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THE NEW POST OFFICE .  
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THE POST OFFICE SYSTEM .  
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EARLY HISTORY

of the

PENNY POST .  
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The Gentleman's Magazine. 1829.

The eighteenth Report of the Commissioners of Revenue Enquiry relates entirely to the business in every department of the General Post-Office in London, and shows the extraordinary machinery of that extensive establishment. The ordinary business of each day is, in letters in the inland office alone, 35,000 letters received, and 40,000 sent, (23,475,000 annually) exclusive of the numbers in the foreign department, and the ship letter office, and altogether independent of the two-penny post. The number of newspapers daily varies from 25,000 to 50,000 (on Saturday 40,000, and on Monday 50,000), of which number about 20,000 are put into office ten minutes before six o'clock. After that hour each newspaper is charged one half-penny, which yields a revenue of fully £500 a year, and which gives 240,000 newspapers annually put into office from six to a quarter before eight o'clock. The revenue derived from charges for early delivery in London is £4,000, and the sum obtained by the charge of one penny each letter, taken up by the bellmen from five o'clock, when the receiving offices shut, to six o'clock when they must despatch all their letters by the mail-carts to Lombard-street, is £3,000 a year, giving 720,000 letters annually, or nearly 2,000 daily, collected in this manner. The revenue of London is 6,000℥. a week, above 300,000℥. a year and yet of all this vast annual revenue there has only been lost, by defaulters, £200 in 25 years!! The franks amount in a morning to 4,000 or 5,000, or more. Newspapers can only be franked for foreign parts to the first foreign port at which

the mail arrives. After this they are charged postage according to weight, in consequence of which a daily paper costs in St. Petersburg £40 sterling per annum.

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Gentleman's Magazine. July, 1829.

THE NEW POST OFFICE.  
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The magnificent building recently opened as the new metropolitan Post Office, is situated near the junction of Cheapside and Newgate Street, on the spot formerly occupied by the college and sanctuary of St. Martin-le-Grand. §

It is one of the largest public edifices in the City of London. The architect, Mr. Smirke, has employed in its construction his favourite order, the Grecian Ionic, which he has also introduced in his new buildings at the British Museum. In all his designs he appears to depend for effect more on the intrinsic beauty of the order itself, than on the embellishment of the subordinate features. The principal front, which is 400 feet in length (and of which the centre and one wing are represented in the accompanying view) has a grand and impressive effect, alike from the continuity and simplicity of its elevation, and from the solidity and magnificence of its proportions. The portico, which projects with two intercolumns at the sides, and is also recessed, has an air of space and a depth of shadow, that contribute materially to enhance its effect. Its breadth is seventy, and its depth twenty feet. Over the door is placed a clock, with a face both to the exterior and interior; and on each side are two pedestals, with strong reflecting lamps. In this front are forty-four windows. The east front, in Foster-lane, has upwards of 180 windows,

and may be said to have the same appearance to the other, as is usual with the back of ordinary houses. The whole, however, is characterized with a simple and impressive character of due proportion.

The vestibule or great hall, which occupies the centre of the edifice, is a thoroughfare for the public from one street to the other. It is about eighty feet long (which is the depth of the building throughout), sixty feet broad (ten less than the portico), and fifty-three feet high in the centre. It is supported by two lines of six columns, similar to those of the portico; and formed of Portland stone, upon granite pedestals. Next the wall are corresponding pilasters, or antae. The entablature, which is enriched with ornaments from the best examples, is of mastic; and is surmounted by an attic, on each side of which light is admitted. The dado and architraves of the doors are of granite; and above the entrance from Foster-lane, which is divided into three circular headed doorways, is a gallery affording a communication to the first floor apartments of the respective wings, and lighted by three circular-headed windows, corresponding to the doorways below.

On the north side of the vestibule are the several receiving rooms for newspapers, inland and ship letters; and behind these, further north, are the inland-letter-sorters and letter-carriers' rooms. These rooms, which extend the whole

length of the front from the portico to the north wing, are tastefully finished. The latter is 35 feet high. Their fittings up appear to be perfect in their kind: there are almost innumerable boxes, pigeon-holes, drawers, &c. At each end of the letter-carriers' office are projecting circular rooms, or bars, for the principals. The mails are received at the doorway (in the eastern or Foster-lane front) north of the vestibule, leading to the inland offices - and are taken into a room called the tick room, where the bags are opened. In this part of the building is also a spacious office, appropriated to the correspondence of the West Indies; and also the comptroller's and mail-coach offices.

