention having been drawn to this subject, and to the probability of my being examined upon it, in order to inform my own mind upon the subject, I have examined our letters for some months past. I had a general impression that the objection to postage operated very strongly indeed to prevent the writing of letters, but I had no idea of the number of cases which present themselves in the course of our correspondence. With the permission of the committee, I will read extracts from some letters now before me, which may be taken as samples of the objections entertained by many persons to the expense of postage. The first is a letter dated Shrewsbury, 27 May, 1837: ‘Be good enough to pass the above draft for £20 to my credit, and let some one call at —, St. Paul’s Church-yard, to acknowledge the receipt: our object is to save the postage.’ The second is a letter dated St. Austell, 31 December, 1837: ‘Will you be kind enough to cause the order on the other side to be delivered to —, Cheap-side? the amount would not be worth a postage to them.’ The third is Tonbridge, 3 July, 1837, with a check: ‘Please to indorse the check,’ intending this as a receipt, to save the necessity of an acknowledgment. The fourth is a letter dated Cambridge, 1 June, 1837, relative to a bill sent for acceptance, £148 13s. 9d. The acceptor adds,

'I had a parcel from you yesterday: why not save me postage?' The fifth is a letter dated Marylebone, 1 June, 1837: 'Mr. E. M. requests me to say that you may draw on him, to be accepted by me by procuration of Mr. M., in order to save the expense and trouble of sending the bill to ——.' The sixth is a letter dated Diss, 2 June, 1837: 'When you send to me, have the goodness to send me an account of Cr. goods, £9 9s. 3d., as I cannot make it correct.' The seventh is dated Belfast, 16 June, 1837: 'Annexed we hand you a bank order for £232 10s. to settle as above. You will please retire our bill to you, due on the 20th, and please lay it aside until an opportunity offers of returning it free of postage.' The next is dated Jersey, 12 June, 1837: 'The enclosed £30 you will please get accepted immediately, and place to the credit of our account. In sending the acknowledgment, please include our last invoice, as also our statement of account, all on a single sheet of paper, to save double postage.' The last I shall adduce is dated Liverpool, 1 February, 1837: 'If you can forward me an acknowledgment free, well; if not, do not put me to expense, as I have no eleven-pences to spare for the dead sea of the Exchequer.' I adduce these, not so much as classes, for it is difficult to arrange them under any heads, but as evidence of the very general, nay, of a universal impression in the minds of tradesmen and men of business against incurring the expense of postage."*

The modes of evasion are extremely numerous. One of the common modes of evasion, that of conveying letters in and by boxes, parcels, and trusses, is so general, that it may almost be termed universal. Mr. Dillon, whose evidence has been before quoted, says:—

"In a warehouse in the city I was present when a bale was being opened the other day, and letters dropped out; I inquired of the warehouseman what he did with them; he said he should deliver them if they were near, or for persons he knew; or put them into the two-penny post if they were distant. I inquired if such things often occurred; the answer was, 'We cannot receive less on an average than ten such letters in a day.' At a committee meeting of persons in our trade, all of them men in a very extensive line of business, I made the inquiry of each of them separately; their answer was, 'We believe that our people, for we know nothing of it ourselves, are in the constant habit of receiving letters in this way, in our parcels;' some persons have

Evasions of
postage.

Sending letters
in parcels.

told me that perhaps they might receive three such letters, others five, and others ten every day in the year. As far as I can judge by inquiry I made with a view to giving evidence here, for I knew little of it before, I believe it is carried to a very great extent indeed ; and from all parts of the kingdom."

A few other instances, each of which it will be obvious is illustrative of a class, will show the extent of the system of evasion :—

Other instances.

A gentleman who had dissolved his partnership, and was retiring from trade into Yorkshire, but whose previous business led to his receiving many letters, arranged with his instaying partners, to open all the letters addressed to him individually, and to advise him shortly, and at intervals, of their various contents.

This, it is obvious, is a course which few men would desire to take ; and that at a penny postage, hardly one in a thousand would adopt.

Another mode is known to exist :—

Persons living in the country, make up a parcel containing many letters ; they address that parcel to Mr. John Smith, or any other name in any street in London, and engage with the guard or coachman of a long stage, to take it for a small fee to London. Arrived in London, he opens it, and either delivers the letters according to arrangement, or puts them into the two-penny post ; but, it is obvious, that not a great many such letters will get posted, because it is worth any poor man's while to deliver eight or nine letters for sixteen or eighteen pence, and the guard or coachman would get thanked for his patronage, and the inducement to deliver instead of posting them increases with the number.

It has been said, that this mode of conveying letters makes no difference to the revenue, as to those which *are* put into the post-office ; on the contrary, that two-pence is gained, where according to the proposal of Mr. Hill, one penny only would be received ; but it should be borne in mind, that as these modes do not give the facility which a cheap and lawful communication would give, that there are many letters suppressed that would otherwise be written.

It confirms the habit of breaking, instead of obeying the laws ; it leads the people to regard the laws as rules of oppression, not as rules of action, and turns their feelings against the institutions of their country : It induces them to regard taxation as a greater evil than it is, and to pronounce

it an evil in itself; and when once this feeling is fixed in the mind of any man, he becomes an unreasoning objector against taxation and the social arrangements of his country.

I take the following extracts from the London and Westminster Review:—

“ Factors address their correspondents by means of circulars in newspapers. ‘ No. 17, You have a remittance this post ;’ ‘ No. 20, 84 sacks at 18s. are sold ;’ ‘ No. 27, Yours not yet received ;’ ‘ No. 60, Nothing as yet done in yours.’ But the most ingenious of these evasions is the telegraph system of addressing newspapers, of which we have been favoured* with an epunate key, which shows how, having once agreed on a system of signals, Mr. Brown of London may correspond with Mr. Smith of Edinburgh.

Mr. John Smith,

Grocer, Tea-dealer,

1, High-street, Edinburgh.

“ Six changes in the mode of the personal address indicate the DATES OF THE NEWS to be transmitted—*e. g.*

Mr. Smith	Monday.
Mr. John Smith	Tuesday.
Mr. J. Smith	Wednesday.
J. Smith, Esq.	Thursday.
John Smith, Esq.	Friday.
— Smith, Esq.	Saturday.

“ The DESPATCH OF GOODS is intimated by taking the full address as above—*e. g.* Goods sent on Wednesday,—the newspaper is addressed, Mr. J. Smith, Grocer, &c.

“ The RECEIPT OF GOODS is understood by the omission of the trade—*e. g.* Goods received on Friday—the address is John Smith, Esq., 1, High-street, Edinburgh.

“ EVENTS OF THE MARKETS—

Tea-dealer alone	Prices of Teas rising.
Grocer	_____ falling.
Grocer and Tea-dealer	_____ Sugars rising.
Grocer, Tea-dealer, &c.	_____ falling.
Grocer, &c.	Markets dull and stationary.

“ Other information is conveyed by Tea-dealer, &c., Tea-dealer and Grocer, Tea-dealer, Grocer, &c.—*e. g.* Suppose

* It was to defeat this system of evasion that Mr. Charles Whiting, of Beaufort House, urged upon the Government, eight years ago, the adoption of his stamped envelopes or “ Go-frees.”

sugars rise on Monday—the address is Mr. Smith, Grocer and Tea-dealer, 1, High-street, Edinburgh.

“EVENTS IN MONEY MATTERS indicated by the changes in the mode of writing the address.

- 1, High-street Remittances received safely.
- High-street Bills sent for acceptance.
- 1, High-st. Acceptances received.
- High-st. Bills dishonoured.

“This is a system which, though it may not baffle ingenuity to discover, defies all legal penalties.

“But these changes are not all—red ink, and blue, and black, may all have separate meanings; the seals are often made signals, and instances occur in which the same character extends even to the dashes and ornaments of penmanship.”

In a subsequent part of this pamphlet I shall bring together evidence of the great extent to which letters *now actually sent*, are transmitted otherwise than through the post-office. It will astonish the public to learn that five times the quantity sent by the post-office, are sent by other modes—the greatest portion in defiance of law, and to avoid the infliction of the tax. The public mind has, upon this subject, repealed the odium which usually attaches to smuggling, and those who would think it wrong to avoid the payment of a tax by purchasing smuggled lace, knowingly, yet feel no reluctance in defrauding the revenue of postage.

I proceed to show new sources of revenue, that would be created if postage were reduced to one penny.

The immense amount of increase in the number of letters which would flow from the book trade only, in the shape of circulars into the post-office, has been amply shown in the evidence of Mr. Charles Knight, publisher to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and to the Poor Law Commissioners; and of Mr. G. B. Whittaker, of the firm of Whittaker and Co., publishers; and of Mr. J. W. Parker, publisher to the University of Cambridge.

Increase from circular letters in various trades.

Mr. Parker, for the purpose of illustrating the amazing extent to which the revenue would be increased, through the medium of the post-office, if postage were reduced to one penny, printed off a number of the circulars which would come into use in his trade, and which would, with variations, equally come into use in almost every trade that exists, whether in things for consumption, for wear, or other use, for articles of taste, of fancy, or for the mind. He

Booksellers.

printed, on half sheets of letter paper, a list of the books he published, with open columns for the number wanted, to be written against each book, and printed on the outside the address of his own house.* This he would send, as would every tradesman, to his customers, and they, or their servants, would only have to take down one of the circulars, affix a word or figure against the article wanted, and the list, when folded, would be an order in the shape of a letter for the post, and could only be used for that tradesman who had supplied it, his address being printed upon it. It is obvious that every family in the kingdom would thus be able to send their orders to their tradesmen, at whatever distance, and that hardly any family would lose the time of a servant in going one or two miles, when a penny would save it, and the order could be given with such simplicity and accuracy. An order of almost any amount is worth one penny, and even if it were used for an order so small that it did not compensate a penny, tradesmen well know that small orders are the forerunners and intimate relations of large ones. To give an idea of the extent to which this class of letters would increase the post-office revenue, is almost impossible. We should endeavour to conceive the immense number of wants, of daily occurrence, when food, dress, the arts, science, and the infinitely varied wants and desires of the instructed, the wealthy, and the pleasure-seeking masses, enter into the computation; and that these wants are ever existing, always in action, and reproducing themselves daily and hourly, in a ratio increasing with the facility and quantity of the supply, and the product will present itself as immense. But this is not all, for families and ladies could, for one penny, receive samples or patterns, or descriptions, or outline drawings, of nearly every article of use, fancy, or desire, and give their orders, without quitting their houses, with a certainty of realizing their wishes, by dealing with tradesmen of character. A resident in the country could thus command all the pleasures and conveniences which science or the arts can supply, with nearly the same facility as if living in any of the great towns. Whatever this country, which for this purpose may be called one vast store-house, could supply, might be had by every family and sent with rail-road expedition to their own fire-side, without trouble, or any serious expense.

It would take up too much space to give all that the various witnesses have said on this subject.

* See the annexed specimen.

Mr. John W. Parker,

Cambridge Bible Warehouse,

West Strand,

London.

Abbott's Reader
 Algebra
 Arithmetic, 1s. 6d.
 Arithmetical Tables
 Artisans and Machinery
 Ainger's Repentance
 Bouchier's Prophecy
 Bolster's Prayers
 Barrett's Prayers
 Book of the Fathers
 Book of Birds
 ——— Animals
 ——— Shells
 ——— Fishes
 ——— Reptiles
 ——— Trees
 Bible Word-Book
 Brande's Chemistry
 Burton's Church History
 Brasseur's Phraseology
 Bernay's German Grammar
 ——— Reader
 ——— Exercises
 ——— Examples
 ——— Poetry for Beginners
 ——— Poetical Anthology
 ——— Historical Anthology
 Browne on the Prophecies
 Cookesley's Frogs
 Columbus's Voyages
 Cook's Voyages
 Companion to Euclid
 Chandler's Hymns
 Child's Verse-Book
 Cambridge Greek Text
 Chevallier's Mathematics
 Crocker's Subjunctive Mode
 ——— Key to Ditto
 Christmas Carols
 Conversations of a Father
 ——— on Gardening
 Caunter's Records
 Cox's Visitation
 Cottage Husbandry
 Christmas's Mythology
 Carr's Latin Selections
 Deaf and Dumb Boy
 Domesticated Animals
 Dissertations on the Eumenides
 De La Voye's Gil Blas
 Easy Grammar
 ——— Poetry
 Education of Children
 Essays on Conversation
 Easy Lessons in Mechanics
 ——— Money Matters
 Elements of Botany
 Edwards's Catiline
 ——— Jugurtha
 ——— Figures of Euclid

Edwards's First Greek Reader
 ——— English Composition
 ——— Cicero and Pliny
 ——— Latin Lyrics
 Farr's Bible Biography
 Family Hand-Book
 Five Hundred Charades
 Familiar Lectures
 Faith and Practice
 French School Classics
 ——— Telemaque
 ——— Cyrus
 ——— Belisaire
 ——— Pierre le Grand
 ——— Charles XII.
 Fox's Reformation
 Geometry
 Gleig's History of England, 3 Vols.
 ——— Vol. I.
 ——— Vol. II.
 ——— Vol. III.
 Graah's Greenland
 Godwin's Tales
 Geldart on Civil Law
 History of Popery
 ——— London
 Hunter's Horace
 House I live in
 Halliday's West Indies
 Horsfall's Prayers
 Hind's Arithmetic
 Hone's Eminent Christians, 3 Vols.
 ——— Vol. I.
 ——— Vol. II.
 ——— Vol. III.
 Hall's Calculus
 ——— Astronomy
 Hull's Manual
 Hind's Official Documents
 Hildyard's Ancient Geography
 Insects and their Habitations
 Instructor, Vol. I.
 ——— Vol. II.
 ——— Vol. III.
 ——— Vol. IV.
 ——— Vol. V.
 ——— Vol. VI.
 Journal of the Asiatic Society
 Keightley's Crusaders, 2 Vols.
 Kelland on Heat
 Ludlow's Class Book
 Leo's Hebrew Grammar
 ——— Lexicon
 Lathbury's Episcopacy
 Lawson's Sermons
 ——— Military Pastor
 ——— on the Miracles
 ——— on Charitable Institutions
 Lord's Popular Physiology
 Major's Latin Exercises

Major's Herodotus
 — Xenophon
 Mayo's Philosophy of Living
 — on Digestion
 Mushet on the Trinities
 Mant's British Months
 — Romanism
 — Churches of Rome and
 England
 Minerals and Metals
 Moseley's Mechanics
 Medley on Church Government
 Magazine of Popular Science
 Musical History (Hogarth's)
 New Zealand
 Orations of Cicero
 Outlines of Sacred History
 — Geography
 — Roman History
 — Grecian History
 — English History
 Original Family Sermons
 Old and New Poor Law
 Parker's Poems
 — Fables
 Parley's Universal History
 Peacock's Trigonometry
 Pridden's Early Christians
 Palin's Village Lectures
 Palgrave's Merchant and Friar
 Phillips' Syriac Grammar
 Pearson on the Apocalypse
 — Discourses
 — Infidel Writers
 Paley's Evidences Epitomized
 Pretty Lessons
 Persian Fables
 — Stories
 Riddle's Hymns
 — First Sundays
 — Luther and his Times
 Robert's Two Years at Sea
 Readings in Poetry
 — Biography
 — Science
 — Prose Literature
 Russell's English Grammar
 Shore's Notes on Indian Affairs
 Strickland's Tales and Stories
 Sullivan's Penny Saved
 Stebbing on Death
 Stanley's Birds
 Sedgwick's Discourse
 Short's St. Luke
 — National Education
 — Church History
 Stolen Child
 Simple Stories
 Stemmata Atheniensia
 School Greek Testament

Sister Mary's Tales
 Scenes and Sketches
 Sacred Minstrelsy
 Saturday Magazine, Vol. I.
 ————— Vol. II.
 ————— Vol. III.
 ————— Vol. IV.
 ————— Vol. V.
 ————— Vol. VI.
 ————— Vol. VII.
 ————— Vol. VIII.
 ————— Vol. IX.
 ————— Vol. X.
 ————— Vol. XI.
 ————— Vol. XII.

Schleiermacher's Plato
 Schulte's Latin Grammar
 Susan Carter, a Tale
 Trench on Education
 Teignmouth's Scotland
 Turton on the Eucharist
 ————— Natural Theology
 Taylor's Ancient History
 ————— Modern History
 ————— Mohammedanism
 Three Weeks in Palestine
 Turner's Vocal Music
 Useful Hints to Labourers
 Usher's Answer to a Jesuit
 Ventouilliac's Livre de Classe
 ————— Rudiments
 ————— French Poetry
 ————— Bouquet Litteraire
 Village Annals
 Wilmot's Sacred Poets
 Wilks's Rose Buds
 ————— Teignmouth and Jones
 Whewell's Inductive Sciences
 ————— Mechanical Euclid
 ————— Four Sermons
 ————— University Education
 ————— Doctrine of Limits
 Wood's British Song Birds
 ————— Ornithologist's Text Book
 Wigram on Sunday Schools
 Young Lady's Friend
 Zornlin's Sandford and Merton
 ————— Roman Catholic Chapel

Saturday } 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25,
 Magazine } 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48,

“It is,” said Mr. Knight, “of the greatest importance to our business, consisting for the most part of the monthly publication of periodical works, seven or eight in number, adapted for general reading, sold almost universally throughout the United Kingdom, that we should be able to apprise country booksellers, about the 20th of the month, what particular portion of works, describing them, or what works altogether we should publish on what is called Magazine-day, that is, the last day in each month, when those works are sent off to the country. We have a list of 1,860 country booksellers, all respectable people, with whom we should not deal ourselves, for they are, for the most part, supplied by the wholesale house, but to whom we should send about the 20th of each month invariably, if the postage were reduced to one penny. I should direct, for example, 1,860 circulars to be sent this month, and should continue them every month during the year, as long as I was engaged in my present business; that would give an average of about 24,000 letters sent out by our establishment annually for that object. But I will mention to the committee the desirableness of the means of meeting another class of persons. We publish a work that is having a very large circulation,—the Pictorial Bible; it is a Bible with notes which, not being doctrinal, suit every class of the religious community; patronized equally by members of the Church of England, and by Wesleyans, Independents, and so on; that work will be completed in two months from this time. There is no difficulty in obtaining a list of all the clergymen in England; there is no great difficulty in obtaining a very complete list of all the Dissenting ministers; to all those I should send a circular, announcing the completion of this work, stating the nature and peculiarity of it: that alone, upon a rough calculation, would dispose of 20,000 circulars.”

Mr. Knight's
testimony.

“I assume,” he adds, “that postage would be paid by myself in advance, and seeing that 100,000 circulars might be sent annually for about £400, I should conceive that would be by far the most efficient mode of advertising that could be adopted.

“I consider that, availing myself of the advantages of the post to distribute such circulars as I have mentioned, we should send out at least 100,000 annually, having reference to our present publications; the other increase I have mentioned makes the total letters we should receive and send, as far as I have calculated, 127,000. We now receive and

send only 11,000 annually; if the average rate of a post-letter is $6\frac{1}{2}d.$, which I see it is stated to be, the revenue would be very nearly doubled in our case by a change from a high rate of postage to a low rate of postage: 11,000 letters, at $6\frac{1}{2}d.$, pay to the post-office £297 18s.; 127,000, at $1d.$, would pay £529 3s.; it is nearly double.

“Can you expect in many cases that, supposing the payment in advance of postage were to become law, many of those persons to whom you should send your circulars would be likely to send you a reply, if the charge of postage was only $1d.$?—I do not think it would have that effect, nor should I desire it; we are strictly wholesale booksellers, and in pointing out to retail purchasers of books the peculiar advantages of a book, we should recommend their ordering it of their bookseller in the neighbourhood. We should look to a large increase of trade by this mode of publicity; and it is very important, for there is no mode of publicity which can effectually reach the rural districts except through the post.

“The reply to your letter would go to retail dealers, who would supply the customer?—If we sent 20,000 circulars, having reference to that Pictorial Bible I have mentioned, and those 20,000 produced an order for an additional 1,000 copies, which I think would be the fact, we should be amply compensated for the expense of printing and sending those circulars by post.

“The parties must communicate in some way their wish to have copies of that Bible; they would be under the necessity of sending their orders to the country bookseller who was to supply them?—Yes, certainly; but there is in that way another increase, which I have not contemplated, an indirect second increase; all increase of business certainly must involve an increase of correspondence, because it has reference to the transaction of business.

“In the trade you are acquainted with, you think the consequence would be indirectly to increase the postage in the manner now referred to?—Without doubt; but, further, there is a consideration in regard to books, which applies to most exciseable commodities; there is a considerable duty on paper; reduced as it is, it is still about one-seventh of the whole price of the paper. The paper we purchase for the production of our books pays, as nearly as I can estimate, a duty of £4,000 a year; if the increased mode of publicity would give us a quarter more sale, and I know of no mode more effectual than that I have pointed out, that

would give the revenue a quarter more paper-duty, or £1,000."*

The evidence of Mr. Knight upon this subject has been confirmed by Mr. G. B. Whittaker, of the firm of Whittaker and Co., publishers.

It will be obvious that the instances given by Mr. Knight are those which are occurring in every publishing-house in the kingdom, and every month of the year.

On the subject of Circulars, I point attention to the evidence of Mr. Louis Fenwick de Porquet, of Tavistock-street, Covent-garden, scholastic agent and publisher:—

Mr. L. F. de Porquet's testimony as to circulars.

"Have you formed any opinion as to the rate to which it would require to reduce the postage to create a large increase?—I may state that the smaller the charge, the greater would be the circulation of my circulars, and the letters addressed to me. If the postage on circulars (I say nothing about written letters at present) were to be *1d.*, I should send not less than 25,000 to 40,000 in the course of a twelvemonth; but if it were half that amount, according to the size of the circular, if I could send a circular of a quarter of a page, I should send 100,000 to 150,000 in the course of a twelvemonth. I should not mind contracting to the amount of £100 or £150 a year for the conveyance of those small slips by post, that accommodation would increase my business, I should think, at least to four times what it now is.

"Do you allude to being able to send those printed circulars at *1d.* each?—Yes; then I could send from 20,000 to 30,000; but if, according to the rate of postage, it were only half that amount for a small slip, I could send not less than five times that amount.

"Should you expect to receive a considerable accession of business?—Immense; I have tried it, when the stamp-duty was reduced on newspapers. I have often purchased from 500 to 1,000 copies of one particular newspaper, the *True Sun* and *General Advertiser*, in which I have, of course, caused an advertisement to be inserted, which may have cost me from £8 to £10, still I purchased, at the trade price, 500 to 1,000, and sent those very newspapers to all persons connected with my business, such as schoolmasters and booksellers, and it has paid me well. It has increased my business more than one-third.