On the south side of the vestibule are the foreign, receiver-general's, and the accountant's offices. The foreign office is most chastely and conveniently fitted up; the beauty of the ceiling at once attracts attention. At the eastern end of the foreign office is a corridor, and the private foreign office, and that of the principal clerk.

At the eastern end of the vestibule is the twopenny post department, comprising the receiving, sorters', and carriers' rooms. The sorters' office is about 46 feet by 24 feet, on the plan and fitted up in the same judicious manner observed in the inland office. There is a very novel and admirable mode adopted for conveying letters across the vestibule to and from the inland, foreign, and twopenny post offices, in

small waggons, traversing in a tunnel beneath the pavement by means of machinery: it is said to be the invention of Mr. Barrow.

The corridor immediately at the right hand of the principal entrance leads to the grand staircase, the dimensions of which are 32 feet by 23 feet; the steps are of solid masonry, and the balusters have a peculiarly massive appearance - they are of brass bronzed, and are cylindrical. On the landing there is a niche for a gas lamp.

On the first floor, are the board room, secretary's room, and his clerk's offices, communicating by long passages with the solicitor's offices. The board room, which is 37 feet long and 24 feet broad, has an ornamental segment ceiling (of the form technically called waggon-head) - the cornice is supported by wainscot pilasters, the dado and doors are also of wainscot, and the walls have been painted to imitate the wood. All the floors throughout the building are of American oak.

At the eastern end of the hall, on the north side, is a staircase leading to the letter-bill, dead, mis-sent, and returned letter offices; and across the gallery of the hall are the offices connected with the solicitor's and secretary's apartments, which latter are also approached from the grand staircase.

On the second floor story and upper story are sleeping rooms for the foreign clerks, who are liable to be summoned

to duty at uncertain hours. The number of these rooms, and the extent of the accommodations, may be conceived, when it is stated that the rooms on each side of the gallery, two hundred and thirty-seven feet long, are appropriated to this purpose.

At the south-western extremity of the building is the private house of the Assistant Secretary. It is well suited for the residence of a gentleman's family; the principal rooms are in excellent proportion, and the whole is arranged so as to admit of free ventilation, and rendered as cheerful as the situation will admit.

In the basement, the whole of which is rendered fire-proof by brick vaulting, are rooms for the mail-guards, conveniently furnished with lockers, presses, and other accommodations; an armoury; and servants' offices. There is some ingenious machinery for conveying coals from the cellars to each story of the building; and a very simple yet perfect means is provided for obtaining a copious supply of water in case of fire, and conveying it through the building by means of these pipes. Immediately under the portico are placed two large gasometers (of Crossley's patent), capable of registering 4,000 cubic feet of gas per hour. The gas is supplied by the City of London Company; and is consumed by nearly a thousand burners in the several offices and passages.

The new Post Office was first opened for business on Wednesday September 23rd. a short time before five o'clock in



the morning. The improved system enabled the inland officers to sort and arrange the letters by about eight o'clock, and at half-past eight they were ready for delivery. In the course of the morning four vehicles were stationed at the back of the Post-office, built after the manner of the Omnibus (a new ob-long vis-a-vis stage-coach, built upon a plan lately imported from Paris). In these (which the Post office name Accelerators,) the letter-carriers having to deliver letters at the west and north-western parts of the Metropolis, took their seats about half-past eight o'clock, two of the carriages proceeding up the Strand, and the other two up Holborn. There were about fourteen letter carriers in each. At Lloyd's Coffee House, and other public places in the city, the letters arrived full twenty minutes earlier than usual. The mails receive the bags, &c. in Foster-lane.

At the old Post Office, the portion called the Comptroller's office, has been converted into a receiving house for foreign and inland letters and newspapers, for the accommodation of the merchants and others near the Exchange.

Two other branch offices have been established at Charing-cross, next door to Northumberland House, and in Vere-street, Oxford-street, where letters are received until half-past seven in the evening.