"What postage do you pay now?—Not £10 a year, sending by post only when I am obliged to do it; but I

* Questions 3,230, &c.

Increase from
circulars

send in parcels, and by friends, and I have had my circulars printed on the spot where they are to be circulated, rather than sending them by the post. At this time I should consider it a great facility if I could renew my correspondence in France with all the schoolmasters, amounting to 4,000 or 5,000. If from this place I could pay the post-office of this country one penny for each letter to Dover, and then pay two centimes in France for sending my letters throughout France, I could send, I dare say, within these next three years, from 12,000 to 15,000 of those circulars, but I am not able to do it owing to the present charge in England. Once I wrote to France, and caused prospectuses to be sent from thence, but it was imperfectly done, in consequence of my not being there. I intend to go again, and send from 5,000 to 8,000; but if I could issue them from this country at a low rate of postage, it would answer my purpose better than absenting myself.

“What number of circulars should you send each month, if you could send them at a penny postage?—I should not send less than 25,000 a year if it were a penny, but I should send about 100,000 if it were a halfpenny.”*

Prices Current.

Again, when I mention to merchants and tradesmen the subject of Prices Current, and market circulars, the source of another most extensive increase will at once be opened to their minds. The value of these documents, if they were permitted to be accompanied with a letter of advice of the state of the markets, and they would be so accompanied if postage were but one penny, can hardly be fully appreciated by those not engaged in mercantile pursuits.

The whole of the agricultural, the manufacturing, and the trading interests, are deeply interested in this portion of the subject, and that to which I shall presently advert—the sending of patterns and samples. The extent of this increase can hardly be fully estimated by those not intimately acquainted with the details of trade and commerce; and extensive as it would be, there is this further important consideration, that they are permanent sources of increase, and must increase as the wealth and commerce of the country increases.

Innumerable prices current, and letters, inquiring and communicating the state of the markets, from stock, share, and produce brokers, and from agents of all kinds to their principals, and from their principals to them, would be a necessary and immediate consequence.

* Report, p. 274.

It would lead to the publication of Prices Current, or market statements, from many houses in the particular marts of trade in the United Kingdom, for immediate transmission to their customers and connexions, and to the collection of those statements into other lists, and they would supply the materials for most useful tables and statistical statements, and produce a very great source of increase through the post-office. But it is not alone from the inland marts of trade that these communications and Prices Current would proceed.

Increase from
circulars.
Prices Current.

There is not a mart, or market, or place of any commercial importance in the world, whose merchants and traders would not transmit to their correspondents in this country, similar communications.

Such is the necessity for documents of this kind, both for transmission outwards and inwards, that merchants, who are compelled to send them very extensively to foreign houses, are obliged to write one here, and send it abroad to be printed and distributed there; thus transferring business, that would be done by our own mechanics in a superior style, to foreign countries, and imposing upon the merchant the necessity of doing that through the medium of others, but partially affected towards his interests, which he could do better under his own eyes, and for himself; and which it is most important, with reference to many collateral circumstances, he should do for himself. Agents frequently defer the printing, or neglect to urge it, and to despatch the circulars with that rapidity that is essential to render them greatly advantageous; or may confide the information to, or use it for others; or permit it by negligence to be obtained by them, and in a variety of ways defeat the purposes of the circular, and injure the interests of the principal. Besides this, a want of becoming secretiveness on the part of agents frequently opens to the negligent or the knavish, the operations of the active and the diligent, and carries from the rightful owner the advantage of his mind, skill, activity, and attention.

It is well known that, although the buyers of articles are not generally indisposed to look at specimens of the things they want, yet sellers are in a much greater degree anxious to submit them to buyers, than buyers are solicitous to have them submitted. Some idea may be formed of the great increase that would flow into the post-office from this source, when the fact is brought into view, that such is the necessity, felt by manufacturers and buyers, of

increase from
circulars.
Prices Current.

having lists of prices in different branches of trade, that large houses keep by them printed forms of letters, to be filled up by their servants, and addressed to the various tradesmen and mechanics who supply them, requesting that lists of their prices and specimens may be sent in, or that their travellers may call.

Now, if this is so frequent as to lead to having printed forms of request prepared, even by buyers, it may be readily conceived how numerous would be the next source of increase to which I shall draw attention,—that of the power to transmit, through the post-office, samples, specimens, descriptions, or illustrative prints, drawings, or outlines, at one penny for half an ounce weight. Considering the facility the post-office, at one penny for half an ounce, would open for that purpose to sellers, and that these great advantages would be unalloyed by the power, on the part of the senders, to inflict the postage upon those they addressed—a power which the present post-office arrangements place in the wrong person—the increase would be immense, and yet subdued by a just restriction, the necessity of franking it. But, before I quit this class of circulars, I must advert to an implied concession, put forth in some of the questions of the committee. It was inquired, whether, if printed letters only were allowed to go through the post-office, that would not give the chief advantages sought by Prices Current? Now, this it is obvious would be *comparatively* valueless: it would convey a permission, under the aspect of relief, retaining restrictions that would strangle its utility; it would be a vain attempt to reconcile inconsistencies, and to gain the advantage of free commerce, not by removing, but by shifting the fetters, and easing them *a little*. The course of examination to which one of the witnesses* was subjected, before his mind was directed to the point intended to be raised, showed this most conclusively; and the more conclusively, because the witness evidently mentioned the facts incidentally, and knew not, when the facts were elicited, the point to which the questioner intended to apply the facts sought. The reader will observe how conclusively those facts established the great extent of increase that would flow from that class of Prices Current, which may be termed inland market circulars.

“ You state that you have lately received from China several Prices Current; what did you pay for those?—One penny each.

* Mr. George Moffatt—an extensive tea and colonial broker.

“ You stated, in your evidence in 1835, that you paid £1 for six Prices Current?—I did so, at that time. The charges at that time were of the most arbitrary description; sometimes 3s., sometimes 2s. 4d.; and after remonstrance, and threatening to throw them back, we have got them to abate the charge at the window of the post-office to 1s. Increase from
circulars.

Prices Current.

“ Has the reduction of postage on Prices Current been a great advantage to your business?—It has certainly been a great convenience; I should have rejected them at the rates proposed at the time I gave that evidence, because I could have seen them at one of the public coffee-houses in the city; but it is convenient to me at a small price to receive them and read them attentively; they contain a great deal of interesting information.

“ You stated in your evidence, that you rejected them at the charge of £1, but that, on making a second application, you got them by paying 1s. a piece?—Yes.

“ You must have had to receive and reject many at those sums?—The trade was then opening, and it was a novelty; we received them at first, but we found that, being sent in duplicate and triplicate, they were too expensive; after the reduction of charge, they were all taken in as they arrived in duplicate, or triplicate.

“ Do you receive many of those now in the course of a year?—I do; both Registers and Prices Current; equivalent to 300 of them in the year.

“ For each of those you pay only 1d.?—Yes; and but for the small rate of charge we should reject them; some houses receive them in triplicate.

“ Three hundred letters per annum would only produce, at a penny postage, 25s. a year?—No, but there are perhaps several hundred houses in London who receive those. I regret I cannot state the number of Canton Prices Current printed, for that would illustrate the number received.

“ Do you think there are many hundred houses in London to whom it would be important to receive advices from Canton weekly through the year?—There are newspapers published there at the cost of printing; the agents send them over here; many houses employ two agents; and receive to the extent of three or four copies.

“ Are there many hundred houses which would wish to receive those advices so frequently, and be willing to pay 25s. a year each for them?—Almost all the houses engaged

Increase from
circulars.

in the East India trade in London would wish to receive them.

Prices Current.

“At what do you calculate the number of those houses?—There may be 200 firms at least; but that is matter of guess.

“Are the letters you send chiefly written letters or printed correspondence?—Written. But if a low rate were adopted, we should of course have a printed form, to shorten the labour of writing; we should have to send so many, it would be very laborious writing each day the number our correspondents would require of us.

“One of the changes it would make in your business is, that you would send printed or lithographed letters instead of written ones?—No, partly written; the form would be printed or lithographed, but the details would be written; there is not sufficient time after 'Change to get a letter lithographed or printed, to be sent that evening.

“Do you believe there is now great ignorance in the country respecting the prices of tea?—No, I do not think there is; I think there is not much ignorance now.

“Then for the sake of greater information upon the prices of tea, there would not be a very great increase necessary in the number of letters sent from town?—Yes, because the prices of particular descriptions of tea fluctuate every day, and our correspondents would wish to know whenever Bohea varied a shade, or whenever Congou varied a shade, if they could have it at a small cost.

“Are you to be understood to say that there is now great ignorance in the country respecting the variations in the price of tea?—Respecting the fluctuations in the market which occur from day to day.

“It is in order to supply that deficiency, cheap postage would be desirable?—Exactly so.

“With what towns or places do you chiefly correspond?—Chiefly with the large towns.

“You do send to them information respecting the variations in the market?—But rarely, unless the fluctuations are very extensive; the slight fluctuations we do not advise them of; we send one letter advising of fluctuations now where we should probably send 100. The state of the coffee market, the tea market, the sugar market, and the tallow market, would be the subject of our daily correspondence.

“Would those advices go to retail dealers in the country?—To the large retail dealers, who are also wholesale

dealers, a large class of wholesale and large retail dealers, those whose commissions were to the extent requiring that information to be given. Increase from
circulars.

Prices Current.

“In that class of wholesale and large retail dealers, you have, at least, 100 correspondents to whom you would think it worth your while to give that information daily, at this low rate of postage?—Yes, more than that.

“What effect do you think it would have upon that branch of the trade of the country, upon the dealings of those wholesale and retail dealers, if they were in possession more frequently of such information?—It would have, I think, a material effect; it is somewhat difficult to estimate the increase simply upon the ground of their being able to sell cheaper to the smaller dealers, and they again to the consumers.

“Would that have the effect of equalizing the profits?—Yes.

“Would that be an advantage to the wholesale and retail dealer?—Yes, and the public also.”

It will be remarked, that the questioner in this case so framed his questions as to give a *decreasing* aspect to the answers which the questions raised. Inquiry was then made of this witness, an inquiry which would not have been made by those intimately acquainted with the details of trade, whether the witness sent one such letter to one person in a town or to several; to which the witness answered, “It is ordinarily the case that the traders are somewhat jealous of each other, therefore we address to each individual a letter; if we desire to convey that information to them, we cannot say, ‘Be kind enough to step over and communicate this to your neighbour on the other side of the way,’ that would not be recognised as an ordinary mode of proceeding.” The witness here answered, as it was fitting he should when giving evidence, in the cool and subdued language of one imparting information to a tribunal of gentlemen, entitled to respect from their station and official position; but, out of that room, and unimpressed by those relative considerations, he would, as any man of business would, smile at the supposition, that he could rely upon a rival tradesman to impart to another early intelligence of the state of the market. If the receiver of the letter felt that the respect due to the writer of the letter precluded his wholly suppressing the communication, yet it is plain he would be in no hurry to make it known to his rival until his own order and the post had left the town. The com-

Increase from
circulars.

mittee would have understood this in a moment, if the witness had supposed the case of my Lord John Russell writing to Col. Sibthorpe to assist a Whig in getting in for Lincoln; or of Mr. Stanley's applying to Mr. Holmes to help him to "whip in" a few Whigs when they were hard run.

The value of Prices Current is dependent upon their precision and accuracy, and the quickness of receipt; they induce additional correspondence; and that, additional business. England is becoming more and more, every year, the centre of the commerce of the world. There are many houses who print Prices Current every week, some twice a-week, and some monthly; and there are not, among the many thousands who send them, any who would not largely increase their number; and considering that they are issued thus frequently in large numbers, and from so many houses, the yearly aggregate would be immensely great. In America, Prices Current, folded in a particular manner, are circulated for one cent;* but all annoyance and petty restrictions may be got rid of by a uniform penny postage.

LORD LOWTHER'S REPORT, MAY 8, 1835.

To the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

Lord Lowther's
Report on
Prices Current.

"Finding that, with respect to the question of facilitating the transmission of Prices Current by the post-office, I cannot come to the same conclusions upon the evidence that my colleagues in the Commission of Inquiry have arrived at, I beg leave to submit to you a Report as an individual Commissioner.

"The principle of the post-office at its establishment, as is distinctly laid down in the 12 Charles II., was to afford advantage to trade and commerce. The direct revenue to be derived from the post-office was not the primary consideration.

"It is, I think, plainly shown by the evidence taken, that great advantage would arise to trade from the transmission of Prices Current at a small rate of postage. It is affirmed by various witnesses, that throughout the country there is a continually increasing desire among persons in trade for such information of the state of the markets in London and elsewhere as Prices Current would afford. That the furnishing of this information is very much restricted by the high rate of postage; and that, if it were more generally afforded, it is probable that much more business would

* Evidence of Mr. Bates, cited in Lord Lowther's Report.

be done. It is also stated, that the increase in the number transmitted at a low rate of postage would be such, that the revenue acquired would be much greater than it now is under the high rate of postage,—one witness, Mr. Cook, estimating the increase, if allowed to be transmitted at a low rate of postage, at three millions of Prices Current annually.

Increase from
circulars.

Prices Current.

“The statements in the evidence also generally agree, that the probable effect of facilitating the transmission of Prices Current would be to increase, instead of to diminish, the number of mercantile letters now written.

“Over the whole of the continent of Europe, where the circulation of mercantile intelligence is probably of much less national importance, a privilege similar to this is allowed to printed Prices Current; and in the United States of America, they are allowed to pass through the post-office (according to the evidence of Mr. Cook) free of any charge, or, as stated by Mr. Bates, at a postage of one cent only.

“It will be seen that the chief objections stated by the post-office are,—

“1st.—*The increase of business*, which, it is said, might render it impossible to send off the mails in time :

“2dly.—*The increased opportunity for fraud*, by writing private communications upon the privileged papers.”

His lordship then proceeds to dispose of these two objections, and concludes this portion of his valuable and statesman-like report as follows :—

“With reference to the charge to be imposed on the transmission of papers of the description referred to by the post, I conceive that 2*d.* should be the maximum rate ; and although, in the preceding part of these observations, the term of “a low rate of postage” has been used, I am of opinion that the preferable mode, both as regards the certainty of payment to the revenue in the first instance, and as saving time to the post-office, would be, instead of charging a postage upon them, to allow them to be transmitted *free* through the post-office, but to require that they should be printed on paper bearing a stamp, which would show that the required taxation had been made at the stamp-office. *The revenue being thus guarded, I should look forward to the time when the rate of duty might be lowered to 1*d.*, if it may not eventually admit of a STILL FURTHER DIMINUTION.*”

Mr. Cook had estimated that the facility of transmitting Prices Current by post, would increase the number through the post-office to three millions annually. This extent of

Increase from
circulars.

Prices Current.

increase did not result, and it is possible that the post-office officials will urge the apparent failure of that anticipation; but the fact is, that the value of a Price Current to the person receiving it, is not alone, that he may know the state of the market, and know that immediately upon the close of the market, but that he may have the opinion of those in whom he has confidence, on the probable stability of the prices,—whether they are likely to recede, or advance, or remain steady; and what circumstances are anticipated as likely to influence prices.

Suppose it were a condition upon the use of franks, that the members should not subscribe their names to their communications, nor send them until twenty-four hours afterwards, which practically is the effect of insisting that Prices Current shall be wholly printed, for the mass of merchants cannot get them printed *after the close of the market, and before the post of the same evening*; by comparing their present facilities with their uselessness, subject to such restrictions, members of parliament would understand at once how the concession, for which Lord Lowther had so earnestly laboured, was deprived of vitality: that which was then wanted, and which would have given those documents the authority and great value of which they are susceptible, was the knowledge of Mr. Hill's plan. By that plan, merchants can use the printing press to get the skeleton of the Price Current ready, and keep the whole in a form ready for use, wanting only a few figures which he can fill in at the close of the market, and by writing *once* a line or two expressive of his judgment of the state of the market at the time it closes, his clerks could add them to each circular. The reduction of postage universally to one penny *paid in advance* through the medium of stamped paper, had not then (1835) occurred, and therefore there was another difficulty in realizing the full value of the concession which was foreseen and pointed out by Mr. Bates in his testimony before the Commissioners of Post-Office Inquiry in 1835. Speaking of Prices Current, he says, "I think that the circulation of Prices Current would be very welcome to the country; probably the merchants on a large scale would think it not of much importance, yet I think those by whom the great bulk of the business of the country is done, trade on a small scale, and they would find it a great convenience.

"The number used on the continent is incredible; and even lottery tickets and every description of property to be

advertised for sale is so advertised :—So far as the revenue of the post-office of France, for example, is concerned, I have no doubt that that is greatly benefited by it ; but if we are to be subject to have them thrown in upon us from abroad at even a moderate charge, it will be a great inconvenience, for few of them would be relied on.”

Increase from
circulars.

Pre-payment, it is obvious, would protect the merchant against the infliction of postage for useless circulars, except those from abroad, but which, by the present post-office arrangements, can be inflicted by any inconsiderate person unchecked.

Circulars are valuable and important in nearly all trades ; they cannot well be enumerated, but the great mass of the whole would find their way into the post-office.

The first, and probably the most numerous, would be circulars exhibiting patterns, particularly of female dress and ornament ; and of all fancy articles : I will mention here two articles that would be permanently and largely productive of postage revenue, though that would be of even less importance than the advantage to commerce and the arts, and to trade in general—those of lace and of prints. Mr. Richard Cobden,* who has been examined before the parliamentary committee, but whose evidence is not yet published, had previously stated the facts to me, and has doubtless communicated the same to the parliamentary committee, produced a single pattern which he stated had undergone, in one season, seventy changes ; that those changes could not be described by words, with the precision requisite to enable a party to purchase, and they could not send them to their customers to ask their opinion and solicit their orders, except through the medium of a traveller ; but that if the postage were one penny, every one of these changes of the same pattern would be forwarded, and would give rise to additional correspondence. What would not the aggregate amount to, if one design only gave rise in its combinations to so many distinct patterns ?

Patterns.

It will be obvious, that upon each new invention or change in a pattern, the manufacturer would send patterns to every linen draper in all parts of the country, with whom he dealt or wished to deal ; and there are some in the trade who, if they could thus get to the eye of their customers, would employ additional assistants merely for cutting patterns and enclosing them in letters to those customers.

* Author of "Russia, By a Manchester Manufacturer," and of "England, Ireland, and America, By a Manchester Manufacturer."

increase from
regulars.

patterns.

The same facts apply to the lace and ribbon trade :—

The letters through the post-office with patterns, in the lace trade, would be very numerous. At present, that trade is not able to send their patterns to any thing like the extent that is requisite, owing to the serious amount of postage, if passed through the post-office. To them it is of immense importance, that their patterns should be transmitted and received by parties in all parts of the kingdom ; and in the English lace trade particularly this is desirable, because it is especially important that the great improvement which English manufactures have made in this article should be made familiar to those who have the old impression in favour of foreign lace.

It is important in this trade, that 200 or 300 various patterns should be transmitted even to the same dealer, for he has then an opportunity of adapting his stock to the wishes of his customers, of whose taste he, and he alone, generally speaking, can judge.

The extent to which this question of taste or fancy prevails, and descends, may be judged of by this anecdote, which was stated to me many years since, by a witness very extensively engaged in a fancy trade—the fact bore upon a question then about to be tried, and the witness was prepared to state it on oath, as illustrative of the opinion he was called upon, as a man of great experience in that business, to express. He had a large low-priced trade, that is, a large demand for cheap showy ribbons and prints ; such as are used by the poorer classes. He showed a box of ribbons which he thought would suit, from their price and colour, to a fish-woman ; she put them on one side, and very contemptuously said, “ They may do for a chimbley-sweep’s wife, sir ; but no respectable woman could wear ’em,” and a higher price ribbon was purchased. Whatever, therefore, descends to, and influences the masses in their choice, is a matter of great importance to the tradesman ; for all, from the highest to the lowest, from the importer or manufacturer, to the retailer, are in chase of the consumer : to that end, and to that end alone, the great hive are in motion.

Now if a single explanatory line be written with a pattern, it incurs a double postage, and this applies to Prices Current also. It will be but of little use, to allow the patterns to go for a penny, unless the manufacturer is allowed to communicate in writing what he has of the sort ; the terms he can do business upon ; the difference he can make in his offer,

if a large portion be taken, or if payment be made in cash; and the various inducements he can offer to a buyer.

Increase from
circulars.

Another great advantage of a low postage, in this fancy trade, would be, to diminish the probability of dead stock, which is a great source of loss to all manufacturers and dealers in fancy articles, particularly in articles of dress.

Patterns.

If a designer or manufacturer of a new pattern, could immediately and *simultaneously* submit it to the whole of his customers, he would be enabled to judge much more nearly of the quantity to be made; and frequently, such is the desire for novelty, the manufacturer would obtain in a short space of time, orders for double the amount he now gets, and thereby the *original designer* would get the just reward of his invention and skill; but now the slow process by which he is compelled to submit the new design to the knowledge of the trade, gives to pirates the opportunity, by rapid machinery, of fabricating the new pattern, and depriving the inventor of his natural and just reward. The rapidity of sale would enable him to produce another new pattern, and this motive, acting upon the whole of this school of artists, would encourage the arts of design, and give a degree of rapidity to their progress which is now unattainable.

Here, again, the effect would be to equalize facilities all over the country, and to give the extremities nearly the same facilities, which, as to all matters dependent upon early information, is confined to large towns. In some degree, too, it would contribute to equalize the value of landed property, and to promote the public health to a considerable extent. Those manufacturers whose machinery is of a kind that could be used without any absolute necessity for crowding together in large towns, are obliged to do so in order to be in the market, and within the path of the buyers; but this necessity would be in many branches considerably diminished by the proposed facility viewed in connexion with the great revolutionizers of human activity—steam power and rail-roads.

It should be remembered here, that if this facility of exhibiting patterns is opened, that there is hardly an article in which men deal, except liquids, which could not be shown, by engraving, or outline, by samples, or by small patterns, and of many articles, patterns would be fabricated or manufactured for the purpose. Even the making of patterns themselves, would introduce a considerable quantity of business. It is stated by large Manchester houses, that

Increase from
circulars.

they should employ additional hands for the sole purpose of cutting and forwarding patterns, such would be the extent of increase with them.

Scientific and
other exhibi-
tions.

Another considerable source of increase, from the number of persons that would resort to it, would arise from exhibitions of scientific and manufacturing skill, and the influence which such exhibitions would have in promoting the arts, by accustoming the eye to the best specimens of those arts, renders it very desirable that the proposed reduction of postage should be conceded. Manufacturers, who have extensive and splendid suits of show rooms, have written to the Mercantile Committee, urging the importance of inducing the public, and particularly strangers in England, to inspect the splendid stocks which the manufacturers of steel, and hardware, and useful and fancy articles of all kinds, are desirous to show, and which it is for the interests of the country they should make known.

There are manufacturers of eminence, capital, and spirit, who, at this time, whenever a foreigner of eminence is known to be in the country, conceiving it to be advantageous to the manufactures and trade of England, invite inspection of their splendid stocks, which are exhibited in a way to give the best and most imposing effect; and they occasionally despatch invitations to the nobility and gentry of the United Kingdom, and their families, for the same objects. If they could do this through the post-office at one penny, they would do it frequently, and to a great extent. They would exhibit all new articles as they came into being, and the influence this would have in spreading the reputation of England, considering the numbers who would find it to their interest so to display their warehouses, and the great extent to which tradesmen with large capitals will do this, would materially advance its commerce, and improve the public taste; in short, whatever spreads knowledge—and these exhibitions tend greatly so to do, for they are exhibitions of utility and not mere shows, and tend to fix distinct and valuable impressions in the minds of those who view them—is useful to the state.

The number of splendid manufactories that would thus be opened, would be very great, and the disposition which tradesmen have to exhibit their articles, and the extent to which they would do so, if they had an easy mode of inviting the attention of the wealthy, may be slightly illustrated by turning over the advertisements at the end of such works as Pigot's London and Birmingham Directories, where, al-

though they are useful, or they would not be paid for, they cannot be so effective with the pleasure-seeking and fashionable world, as invitations carried to their eye gratuitously, at those seasons of the year when all are in motion, and seeking such enjoyments and advantages; particularly during the school vacations, when education of this kind—and a most important part of education it is—is usually given. Increase from circulars.

There is hardly a description of manufactory to which this would not extend, nor a splendid nursery ground, or institution of any kind, dependent upon the voluntary support of the public, that would not be thrown open at such seasons, and give rise to post-paid invitations to the families of the nobility and gentry within fifteen or twenty miles around their localities. It is the great object of the proprietors to invite the presence and the eye of the wealthy, the scientific, the influential, and the young, and thus to induce an interest in the arts or things exhibited—the manufacturers and owners know that by the eye the taste is formed, and the disposition to promote the arts created and strengthened.

Much of the same argument applies to samples of drugs, seed, and all dry produce; samples would increase letters into the post-office to nearly the same extent; for although, as to fancy articles, a greater variety of patterns would be necessary, there could not, generally speaking, be a union in the same letter of different samples—for instance, samples of seed, and of sugar, and of drugs, would require that two or three different letters should be sent to the same parties. I remember observing to a broker in an extensive business, “Why you will be constantly sending a sample to your various customers;” he smiled, and answered, “A sample! yes, several of each article. I must necessarily, if I wished a man to purchase a lot of sugars, send him different samples. I could not mix them, and I should not hesitate to send four or six samples to a very large proportion of the persons for whom I act.” Samples.

An immense proportion of the produce of the country would be bartered in this way: it would be to the interest of every wholesale house to send the bulk equal to the sample, and to obtain the credit of exceeding rather than falling below it; and that once obtaining generally, and an enlightened self-interest would soon produce it, it would enable every retail dealer of credit and character to command the first stocks in the kingdom; and to offer the same selection of quality and variety to his several connexions, that could

Increase from
circulars.

be offered to them if they went to the largest and first house in the trade! This would soon be seen and felt by all; and would tend to confirm and extend that confidence in the integrity of each other, which so largely exists amongst men of business. It would also, as in the case of patterns, protect them against much of the loss they now sustain from old stock, by rendering it unnecessary to keep heavy stocks on hand.

Travellers' cir-
culars.

Another description of circulars that would largely increase the number of letters through the post-office, are circulars announcing the intended call of travellers to transact the business of their various principals. It is, as is well known, their custom to transmit a card or letter, partly written and partly printed, intimating the day on which they will be at a given town, and to forward a packet for each town to some friend in that town, or to "boots" at the inn, to be delivered a few days before. There are various reasons which render this an undesirable mode of intimating their call—it is uncertain that the party intrusted will execute the commission which is solicited as a favour; and it is a frequent case, that when they are intrusted to "boots," that though they are alleged to have been delivered, their receipt is denied by the customer, and the inconvenience and delay is frequently great.

There are 20,000 travellers in England, and it is a very low estimate indeed to say, that each traveller calls in the course of twelve months upon 1,000 persons, and as this would amount to little more than three persons every day, the moderation of this estimate will be obvious. It has been stated to me, that I should not over-estimate this number if I were to say, that each traveller calls upon five persons in a day; but take the original estimate, and suppose that each calls upon 1,000 persons in a year, this alone would give TWENTY MILLIONS of such letters into the post-offices. It may be—it probably is—that many such letters now get into the local penny posts; because in order to save the present heavy rates of postage, it is the practice in the travellers' room, for travellers not in the same business, to exchange their letters, as their respective routes may enable them to serve each other, and some are put into the local penny posts; but the mass of them are delivered, and the above low estimate leaves enough to cover the quantity which are so posted; but this practice imposed by the heaviness of the rates of postage is objectionable to many travellers, as it exposes to others their connexion, to which all men of

business are indisposed, for trade itself is a competition of the selfish principles ; and it has often happened that when letters of this kind have been intrusted to one who travelled in a different trade, that the party trusted meeting a more intimate friend on the road, travelling in the same trade as the one who had intrusted him, has shown the superscriptions, and the route of the confiding traveller has been anticipated, and he and his employers injured.

Increase from
circulars.

Again, as to travellers : Another source of increase of letters to and from head quarters, would arise, and this would be constant and increasing. His letters home are now deferred until he can fill them with orders and remittances ; but if postage were reduced to one penny, the principals would require their travellers to write once every day, whether they had orders to transmit or not, for it would enable them, for 6*d.* per week, to regulate and equalize their business of buying and packing at home, to receive orders and remittances forthwith—to know that a traveller was doing his duty equally on the road—to transmit fresh directions, patterns, and commissions to him, and to meet him on the road to adjust any difficulty, or to correct any negligence.

In trades requiring much packing, this would be an important saving of time, and the arrival of an order a few hours earlier, will often save whole days of delay, by enabling the house to send by the steamer, or boat, or van, in the earlier instead of the later part of the week.

I know I shall have the assent of every man of business, when I say, that there is no obscurity in a communication, or convenience, or difficulty on a business matter, which it is not worth while to remove or secure for one penny ; and that a traveller, clerk, or person, away from home on business, who did not write daily, would, as a general rule, be considered as negligent.

In the course of my inquiries I found, that travellers now write from three to four times on the average in a fortnight, and unless some difficulty or irregularity arises, that the communications to him from head quarters are not so frequent : here, therefore, would be a permanent and fruitful source of increase.

It is true, that if the facility and cheapness which Mr. Hill's plan would secure, should be conceded, that the necessity for travelling would in many instances be superseded ; but it is equally certain, that communications by the post would be substituted, that this will multiply letters very

Increase from
circulars

largely, and the orders which are now given to the traveller, would be transmitted to the house of business, and that the answers and correspondence arising out of them would largely increase.

Vintage circu-
lars.

Another extensive source of increase of circulars to the post-office, would arise in the wine and spirit trade. The Bourdeaux merchants send out, each of them, two or three thousand circulars at different periods of the year, with regard to the vintage, to the quality of their wines, and their prices. These they transmit to the importers of wine in this country, and they again transmit the same matter, or reproduce it in another form, to the various wholesale dealers. The brokers in that trade also forward circulars founded upon the knowledge which their agency and experience supplies, using the information supplied in part from the vintage circulars, and ultimately, they and the wholesale dealers would transmit, if a penny postage were established, their circulars to a very large class of the retail dealers in wine and spirits in the United Kingdom.

Then let it be considered that there are numerous wholesale houses in all parts of Great Britain, each having a circle of operation who themselves are desirous of transmitting circulars with their own names and views to their own connexions, and thus the information would ultimately travel to the smallest dealer, and that, profitably, to the government and to the parties.

The immense number of communications, valuable and important to all parties dealing in the article—the extensive circulation and equalization of information which this would give to the humblest in the trade, as to matters promoting or affecting their own interests, will, when these numbers are brought into view, and such motives are brought into action amongst them, enable us to justify the conclusion, that here again the increase will be very great.

Then let it be considered that there are the wine merchants of Spain and of Portugal, sending forth the same sort of information, and the importers, brokers, and wholesale dealers working out the same results, and the advantage to the public—the all-absorbing consumer—of giving to each tradesman the full knowledge of the circumstances influencing the price of the article in which he deals, and equalizing the stock of business intelligence, will present an aggregate justifying a conviction, that the revenue would be increased by reducing the rate of postage to one penny, and the public would be protected against any abuse of the

power of communication, by the provision, imposing the necessity of paying the postage of such communications. Increase from circulars.

In every way in which this subject is considered, it opens an increase to the general revenue ; it being impossible that the transactions of business should be multiplied without increasing the revenue by the consumption of duty-paid articles. The statement of Mr. Brooks, of the well-known firm of Brooks and Hedger, of Bond-street, land and estate agents and auctioneers, shows the modes by which the number of advertisements would be increased by a reduction of postage. Land agents and advertising.

I take first the case of land agents and auctioneers, an ever-active and intelligent body of men, anxious to avail themselves of every opening that presents itself ; and skilful in combining advantageously every just means of advancing and increasing business results. If they could frank their communications for one penny, there is hardly a land agent or auctioneer who would not establish a communication with most of the other respectable land agents, auctioneers, and professional men in the kingdom, and with most capitalists, with a view to spread a knowledge of the properties they each have for sale, or desired to purchase or hire, and the wants and wishes of their several employers. Mr. Brooks stated this in substance to the parliamentary committee ; but as this portion of the evidence is not reported to the house, I am precluded from giving it in the words in which he stated it to the committee ; but having had to take that statement previously, I may state its substance—the facts as to him being no longer secret.

The increase of letters into the post-office, at one penny postage, from their house, would be 20,000 in the shape of particulars of estates only. It is known to all, that many hundreds of thousands of particulars are printed by land agents and auctioneers in a year, for the purpose of distribution ; that it is their wish from a sense of duty to their employers, as it is their interest, that those particulars should be transmitted to persons known to be in the market as capitalists, as land agents, as solicitors for men of landed property, as speculators, or as men in the habit of communicating to those who are seeking investments.

This gentleman stated to the Mercantile Committee, a consequence flowing from the heavy rates of postage, and has since stated the same thing to the parliamentary committee, on the subject of advertisements ; which must not only be greatly injurious to the public press, as diminishing

Increase from
circulars.

Land agents
and advertis-
ing.

the number of advertisements, but occasion a great loss to the public revenue. One-half of their inducement to advertise is done away with ; for advertisers get nothing like the replies they would get, in consequence of the very expensive postage both ways.

It has become a necessity to say " letters must be post-paid," and that checks inquiries—parties will not go to the expense of two shillings for an inquiry and an answer ; and though anxious to have the particulars of property, and very likely to become purchasers, they decline sending for the particulars at the cost of one or two shillings ; and much property is, and many houses are, now lying unsold, and deteriorating in the hands of parties desirous to sell or let, although there are many persons who would desire to have that property, if they knew the thing they want to be in the market.

The more, said this gentleman, we advertise, the more government get in the way of revenue ; and the more they would get in postage, also, if it were reduced to a penny ; but it checks our disposition to advertise when we are obliged to add, that letters must be post-paid.—I should advertise ten times more than I now do, if postage were reduced to a penny, for I wish to induce inquiries.—I used to advertise some years since more largely than I now do ; and if postage were reduced to one penny, I should again advertise in the public papers far more extensively.—I am surprised at the small numbers of replies we have, and I should send in strings of 40, or 50, or 60 advertisements together, if I thought it consistent with the interests of my employers ; persons are unwilling now to write and incur the postage of a reply, and wait till they come to town ; and the inquiry dies, and the advertisements are comparatively fruitless.

This statement comes from one having experience to a very great extent, and whose house has so considerable a number of estates to sell, that he has adopted the plan of a Cosmorama to enable him to show in one room, views of the various important and extensive properties of which he has the disposition. The weight of his authority upon this subject, would be greatly increased if I were at liberty to state here the great extent of property which passes through his hands to sell and let. But the distribution of particulars through the post-office, at one penny to the extent of 20,000 per annum from this house alone, would not be the only source of increase from his, and from similar establish-

ments. It would, said he, be very much to our interest to communicate with our employers, and we should let the postage fall upon our own shoulders at one penny, if we could communicate with them at so low a rate, that they might know what we were doing for them; we should communicate with them periodically; and if places were let, it would be desirable that they should inform us immediately, as it would save parties from going down to view unnecessarily; we should pay the postage upon our particulars ourselves; we should not mind £200 or £300 a-year, in sending circulars only, at the rate of one penny; and there is not a property that would be advertised in the public papers, of which we would not at the expense of one penny write for the particulars, that we might submit those properties to such of our connexions as we thought them likely to suit. This would lead to postages both ways, and to letters to and from our employers. It is the interest of parties advertising to answer inquiries; and as they would get their inquiries post-paid, they would have protection against loss. We should not hesitate to enclose a frank for the answer. It is obvious, as an advertiser could send a hundred answers for less than ten shillings upon a subject on which he had an interest to reply, that a penny would be no practical impediment: the more he had to answer, the greater the chance of realizing his object.

Increase from circulars.

Land agents and advertising.

If these facts and reasons are thought to have weight, it is obvious that what this gentleman would do, every active and intelligent man in the same profession would also do; and the increase which would arise in this business, would be immense.

It is almost impossible to say the extent to which this would not go. It would be to the interest of land agents in every principal town in the kingdom, to aggregate information relative to property in transit, for their own use; and the various arrangements for communication with each other that would flow out of such a facility, when presented to intelligent men of business habits, can hardly be fully anticipated.

That it would lead to classified lists of persons to whom each would desire to communicate, and to the communications as a consequence, is obvious.

When a land agent is instructed to dispose of a property, his desire and his interest is to communicate to all other respectable land agents, and persons likely to become purchasers, that he is so instructed, with a view to obtain a

Increase from
circulars.

Land agents
and advertis-
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purchaser ; and the knowledge which correspondence would necessarily create, would establish the respectable and trust-worthy in the confidence of each other, and lead to the realization of the wishes of their employers with a facility and rapidity which is now altogether unattainable.

The particulars are now nearly half lost, they send them to inns for distribution, and they have the mortification of knowing that more than one-half of all they send are wasted to them and their employers.

Other land agents and auctioneers in London write as follows :—

“ We are in the habit of sending parcels of particulars to the inns in the vicinity of the property for sale, these, in nine cases out of ten, are wasted, being usually laid upon the bar for the first comers to take up at discretion, and without knowledge of, or view to purchase the property ; if the postage was one penny, all application at inns would, most probably, come to us direct, as neither applicant nor auctioneer would hesitate about the postage.

“ We have innumerable personal applications for particulars, from parties who decline leaving their address, that they may not incur postage. We should not hesitate forwarding them in stamped covers.”

This then is the effect of the heavy rates of postage upon auctioneers. Advertising is largely diminished, because the advertisers themselves, although their object is to raise inquiries, are obliged to notify that an inquiry must be post-paid.

The language of the fiscal laws to the public on this subject, is practically this,—You wish to proclaim your desire to sell property, and to induce parties to inquire after it. You shall not do so, unless you pay a heavy fine for leave to advertise your wants and your wishes, to induce other men to inquire after that property ; but although you have paid us a heavy tax for leave to do so, other men shall not be at liberty to make the inquiry of you, unless they also pay another tax for making the inquiry which we had authorized you to raise.

The suppressive effects upon science and the arts of the heavy rates of postage have been mentioned. There are various societies existing whose objects can only be effectually promoted by eliciting from the operatives in the various branches of science and the arts, the knowledge which hourly familiarity with practical subjects has supplied to their minds. The operatives are engaged in working out

Suppressive
effects on
science.

the principles of science ; and though they may not always connect the theory or principles with the practice, still they are constantly marking coincidences by which they learn what *is*, and frequently are enabled of themselves to trace causation, and where they cannot, they can supply the facts by which other minds may be enabled to trace the cause, and thus enlarge the stock of science and open new fields of activity. The improvements in the mechanical arts have in many, I may say in most cases, resulted from the observations of the working artisan, but the heavy rates of postage have prevented the most effectual mode of drawing forth and reaping for society, the produce of their experience : their knowledge in multitudes of cases dies with them, because their education does not enable them to convey their knowledge to educated men of science, who could use their facts and carry forward the results of the great teacher—experience.

Increase from
circulars.

Suppressive
effects on
on science.

The Institution of Civil Engineers are anxious to work the mine of knowledge, possessed by the operatives of the kingdom ; they associate for the purpose, not only of discussing known facts, but of obtaining the knowledge of new ; and for this purpose, upon all subjects in which fuller knowledge is thought likely to exist, they know where it is most likely to be found, and are anxious to promote the circulation of questions amongst each other, and amongst the operatives engaged in particular trades or manipulations, and to elicit the contributions of experience, though proceeding from the uneducated : they know that the fact is not varied by the diction, and that there are amongst the operatives men of sound comprehension and inquiring minds—steady thinkers. Indeed the intellectual seed is scattered amongst men with the same profusion that Providence supplies it for our physical wants :—this has been shown whenever revolutions or any great exciting cause has thrown masses of men into new positions.

Institution of
Civil Engi-
neers.

It has been found by those who have communicated with the working classes upon subjects which occupy their attention, that though their limited education does not enable the mass to write essays, they can convey facts, answer questions, and give reasons : that they can effectually assist in constructing the compass of facts by which the helmsman should steer ; and they are perfectly willing to do so, when questions are so framed as to raise the points inquired after, with that clearness and distinctness, with which educated science can convey its mind to the less instructed.

Civil engineers

It is a suggestion frequently made by those who know human character, to talk with men upon subjects which they understand, if you wish to please them, and inform yourself. This advice has resulted from the observed willingness to communicate: it is a product of the social principle—of that impulse which urges men into society; and is one of the multitude of mixed impulses, by which the selfish and social principles are blended in the human compound, and made to work out the individual and social good.

Indeed, as to men's willingness to give information, it is characteristic of knowledge to desire to communicate, and to extend; and this disposition acts alike upon the literate and unlettered.

Society of
Civil Engi-
neers, and sup-
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on their opera-
tions.

The Society of Civil Engineers has been in the habit of preparing questions on points upon which valuable information connected with the objects of their association could be procured, for the purpose of despatching them to those most likely to possess it; but their useful activity has been—though not actually suppressed—deprived of its fruitfulness by the heavy rates of postage.

I will mention here a few instances in one year, in which it was desirable to circulate such questions and to obtain information. It was of great importance in discussing the subject of cements, and the manufacture of artificial cements, to ascertain the nature of cements in different parts of the country, and how they were compounded, and the proportions of the ingredients. Information could not be obtained upon these subjects without writing to a great number of parties. It is obvious that in such cases the information to be obtained must be sought at those places where God has placed the gift, and from those engaged in working it. Again, the subject of rail-roads interested the society—as indeed what society have they not interested. All the data and facts relating to the wear and tear of locomotives and of rail-roads, the different speeds of engines, and the general details on that subject, would have given rise to another large class of questions, which the institution would have had pleasure in distributing to the immense numbers of engineers and persons engaged in those branches of science.

Another subject was, the strength of materials for buildings. The strength of iron and wooden beams, and, in connexion with these, a most important question, upon which there exists a great difference of opinion, as to the

deflections for given weights. Different opinions exist as to the amount of deflections, and as to the manner in which they ought to be observed. Civil engineers

Again, the generation of steam, and the quantity of steam that could be produced by a given quantity of coals, and as to the elastic force of steam.

Another class of questions it was desirable to circulate, was, as to the duty of engines, especially of the Cornish engines, that is, the work done by a given quantity of fuel;—that question includes a great number of details, and which details had never been properly investigated, and can only be investigated with the fulness desirable by circulating questions extensively amongst those constantly engaged on the various matters to which the questions have reference.

It was also desirable to send questions on the subject of blasting rocks, the quantity of powder requisite for a given quantity of stone, and as to the quantity for different stones, coal, and slate; and also to iron masters, as to the friction of air and gas in pipes: but these do not form a title of the matter suppressed; indeed, when mind is suppressed, the product, which would have arisen, cannot be estimated.

If it were not for the high rate of postage, the institution would constantly frame questions, and send them by post. There are a great number of non-resident members. The efficacy of the institution depends entirely upon its correspondence with those non-resident members. The members in London, or the residents, have, few of them, means of giving information; the manufacturers in London are very few; but the non-residents are the leading men of the great manufactories throughout the country; they have the means of giving information, and would give it when addressed by queries in a letter.

The following is an illustrative extract from the valuable evidence of their active and intelligent Secretary;*— Examination of
Mr. Webster.

“*By Mr. Wood.*—Do you think the avocations of your non-resident members would permit their replying to queries to any great extent?—Yes, the habits and occupations of the non-resident members are such that they cannot write treatises, but if letters were sent containing detailed questions, which they might answer by the side, they would do that. I have brought here the first half-sheet of the minutes we have sent out this year; this subject was dis-

* Thomas Webster, Esq.

Civil engineers
Examination of
Mr. Webster.

cussed—the friction of an engine; a great number of different opinions were maintained upon that point. The institution would have sent out questions of this sort. Give the dimensions of any engine with which you are acquainted; what is the friction of such engine? That would have been answered by the side, and returned. There are a great many non-resident members whose occupations would not have permitted their writing any formal essay, but who would have put a pen to paper, and sent back, on the same side, an answer to the questions contained. We have no communication whatever with the non-resident members, simply on account of the high rate of postage.

“*Viscount Lowther.*—Have you made an estimate of the number of letters you should send out at a low rate of postage?—I have; I will confine myself to the non-residents. It has generally been the practice to send by the post to each non-resident once a year; we have about 200 non-residents; they would be sent to, I believe, 30 times a year, at a penny postage. I will give the reasons for assigning that number; we have about 20 meetings in the year; at each of those meetings questions for discussions arise, and I believe the institution would direct circular letters to be sent to the non-residents on those subjects; that is to say, they would direct a series of questions to be framed for every meeting; the minutes would likewise be sent out. I conceive the other communications by letter would be about *two*, making the communications in general to non-residents 30 times a year instead of only once. I have not included the residents in that calculation; they are generally sent to now by hand, but there would be 100 residents sent to 30 times a year by the penny post, with the exception of those living in the neighbourhood, who probably would be sent to still by hand.