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The Post-office system of England, perfected as it has been of late years by the suggestions of Mr. Palmer, the late mail-coach contractor, is considered superior to that of any other country.

The mention of the office of Chief Postmaster of England occurs in 1581. In 1635, King Charles the First directed his "Postmaster of England for foreign parts" to open a communication, by running posts, between London and Edinburgh, Chester, Holyhead, Exeter, Plymouth, and Ireland, &c. In 1653-4 the post-office revenues were farmed by the Council of State and Protector at £10,000 per annum. In 1656 the Parliament made some enactments for the erection of a new general Post-office, which was established at the Restoration in 1660, and from that period has only changed by a perpetual growth of activity and usefulness. The mail was first conveyed by stage-coaches on the 2nd. of August, 1785; and in 1789 no less than £30,000 was added to the revenue by the establishment of mail-coaches.

The progressive increase of the Post Office receipts has been as follows :

1664 .	£21,000	1723 .	£ 201,804
1674 .	43,000	1744 .	235,492
1685 .	65,000	1764 .	281,535
1688 .	76,318	1775 .	345,321
1697 .	90,505	1785 .	463,753
1710 .	111,461	1793 .	607,268
1715 .	145,227	1815 .	2,067,940

The Eighteenth Report of the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, which has been recently printed, is entirely devoted to the subject of the Post-Office of the United Kingdom. The

Report and its Appendix, which together occupy no less than 697 folio pages, relate to one only of three heads into which the subject matter is distributed by the Commissioners, namely, "The Circulation of Correspondence within the United Kingdom." The remaining two heads are, "The Communications with the Colonies and Dependencies of Great Britain, direct and intermediate, including the Internal Circulation of the Colonies;" and "The Communications with Foreign Parts, direct and from the Colonies." The Commissioners exhibit a comparative statement of the general revenue and expenditure of the Post-office at two distinct periods, namely, the three years preceding the commencement of their inquiry, and the three years ending the 5th. of January, 1827. From this statement it appears that in the last period there has been a progressive increase in the gross receipts in each of the three kingdoms; whereas in the former period there was a progressive decline. The average rate of charge upon the gross receipt, during the first period, was 28£.19s.4½d.; during the latter, it was only 26£.17s.9¼d. The sum disbursed under the direction and responsibility of His Majesty's Post-masters-General in Great Britain, and Ireland, during the latter period, was, on an average, 670,000£. per annum. The net revenue of 1828 was 1,400,000£.

The following abstract from the evidence of Sir Francis Freeling, will afford a comprehensive and instructive view of the conducting of this gigantic engine of general intercourse,

and important branch of the revenue of the country. It will, together with what has already been related, demonstrate to those who wonder at the size of the new building, that such extensive business, even when conducted in the most simplified manner, could never be accomplished within confined limits.

### Principal Offices.

The Inland-office, the Foreign-office, and the Twopenny-post (which is now very considerable,) are the three great divisions of the Post Office.

The Inland-office divided itself into the London-office, the Country-offices, and the Twopenny-post.

The general departments through which the business of the Inland-office is conducted, are the Inland, the Foreign, the Two-penny-post departments, the Ship-letter, the By-letter, the Dead-letter, the Returned-letter, the Letter-bill, the Accountant-general's, and the Receiver-general's offices; the latter office is a check upon the Postmasters-general, and the appointment of the Receiver-general is not with the Post-master-general, but with the Treasury.

### Letters sent from London.

Will you have the goodness to trace a letter from its being put into a receiving-house in London to its being delivered in the country? - If it is put in at any distant receiving-house, it is there stamped and put up into a bag, that bag not being accessible to any individual until it comes to

the Post-office. Those bags are called for by the latter-carriers, who deposit some of them in sacks, which are put into carts employed for the purpose of saving time, in order to bring them to the office so much the earlier; others are brought in great sacks by the letter-carriers on foot. The bags are opened by persons appointed for that purpose, and the letters are then thrown into great baskets, in which they are brought to the places where they are to be stamped. The stamping is done by messengers, or by letter-carriers; and, as they are stamped, one letter is put into a sort of box, which is to go for 100; and so it is that we arrive at something like the number of letters that are put into the Post-office of an evening.

There are four or five stamping-tables; and sometimes three or four, sometimes more persons, are employed at each table. As soon as the letters are stamped, they are taken away to be assorted into 18 or 20 divisions, upon tables which correspond with what we call the roads, from which these letters are to be sent; the individual at No. 1. or 5, or 10, as the case may be, comes exactly to his table, and takes from the corresponding number the letters which have been assorted in the manner I have described. This is done by a higher gradation of sorters. There are a certain number of individuals assigned to a road; they take the letters to the road, and there they are assorted for the different places along the line of that road. When the individual has got the letters to his proper road, he begins with marking them with the rates

of postage; after that they are put up into the box which bears the name of the post town to which they are to be conveyed. When all the letters are assorted, it is his duty to tell up the whole in each box, in order to ascertain what sum the postmaster in the country is to be debited with: after that comes the process of tying them up in bundles, and putting them into bags and sealing them. The bags are then put, according to a certain order, into large sacks belonging to the roads; for instance, the Carlisle bag would be put at the bottom of what we should call the Carlisle sack, next to that Penrith, then Appleby, and then Brough, and so on. The sacks are then delivered to the guard, and he becomes from that moment responsible for their security. As he comes to each place, the bag belonging to the place is taken out; he delivers it to the postmaster, with all the bye-bags he may have to deliver, and takes up the bags which it is necessary he should have from that town for the different towns through which the mail coach passes.

#### Accounts of Postage.

The clerks making up the bags enter in slips, against each post town, the amount of the whole of the letters sent away from the office. Those slips then are handed to the proper officers, in order that they may find their way to the Accountant-general, so that they may form the charge upon the Postmaster in the country. A sort of way-bill is sent down, specifying the amount of letters charged upon the Postmaster,

which should correspond in all cases with the slip which goes to the Accountant-general. If we find that the Postmaster is in the habit of returning 1d., or 2d., or 3d., even such small sums as that, short of the office charge, we have recourse to this process: - unknown to him, the letters are told over by two or three persons for a certain period, so that we might, if possible, swear to the accuracy of our account, and the inaccuracy of his. The Postmasters' accounts are made up in books monthly; sent, under the signature of the officer of the Letter-bill office, to the Accountant-general, and then they form part of that account which is sent down to the Postmaster in the country once in a quarter. The letter-money is remitted by way of instalments, which are regulated every quarter. Where the amount is large we get a remittance once in fourteen days; where it is under £70 a fortnight, the remittance is made monthly. There are some very few instances in which an individual does not remit more than once in a quarter, which was formerly usual with all. The emoluments of the Postmasters in the country are in some instances influenced by the amount of the remittances; but the duties of the Post-offices are so varied in almost all cases, that the salary is never settled but on a due consideration of all the circumstances. An office where the amount of the revenue may be perhaps £200. or £300 a year, may from its local situation be a great forward-office; for instance, the town of Huntingdon: the mails arrive there in the dead of the night, and all the

letters from the north come up to Huntingdon to be assorted for Cambridgeshire, for Suffolk, and for Norfolk, and they amount to, I may say, thousands; on the return they come from Cambridge and Norfolk to Huntingdon, and amount to as many: the result is, that the duties at that office are done at very unseasonable hours; of course the regulation of the salary is not dependent upon the money that the individual receives, because those are all letters in transitu, but according to the severity of the duties he has to perform, and the time at which they are performed.

Letters from the Country.

Will you have the goodness to trace a letter, put in in the country, to its delivery in London? - It is dropped into the receiving-box at the Post-office of the town from which it is intended to be sent; it is stamped and taxed there by the Postmaster or the persons employed by him, all of whom take the oath of office; it is entered in his bill exactly in the same manner as is done in London; it is enclosed in a bag, which is sealed and delivered to the guard, put into his sack, and conveyed by the mail-coach to London. Having got to London, the bags are opened, the letters are told over, and more particularly the paid letters, because the Postmaster in the country receiving so much money for the paid letters, it is very necessary that we should see that he has put down the right amount. After the letters have been examined and stamped, they are distributed into fourteen divisions, twelve



for the inland letter-carriers, one for the window or alphabet, and one for the twopenny post. Each of these twelve divisions is then sub-divided into walks (118 or 119 in number). They are then placed before six clerks called tellers, who charge the amounts against the respective letter-carriers. The amount against each walk is entered in a book, and stated on a docket, which is delivered to another clerk, called the check clerk, who also enters it in his book. The letter-carriers then tell the letters, and report the amount they make to the check clerk. If it agrees with the amount of the docket he has received from the telling clerk, the docket is handed to the letter-carrier for signature, and returned again to the check-clerk, and the amount is thus established against the letter-carrier. If it disagree, after a second telling by the letter-carrier, the President selects a clerk from another part of the office to re-tell the letters, and decide which is right. The President frequently retells the letters himself. The telling-clerks, to prevent collusion with the letter-carriers, are changed almost every day.