“*Mr. Wood.*—Who do you conceive would pay the postage to the society?—The members. They would not consider that a tax. They would be most happy now to give information, if they could do it without interference with their occupations; but those of the greatest eminence are so occupied they have not the time, and very often not the education, to write and to give information in distinct treatises. The consequence is, that information is not obtained; and it can be obtained only through the queries of an institution like this.

“*Viscount Lowther.*—How many members have you?—About three hundred.

Mr. Wood.—Is the scientific information which your society is anxious to obtain likely to be serviceable to the progress of the arts, and the comfort of mankind?—Certainly; the publication and circulation of those questions and those minutes would show the artisans throughout the country what was wanted. The great difficulty which every person who is pursuing any investigation now has to contend with, is, to know what is wanted; and sending out a set of queries from an institution like this, would call attention to the particular facts on which information is required. I consider that the society is crippled for want of ability to communicate with the non-residents generally.

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Chairman.—Would it not be a great benefit to young artists to have an opportunity of receiving, at a lower rate, the knowledge of what was going on in such a society?—A very great benefit. The young artists are more able to assist in some departments than any other persons. One great object of the institution is to collect drawings and documents connected with the manufactures of the country. The younger men would have their masters' permission to make such drawings, and such collection of facts; and to be able to communicate with these young men, and to put them into connexion with the institution, at a cheap rate, would be one of the greatest means of advancing the knowledge of science.

Mr. Wood.—Are the arts, connected with science and civil engineering, at present in a state of rapid and progressive development?—I conceive that they are improving, and that they will receive further advancement in proportion as the facilities for collecting knowledge are increased: the great difficulty and great impediment which exists in this country now is to concentrate the knowledge of facts possessed in various parts of the kingdom; THE MASS OF KNOWLEDGE POSSESSED BY THE MANUFACTURERS OF THE NORTH IS QUITE INCONCEIVABLE: there are a number of men there of great intelligence: and any one acquainted with the character of our engineers knows that they are men whose genius has brought them to that situation: they are not in general men of education; they have been all carrying on investigations on their own account, and they possess immense masses of facts which, if they could be concentrated, would tend rapidly to the settlement of points about which little is now known. It is from workmen, or persons a little above them, we mostly want practical information. There are no facilities for a communication

Civil engineers of knowledge, and the result is, that there is no attempt made to collect and concentrate the knowledge distributed in different manufactories. I believe, that after a few years, the mass of matter which would be collected by this institution is inconceivable; the sending notes of this kind and queries, and getting answers to them, would lead to the accumulation of facts in every department of science."*

Examination of Mr. Webster.

Advantages from shortening correspondence and saving of time.

Another advantage of Mr. Hill's plan would be to shorten correspondence and save time and labour, which is here mentioned, on account of its value to scientific and all other professional men. The value of the time and labour that may be saved, has hardly been contemplated. In many instances when this has been spoken of, it has been supposed to mean diminishing the number of letters, instead of the quantity of matter.

Now if the envelope were allowed to circulate equally with stamped paper and vignette stamps, the shortening of correspondence with all branch establishments, and with masters and servants, superintendents and workmen, who are constantly sending inquiries and communications backwards and forwards, would be immense. This can be best illustrated by supposing the charge by weight and envelopes in use, and the questions to be written in the forms here supposed.

How many inches did you say were to be left, breadth and depth?

Seven.

You don't distinguish length and breadth?

7 in. deep, 9 in. broad.

Where shall you be on Wednesday?

Windsor.

Say how much you have drawn, and in how many drafts?

£20.

But you don't say how many drafts.

Two £10 each.

The questions and replies, which are printed in italics, show the supposed omissions in the answers, and the few words by which the omission is supplied.

To surveyors, to architects, to all persons having the superintendence of large establishments, and having numbers of workmen, subordinates or co-operators, with whom to communicate, or to guide, advise, or direct, this would

supply advantages not easily over-estimated; for time is money, "it is the stuff that life is made of," and if the two addresses be printed, one on each side the envelope, the questions and answers may be sent backwards and forwards in the same envelope, and even more than once each way, by using the vignette stamp upon the third and subsequent occasions, which may be applied with the same ease that fancy wafers are now applied: this, however, would not be so very important, but would be economical; and, in the case of branch establishments, would, as the address is always the same, be very useful.

Shortening correspondence.

And let it be considered with regard to this mode of correspondence, that several independent slips for different men at the same works or factories, could be enclosed in one frank, and that each of the head men of a department in a large manufactory could report daily upon all the details of the various orders, or business, under his direction or control, to the superintendent of the department, or to the directing man at head quarters, and that the whole could keep up a continual stream of communication, upon which the superior could express his opinion and give his directions in a few words; and when rail-roads come into being, this could be done twice or thrice in 24 hours. It will be most valuable, where there are immense numbers of particulars to be collected, and questions to be answered, and where the regulating mind must necessarily know the whole before the directions are given.

This will be applicable to all engineers, surveyors, architects, master manufacturers, foremen, superintendents, partners having branch establishments, and all desirous to be present in mind, and to suggest and direct.

At present, if an inferior desires to report to his principal, and sits down to address him, he does not know—he cannot know—the precise questions that the principal would ask, and he therefore has to occupy an hour, perhaps more, in giving a long, circuitous statement; whereas, if the facility of questions and answers were given, the necessity for taking the man out of his business, or compelling him to sit up late at night, in order to make this report, would be in a great measure removed, and two or three communications would be had daily instead of one or two in a week. This may be applied to hospitals also, where it is of immense advantage that the head surgeons and physicians should be advised with, and consulted upon any change in the state of critical cases.

Shortening cor-
respondence.

The master-mind can then be brought to bear upon the subject, and bearing in mind that the instances supposed are the ever-occurring instances of each day, and every hour of each day, the advantage, particularly in towns where hourly deliveries will be established, will be immensely important to the post-office.

But a large mass of these reports would be required, even where directions were not absolutely needed, merely for the satisfaction of those bearing the responsibility. Men charged with grave responsibilities like to have reports, if it be merely to tell them that nothing is going wrong.

Hearing that Colonel Colby, who has the direction of the survey of Great Britain and Ireland, used this mode of communication, the Mercantile Committee applied to him to give evidence of its facilities, and that gentleman was kind enough to communicate the great advantages flowing from it; and, at the request of the Mercantile Committee, to give evidence before the parliamentary committee; and his evidence will be reported.

Now let us suppose that this facility had been possessed by the Society of Arts, and by Mr. Aikin their secretary, during the many years which he has rendered his valuable services to that society, instead of a volume of valuable matter once in the year, born out of due time, and, therefore, although it is valuable, falling still-born from the press, we should have had, during the season when men were assembling upon the subject of science, and when their minds were in activity on this subject, and their opinions in collision, weekly reports of the living product; and the utility of the society would have been immensely extended.—It would not have been reserved to 1838 to establish the first statistical periodical. The science of national economy would have been greatly advanced; and unless it were possible to know the extent of our loss, from not having discovered that which might, under other arrangements, have been discovered, we can only imagine what it may have been, by considering what our loss would have been if the power and application of steam had not been discovered.

To open the post-office is to bring forth the stream of intellect, and will be to science what light and air are to vegetation.

Suppressive ef-
fects on religi-
ous and educa-
tional efforts.

It would often be highly important, with reference to religious and educational purposes, to address the dissenting ministers of the country as well as the clergy; but although there is a dissenting minister in nearly every parish in the

kingdom, there are no means of knowing his name, so as to address him, as a resident religious and moral teacher, although it would often be highly important.

Suppressive effects on religious and educational efforts.

The clergyman and overseer of the establishment can be addressed officially, but letters cannot now be addressed to the dissenting ministers in each parish or place where there is a chapel, and under present arrangements, it is, perhaps, as well for him that he is thus protected from the infliction of postage; but let it be supposed, that a penny postage, and the just protection of pre-payment, were obtained, and lists prepared and published periodically of the names of the various dissenting ministers in England, and being then needed, they would soon be published, what immense advantages would result. A mode of cheap organization would be presented to the dissenting interest in England, and to the ministers and members of every religious body. The facility with which they might be appealed to in aid of any good work, and with which they might direct their efforts simultaneously, will be obvious;—they will be protected by pre-payment of letters against involuntary expense, and their periodical reports to a common centre, of the religious progress of their several circles or circuits, will be most advantageous and useful;—how readily this will enable them to promote Sunday schools and their other educational and interesting social objects! and wherever the good and the careful might see the bad and improvident working moral injury, they could consult those to whom they look for counsel and aid, and bring their united judgment and efforts to bear against the mischief. They could have, readily, easily, and cheaply—and to men with their limited incomes and deep obligations to train their families intellectually and with habits of respectability, this last is an important consideration—they could have, readily, easily, and cheaply, the knowledge of the movements in their own religious circle; and the great advantage to every one in connexion, of having, with certainty and ease, recent and cheap news upon those subjects in which he takes a deep interest, and of which he may himself be said to form a part, need only be brought into view, to be admitted.

Now, if any communication is desired with reference to great general objects, the clergyman of the parish can be addressed by the bishop, or by the government, and the advantage of unity of action, as well as of interest, is properly secured; and with a cheap postage, the same

Suppressive effects on religious and educational efforts.

facility could be readily brought into action amongst every body of religionists, by which the same unity of purpose and movement, for any common object, could be realized for or by them.

It is a maxim often quoted, that when bad men conspire, good men should combine. I advert to this maxim, not for the purpose of applying the adjectives to those who resist the reduction of postage, but for the purpose of using the idea, changing its terms, and saying, that when men, ignorant of the injury they inflict, and of the good they suppress, resist a reduction so important to religious and moral progression, so calculated to strengthen the hands and the influence of the wise and the good in their peaceful war against ignorance and error—good men should unite to obtain it.

It is known that the Society of Friends are constantly referring in their yearly advices, and in their advices of discipline, to the subject of evading the laws and defrauding the revenue; yet the leaders and the deeply sincere men amongst them, must be painfully impressed with the conviction that the practice of evading postage is generally prevalent, and that their disciplinary admonitions are, I cannot say wholly—I know it is not wholly; but—generally, ineffective in this particular.

The injury does not end in the mere departure in this instance from those advices; for public opinion, from the highest to the lowest, is habitually arrayed against this law, and the injury to their disciplinary influence would be but comparatively slight in this instance, because the act of conveying a letter is not wrong in itself—it is but speaking to a friend at a distance—but it is an injury to the influence of their principles, and to the just influence of those they invest with authority, when any society, particularly any religious body, get into the habit of neglecting those advices which they publicly profess to reverence; and which advice, and that it may be the result of experience and knowledge, all the machinery of their moral and religious discipline is intended to bring forth with the authority and weight due to those elders who owe their position to the love and respect of their brethren; and their authority, as instructors, to that system of discipline to which the members voluntarily give their assent as good and wise. The same reasoning applies to all other bodies. I have been led to allude respectfully to this body in particular, because their disciplinary arrangements are more obviously before

the public, and the only one of that body in parliament * is an anxious and active member of the Parliamentary Committee on Postage.

The injurious effects of the heavy rates of postage, upon the exertions of those who associate for the promotion of religion, are as great as upon these who associate for purposes of science; and particularly upon those important societies, who send forth missionaries, and seek to spread the Scriptures, and the knowledge of the gospel; they are not only restricted from frequent communications of encouragement and advice to their missionaries, but from receiving their reports, which it is very desirable should be collected from all parts of the globe. It is a matter peculiarly painful to the friends and active agents of these associations, that when those reports come to them from abroad, they are attended with such heavy rates of postage as to compel them to leave them to be destroyed in the post-office.

On religious societies.

A letter from one of the officers of The Religious Tract Society says—

Religious Tract Society.

“The correspondence of this institution extends to every part of the world; and we have been particularly inconvenienced by the charge on the printed reports of our foreign auxiliaries, which seldom exceed two, but are more frequently contained in one sheet of paper, put in an envelope open at both ends, and brought free of expense by the vessels from abroad; these are, with the letters, placed in the post-office bag, and reach us with a charge of from SIX OR SEVEN SHILLINGS, UP TO EIGHT OR NINE POUNDS for inland postage of parcels, whose intrinsic value does not exceed *one or two shillings*; the consequence is, the packet is refused, and the waste paper is all the government obtain—and thus the intercourse between kindred societies is paralysed.”

The effects of these suppressive rates are not witnessed by the many subscribers to these various and useful institutions, but it is matter of great regret to its executive officers to see the efforts that are made, and the usefulness of the society, so grievously suppressed—the extent to which this suppression goes, is shown in some degree by the examination of one of the officers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts

That gentleman stated, that the society had drawn upon them annually, about 700 half-yearly bills from missionaries for their salaries; that the expense of postage was

* Mr. Pease.

very great ; and that when appointed secretary, and he had once seen the hand-writing of each missionary, he sent them a circular, that they need not in future advise the drawing of their bills. Now if a communication so essential to accuracy, and which would also present the opportunity to the missionaries to make a report of their exertions, was suppressed, it is easy to conceive how the interest would tend to die away between men at a distance, whose communications are thus restricted ; but, on the other hand, imagine an active and intelligent body of upwards of 300 of such men, encouraged to make such reports as might reasonably be expected from men of their intelligence, and with such duties, and all those reports coming to a common centre ; and the mass of valuable and various knowledge that would be brought together, may be in some degree conceived.

Then let the number of other associations and subscribers be brought to view, all engaged in the prosecution of the same general objects, and the mass of useful materials that would thus be collected, and the extent to which the spread of the gospel is limited, may be perceived.

The increase into the post-office, from these societies, may be estimated in some degree by the facts stated by the under-treasurer of the last-named society. That society has from 12,000 to 15,000 subscribers ; they have 300 branch societies ; they now make a report once a year, but they are desirous to report oftener, and would do so if they had the advantage of a penny postage.

“ We have attempted,” said Mr. Saintsbury, “ the plan of issuing a quarterly report ; a brief statement of the operations of the society, and extracts from its correspondence. We should probably do that monthly, if we could do it without any great expense—the principal cost being the cost of transmission. Such brief statements, in the majority of instances, we should send by post : at present we send the major part of them by coach parcels. I have no hesitation in saying, that we should employ the post-office for all except about ten or twelve parcels.”*

It will be obvious to all who take an interest in these objects, that the reduction of postage to one penny would lead to frequent reports to their subscribers and friends, and that a continuous steady interest might be kept up, which would render the important annual meetings that now take place more effective, by bringing their friends together,

* Report, p. 371.

with a fuller knowledge of the exertions that have been made. Frequent short reports would be read: thick annual volumes are not.

The annual meetings at present may be rather considered as annual impulses,—important and valuable, but still far from giving that great and steady power which they would do, if the organization and interest that might be kept up during the year, through the post-office, with profit to the government, were permitted.

The evidence of Mr. Watson, Secretary to the Sunday School Union, will be found, when published, to carry out the testimony of Mr. Saintsbury.

As to the certain increase that would result, from the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan, I need only direct attention to facts furnished by the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester, through Mr. Cobden, the extensive manufacturer:—By Glasgow, communicated to the Mercantile Committee by Mr. Thomas Davidson, and who has since been examined before the Parliamentary Committee:—By witnesses from other large manufacturing towns who were examined by the Committee without reporting their names, on account of the extensive disclosures of illicit conveyance which they established:—By Mr. D. Mc Laren, the Treasurer of the City of Edinburgh, who has been since examined before the Parliamentary Committee:—By Wm. Brown, Esq. of Liverpool, and Wm. Maury, Esq., the late President and now Treasurer of the American Chamber of Commerce at Liverpool, all of whom establish the extensive evasion of the postage tax, induced by its excessive amount; and this evasion is of course of letters *now written*. It is important that this should be noticed, because, as an increase of five-fold and a half is enough to sustain the revenue, it establishes, that, if the postage be reduced to a penny universally, a price at which, at least until rail-road and steam communication be much more complete, the smuggler cannot successfully compete, there can be no rational ground to fear a diminished revenue.

Certain increase from commercial correspondence.

I have already referred to portions of the evidence of Mr. Dillon as to the practice existing in London; the evidence of Mr. Brankston of Leaf, Coles & Co., and of Mr. Pearson of Stanton's Wharf, already published; the statement of Mr. Deacon the public carrier; of Mr. Mc Kewen, the manager under W. J. Hall & Co. of the Custom House and Wool Quays, confirmed by Mr. Thomas Griffin, of Beale's Wharf; all of whom have since been examined be-

fore the Parliamentary Committee, put the universality of this practice beyond all question ; indeed the universality of the practice is so generally known to commercial men, that if it were not for the purpose of showing the *ascertained extent* to which it is carried, I should not enter further upon this subject.

In Manchester and Glasgow, means were taken to ascertain the average proportion between the letters which were sent otherwise than by the post, and those which were actually sent through the post-office.

The Manchester Chamber of Commerce sent 400 copies of the following letter, soliciting information of the requisite facts :—

" Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures,
Manchester, 29th March, 1838.

" SIRs,—In compliance with the recommendation of the special general meeting of this Chamber, held on the 22nd instant, the Board of Directors has appointed a sub-committee to inquire into the facts illustrative of the plan of post-office reform suggested in Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet. I have been instructed, by that sub-committee, to forward to you the questions on the other side, in the hope that you will favour them with replies, attested by your own signature or that of your firm, and addressed to me. I am further directed to assure you, that any information which you may communicate shall not be divulged in any way, as relating to individuals ; that in no case shall the names of parties giving information be laid before the sub-committee itself ; that the secretary alone shall inspect the returns ; and the results only shall be extracted by him in a collective and tabular form."

The questions were :—

First—" What number of letters, invoices and circulars included, do you send weekly by post ?" Secondly, " How many otherwise than by post ?" Thirdly, " How many do you avoid writing, on account of the expense of postage ?" Fourthly, " What number would you send by post were the rate of postage to all parts of the United Kingdom reduced to the uniform charge of 1*d.* per letter, with more frequent transmissions ; or would your number be increased at all ?"

It will be obvious, that a general disinclination to answer questions of this kind would exist, because the parties might have subjected themselves to a ruinous number of penalties ; but so heavy is the tax, and so great the con-

vidence placed by the merchants and manufacturers of Manchester, in the gentlemen composing the Chamber of Commerce, that to 400 of these letters they obtained no less than seventy-three returns, containing the requisite particulars, although each house was thereby furnishing evidence against itself; and the Chamber of Commerce taking the facts for the purpose of putting them in evidence, without injuring the writers, directed their secretary to fulfil the terms of their circular letter. Those letters were sent to the most respectable houses in Manchester: the result of the whole showed an extent of evasion quite incredible, until the evidence established it.

Evidence from
Manchester.

The result of the whole is, that the increase would be five and two-thirds-fold.

“Our rule is,” says one writer, “never to send by post when we can avoid it.” “We ourselves,” is the reply of another, “remit £180,000 to £200,000 per annum by post, in sums varying from £50 to £2,000, for which remittances we receive no acknowledgments, owing to the expense of postage.” A third party says, “I do not doubt that four-fifths of the correspondence between Manchester and Liverpool is carried on by private hand. I often go down to Liverpool, and every trip I bring and take for my friends pockets full of letters.” Another says, “Many of our customers have continued for many years to send their letters to us by private hand—coachmen, guards, or travellers. On reference to our books, we have taken out one instance of many, in which an individual during the last seven years has sent us 170 orders and 139 remittances, and in no instance through the post.” A bookseller says, “In almost every coach-parcel which I receive, packets of letters are enclosed for individuals in this neighbourhood totally unconnected with my branch of trade. Every traveller, whether from a publisher or stationer, has his advice letters forwarded through a bookseller’s parcel; and I have frequently received as many as thirty or forty at a time, all of which would be sent by post if it were reduced to the sum contemplated by Mr. Hill in his pamphlet.” “We know a firm six miles from Manchester,” writes one party, “who enclose in parcels 300 circulars, letters, invoices, &c. per week. An account was also sent to us of a rail-road company, the directors of which had availed themselves of a newspaper as a medium of circulating their half-yearly report, a copy of which was thus sent to each proprietor, and the cost of postage saved.”

Evidence from
Manchester.

It is the general opinion of the writers of those seventy-three replies, that a great increase would arise in the mercantile correspondence of the country, were the postage reduced to one penny. There is a very strong expression of feeling on that point; though the aggregate is stated to be five and two-thirds-fold, there is no doubt the increase would be much greater. In many cases, that is stated in a strong manner.

It is said if the postage were reduced to a uniform rate of one penny, one individual would send 1,500 letters a week, whereas he now sends only 100. Another says he should frequently send 500 to 1,000 in a day, containing tickets to exhibitions. The answers from three other houses concur in the singular statement, that they should give employment to an additional assistant in enclosing new patterns to their customers throughout the kingdom. Another answer from a house in the fancy trade predicts, that it would increase its correspondence one hundred-fold; and one house gives a very strong opinion, which I will give in the writer's own words,—“We should consider a general reduction of the rates of postage to one penny as one of the greatest boons which could possibly be conferred on the trading interest; indeed, if we were asked what favour as mercantile men we should desire from government, we should not hesitate a moment to desire the change proposed as one of almost equal importance, but of greater safety, than even the repeal of the Corn Laws.”

Evidence from
Glasgow.

A committee of the Glasgow Town Council appointed to inquire into the expediency of reducing the present rates of postage, took the same means for ascertaining the extent of the practice existing in Glasgow—they communicated their report to the London committee; and I cannot do better than insert the report which that committee made to the Town Council, and the statistical statement at the end, by which the carefulness of their investigation, and the certain increase that would flow from the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan, will be evidenced.

Report of Glas-
gow Town
Council.

“*Report of the Committee of the Glasgow Town Council, appointed to inquire into the expediency of Reducing the Present Rates of Postage.*”

“The plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill, in the pamphlet recently published by him, is, that all letters weighing not more than half an ounce be charged *1d.*, and

that for heavier packets 1*d.* be charged for every additional half ounce to a quarter of a pound.

Evidence from
Glasgow.

Report of
Town Council.