#### Foreign Letters.

Will you now have the goodness to trace the Foreign Letters? They are deposited in the receiving-houses, and come up in sealed bags, just the same as the others. When a foreign letter is put into the Post-office in the country, it is tendered at the window of the Post-office in the country, and paid for. It then comes up in what is called the paid bill to

London, and is transferred to the Foreign-office; it becomes virtually a frank, as it forms no part of the charge on the Foreign-office. The bags are made up in the Foreign-office by nearly the same process as in the Inland-office, only of course on a smaller scale. We have a Hamburgh mail, a French mail, a mail to Ostend, a mail to Helvoet, a mail to Gottenburgh, a mail to Gibraltar and Malta, a mail to the Brazils, and a mail to Lisbon, - recently one to Buenos-Ayres.

#### Letters to the Colonies.

Letters are sent to the Colonies, with similar accounts to the Postmasters, who are our deputies, precisely in the same manner with the Postmaster of Bristol or Birmingham, and account for postage in the same way. The remittances are made by every packet, and those balances are at present, certainly, in a very creditable state. All letters from the Colonies are not received in the first instance by the Post-office in London; all that can be circulated sooner by going by the cross-post, are forwarded from Falmouth by the nearest post-road.

#### Cross Post.

Having gone through the direct communication, will you describe how letters are conveyed and checked in going through the line of cross-communication? - I will take the instance of Nottingham and Derby. The Postmaster of Nottingham, who sends the letters away, not only inserts the amount in the bill which accompanies those letters, but he keeps a voucher, which

is transmitted monthly to the By and Cross-road office, in which the amount charged on Derby is inserted, with the day, in the column. The Postmaster at Derby, when he receives those letters, puts down the amount in what is called the received side of the voucher. The voucher from Nottingham, and also that from Derby, are transmitted to the By and Cross-road Letter-office; they are there examined to see whether they agree; if they do agree, the account is received, and the deputy is debited accordingly. There must be a collusion between the two parties of course, if there is any fraud.

#### SURVEYORS.

Have you not Surveyors? - It is a part of their instruction to look to those things accurately and constantly, in travelling through the country: if there is any thing which can in the most remote degree excite their suspicion, they are to represent it immediately. In a flagrant case, the surveyor would at once see it was his duty to take charge of the office, and he would immediately state that he had done so. Where a man is deficient in his remittances, and where it would be imprudent to leave the revenue to greater hazard, a Surveyor is sent to take charge of the office. The great security for the cross-posts is the attention of the Surveyors? The Surveyors are officers fixed in districts; there are seven of them. There is scarcely a day in the year in which I do not receive communications from some of them.

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Early History of the Penny Post.  
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Staffordshire Moorlands,  
Dec. 1. 1829.

Mr. Urban, -

As your article on the New Post Office, relates almost entirely to its modern economy, and has scarcely an allusion to that important branch, the Twopennt Post, a few brief additions, with some notices of its early state, gleaned from various quarters, may not be uninteresting.

The utility of the Post Office at the outset, seems to have been so little appreciated, that, even so long as thirteen years after the Restoration, we find, from Blume's "Britannia," many people were almost ignorant of its existence. He says ;

" For the better information of all such as have occasion of conveyance of letters into any part of England, which before made use of that tedious way by wagon, carrier, or stage-coach, as not fully knowing this great conveniency, this is to inform them that the inhabitants of this nation have of late years, by a general Post-Office, an exceeding great conveniency in the conveyance of letters to most parts of the kingdom; and that at such easie rates, and with such quick dispatch, that in five dayes an answer may be received, though 250 miles; and, if but a letter of a single sheet of paper, for the expense of 3d.; but if of a greater bulk, then after the rate of 8d. per ounce; and if under 80 miles, then 2d. for a single letter. And if to Scotland 5d., and to Ireland 6d. for single letters.