“ After a careful consideration of the subject, we are convinced that a reduction in the rates of postage, to the extent proposed, would be attended with important benefits to the public; and that such reduction, so far from diminishing the revenue, would tend, in the long run, by increasing the amount of business, to augment it. It has been ascertained, that the average postage of every chargeable letter, agreeably to the existing rates, is 6½*d.*, and, consequently, that it would require an increase in the number of post letters to the extent of six and a half-fold to make up the amount of revenue at present collected. Were the rates of postage reduced to 1*d.*, it appears to us to be a fair calculation that the amount of correspondence through the medium of the post-office would be increased at least *ten-fold*. The law of postage, as it at present stands, is felt to press so heavily, that it is daily evaded to an enormous extent, without the smallest compunction, by every class of the community. In prosecuting our inquiries, we have obtained returns of letters sent and received, *during one month*, by a number of mercantile houses engaged in different branches of business in Glasgow—such as wholesale warehousemen, wholesale grocers, spirit merchants, &c., and we find that in one of these the number of letters and other communications received and sent otherwise than by post amounted to 2,656; while the number received and sent by post amounted to about 833, or about a fourth part of the total number. In a second house, in a different line of trade, the number of letters and other communications received and sent otherwise than by post amounted to 1,123; while the number received and sent by post was 68, or about an eighteenth part of the total number. In a third house the number of letters and other communications received and sent otherwise than by post was 804; while the number received and sent by post was only 12, or about a sixty-eighth part of the total number. In a fourth house the number of letters and other communications received and sent otherwise than by post amounted to 415; while the number received and sent by post was 55, or about a ninth part of the total number. And in a fifth house the number of letters and other communications received and sent otherwise than by post amounted to 2,145; while the number by post was only 142, or about a sixteenth of the total number.

Evidence from
Glasgow.

Report of
Town Council.

“ We have learned also that in every department of business and among every class of the community, the same system of evading the postage of letters is universally and extensively practised. Were the postage of letters reduced to *1d.*, the temptation to evade the law would be removed, and the immediate consequence would be, that the greater part of the communications which are at present transmitted by irregular channels would pass through the post-office. The actual *amount* of such correspondence, also, would be prodigiously increased; and in particular, there would be a very great increase in the number of letters relating to the sale or purchase of goods, sending invoices, accounts, and remittances—letters of advice, of inquiry, or of explanation—letters pointing out or supplying errors or omissions in orders or directions—letters to secure accuracy and expedition—notices of the calls of travellers, and so on—the greater part of which, were the postage reduced to *1d.*, would pass through the post-office. There would also be a great increase in the number of post circulars containing lists of prices current, specifications of stock on hand, and inquiring or advising about the state of markets; and such circulars at present are either not written at all, or but rarely written, on account of the postage. There would further be a very great increase in the number of post circulars and communications of every kind, from every description of persons engaged in business or requiring to solicit the notice of the public, such as from bankers, accountants, law agents, tradesmen, insurance agents, brokers, auctioneers, managers of public institutions of a charitable, religious, literary, or scientific nature, booksellers, publishers, and others. There would be a great increase, too, in family or domestic correspondence between relatives and friends, living in distant places; and on this point, it is a subject of common remark, that among people in ordinary or humble circumstances, the present high rates of postage form almost a complete bar to friendly correspondence.

“ It is worthy of remark, that much inconvenience is at present experienced in mercantile houses by the receipt of letters through common carriers or other irregular country channels. Orders for goods are usually brought by carriers in the forenoon, and requiring to be fulfilled by the return of the carrier in the afternoon, accompanied by invoices or letters. Or parties come to town from a distance to make purchases, and requiring their purchases to be made up, and the invoices and accounts prepared, before

they quit town—probably in a few hours. Much annoyance is thus occasioned, which would be almost altogether avoided were the postage made so cheap as to enable merchants to transmit the invoices and correspondence by post, in place of along with the goods, or otherwise.

Evidence from Glasgow.

Report of Town Council.

“On taking a general view, then, of the whole subject, we are decidedly of opinion, that a reduction of the existing rates of postage to one penny would afford facilities of a very important kind in every department of business, and to every class of the community; while, at the same time, we think it would directly tend to increase the general revenue of the country.

“JAMES CAMPBELL, JAMES HUTCHISON,
 WM. BANKIER, WM. GILMOUR,
 JAMES LUMSDEN, ALEX. JOHNSTON.”

“Particulars of the Returns made by Five Wholesale Houses in Glasgow, engaged in different lines of business, of letters received and sent by them, in course of one month, as referred to in the above Report.

Returns of five houses referred to in the report.

ONE HOUSE.	By Post.	Otherwise than by Post.
Invoices received from parts forth of Glasgow	212	253
Invoices forwarded to parts as above	31	1409
Orders and remittances received	292	614
Orders and remittances forwarded chiefly to England (<i>estimated</i>)	280	50
Advice of drafts and states of accounts, sent out	18	130
Circular notes of calls of travellers, &c. (<i>estimated</i>)		200
	833	2656

A SECOND HOUSE.

Invoices received from parts forth of Glasgow	2	22
Invoices forwarded, as above	19	565
Orders received, ditto	45	332
Letters on sundry business, ditto	2	30
Circular notices of calls of travellers		174
	68	1123

A THIRD HOUSE.

By Post.

Otherwise
than by Post.Evidence from
Glasgow.

Invoices, orders, and other letters, received from parts forth of Glasgow	12	..	244
Invoices forwarded, as above . . . . .		..	392
Notices of calls of travellers . . . . .		..	168
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	12		804

A FOURTH HOUSE.

Invoices, and other letters, received from parts forth of Glasgow	35	..	55
Invoices, &c. sent out, as above	20	..	160
Circulars, containing notice of calls of travellers, &c. . . . .		..	200
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	55		415

A FIFTH HOUSE.

Invoices received from parts forth of Glasgow	4	..	
Invoices and other letters, forwarded as above	42	..	1222
Orders received	87	..	613
Circular notices of calls of travellers, &c.	9	..	310
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	142		2145''
	<hr/>		<hr/>
Gross Total	1110		7143

Conclusion
therefrom.

These five houses were all in different trades, and taken from the most extensive of their class. It will be obvious, when the fact is considered, that the experience conveyed by each merchant or tradesman, when he speaks of this practice, and the weight of his testimony, is proportioned to the extent of his business; he is for this purpose the centre of a circle, and the information he gives shows the practice to be as extensive as is the range of his operations; and, if there be no question about his veracity, the universality of the practice, in that circle, is as fully established as if all the persons with whom he dealt were examined: when, therefore, the high respectability of the parties who subscribed the above report, and the known extent of their commerce is referred to, and of Mr. Cobden of Manchester, who also vouches for the general extent of the seventy-three houses of whom he speaks, and the extent and business knowledge of Mr. William Brown of Liverpool, and of

Mr. Maury, the treasurer of the American Chamber of Commerce, and the extent of the business of the London houses, whose partners have been examined, are avouched to the universality of this practice, I think I might here leave this important fact for Mr. Hill, as irrefutably established.

Evidence from Glasgow.

Conclusion therefrom.

It is important to remark the fact, that this *evasion* is of letters ALREADY WRITTEN, and that the increase *from them* would be nearly six and a half-fold, even though cheapness and expedition should not produce a single additional letter, and supposing all the letters now sent in parcels to be single ones. It is important, because the post-office authorities dispute Mr. Hill's estimate of the number of letters, yet themselves do not *know* the number; for they have, as I have before stated, given four different statements; but whether Mr. Hill is right in the number of letters or not, or the post-office authorities are in a mist on the subject, this increase, and the fact admitted by Lord Lichfield, that Mr. Hill's estimate of the cost of transit is a correct estimate, proves the whole case in his favour, whatever may be the number of letters. It is clear that the present number pays the whole of the revenue, and the average postage on that number being ascertained at 6½d., it is equally clear that an increase of five and a half-fold will sustain the revenue, subject only to the question whether the increase upon Mr. Hill's plan saves a greater expense in the collection and sorting, than will compensate the extra expense of delivery. The transit of the increased weight to that extent it is already shown is so trifling, as to be unimportant in the calculation,* and the increase in the number of letter-carriers is an increase of a cheap description of labour.

But it is desirable to confirm the case by those who may be considered as interested to make out the opposite if they could. I shall therefore conclude this portion of my facts by stating a case which happened at Liverpool, and quoting, in confirmation, a document to which that case gave rise.

In 1836, a packet containing 25 bonds of one thousand pounds, each payable to bearer, was missed from a ship letter bag; circumstances induced the house to whom it was addressed to complain of the custom-house. The house advertised a reward for recovery of the parcel, and it was found shortly afterwards opened, and placed in a position in which they could not fail, when they opened their

Case at Liverpool.

* See note to p. 16, for the adjustment of any reasoning connected with the cost of transit; and as to the evidence of the averages, see *post*.

counting-house door, to find it, and the reward was never claimed.

Evidence from
post-office of
the extent of
evasion.

This practice of opening packets had been a frequent cause of annoyance to the merchants of Liverpool, and a memorial was addressed to the Lords of the Treasury in reference to that practice, and to the particular case of the bonds. It is sufficient for my purpose here to state that their lordships gave prompt and full attention to the subject, and that the post-office and the custom-house were put upon their defence; and the post-office then made out a case in their own justification, which now makes out the fact it is, for the present purpose, so desirable to establish, and shows the strongest necessity for adopting Mr. Hill's plan. I quote from the original letter from the Lords of the Treasury. After referring to the particular case of the bonds, and the privilege of consignees, it proceeds thus:—

“It is stated to this board by the Commissioners of customs and the post-office department, that a large number of letters beyond the privilege allowed to consignees, has been discovered and sent (as is required by law) to the post-office; that the number of packages and letters sent by the customs to the post-office under this head, between the 14th February, 1836, and the 28th February, 1837, amounted, by a detailed account furnished this board, to 2371.

“That in one instance alone, it is stated to my lords, that 530 letters were discovered; and that out of 111 packages of newspapers opened between the 29th September, 1836, and the 20th February, 1837, and which contained 822 newspapers, there were found concealed 648 letters: that my lords have before them the details in these last cases, with the names of the parties to whom the packets were directed, and the number of newspapers and letters in each packet.

“That when a privilege, most properly granted for the benefit of the merchants, has been so much abused, as it appears this has been, it was the duty of the officer of the revenue, in as far as lay in his power, to put a stop to such practices. I have at the same time to state, that my lords regret that any inconvenience should have been occasioned by the course adopted for this purpose; but their lordships cannot but consider, that if the merchants had, in communication with their correspondents abroad, taken early steps to check this system, and to have restricted the letters and parcels sent within the spirit of the Act, such inconvenience would probably never have occurred.

“ I am further to observe, that with respect to the manner in which the examination takes place, it has been stated to my lords, upon inquiry, that the officer who has been appointed to the duty was selected only on account of his efficiency, integrity, and discretion; that he denies that he ever broke open the seal of a letter, but has taken them in the state in which he found them to the post-office; and that when he has opened parcels or packets he has carefully made them up and sealed them with his official seal, and sent them either to the post-office, or King’s warehouse, as the circumstances might require.

Extent of evasion as shown by post office.

“ That it is further stated to my lords, by Mr. Banning of the post-office, that the parcels when delivered to him, were all carefully made up in their original envelopes, sealed with the official seal, and as far as he was able to ascertain, had not been opened further than was necessary to discover whether they contained letters or not; and it is also stated that the parcel bag is opened, and the examination takes place, in the presence of the consignee or the agent. Having thus explained, in reply to the memorial in question, the statements furnished to my lords upon the inquiry instituted by the post-office and customs department, my lords do not consider it necessary to go into the particular details of the two cases referred to in the memorial, it would be difficult to investigate with accuracy the particular circumstances attending a particular packet or letter, the more especially as my lords observe, that on the 6th December, the day on which the two letters or packets to ——— were opened, there appears to have been 205 letters and packets sent to the post-office from the customs.”

Having shown how extensively the letters which are written are conveyed otherwise than through the post-office; that they are sufficient of themselves to sustain the revenue, assuming that which I shall show, that an increase of five-fold and a half is all that is requisite; I proceed to notice other sources of increase that would be opened, and the many advantages that would result, from reducing the postage to one penny.

I notice, first, an effect of the present suppressive rates of postage, which tends to shut out the business of nations, and to throw it into the hands of foreign rivals; and although it may be brought into view in a few words, it is extensive in its injurious effects.

Injury to foreign commerce.

A merchant in America, if he can communicate cheaply and freely with the manufacturers of Germany and of France,

Suppressive effects on foreign commerce.

and finds the same mode of communication with the manufacturers of England is very expensive, will not get into correspondence with England, but will write to Germany or to France.

Every person acquainted with business knows that there is a great deal of speculative correspondence, as there is of speculative conversation, and that for an operation in business, which ends in a practical result, many projects are conceived, and inquiries made, ere the determination to effect one operation is matured, and at last one operation out of many is brought to bear. But few of these operations at first are thought of with that determination of purpose which induces a man to expend large sums in making inquiries upon a matter on which he himself is wavering; but if he can make them easily and cheaply, he will address an inquiry to those who are likely to give him information; and the disposition of all men in trade to promote operations with merchants of credit, induces them to give even fuller information than that at first sought, and the contemplated speculation ripens into action, merely because the correspondence being opened, that which would otherwise have died away, is brought into being.

That the weight of postage has begun to work injuriously, with reference to our foreign commerce, is proved by this, that some foreign merchants now refuse to receive duplicates and triplicates of letters, when they are merely duplicates and triplicates. For this purpose, they have arranged with their correspondents to write on the outside of their duplicates and triplicates thus: "Duplicate of the 2nd April," and if he has received the letter of the second of April, he refuses the duplicate. If the letter contains anything important, in addition to the duplicate, then of course the indorsement is not made: and such indorsements can of course be made on the outside by conventional signs. There are few commercial men who have not private marks, and still fewer who cannot adopt them, if their occasions call for their doing so.

The heavy pressure of postage upon foreign orders, or upon inland orders for foreign shipment, and the contrast which the weight of postage, for carrying an ounce or two, bears upon a small transaction to the carriage of the bulk, is forcibly illustrated by a letter which I have received from a highly respectable house in the north, from which the following is an extract:—

"In our business, which is almost exclusively foreign,

we feel the charge of postages to be a most grievous and heavy tax. Take, for example, the sum which we have to pay on a single order from the continent, frequently not amounting to more than £100, £150, or £200.

Suppressive effects on foreign commerce.

	£	s.	d.
Postage of letter with order enclosing patterns	0	4	10
Do. do. acknowledging receipt	0	2	5
Letter of advice to shipping agent and his reply	0	1	4
Do. to London ordering insurance and reply	0	1	10
Sending out invoice and pattern card	0	4	10
Letter with remittance frequently enclosing } 2 or 3 bills to make up a certain amount }	0	7	3
Letter acknowledging receipt of ditto	0	2	5
Total	£1	4	11

“A sum more than the cost of conveying a bale weighing *six hundred weight* from Leeds to Hamburg, (per railway to Selby, and thence per steam-boat,) whilst the export duty would only amount to about one-half!

“The competition with other countries is now so great, that any thing which tends to diminish the cost of producing British manufactures in foreign markets, must contribute to the advantage of our manufacturing population, by increasing the consumption of, and the demand for, their products.”

But the largest and most important source of increase, because it would come from the many, is yet to be noticed, and may be classed under the head of “Domestic Correspondence,” for it would open correspondence alike to both sexes.

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence,

The whole of the men and women of the country are related to some of the others, and are daily and hourly desiring to communicate with each other: the necessities of the whole, and the interests of all, demand, that they should go forth from their homes to settle, and thus promote the good of all; and the government interpose, assume a monopoly, and make the departure of the poor from their parents and kindred, equal to a sentence of transportation.

The extent of the suppression has been illustrated to the Mercantile Committee, in a letter from a gentleman in the north:—

A number of poor emigrants arrived there from an agricultural district, from whence one young man amongst the

Amounts to a prohibition to the poor.

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

number wrote home to his father, to advise him of his arrival. An answer was received expressive of the father's pleasure in hearing from the son, but reminding the son that the father's circumstances were such, that he could not afford to pay for another letter. Let those who know, or can conceive, what it is to be alone in the world, imagine the feelings of this youth, under these circumstances, and how soon the domestic affections and that kindness of disposition and subordination of feeling, which are usually associated with them, would cease to support him in his future progress; and then carrying the idea onwards, and looking at it as a member of society and a legislator, consider that the masses are thus circumstanced, and the effect such deadening influences must have upon society at large. Poverty and the absence of sympathy are sure to triumph over the affections,—where they do not, the case forms an exception to the rule.

Evidence of their desire to correspond.

There are 50,000 Irish labourers in Liverpool alone, and there are as many in Manchester. The Irish are warm-hearted, affectionate, and proverbial for attachment to the land of their birth, and to the ties of kindred and of home. It is notorious, that the Irish rural labourers toil and save for the purpose of conveying their wages to home, at the end of the agricultural season in England. Yet the whole of these are as effectually prohibited from exchanging a line with home and friends, as though an Act of Parliament had prohibited it in terms.

If any evidence were wanted of the warm hearts, and strong attachments to home and kindred, on the part of the poor, and of the Irish in particular, it is again supplied from the post-office itself.

Proved by report of commissioners as to the money-order office.

In an admirable report on the subject of the post-office, made by Lord Seymour, Lord Duncannon, and Mr. Labouchere, in January of this year, they thus report upon the subject of the money-order office:—

“The Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, conceiving, from the evidence they obtained, that the principal object of the money-order office was the transmission of small sums to persons who had served their country, were of opinion that this should be provided for through the departments of the army and navy, and that it would not be requisite to sanction any establishment of this description in connexion with the general post-office. We are, however, informed that, *although soldiers and sailors are much in the habit of sending money-orders, that the greater proportion of*

them are obtained by the poor and labouring classes, particularly Irish artisans and workmen employed in the metropolis and large towns throughout the kingdom, who are anxious to remit some portion of their earnings to their relatives and friends."

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

This office was originally established for the convenience of the army and navy, but it appearing that although the profits were put into the pockets of the clerks, the whole of the correspondence was conducted at the expense of the country, the commissioners * recommended its transfer as to soldiers and sailors to other departments; but were not unmindful of the interests of the poor, and they benevolently added the following recommendations in their favour :—

Money-order office.

"Your lordships, we feel satisfied, will not be disposed to deprive them of the accommodation which they now have for this purpose. WE ARE ANXIOUS that every facility and encouragement should be given for making these remittances, and are satisfied that the business will be done in a more satisfactory manner by the department, and at less expense, than by individual proprietors. Arrangements should, therefore, be made, on the introduction of the registry system, for the transmission of remittances by post, and the profits, *if any*, carried to the account of the revenue.

"The deputy post-masters, who will be employed as agents under the direction of the post-office, are already required to give security for the money passing through their hands, which will protect the department against the losses by defalcation which the proprietors now sustain. The business, in other respects, may be conducted for a very trifling expense, and we therefore recommend that the poundage be reduced, and beg, at the same time, to suggest to your lordships' consideration whether it might not be expedient to remit the stamp-duty on orders of the value of £2, and not exceeding £5 5s.

"If it was remitted, a great boon would be conferred on that class of people.

"We believe that, in place of charging from 3s. to 4s. for an order for a couple of pounds payable in Scotland or Ireland, the remittance might be made for as many pence, provided the transmission of these sums ceased to be a source of profit, and the poundage was reduced to the lowest rate that would defray the expense."

Its excessive charges.

* Lord Seymour, Lord Duncannon, and Mr. Labouchere.

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

A penny postage would, of itself, realize a great portion of this kind and considerate report.

Let it be considered, that if two men meet each other in a foreign land, they are drawn to each other merely by the tie of country—if in the metropolis of their country, they feel a friendly disposition towards each other, merely from the tone of the county tongue, this is because it recalls home and its affections, their childhood and its joyousness. To this we owe the various county associations formed in the metropolis. If they meet in the county town, they are friendly, because they come from the same village.

These things considered, the strength of home attachments as a motive to correspondence, particularly to the female branches of families, may be faintly raised in our minds.—Let those who have witnessed the joyous greetings and reminiscences amongst fellow-townsmen, and villagers, and old school-fellows, recall their gratulations, and the hearty inquiries after old acquaintances, and they will see how abiding are the first impressions of the being, and the feeling for home and early friends. And those who have witnessed the departure of the sick from this life, will remember how fondly and how anxiously parent and children remember each other in that hour. The domestic affections are strong in all, but are the strongest in those who have been the best nurtured, and are, generally, for that reason the best members of society: they grow out of the link by which God has connected each race with the immediate authors of their being, and the children of their affections. The natural flow of this, the strongest and most abiding source of goodness and love, is restrained in all, and practically prohibited to those who have the greatest need of such consolation and support—the very poor and the wretched. How often from the criminal in the hour of condemnation do we here the first gush of misery break forth in, “Oh my poor mother;” and find that the last hour is devoted, and the last prayer offered for the parent, the wife, or the child!

Cases of hardship on the poor.

Let those who have, or have had, happy homes, kind parents, and beloved children, dwell for a few moments on the two cases I will now mention—they are not cases sought out for the occasion, they were communicated by a benevolent magistrate in a western county, when writing on the general subject to the Mercantile Committee.

“A poor widow in Somersetshire, a pauper, receiving 2s. 6d. per week from the Union, had intimation that a

letter was waiting for her at the office, supposed to come from her daughter, who had lately gone into service in London, the cost of which was 11*d.* The mother could not raise the money, and the post-mistress being afraid to trust the letter out of her hands, it remained until the following week, when the relieving officer came his rounds and gave her her weekly pay, when she took up the letter at the cost of *one-third of her weekly subsistence!!!*

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

Instances of hardship on the poor.

“A poor woman, with a large family, whose husband was in prison for a small debt, and who had written to his afflicted wife and family, who were *without bread*, received notice of the letter lying at the post-office, upon which, after several days’ trial to raise the amount of postage, she was compelled to leave a silver tea-spoon, by way of pledge to the post-mistress, for the payment of the postage, and thereby obtained the long-wished-for letter from her incarcerated husband.”

One of the most gratifying circumstances which presented itself in reading the extensive correspondence which immediately resulted from the exertions of the London Mercantile Committee, was the many evidences of the anxious thought and care for the poor, in the letters from the rich and the well-doing.—The printed inquiries of the Committee had reference, principally, to the injury and inconvenience to commerce and trade; but the replies from all quarters turned to those who suffered most, and I now produce extracts from some others of those letters in which illustrative instances are given by the generous writers.

Gentlemen residing at Nottingham thus write:—

“The receipt of an unpaid London letter in Nottingham costs a stocking-maker 10*d.*, which is *one-ninth* of the average weekly earnings of that class for the last thirty years.

“A great portion of the workmen employed in the manufacture of lace in France, are persons emigrated from the neighbourhood of Nottingham, and who have left their families or relations behind them. The expense of postage is a complete bar of communication to these men, in the shape of correspondence, or remitting monthly what they can spare; the natural consequence of which is, that we assist them in avoiding it altogether.”

Thus we see the consequences of an unjust and immoral law—a union of those who can pay, with those who cannot, to break it, because of its injustice. Natural and

moral laws are stronger than positive enactments, and the ignorant fiscal will fail in a combat with nature.

A banker at Glasgow says—

“My desire for a change of system was stimulated by reading (in *The Schoolmaster*, a three-halfpenny periodical, published five or six years ago at Edinburgh) an affecting illustration of its necessity given, from the case of a domestic servant from the country, all whose hard-earned wages did not leave over her needful outlays a surplus sufficient to defray the expense of a monthly letter from home! The question is, by no means, one of *commercial facility* chiefly, but one of philanthropy and civilization. The post-office must no longer be a luxury for the rich—it must be enjoyed by the poor man liberally; and then will it become a grand instrument for improving their intellectual and moral condition. The prevention of business correspondence, which high duties affect, is of little moment compared with the prevention of friendly and familiar letters between friend and friend, family and family. The writers and receivers of the latter might be increased ten-fold; the cultivation of the better feelings and taste that would ensue could not fail to prove an inestimable blessing—cheaply purchased, even at the sacrifice of all the post-office revenue.”

A gentleman who was examined before the Committee stated the following fact:—

“I had an instance the other day, in conversation with our postman, which was quite spontaneous on his part, without being asked the question, and had no reference to my appearance before this Committee: my wife was paying for a letter, and she made a remark as to the cost; his reply was, ‘Yes, it is a good thing you can afford to pay it, for I assure you my heart bleeds when I take letters to the poor. When I take letters to them, I have known them go and pawn their goods to pay for the postage of a letter when they have wished to have it; that is a matter that has frequently occurred.’ Then, another mode by which the poor are separated is under the provisions of the Poor Law Act, which promotes emigration from the agricultural to manufacturing districts; this applies to them peculiarly; they must necessarily be anxious to communicate with their friends: then the increased education among the poor, of course, produces a greater desire to communicate their thoughts by letter correspondence.”

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

Instances of hardship on the poor.

Now it is demonstrated by the evidence that the poor are anxious to write, and would write, if permitted by a low postage. This is shown by the evidence of Captain John Bentham. Soldiers, it is well known, are permitted to send letters for one penny, if franked by their officers. It was his duty to frank letters for a regiment. He stated that he had made a calculation, that soldiers, on an average, send seven letters and a half yearly each. The calculation, he said, was a rough one, but he was pretty confident he had understated it. He had observed that soldiers most highly appreciated the privilege, and that many of them learnt to write expressly for the purpose of writing their own letters. That it made them much more valuable members of a regiment; and that he knew they generally corresponded with their relations, from the similarity of the name—the address usually indicating kindred.

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

Poor anxious to write. Evidenced by soldiers.

That if they had to pay the present rate of postage, he thought that it would almost entirely destroy their correspondence. That he did not think one letter in 30 would be written—certainly not one in 20.

That the men who had most correspondence were well-behaved men in a military point of view; and yet that the barrack-room was not well adapted for the purpose of writing.

A firm at Sheffield write thus:—

“We have about 500 persons employed in our manufactories; and, although many of them are from different parts of the kingdom, having relations and friends living at a distance, yet we may say they have not, on the average, three letters per week by the post-office.”

Captain Bentham's evidence shows that soldiers, who are taken from this class of persons, having the facility of sending their letters at one penny, write upon the average seven letters and a half each per year. Assuming, therefore, that this class of persons, with greater facilities for writing than the barrack-room affords, may be judged of by the same standard, the 156 letters per annum above shown would become 3,750:—an increase of just fifteen-fold.

The next extract, written before Captain Bentham's evidence was published, is confirmatory of his testimony, and of the influence of affection when this impolitic monopoly does not interpose to prevent its expression.

A gentleman extensively engaged in business in a distant town, says—

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“During the last two or three years I have had the means of seeing much of the lower classes of poor, and the paupers, in this extensive Union, from acting as guardian and overseer, and now vice-chairman of the board of guardians, and I am corroborated by our relieving officer and master of the workhouse, in stating, that these classes are now shut out from post-office accommodation almost altogether, except where relatives are in the army, where a *penny frees the letter*, then the correspondence on the contrary is regular and active. In other cases of distant relatives no intercourse worth naming takes place, except by package.”

In further confirmation of this testimony of Captain Bentham, I may mention here the statement made to me by Lieutenant Ellis of the Royal Navy, who has since been examined by the Parliamentary Committee; but his evidence has not been reported at the time I write this:—

“As to soldiers and sailors, I can speak,” he said, “from my own experience; when afloat, there was a great desire among the sailors to make use of the channels of communication; there were three or four sailors on board who could write, and I have seen bags and bags of letters go away.”

A merchant at Leith thus writes:—

“The fishermen, a numerous, industrious, but poor class, in this neighbourhood, (Leith,) find the postages extremely heavy, and often refuse letters on account of their inability to pay. Many fishermen proceed in their open boats to the herring fishery, and are prevented writing to their families from the fishing stations on account of the high charge of the postage; from Wick, for instance, it is 1s. 0½d., this is one of their stations.”

“Again, it would be of the very highest importance if the fishermen could communicate with the different fishing stations, during the herring fishery, so that they might obtain intelligence where the herrings are most numerous, and communicate this intelligence to others. The high postage prevents this.”

A clergyman in Yorkshire writes as follows:—

“In countless instances have the poor borrowed of me money to pay a letter they could not otherwise obtain. In many instances, to my own knowledge, the poor have been losers of charity money, doles, and benefactions, for want of means to pay for the correspondence requisite. At the last curacy I held, a poor woman lost a share of a dole at Newmarket she was clearly entitled to, because the expense of

Fishermen.

Testimony of clergymen.

the correspondence between her place of residence and Newmarket, would have amounted to *as much as her share of the charity was worth*. In my present parish, a poor woman will probably lose some little pittance she is entitled to, from sheer inability to pay the heavy postages to and from Norfolk respecting it.—I can truly say, that not a month ever passes over my head without giving me fresh proof of how painfully and oppressively the present rate of postage affects the poor.

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Testimony of clergymen.

“By the heavy rates of postage at present, the poor are virtually debarred from all knowledge of, or intercourse with, their DISTANT friends and relatives. Any parochial clergyman, who mixes at all with his people, will readily recollect how frequently he has been asked by a poor parishioner to write or DIRECT a letter for some absent son—some sick parent—some distant relative—and the request has been followed up by entreaty for a ‘*little help towards the postage,*’ which is so heavy, and which they ‘*cannot raise.*’

“I trust the committee will forgive me as a clergyman, for pressing this view of the subject very respectfully, but earnestly, on their attention, as well deserving the consideration of legislators.

“Domestic or family correspondence would be very greatly increased. I know a family where there are 15 children, the majority of whom are constantly travelling about. Their custom is when they leave home to take an *old* newspaper with them, and put it into the office on their arrival at their destination, to let their friends at home know they have reached their post—they do this to avoid heavy postage. Others of the same family, when moving from place to place, drop a newspaper at various towns, the name of which newspaper, such as for instance the ‘Leicester Herald,’ the ‘Northampton Mercury,’ tells the rest of the family where they are. Were the postage a penny I have not the least shadow of a doubt, that a letter on their arrival in London, or their change of place, would be regularly despatched to the heads of the family. As it is, the post-office gains nothing. *The expense of postage defeats its own object.*”

Another clergyman writes thus:—

“Glad as I should be to see a great reduction of postage effected on my own account, (being put to an expense of some pounds every year for letters, received or sent, having relation to public objects, or written more for others than

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

Testimony of clergymen.

myself,) I hail such a proposition with yet heartier good will *for the sake of the poor classes*, the extent of whose correspondence with their friends I know is curtailed most seriously by the amount of the present tax on letters. When the younger members of a family have gone to a distance from their homes, either as servants or apprentices, communication by letter is very little carried on, solely because the sum required for postage is one which a common labouring man can very ill spare. It is necessary to have much personal intercourse with the poor before one learns what is the value to them of every sixpence, and how exceedingly inconvenient is any unexpected call of that amount or more, when their weekly earnings are regularly expended as they are received upon the actual necessities of life; and it is only by an effort that any sum is laid by to supply clothing, or provide for the quarter's rent, or meet any extraordinary demand upon their resources. That the limited measure of the intercourse does not arise from decay of affection and want of interest, is quite evident from the terms in which the absent members are talked of, from the value set upon a letter when it comes, (which the minister, or other friend who visits the poor at their homes, has frequently brought before him, from the circumstance of their frequently producing the last precious sheet, and begging he will read it,) and yet more from the eagerness to write which the offer to convey a letter gratuitously calls forth whenever it is made. Living, as I do, in a provincial town a day's journey from London, I have been the means of settling the daughters of some of my parishioners with friends in or near London. One is a housemaid in my father's house, another in my brother's. When I was in town the other day I had packets intrusted to me for both of these, as also from a third living with a friend, to bring to their parents; but many a week or month probably will elapse, unless a similar opportunity should occur, before another letter is sent. In the same manner, when I am going to London, or my town friends are returning thither, a letter from the parents is almost sure to be forthcoming. I find, too, the practice prevails most extensively of getting any body who is going to town, friend or stranger, if he be but a neighbour, to call and see the absentee, and take or bring a letter. In fact, they seem on the look-out for means of communication free of expense; whereas, in a common way, it is only upon some emergency, when information of importance has to be conveyed without loss of time, that

they have recourse to the post-office. Of course, intercourse that is thus carried on must be very precarious ; and must be quite another thing from that which prevails among near relations when there is nothing to prevent their writing as often as they please. The moral advantages of frequent communication by letter, under such circumstances, I rate very highly ; as one of the best securities for good conduct, where young people have been well brought up, is the preservation of home feelings in all their freshness, and the nurturing and cherishing of all the pure and wholesome influences that belong to the family relations. As long as a girl writes freely to her mother, I shall scarcely fear for her virtue. Give me a youth who finds a pleasure in devoting a spare half-hour in the evening to the sister whom he has left behind him, and though he be a hundred miles off, there is a chain upon him, which, if it does not hold him back from evil, will check him in the pursuit of it. Now when one considers the field to which these observations refer, the immense scale upon which the enormous tax upon letters is working mischief, in separating the nearest friends, and insulating, during the most critical period of life, those who want every help to strengthen them against temptation, I really feel that the *economical* part of the question is quite superseded by the *moral* part ; and even if the million and a half of revenue were sacrificed, the gain would be immense."

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Testimony of clergymen.

A gentleman in an extensive way of business, and now holding an important mercantile appointment in England, writes thus :—

Other instances.

"When I first resided in London I was a youth of eighteen, of such slender resources (not willing to press upon an excellent father, burthened with eight other children) that I was fain to dine off a twopenny loaf, a penny-worth of cheese, and a glass of porter, every other day. Now, my dear father's letters, of worth inestimable in themselves, being full of wisdom, and counsel, and affection, cost me 9*d.* each, or two dinners ; or if, as was often the case, he paid the postage, they drew upon him too largely. When, some years afterwards, his family was spread abroad, this was a very serious item in his expenditure. Yet how could or how should he act otherwise ? I assure you, amongst all your correspondents not one is more indebted to parental correspondence than myself. It has conferred upon me so much, that I would willingly assist to open the channel and make it less expensive to others. It is certain that where

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one family goes on to correspond as did ours, a hundred suffer the expense of postage to prevent this most important and delightful intercourse altogether. I may remark that the whole of us were taught to write in shorthand, that we might make the single sheet more capacious, and did thus write for nearly twenty years."

A witness who was examined before the committee, but whose name the committee thought it was not desirable to print, stated:—

"My wife is separated at a considerable distance from her friends, and she cannot correspond with them at a less expense than 1s.; we should correspond more frequently if it were not attended with so great an expense; that will, of course, apply to other families, particularly persons separated from their parents; and it is a matter of prohibition to our poor. I have had conversation with some of our poor labouring classes; the families are more separated now than they used to be; the same trade is carried on in distant parts of the country. It has been carried to Devonshire, and Derbyshire, and Scotland; families are thus separated, and it is utterly impossible for them to correspond."

A gentleman at Leeds thus writes:—

"We have three or four servants who can all write, and one or other seldom miss a week without having letters, which I suppose they answer, and if the postage was reduced to a penny, no doubt they would have a great many more letters; I should think, altogether, we should have ten times as many. We frequently have friends from a distance stopping at the house, and by many the inquiry is—When will you return, I shall have some letters for you to take. You cannot say it is illegal to take them, nor well refuse. I have many times had friends who have had more than a dozen letters to take this way. If the postage was reduced to a penny we should not have the trouble. Such must be the case with hundreds of families."

But it is not the very poor only, whom heavy rates of postage oppress—they operate oppressively upon the greater portion of those who are termed the middle classes.

A gentleman holding appointments of great trust and confidence in London, stated this case, as within his own knowledge:—

"A lady known to him has four daughters, settled in different parts of the country, engaged as teachers, whose correspondence constituted her principal solace, but, induced by her affection, and knowing their limited means, she re-

Other instances.

Oppresses the middle classes also.

refused to receive letters from them unless she was permitted to pay the postage. Influenced by the same feeling of affection towards her, they had desired to pay the postage of their letters, but as neither would impose upon the other's limited means, they have long had recourse to the following mode of seeking this natural expression of their affection and love for each other:—

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Middle classes.

“Having a common friend in town, to whom all the daughters could communicate, by persons going to London, they send their letters to him, and he makes a small parcel once a month, which is conveyed by an omnibus, for sixpence, to the parent. The mother's difficulty of conveying her letters to her daughters, however, is not removed by this means, but the position of their common friend happens, in this case, to enable her to get them franked occasionally.”

A gentleman at Bristol writes thus:—

“In another case that came under my immediate observation, a long correspondence was kept up between two sisters by means of newspapers, the wrappers of which were marked in a particular way to denote the state of health of the party sending it. In this case economy was a virtue, but the additional information that might have been communicated by *letter* would have been so welcome that no obstacle would have been found in a penny tax each time, whilst the newspapers were made to supply the place of a letter for at least ten weeks at a time.”

Mr. De Porquet says:—

“I have in my service several people, male and female; I know one who has seven or eight brothers and sisters scattered all over the kingdom; I put the question to him the other day, ‘How many letters do you receive from your relations?’ ‘Not above one in six months, and hardly that.’ I said, ‘If the postage were *1d.* or *2d.* how many should you receive then?’ He said, ‘We should be happy to receive one a week, and to send one a week!’ Some of them do not receive a letter in a twelvemonth.

“Is that individual a native of this country?—Yes. I asked him yesterday what letters he had received from his sister, a governess in Belfast; he told me one a fortnight after she arrived, which was eight months ago; not one since. He has seven sisters scattered all through the kingdom, and he does not hear from each of them once in a twelvemonth.”

Mr. Brankston, a gentleman of long experience in the

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Middle classes.

conduct of an important department of one of the largest houses of its kind in England,* and having 140 young persons constantly under his observation, gave the following evidence on this subject, with much earnestness and feeling.

“I would not consider the reduction of postage simply as a commercial transaction, but I would take it morally, religiously, and socially, and I will venture to say, that the revenue of the post-office will be higher and greater than it now is, when it is considered what will be the enormous increase from those at present incapable of sending letters through the post-office in consequence of their poverty. Out of 140 young persons in our house, there are not more on an average than two in a day receive a post letter; but they receive their letters in other ways. Looking abroad in the world, looking to Northumberland, of which I am a native, considering their pastoral habits, living in comfort and decency, their sons and daughters come to us very young; they cannot afford to pay this rate of postage; they are sent abroad, some from the humblest and some from the most respectable classes, and from those, if the rate were low, the increase would be enormous, and of a highly moral and highly social tendency. We have many young people here, who have not any salaries for three, or four, or five years, officers’ sons, and others, who come to us for five years for nothing: and wherever our young men have any connexions, they are obtaining franks, which are always in request.

“There are thousands and tens of thousands living separate from their children, who have no means of communicating with them in consequence of the high rate of postage: every feeling of philanthropy, as well as commerce, requires there should be a reduction of postage. I have seen much of the evils resulting from that in the young persons in our establishment. I fear that the want of communication with their parents has led, in some instances, to vice, which might have been prevented.”

The following letter was sent to a gentleman connected with the Mercantile Committee on postage, by an old and respected friend, in answer to one of the printed communications they have circulated. The names and means of identifying the parties publicly, have been withdrawn—the facts themselves being all the public are interested in. The case here so feelingly stated, must be the case of the largest and most useful portion of the clergymen of these kingdoms

* Leaf, Coles, & Co. Old Change, London.

—of nearly all Dissenting ministers—and, indeed, of all the middle ranks :—

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“ March 19, 1838. Middle classes.

“ My dear Friend,—I am blind, and ill in bed, and am therefore compelled to dictate to my friend, the Rev. Mr. ———, a few cases where the best ties of affection are severed by the present excessive charges of the post-office.

“ Mr. ——— is himself one of a family of *ten*—the children of a pious and affectionate couple, residing in the opposite extremity of the kingdom, who are deprived, by the enormous tax, from receiving that support and consolation in their old age, which is the best and last hope and stay of pious Christians. Just examine all the ramifications by which the affectionate feelings of this family are damped, if not necessarily extinguished, by the unequal and unjust tax, and you will have a scene of moral mischief, for which I do not believe any government is able to answer—a communication between any two members of this family costs *two shillings and two-pence*.

“ Here is another case. My friend, the Rev. Mr. ———, of ———, a village four miles from a market town, and four miles from my own house, is a most earnest, diligent, and pious minister of the gospel, labouring incessantly among the people of his charge. But he has not a large income; he has, however, ten amiable and affectionate children, situated in various parts of the country, honourably providing themselves with respectable means of subsistence. For instance, his eldest son resides at a town, from whence the postage each way is one shilling, *that is two shillings!* He has a daughter in another county, from whence the single postage is *nine-pence* (and observe those letters are sent for the convenience of the post-office a number of miles *round the country*, and the post-office charges for the distance it *affects* to carry them). He has a son and daughter at ———, the county town, at the distance of thirty-nine miles (from whence the postage is *seven-pence*). You, my dear friend, who know Mr. ———, are aware that this family have been trained up from their childhood to give instruction to the children of the poor wherever they are placed; and in all places where they are located they are cheerfully and intelligently employed, in giving Sunday School and religious instruction to the children of the poor families in their several neighbourhoods. Suppose these children had a power to communicate

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a slight thought, originating in the changed aspect, or some other circumstances, of some one who had hitherto been wayward, whose habits had been changed—who had turned from sullenness to cheerfulness, and fierce defiance to placid and beautiful obedience. These are scenes which, I can assure you, frequently come under our observation in these towns, arising, we hope and believe, from the example and precepts of those young people who undertake the gratuitous task of instructing them. You must try and imagine what that result would be if this family of children were thus permitted to communicate; no one can do it so well as yourself. You know that a simple and humble thought has often led to the most great and powerful results. The post-office tax entirely shuts out the communication of mind between this amiable and affectionate family, and whenever they do write to their parents or one another, they sit down under the idea that they must write a *letter* that their father may think *worth the postage*. The short line expressed from the heart, at the moment, would be worth twenty such letters! The government by such a course is taking the most effectual step to estrange from each other the very best members that constitute any community.

“ With regard to my own family of nine children; one son is engaged in business in London, another is studying at the London University, and another is at school in Worcestershire, and I will not insult the understanding of the committee by supposing they do not feel the immense importance of the rapid, quiet, and cheap communication of a father with his children. I could add a great deal more, but this has worn me, and I must beg of you to trace my meaning with your usual understanding. I am told that Lord —— is a most active member of this committee, and if it would not be deemed offensive by his lordship, I should be glad if you would communicate to him these thoughts, which I convey to you from my sick pillow.

“ P. S.—I forgot the conveyance of letters by private individuals; I am an extensive carrier in this way. Persons in a town like this—widows who have sons in London—and, in many cases, poor labourers who have children—these show laudable anxiety to get a letter conveyed. Lately, a farming man asked to have a letter conveyed, adding, ‘ It was only that Benjamin wanted to know about the child sent down for his health.’ You may say these

letters must pass through the two-penny post: but this is not the case; for I have known eighteen out of twenty letters delivered before the second day without any expense whatever.”

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The outward condition of the poor is necessarily a hard one—recent arrangements have begun to teach them the necessity of self-dependence—every thing then which tends to depress their social condition, and to diminish their self-respect, should, in justice, be removed. The natural affections are preserved by their expression and exercise. Without sympathy, self-respect cannot be long maintained, and the spirit of self-dependence will depart with it. Unless the social and domestic affections exist amongst the poor, the world to them is a blank. If these are deadened by the arrangements of the classes holding a superior position, those links in the social chain which hold the others together with some degree of respectful regard, in each class for those above them, become, amongst the very poor, not ties of regard, but links of bitter servility—like the slave, they cringe—and curse. Every poor man's child is obliged to go forth from home into servitude or labour of some kind, and this is right; but from the time the child leaves home, the postage-tax works a sentence of banishment upon it from its parents and kindred; and let it be remembered, that this is an act of the government; not merely negative, that is, omitting to do that for the people which the people could not do for themselves, but it is a positive infliction of evil, for it prohibits the people from doing that which they could have done for themselves, for a cost less than that which it is now proposed to give to government.

“It is only,” said a poor man, when he called, by way of apology, at a gentleman's home, to request he would convey a letter to London for him, “it is only to let Benjamin know how his child is, that is down for its health;” thus it is, that one amongst the few springs of solace which exist amongst the poor, and is given, not by government, but by God, is prevented, by heavy postage, from flowing to the poor.

The extent to which suspicion exists in the minds of the very poor of the feelings of the rich towards them, arising from this practical prohibition, is strongly illustrated by the statement to the Mercantile Committee of an active and benevolent clergyman, who has been much engaged in promoting the comfort of the emigrating poor,

Suspicion induced in the minds of the poor of the motives of the rich.

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spondence.

who have gone from his parish—a suspicion that would not have arisen if they had been in the habit of corresponding with each other, and had thus been led to confide in written communications; but it will be seen, they had not reliance upon a mode of communication, with which they were not familiar. Circumstances led him to know that so strong had the suspicion—that letters were forged in London to deceive and get rid of them—entered into the minds of the poor in a particular district, that those who were going, and those who thought of it, entered into arrangements with their friends for using signs, by which those to whom letters were addressed were to know, whether the news that came, really came from those who were then departing; and the plans they resorted to were characteristic, not of their want of sense, but of their want of learning; and at the same time showed the depth of the distrust which existed amongst them. In one instance it was found, that an emigrant had arranged with his friends that they were not to rely upon any letters purporting to come from him, unless every “i” had two dots to it: another arranged, that they were not to attend to any letters, unless they found under the seal a crooked pin: on another occasion, the clergyman had a letter brought to him in which he found the signatures of several of the villagers written by themselves, and amongst them one who was a sort of scribe and oracle with them, and also the signature of one of his own farming servants; he sent for the servant, who explained, that one of the emigrants had taking that sheet of paper out, and the persons whose signatures he saw, had written their names upon the sheet of paper, so that when it came back, they might know the letter really came from the emigrant.

In another instance, the clergyman was informed, that an old woman then in the town had got a letter from her son, and that the letter was very satisfactory; having heard of the suspicion existing, he went to see the letter, and found that a piece was torn off the corner, and observed that it was not a recent separation; wishing to get at the fact, he said, “Well, but do you think this is genuine, you know it is said they forge these letters in London?” “Ah! ah!” said she; “but we’ve t’other piece at home in the tea-caddy, and it fits nicely.”

Now it is obvious that such suspicions, and the injury flowing from them, could hardly have arisen, if these people had been in the habit of writing and receiving letters.

The correspondence of the female sex is nearly suppressed to the many, and greatly limited to the whole; for those whose position in life would enable them to pay, or to obtain the payment of their postage, are restrained from writing, feeling that it is a great charge upon their relatives. The extent to which this apprehension limits their correspondence, is evidenced to almost every one, by the fact, that he seldom travels, or is about to return, if his intention is previously known to the circle he leaves, without being asked to convey letters for some of the ladies of the family. Now, let it be borne in mind, that the earliest and the strongest impressions of every generation, and of both sexes, are impressed by the mother and the sisters; that they are anxious about the child and the youth; that the habits and characters of both sexes, to the time when they go forth to school, are mostly formed by the mother and sisters. The correspondence to and from school, would, at a penny postage, be frequent and useful. It would create in early life the habit of correspondence, and convey the first and fresh impressions to the parents, who, from affection and duty, would feel deeply interested in advising, encouraging, and guiding those who in a few years are to carry forward the business of the world; these considerations apply to the youth of both sexes, and the value of such correspondence cannot be too highly appreciated. There must always be hundreds of thousands of the youth of the country thus placed; and of course, more than the same number of their seniors, anxious about them, and whose happiness is in a great degree dependent upon their well-doing. In the best regulated establishments, the scholars cannot have the advantages of home influences in the cultivation of the affections; and the religious, social, and national importance of opening this source of moral cultivation through the post-office, becomes therefore a graver question than the question of revenue: the revenue, however, would be largely increased by it.

Besides this, it will teach the youth of the country, by actual correspondence with home and friends, that which it is one great object of all education to impart—the art of conveying the thoughts with ease and clearness; they will write—not holiday letters as now—but upon natural subjects in a natural manner, and will therefore acquire the power of expressing their wants, wishes, feelings, and opinions. Any thing written may be considered as thrice read, so far as impressing the memory is concerned.

Suppressive effects on domestic correspondence.

Correspondence of the female sex.

Schools and education.

Suppressive
effects on do-
mestic corre-
spondence.

It is obvious, that parents would encourage the writing of letters very frequently, as evidences of the improvement of their children, as well as from the interest they take in them ; and that they would have pleasure in communicating in reply, imparting advice and suggestions, and of seizing the ever-occurring incidents, to improve the minds, to cultivate the affections, and fix the principles of their children.

It is of no slight importance, serious as are the duties necessarily confided to the teachers by the principals of those establishments, that the teachers should know that the scholars were expected to correspond with home. The letters written, would be too numerous to be cockered-up, and the parents would soon see whether the child was properly attended to, or had just cause of complaint ; and it would be a most desirable thing for those schools where children are well attended to, and give to their principals the just advantage to which the honest and able discharge of such important duties would entitle them. Their pupils would thus be conveying home the frequent evidences of their progress ; and, improving rapidly, as the art of education now is, and excellent and well-conducted as many of the scholastic establishments now are, this is an advantage which ought to be brought into action in their favour : it would remove a very strong objection against sending their children to school, from the minds of many parents ; and create an immense correspondence.

Increase of re-
venue from
second-hand
booksellers.

Another source of increase of revenue would arise both to the post-office and the general revenue, from second-hand booksellers. They now frequently print very extensive catalogues of their stocks. The catalogues are thick, expensive in getting up, and though necessary and useful, or they would not be made, are too unwieldy for circulation to any thing near the extent they would be by a universal penny postage ; and each of those that are circulated, convey to those to whom they are sent a mass of titles, useless to them, and profitless to those who send them. Such catalogues can only be printed once or twice a year, although, from the ever-changing character of the stock, they require constant revision ; but if the proprietors were enabled, by a penny postage, to circulate them, they would have them printed in classified portions, and send each portion to those classes of buyers known to use or read the particular description of works. It is the every-day business of a bookseller to learn the class of books which particular persons use, or of which they are in search. It is supplied by the

inquiries and purchases which are made of them. They would take the address of inquirers, and the moment the book wanted turned up, that moment, at a penny postage, the person who wanted it would be informed where he might get it. Gentlemen would not then object to leave their address with them, when they could get the convenience of a communication which could not be made burdensome by postage. For six-pence, a buyer in the remotest corner of the kingdom might inquire of the largest houses in the trade; and for a shilling, if the book were scarce, at the principal towns in the kingdom.

One of the most respectable and most extensive of this class of tradesmen informs me that he should revise and reprint such catalogues frequently within the year; that their stocks are in a constant state of change from sales and purchases, and that it would be useful and advantageous to them to be enabled to communicate to their customers when they had a fresh accession of the particular class of books suitable to their pursuits or tastes; and that he should avail himself of the post-office for that purpose to a very large extent; but that now, the catalogue, from its size and infrequency of correction, unavoidably presents a great number of books which have been sold between the necessarily lengthened periods of publication.

Then again, let it be supposed that the rates after the payment of the first penny for half an ounce were to diminish as the weight increased, what a number of deeds, of plans, outlines, sketches, tracts, pamphlets, and illustrative drawings, would be transmitted!

Suggestion as to the extent of weight to be carried.

The limit as to weight, could be fixed wherever it was thought desirable to prevent THE FURTHER INCREASE OF A PROFITABLE BUSINESS.

The carrying of two tons, by a carrier who is going the same road with one ton, does not increase the outlay or trouble in any thing like the same proportion; the more he has to carry, the greater his profit.

And let it be remembered, that the increase of weight would not affect the rapidity of transit. The instances of the Penny Magazine, Chambers' Journal, and other cheap publications; and the fact, that a live elephant was carried on the Manchester railway at 20 miles an hour, show this.

Nor need the extra sorting and delivery postpone the time of delivery—the great proportion of the increase would be deliverable to the same persons; for they are now, as is shown by mercantile men of the first eminence in London,

As to increase
of business.

Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Nottingham, and Sheffield, written and sent by the same persons by other conveyances; and being brought into the legal channel, they would have to be delivered by the same carrier—there would be more sorting and delivery; but sorting and delivery are done by those whose labour is cheap, and consequently any requisite increase of force for that purpose, would involve but a trifling increase of outlay. If there were any difficulty of this kind, which I submit there would not be, except that of an increase of cheaply acquired force, it could be remedied by allowing all parties to whom early deliveries are essential to have a *right* to a box at the post-office for a small fee, into which their letters should be dropt.

There are a thousand such boxes now paid for at the rate of one guinea a year each, by the merchants of Liverpool—this, I must observe, in passing, shows how the rent of many establishments might be provided for. Besides this, if the increase was found greatly inconvenient, and never let it be forgotten, that it is the increase of a profitable business of which we are speaking, it could be provided, that letters above a certain weight, should wait a second delivery—so that important communications would be kept under a small weight, and secure immediate delivery; and if the communications related to a heavier package, it would be necessary to incur one penny more to separate the letter from the package, and secure the intelligence by the early delivery; but I am strongly persuaded, that this second delivery would not be necessary, and would be dearer to the post-office than hiring the requisite force, and shortening the walks.

The increase of profitable business is, by active and clever tradesmen, met by an increased power, and additional facilities; and in this instance, as I have before observed, the power required is of a description which is abundant and cheap. The distance which each carrier would have to go, would be shortened as business increased; and the effect would be, that the time occupied in the deliveries might be shortened.

In all large towns, if the business should, fortunately for the government and the revenue, greatly increase, it would only be necessary to put the men who were to take the distant walks, in vans, as they are now in London; and to drop them at the commencement of their respective walks. In the mass of cases, the labour of the men might be so economized, that no carrier should have to cross a street;

but to deliver all letters from the same side of each street, or part of a street. As to increase of business.

In every improvement of this kind, changing, as it will, the proverbial tardiness of official movements into the activity of business habits and railway speed, the government will have to contend against the opposition of the influential amongst those whose habits have been formed by fixed rules; whose business intellects have been trained in the unvarying circle of official routine; and whose wits have not been sharpened by the fear of successful competition, or of being superseded if their department did not keep pace with the general increase. But if government would adopt the practice in this office, which merely conducts the business of a carrier, of making the salaries of the heads of departments dependent upon the increase of the business, they would soon find how soon all things would become new, and how easily and eagerly every new opening of science for facilitating transit, would be sought for, and adapted to this carrying machine.

We should not then, with reference to a profitable business, hear those who had the conducting of it, stating to the government their apprehensions lest it should increase. —Make the salaries dependent on the increase of the business, and their anxiety would be, not to get the business cut down to the size of the post-office, but the post-office enlarged to the size of the business.

The public would not then avail themselves of coach parcels, for the post-office would be the cheapest, the quickest, and the safest; and though it does not need authority, to establish that men will resort to the cheapest mode of conveyance, yet I bring from Colonel Maberly's evidence, because of his position, and of the argumentative use that it admits of, his opinion on this point: it shows how soon the official fog, which envelopes the intellects of all men who are not subject to business competition, had obscured the reasoning powers of a gentleman, previously well known for his clearness and business skill.

He had stated, that it would *not* be a fair experiment of pre-payment by envelopes, through the two-penny post, to allow them to go for one penny; and those not paid till the end of the transit, that is, not using envelopes, to be charged two-pence: it would, said he, be "a most preposterous way of trying the experiment."*

Col. Maberly's evidence as to the proposed experiment of pre-payment.

Col. Maberly's evidence as to proposed experiment of prepayment.

The next answer is too good for this purpose to be lost ; and to do him justice, I quote both :—

“ *Mr. George W. Wood.*—Would it be a fair experiment as to the acceptableness to the public, and probable success of the scheme of compulsory payment in advance, if the London two-penny post had been put on this footing, that all letters paid in advance should go for *1d.* ; those not paid in advance remaining at the present rate of *2d.* ?—Certainly not ; it would have been a most preposterous way of trying the experiment.

“ State your ground for thinking so ?—Because, if the party had used the stamped cover, he would have circulated his letter for *1d.* ; if he had used the other mode, he would have paid in some instances *2d.*, and in others *3d.* ; that is, a taxation of 100 or 200 per cent. over that which he would have paid if he had used stamped covers. The inevitable consequence of that would have been, to have driven the public, from a sense of interest, into the plan of stamped covers, and a sense of interest so strong, that I do not think in any case scarcely it would have been neglected.”

Now mark, the question raised, being, whether the public would prefer payment of a penny in advance, to payment of a larger sum at the end of the transit, the Colonel says, it would be a “ preposterous ” mode of testing that fact, to allow them to save the penny in the one case upon the condition of paying beforehand in the other. Surely, it will be said by those who have not seen the report, there is some mistake here.—No, the Colonel puts his meaning beyond doubt by his answer to a subsequent question of *Mr. Wood's*, as follows :—

“ Can Colonel Maberly suggest any other means by which the probable effect on the extent of correspondence might be defined, which would arise from a considerable reduction in the rate of postage, making the experiment in a narrower field than that which would arise from the entire adoption of the scheme at once ?—It always seemed to me that the fair way to test the experiment would be to let stamped covers circulate concurrently with the other system of rates, bearing the same price as would be charged by the adoption of either optional payment or payment in advance ; then the public would decide between the three modes of posting letters, and it would be a fair experiment.”*

The Colonel thus converts the question, which it is impossible could have been stated more plainly than *Mr. Wood*

stated it, into a question, not of pre-payment at a penny, but of whether men would use envelopes in preference to letter paper, both being charged alike. Of what value would such a choice be to the mass of the people—to the millions whose incomes do not exceed fifteen shillings a week; and to the far greater number to whom it is unimportant whether they use envelopes or common writing paper, and who, if it were necessary to use writing paper in addition to the envelopes, as for instance, for an invoice or bill of parcels, must pay, in addition to their writing paper, a penny for their envelopes?

Col. Maberly's evidence as to proposed experiment of pre-payment.

It is not to be supposed, that Colonel Maberly intended to fence with or evade the question, but it is impossible not to see that his reasoning is sadly inconclusive as applied to the case put; and that the supposition, that he reasons less clearly now than he used to do, is not unjustifiable. Yet this gentleman has, in this same examination, stated, that he has no doubt, that the provincial penny posts which have been recently reduced to one penny, will recover themselves in three years; and that, notwithstanding they are limited to a narrow range, and are beaten in expedition by the carriers at the same prices. Now, imagine all these thrown into one, the circle of each being thereby made to include the whole of Great Britain and Ireland, at the same price, consider that a reduction of postage to one penny is, according to Colonel Maberly, irresistible; that one penny will in three years produce as much as two-pence, although their limited circles shut out all who do not live within the range of each, from communicating to any one without its circumference, and without more, an immense increase may be confidently looked for, if the experiment be fairly tried.

Colonel Maberly has also said in the same examination, that, "as a general rule, we almost always find in the post-office, that increased accommodation presents an increased quantity of letters."*

Thus, mere accommodation produces an increase in the number of letters, what then may we expect if the accommodation be extended to the whole kingdom, all the little eight-mile barriers being thrown down, and each being allowed to communicate with the whole; the postage reduced upon the London two-penny and three-penny letters 100 and 200 per cent., and upon all general-post letters, which are four-fifths of the gross number, 500 per cent.? Then let it be considered, that the mere transit of these letters

* Question 2914.

costs the carrier but one-tenth part of a penny, paid beforehand, and that the remaining nine-tenth parts are left to pay him for the sorting and delivering, with few or no accounts to keep, because he is to be paid beforehand.

A fear has been expressed, lest the public may not be protected against their own blunders; and an objection therefore raised against Mr. Hill's suggestion, that overweight letters should be sent to the dead-letter office, and returned to the writers; the public, it is considerably urged, might sustain great inconvenience from this.

To refuse improvement on this account would be to sacrifice the accurate and the intelligent, to the uninformed and the blunderers; and to legislate for the exception, and not for the rule. It is obvious, that that which is done now, could be done then; and if instead of delaying a letter a month in the dead-letter office, as is now done, it was returned next day, the blunderers would lose thirty days less upon each blunder; and the considerate objectors would thus benefit their proteges, the blunderers.

There is an objection felt by many merchants in London, to an increase in the number of deliveries, because their present business arrangements will be thereby disturbed; but let it be borne in mind that this is not the result of Mr. Hill's plan, but of the application of steam power and the use of rail-roads; and that whether Mr. Hill's plan be or be not adopted, the post-office officials, wholly without intimation, have made, and are making, arrangements for four deliveries a day, as the rail-roads come into being.

The course of events and the determination of the post-office authorities, without reference to mercantile convenience, or to Mr. Hill, is bringing this change in existing arrangements upon them. There is, doubtless, matter for grave consideration, arising out of the great change that will be worked in commercial practice, and the legal obligations upon commercial men, in relation to negotiable securities, resulting from more deliveries than one in the metropolis; but unless it be thought possible to stop the prodigious change that steam and rail-roads are producing in all our social relations, and to carry society and commerce back to the days when men made their wills before they left the north for London, they must yield to the impulse, which says, "Onward." If the objectors must swim in the current they cannot stem, they must swim with it:—convenience must give way to necessity.

As to blunders,
and dead-letter
office.

Objections to
more frequent
deliveries con-
sidered.

Motion is the condition of the universe, and commerce is the motion of human beings induced by interest.

Those who would reason against more frequent deliveries, should have petitioned parliament to prevent the Sirius and the Great Western from sailing, and to prohibit the use of steam.

“It is incredible,” said Mr. Bates in 1835, “what a change has been effected within a few years, by the system of packets sailing to America once a week. It doubles or nearly trebles the labour of conducting our business, and the necessity of writing by every packet.”* Yet it never occurred to this eminent merchant, nor will it ever occur to men who have heads on their shoulders and brains in those heads, to petition parliament, to check the progress of science, or arrest the onward law of our being.

Let us imagine a petition presented to parliament, praying that there might not be more than one delivery of letters in twenty-four hours. Would not the natural answer be—The assent of parliament is not wanted to this—provide a box at your own counting-house—let the letters be dropt into it, and do not let it be opened but once in twenty-four hours—but let those have them who wish for them?

But whatever may be the objection to more deliveries than one in the metropolis, Mr. Hill is guiltless of originating them—it was the Marquis of Worcester, Arkwright, Watt, Fulton, and such men, who conspired to do this before he troubled the world, or his plans and figures troubled the post-office.

Mr. Hill
innocent of
originating
them.

The law of our being will bring upon the stage, men bred in the atmosphere caused by steam power and rail-roads; and unless we move on, they will push us from our stools. Liverpool joined to Manchester has taken the place of Bristol, and unless the London merchants and traders rouse up, the Mersey will beat the Thames.

The following evidence of Col. Maberly, will show that Mr. Hill is not to be charged with any inconvenience, if inconvenience it be, of getting two deliveries a-day,—that, and more, was determined upon in the days of his innocence.

“*Lord Seymour.*—Do you not think the more frequent communication rail-roads afford to the public, in many instances, will lead to a probable increase of the fraudulent transmission of correspondence?—So much have we been of that opinion, that on the grand junction rail-road being

Col. Maberly's
evidence as to
increase in de-
liveries.

* Fifth Report of Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry.

Increase in deliveries.

Col. Maberly's evidence.

opened between Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester, we established four communications a day; and the post-master-general has decided to give that number of communications on the different rail-roads as they open, provided that that number of despatches and receipts should be found serviceable; on the principle, that if we do not give facilities for the transmission of correspondence, the smuggler will beat us out of the market, and we should get no revenue at all.

“Do you not think that while you afford these additional facilities for the transmission of correspondence, it will be beneficial to the revenue, for the same reason, to reduce the postage on those lines?—I have always said that the present rate of postage is a great deal too high, and I think the establishment of rail-roads is a very great additional argument for reduction, as giving very great increased facilities for smuggling correspondence.”

It will be seen, therefore, that *if* it be a convenience to shut up letters for a large portion of every twenty-four hours, it is neither the public nor the merchants' convenience that has been studied. Four deliveries a day have been established for the sake of the revenue, and not for the sake of commerce, and that number is to be established, as rail-roads open, if they shall be found serviceable—that is, to the revenue. This has been and is the case between Liverpool and Manchester, and is to be the case as to other lines of railway. The lecturer who should attempt to persuade the merchants and manufacturers of the north to shut up the railways and discontinue steam packets, would not find an audience exceeding in number the door-keeper and the porter, unless a few should attend curious to see how a man looked when out of his wits.

The admission of Colonel Maberly that the present rates of postage are a great deal too high, and that rail-roads are a great additional inducement for reduction, will not be forgotten; but attention is here pointed to the fact, that it is not because it is desirable, in a mercantile view, or beneficial to the public, but because high rates give increased facilities for smuggling correspondence, that reduction is thought desirable. So true it is that the smuggler has been the great reformer in all fiscal matters. It must be painful to the economist and statesman, and to the moralist, to contemplate this as the result of the practical knowledge of our fiscal officials; but that this is the motive to action with them has long been known to those whose attention

has been drawn to this subject, and whose knowledge has been made perfect through suffering. It was recently manifested in the silk trade, in which the prohibitory laws and heavy duties had systematized smuggling: the smuggler forced the attention of the laggard officials; and those who *broke* the law compelled the government to yield that which they could not be persuaded to grant by those who obeyed it—the smugglers in that trade taught the government that their fiscal laws and heavy duties were just worth an insurance of ten per cent. and no more. The smuggler—though the proximate is not the primary cause of injury to the honest merchant or trader; but unwise laws, and ignorant or obstinate statesmen—the smuggler is, and has been, the great teacher of our financiers. He is, at the same time, the creature and teacher of foolish statesmen.

Increased deliveries.

Rail-roads and smuggling.

Colonel Maberly seems to have an absurd fear of smugglers: "The smuggler must always beat the post-office, whatever rate of postage is imposed.

"I do not think it possible by any law, or by any reduction of postage, to stop illicit correspondence.

"The *only* method which appears to me at all practicable, would be a right of search, which no legislature or people would submit to."

The result of this is, that Colonel Maberly thinks there is no remedy but a remedy worse than the disease. So think the sluggish Turks, and the plague continues.

It is obvious, however, to all other men, that if postage be reduced to one penny instead of being retained at about six-pence halfpenny, the average postage of all post letters, that the inducement to smuggle is reduced 500 per cent.; and many people think that if you remove a cause, its effect will cease.

The carriage of men, though taxed heavily enough in the shape of post-horse duty, stage coach, and hackney coach duty, is still left in the hands of the public; that is, the people are left to help themselves, and the consequence is, that there is hardly an important town or populous place in the kingdom, which has not the advantage of several coaches; and many of the most populous, of half-a-dozen coaches and other means of conveying men and parcels to the metropolis, and all other important and populous places, every day. Yet the post-office can only convey a letter once in twenty-four hours, if the distance be beyond twelve miles from London; and that at an expense of ten times the actual cost of the conveyance; thus the residents in the

circle round the metropolis, exceeding twelve miles, and under twenty, are still left where they were in the earlier times of post-office management. Let me repeat this in other words: Without the government *aid* (?) we could, upon the average, have three communications daily, with every important town in the kingdom; with it, we are restricted to one in twenty-four hours. Without the government *aid*, we could have our letters conveyed to every part of the kingdom at one penny, being allowed a double letter where we are now restricted to a single letter; and yet allowing 100 per cent. profit—a profit much beyond what would be required from the public by carriers. The average postage of letters, taking in all the letters of every kind, is *six-pence halfpenny*. We are charged FIVE HUNDRED AND FIFTY per cent. more than we could have them carried for, with three or four deliveries per day; this, therefore, is 550 per cent., not for *despatching*, but for *delaying* the communications of business, and the interchange of affection to all, and practically prohibiting them to the poor.

Uniformity of charge.

A return to the postage of 1765 has been suggested. Now to return to the postage of 1765, would be, if all the considerations which ought to be brought into view are taken into account, to return to a penny postage.

In 1765, the universal postage on letters, transmitted under fifteen miles, was one penny; above fifteen and under thirty miles, two-pence; above thirty and under eighty miles, three-pence; and on all above eighty miles, the postage was only four-pence. In 1765, there were no mail coaches—few direct roads, and those few inferior to the worst turnpike road of the present time—small facilities for travelling—great insecurity—and a population greatly inferior in number and education to the present. In 1838, with all possible increased advantages of travel and transport, increased trade, progressive numbers and intelligence, the postage of

One penny	has become	four-pence.
Two-pence	—	six-pence.
Three-pence	—	eight-pence.
Four-pence	—	nine-pence.

In 1765, the true principle of postage—*uniformity of rate*, was carried out, probably as near as the roads and traffic of that time would allow; and the charges were evidently regulated on the principle mentioned by Lord Lowther in his statesman-like report, that “the post-office was to afford

advantage to trade and commerce," and that "the revenue to be derived from the post-office was not the primary consideration." Uniformity of charge.

It is obvious, therefore, that with the increase of the number of letters, the improvement in roads, ease and facility of transit, to return now to the same nominal rates of 1765, would not be to return to the same rates in fact.

The public in a matter of trade, if the government will insist upon maintaining its monopoly, are entitled to all the advantages flowing from the increase of population, the spread of education, of commerce, and of improved roads, for which they themselves have paid.

Lord Lichfield contends, that it is necessary, in order to arrive at a fair estimate of the cost of carriage, to take the few letters carried by the Louth mail, and to bring them into average with the Edinburgh mail; because the many can be carried at a cost so much less than the few: this is what Mr. Hill contends; and as the average cost is too small for collection, he proposes to add a profit of more than 200 per cent., and to establish a uniform rate of one penny.

Viewing Mr. Hill as the relator on the part of the public against the post-office, and Lord Lichfield as a witness for the defence, it may be truly said, the defendant's witness has made out the plaintiff's case. Had the government, as public carriers, improved the roads at their own expense; had they been at the cost of the rail-roads; had they, and not the people, sustained those losses which result from the great and sudden changes of property, which the application of steam power and the improvements of rail-roads and machinery have introduced, and are working in this great commercial, though, geographically, small country; then there might be some *colour*, though, even then, no real ground, for urging on the part of the government, the same rates as were paid in 1765; but otherwise, it is a false semblance to call the same nominal rates, if imposed now, the same rates as in 1765.

A thousand letters at half-an-ounce weight each, would be 31 lbs. weight; this weight could be sent to Edinburgh for 7s. or less. For this the government would get, at one penny, £4 3s. 4d.

But let us suppose a carrying establishment having to carry and deliver 200,000 letters per day, all will see how much more cheaply, in proportion, this could be done; as the same agency that takes the letters to Edinburgh, would

take all the letters for any intermediate place in the same line of road; and five or six letters instead of one would have to be delivered at the same house.

People are then apt to suppose that there would be a great expense in the sorting and delivery;—now that the expense of sorting and delivery would be but little, is demonstrated by the fact, that there are seventeen hundred local penny posts in the kingdom, that those posts average a radius of about eight miles for each, and the correspondence of each is shut out from the others, and that they, nevertheless, give a profit of 75 per cent. upon the outlay.

We have only then to consider these little barriers thrown down, and all letters brought under one uniform management; that the carriage of a letter from any one post town to any other post town in Great Britain, costs but the one-tenth part of a penny; and then the certainly great increase in number and in profit will be brought to view.

As to pre-payment.

As to pre-payment, this has been noticed incidentally as it has occurred. The arguments in its favour are these:—

Economy in collection.

It prevents the necessity for keeping daily accounts with all the post-offices in the kingdom. The smallness of the items, and the details which they must necessarily embrace, coupled with the admitted fact, that there is no effectual, that is, precise, check upon the deputy post-masters; the saving of time and of trouble—and that, generally speaking, the officers connected with the finance department are those who receive, and are entitled, from the confidence that is necessarily reposed in them, to the largest salaries—establish the saving to result from the proposed mode of collection.

The justice of pre-payment:—

It is just that he who writes a letter, inasmuch as he is thereby realizing a wish, motive, or purpose of his own, should pay for its carriage. If there were no post-office, could he in reason ask the party written to, to send for it?—surely not: it is clear then, that the writer ought to pay the messenger. It is not just that any man should have the power, at his pleasure, to inflict upon another the payment of six-pence or a shilling. It is only the habit of doing this that has induced the forgetfulness of this departure from a just rule—a habit which, if this part of the carrying business of the country had been in the hands of individuals, would not have been tolerated.

Let it be recollected, that correspondence consists, as a

general rule, of a letter each way, so that the objection, at the most, exists only in the few cases that constitute the exception. Pre-payment.

It has been urged—Suppose a poor man wants to write a letter of solicitation, you shut him out from the power. This is the case now, for if he does not pay the present heavy postage, he goes far to secure a negative to his petition. But if every man can frank for a penny, that class who would be so extremely poor as not to be able of themselves to pay a penny, must not only be extremely poor, but destitute of a friend in the classes immediately above him—and the number who could assist him, would be so many, that he must be poor and destitute indeed, who could not, even amongst his own acquaintances, find a person to give him a frank. The objection to relieve, with most persons, is, the uncertainty of their doing good; but here it would be an act of kindness, which all would have pleasure in yielding; because, if the object should be doubted, the answer would be, “Give me the letter, and I will put it into a frank and send it.”

It will be familiar to most upon whom **Hamburgh** lottery circulars and anonymous letters have been inflicted, and **Joseph Ady's**, and similar circulars, that there is not sufficient protection under the present system, against the injustice to which I have adverted.

Mr. Macfie, a banker at **Glasgow**, had the following correspondence with the post-office upon the subject of a **Hamburgh** lottery circular; and it will be seen how limited is the remedy the post-office supplies—protection it does not give.

" National Bank of Scotland Office,
Glasgow, 31st March, 1838.

“**SIR**,—I use the freedom to return you a printed circular delivered me this morning from the post-office of **Glasgow**, and to request that you will direct that repayment of the duty thereon (1s. 1½d.) may be made. The letter is to me totally useless—the writer totally unknown. I could not avoid opening the letter, because, being agent for others, I feel bound to examine any letter addressed to me; but I have not read more than enough to show the shameful dishonesty of the man, who, deriving impunity from his distance, dares thus to abuse our facilities of communication to the detriment of any humble individual who may be unfortunate enough to have his name in a directory. I am the more bold in hoping you will afford redress in this

Pre-payment.

instance, for the sender of the circular does not reside in Britain, where, it might be said, recourse could have been had upon himself.

“Allow me, respectfully, to remark, that an argument may be drawn from such cases as the present, in favour of Mr. Rowland Hill’s system, so far as payment in advance is there made obligatory.

I am, Sir, your obedient humble servant,

(Signed)

R. A. MACFIE.

“The Secretary of General Post-office.

“If you refuse redress, of course you will return me the enclosed.”

“4th April, 1838.

“SIR,—Having submitted to London the question of returning the postage upon the enclosed, I beg to inform you, that as such letters are not sent for the purpose of annoyance or of maliciously subjecting the parties to expense, they do not come within the limited discretionary power granted by the treasury to the post-master-general, in regard to the return of postage on letters, which have been delivered to and opened by the parties to whom they are addressed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed)

ALEXANDER J. REAVES.

“R. A. MACFIE, Esq.”

In Ireland, it was found, some few years ago, that the immense number of notices connected with benevolent and other institutions failed in their objects, in consequence of the uncertainty of their delivery; under certain restrictions, they were therefore allowed to pass through the Irish post-office for a penny; but by some wording of the privilege it was made rather more extensive than was intended, and the increase of letters became so great as to impede the business of the post-office.

Pre-payment was not insisted upon, but the extent to which the public availed themselves of the privilege, raises a strong ground for believing that the anxiety to communicate, and the advantage flowing from communication at a cheap rate, taken in connexion with the next fact I will mention, would overcome any objection to payment *of so small a sum* in advance.

It is a fact shown by post-office returns, that more than one-fifth of the letters posted under the present rates of postage are paid. Now, if, when postage is voluntary and at the present rates, it is paid in advance to this extent, it follows, that more than five-sixths of the postage being taken off, the public will be rather relieved than oppressed by the arrangement. Pre-payment

The present average postage of letters is no longer a question; for as to that, and the number of letters, the evidence, and the returns from the post-office, have shown, that Mr. Hill had ascertained that of which its officers were ignorant. Official routine seems to have the same deadening influence upon the mentals of bipeds, that a mill-track has upon the visuals of quadrupeds. As to the average postage, and the number of letters.

Mr. Hill stated, in his examination, the annual number of letters passing through the post-office, to be seventy-nine millions and a half. The annexed statement will show how gradually the post-office statements and returns have subsequently shown his accuracy.

Date.	Number of Letters.	Average Postage.	Evidence or Authority.
1837. Dec. 7th	General 43,740,350	d. 11½	Return. Appendix B. No. 1 Report, p. 434.
	Two-penny . . 10,894,570	10	
	54,634,920		
Dec. 9th	General 43,740,350	11½	Return. Appendix B. No. 2 Report, p. 434.
	Two-penny . . 10,894,570		
	Penny 3,589,920		
	58,224,840	9½	
1838. March 9th	General 47,627,000		Col. Maberly's evidence. Answer 3012.
	Two-penny . . 12,058,000		
	Penny 7,067,000		
	66,752,000		
March 21st	General, Penny, & Two-penny 68,324,516		Return. Appendix to Report, p. 462.

* This omitted the penny letters.

Average postage and number of letters.

Let us suppose that the inquiry on this point had been allowed to rest upon the return from the post-office of 58,000,000, it is easy to see how Mr. Hill and his proposed reform would have been disposed of. The conclusion would have been, that the post-office returns were correct; and the question would have been sacrificed, in consequence of their ignorance. Either these returns were the result of ignorance or of design. I assume that they were the result of ignorance; because, on three occasions, an average postage is struck, and the number of letters therefore necessarily taken as the measure by which to ascertain it.

Since the last of the returns above given, another it is known has been presented, and that establishes the number as given by Mr. Hill in his evidence, before any of the returns were made.

This return, until the Committee has reported to the House, is not accessible; and, therefore, cannot be presented here. It will show that Mr. Hill knew better than the post-office officials themselves what they were doing.

The whole of the evidence and the returns demonstrate the subdued and safe character of the estimates upon which Mr. Hill has rested his case.

Oppressive effects of postage upon shares in public companies.

When the number of railways now in progress, and the capital that must be required for completing them, is considered, the importance of facilitating the application of private savings to these useful undertakings will occur.

I insert here, though a little out of place, for it has reached me since I put together the preceding, a statement of the postage incurred on small investments of this kind, that the prohibitory effect of heavy postage upon another great field of business activity may be appreciated.

“There are,” say a highly respectable house in Liverpool, “many respectable persons in country districts, especially females, who can hardly be induced to take shares, however desirable to increase their income, from the dread of the present heavy rates of postage. Those who have engaged in new undertakings, are deterred from engaging in more, from the cost of postage, which for notices of meetings, half-yearly and special reports, for calls, and remittances of calls, amount to one and two per cent. out of the first year’s dividend, upon an investment of £100 or £200.

“Assuming the purchase of £100 stock in a railway, with only £10 paid up, and the average of postage to be

nine-pence, the charge on one share will be something like the following:—

	£	s.	d.
“ Ordering purchase	0	0	9
Advice of ditto	0	0	9
Remittance (double)	0	1	6
Transfer to be executed	0	1	6
Ditto returned	0	1	6
Certificate and transfer sent up to London to be registered (treble)	0	2	3
The certificate returned indorsed (double)	0	1	6
The same forwarded to purchaser	0	1	6
Acknowledging receipt of the same, and balance of account	0	0	9
Call of £5 0 9)			
Remittance (double) 1 6 } 3s. 9d. each call.			
Receipt 1 6)			
This repeated eighteen times to make up £90	3	7	6
Notices of two half-yearly meetings for three years, and reports of such meet- ings (six letters at 1s. 6d.)	0	9	0
	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>6</u>

“ If the concern pays 10 per cent. per annum, half-a-year’s dividend is swallowed up in postages. If the party is an original subscriber, the expense will be £1 or £2 more; and if the share is only £50 or a £25 in the Eastern Counties Railway, the cost of postages is equal to one or two years’ dividend. These shares are also burthened with a *heavy stamp*.

“ Besides this, they are subject to a heavy cost of postage on the dividend, viz:—

	s.	d.
“ Letter advising dividend declared	0	9
Receipt for the dividend (double)	1	6
Remittance for ditto	1	6
	<u>3</u>	<u>9</u>

And this repeated twice a-year, makes a dividend of £5 per annum only £4 12s. 6d.; and on a share of £50, pro-

ducing only £2 10s. per annum, it leaves for the annuitant only £2 2s. 6d., or 4½ per cent. instead of 5 per cent.

“ On account of the enormous charge for postage, investments in shares are very much limited ; and certificates and transfers, instead of going by post, are accumulated, and sent in parcels, and returned in like manner ; and parties not resident in the largest towns, are kept for weeks and months out of the title to their property, waiting conveyances by private hands, and are thus obliged to confide to the integrity and solvency of their agents.”

Let me here point out an advantage to flow from a reduction of postage, which few perhaps would anticipate until brought to their attention.

Facts as to
strikes among
workmen.

The strikes that have taken place between masters and men have been shown to result from causes which would not have existed if the men could have communicated freely with each other, so as to have ascertained the rates of wages at different localities ; the disputes arise in these cases, as most disputes do arise, from ignorance of facts ; the men will not believe the representations made by the masters, and it is not reasonable that they should be expected to do so. The masters do not adopt the representations of the men ; and as justice is equal, they cannot expect the men should give credence to them, in cases in which they are interested. Now it has been stated by those of great experience in these matters, that when the delegates of the men were themselves satisfied that it was undesirable to strike, the strong opinions previously formed by the men upon erroneous statements of facts, prevented them from listening to opinions which appeared to them to be unfounded ; but if the men had had the opportunity of writing to their friends and acquaintances of their own grade, and having the same interests, at different towns in the kingdom, and the stream of facts had had its free course, as it would have had at a cheap postage,—because men, when they correspond, write upon subjects which interest them,—the error as to facts would not have existed, and the strikes would not have resulted.

The operatives meet, debate, and reason upon the questions of strikes long before they take place. Their errors do not arise from their unwillingness to investigate, but because the sources of evidence are shut out from them by heavy rates of postage.

Those who have ascertained the immense expenditure which has been incurred by the masters and men, in con-

sequence of strikes—which strikes themselves would not have originated, had the facts been current amongst the mass—will see the great advantage which would have resulted from the increase of knowledge by a cheap postage. Facts as to strikes.

The men are not to be blamed for not listening immediately to their own delegates: it is not because their delegates ascertain the facts to be different from what the men have supposed, that the men can immediately adopt new convictions: it is not that they are disposed to have less confidence than other men in those they employ, but that they have not been permitted to enjoy the same advantages of getting information, and receiving current truths from those they know to have the same interest, and who, therefore, would be, to them, credible witnesses.

There need be no apprehension of any injurious results, either in business or in science, from extending the utmost possible knowledge to all.

There are some that feel an apprehension that the circulation of business knowledge, and the increase of business activity, will discover too soon all that is to be known; and by exhausting the field of business activity, leave men without any thing new to discover; so some men thought when fly waggons took the lead of broad wheels, and coaches accomplished what was then thought the wonderful effort of travelling from York to London in three days.

Improvement and the world will expire together; and until the final end of all things, we may diffuse knowledge without fear of exhausting it. We need not be apprehensive of becoming infinite or perfect. New discoveries will only open new fields of activity and usefulness. Something useful will always arise from exercising the inventive powers; and as all the blessings that now exist have arisen from society and commerce, we may feel perfectly easy that the more communication is facilitated, and mind communes with mind, the greater will be the happiness resulting to man.

LIST OF THE COMMERCIAL AND OTHER WITNESSES

Examined before the Select Committee on Postage.

- LORD ASHBURTON.
 R. WALLACE, Esq., M. P.
 ROWLAND HILL, Esq.
 C. KNIGHT, Esq. Charles Knight & Co., Publishers.
 W. M. CHRISTY, Esq. . . . W. M. and John Christy & Co., Hat Manufacturers.
 JOHN DILLON, Esq. Of the Firm of James Morrison & Co., Wholesale Warehousemen.
 G. B. WHITTAKER, Esq. . . Whittaker & Co., Publishers.
 JOHN DICKINSON, Esq. . . . John Dickinson & Co., Paper-makers.
 Mr. J. WRIGHT Warren, Russell, and Wright, Blacking Manufacturers.
 Mr. L. F. de PORQUET Publisher and Scholastic Agent.
 H. DESBOROUGH, Esq. . . . Secretary to the Atlas Fire and Life Insurance Company.
 Mr. M. BRANKESTON Superintendent of the Establishment of Leaf, Coles, & Co., Wholesale Warehousemen.
 G. MOFFATT, Esq. Moffatt & Co., Tea and Colonial Agents and Brokers.
 R. TAYLOR, Esq. Printer. Editor of "Philosophical Magazine," &c. &c.
 Capt. J. BENTHAM 52nd Regiment.
 J. W. PARKER, Esq. Publisher to the University of Cambridge.
 Mr. J. REID Formerly a Bookseller and Publisher in Glasgow.
 G. SAINTSBURY, Esq. Under Treasurer to The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.
 R. PEARSON, Esq. Proprietor of Stanton's Wharf.
 Dr. D. LARDNER.
 Mr. J. B. SHARP Sharp & Co., Medicine Vendors.
 Mr. F. B. OERTON Saddlers' Ironmonger.
 T. LAMIE MURRAY, Esq. . . Chairman, National Loan Fund Life Assurance Society, and one of the Directors of National Bank of Ireland.
 T. WEBSTER, Esq. Secretary to Society of Civil Engineers.
 PATRICK JOHNSON, Esq. . . Official Assignee.
 Mr. G. E. BROOKS Brooks and Hedger, Auctioneers, and Estate and Land Agents.
 Mr. W. H. WATSON Secretary to Sunday School Union.

- J. M. ASHLIN, Esq. John Ashlin and Son, Corn-factors.
- WILLIAM MAURY, Esq. Treasurer of the American Chamber of Commerce at Liverpool.
- WILLIAM BROWN, Esq. William and James Brown & Co., of Liverpool, Merchants.
- RICHARD COBDEN, Esq. Of Manchester, Manufacturer, and author of "Russia, By a Manchester Manufacturer," and of "England, Ireland, and America, By a Manchester Manufacturer."
- WILLIAM FELKIN, Esq. Of Nottingham, Lace Merchant, and Vice-President of the Chamber of Commerce at Nottingham.
- THOMAS COATES, Esq. Secretary to the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.
- Mr. W. VICKERS Naylor, Hutcheson, Vickers, & Co., of Sheffield, Merchants and Steel Manufacturers.
- Mr. DANIEL DEACON Daniel Deacon and Son, Public Carriers.
- E. G. FLIGHT, Esq. A Solicitor at Bridport.
- Lieut. F. W. ELLIS, R. N. Auditor of a District of Poor Law Unions, Commissioner of River Blyth, &c.
- Mr. D. Mc KEWAN Manager, under W. J. Hall & Co., of Custom House and Wool Quays.
- T. GRIFFIN, Esq. Proprietor of Beale's Wharf.
- Mr. A. DAVIDSON Durnford & Co., Gracechurch Street, Pin and Fish-hook Manufacturers.
- Mr. J. BOORD Clerk to Swain & Co. Distillers, Holborn.
- Mr. E. BAKER A Traveller.
- Colonel COLBY Superintendent of the Ordnance Survey.
- MATTHEW CLARK, Esq. Matthew Clark and Keeling, Brokers and Agents in the Foreign Wine and Spirit Trade.
- Mr. T. J. BREWIN John Brewin and Son, Cirencester, Dealers in Seeds, Hops, &c.
- D. Mc LAREN, Esq. Treasurer of Edinburgh.
- Dr. G. BIRKBECK.
- Mr. J. DUNLOP A gentleman, who has devoted much time to the establishment of Temperance Societies.
- ALFRED AUSTIN, Esq. Solicitor.
- Mr. T. DAVIDSON Manufacturer, Glasgow.
- Mr. GRAVENER HENSON Of Nottingham, Hosiery and Lace Manufacturer.
- Rev. T. SOCKET Rector of Petworth.
- JAMES SIMPSON, Esq. Of the Scotch Bar, Author of "The Philosophy of Education," and Lecturer on Education.

- GEORGE EMERY, Esq. The Grange, Banwell, near Bristol, Magistrate for Somersetshire, &c.
 Dr. G. GREGORY Physician to the Small Pox and Vaccination Hospital at St. Pancras.
 Dr. W. MUNK Physician to the Farringdon Dispensary.
 SAMUEL JONES LOYD, Esq. . Jones Loyd & Co., Bankers.
 CHARLES TENNANT, Esq. . . Of Russell Square.

POST AND STAMP OFFICE WITNESSES.

- EARL OF LICHFIELD General Post-office, London.
 Lieut.-Col. MABERLY Ditto.
 Mr. J. CAMPBELL Ditto.
 Mr. W. BOKENHAM Ditto.
 M. B. PEACOCK, Esq. Ditto.
 Mr. G. R. HUDDLESTONE . . Ditto.
 Mr. C. NEWTON Ditto.
 T. LAWRENCE, Esq. Ditto.
 Mr. W. HOLGATE Ditto.
 GEORGE LOUIS, Esq. Ditto.
 Mr. J. W. SEBRIGHT Ditto.
 Mr. G. H. CRESSWELL Ditto.
 C. T. COURT, Esq. Ditto.
 JOHN WOOD, Esq. Stamp-Office.
 C. PRESSLY, Esq. Ditto.
 JOSEPH TIMM, Esq. Ditto.
 THOMAS THOMPSON, Esq. . . Solicitor to Irish Post-office.
 WILLIAM BANNING, Esq. . . Postmaster of Liverpool.
 AUGUSTUS GODBY, Esq. . . . Secretary to Irish Post-office.
 Sir EDWARD S. LEES Secretary to Post-office of Scotland.
 Mr. C. BIANCONI Car Contractor, Ireland.

* * * *Several Witnesses were examined relative to the practice of evading Postage in different Towns in the Kingdom, whose names are not printed.*