The profits of this great Office, by Act of Parliament, is granted unto H.R.H. the Duke of York, under whom are abundance of officers, who continually give their attendance, under a yearly (and some a weekly) salary, each being appointed to, and knowing, his respective employment. And, upon the grand Post Office, which is kept in London, there depend 182 deputy

Postmasters in England and Scotland, most of which keep their offices in their stages, and have sub-postmasters in their branches out to Market-towns, not seated in the high roads: so that there is scarce any market-town of note, but hath the benefit of the conveyance of letters to and fro.

"The answers that are received, are delivered (if in London) to the letter-porters, who speedily carry them, according to the directions, and ought to demand no more than what is charged by the Office for bringing the same; yet, if one hath not a care, some of them will require money where none should be paid."

Three years later, an acquaintance with the nature of the Post Office was still far from being universally diffused, or the conductors would not have found it necessary to publish the following advertisement, which occurs in the London Gazette, 8 April, 1678 :

"All persons are desired to take notice, that there is a settled and safe conveyance of letters and packets by post, three times in every week, upon the usual post-days, to and from the City of London, and the towns hereafter mentioned in the counties of Surrey and Sussex, viz. Epsom, Leatherhead, Dorking, Guildford, Farnham Godalmin, Haslemore, Midhurst, Petworth, Horseham, Arundal, Staying, Shoreham, Bridghelmstone, Lewes, and Eastbourne; so that a correspondence may be had between all or any of the said places; and no money is required till the letters are delivered, and then only such rates as are established by Act of Parliament."

The account of the Post Office in Delaune's "Present State of London," 1681, is nearly the same as that given in the above extract from Blome, save that the rate of conveyance appears to have become somewhat more expeditious in the lapse of eight years; for whereas Blome boasts that letters might be sent 250 miles, and answers received in five days, Delaune tells us that

answers might then be had in the same time "from a place 300 miles distant from the writers;" and "though (he proceeds) the number of letter missives in England were not at all considerable in our ancestors' time, yet it is now so prodigiously great, (since the meanest people have generally learnt to write) that this Office is farmed for above 40 or rather 50,000£ a year."

What he adds, as to the improvement in coach-travelling, though not immediately connected with the subject, is too exquisite to be omitted :

"Besides this excellent convenience of conveying letters, there is of late such an admirable commodiousness, both for men and women of better rank, to travel from London, and to almost all the villages near this great city, that the like hath not been known in the world; and that is, by Stage-Coaches, wherein one may be transported to any place, sheltered from foul weather, and foul ways, free from endamaging one's health or body by hard jogging, or over violent motion; and this, not only at a low price, as about a shilling for every five miles, but with such velocity and speed, as that Posts in some foreign countries make not more miles in a day; for the Stage-Coaches called Flying-Coaches make forty or fifty miles in a day, as from London to Oxford or Cambridge, and that in the space of twelve hours (not counting the time for dining), setting forth not too early, nor coming in too late. Moreover, if any gentleman desire to ride post, to any principal town in England, post-horses are always in readiness, (taking no horse without the consent of his owner, which in other Kings' reigns was not duly observed,) and only 3d. is demanded for every English mile, and for every stage, to the post-boy, 4d. for conducting."

Delaune, however, devotes his chief attention to "that ingenious undertaking, the Penny-Post," which having, as he tells us heard disparaged by some censorious persons, he "examined the reasons, and found it opposed by none but the ignorant, or such as preferred some particular ends before public

utility, who persuaded H.R.H. the Duke of York, that it damnified the General Post-Office; whereupon many actions were brought, and a chargeable suit of law followed." He then upon the authority of "one of the gentlemen concerned," subjoins a long narrative of its rise and progress, the substance of which I annex :

"This useful invention is little more than a year old, being begun in April, 1680. The chief undertaker that introduced it into practice, is one Mr. William Dockwra, merchant, a native and citizen of London, with a numerous family of eight young children; who being forsaken by some others soon after it began, and left to shift for himself, carried on this undertaking singly, for above half a dozen years, at his own proper charge and hazard, against all the difficulties, oppositions and discouragements, that attended it, though now he hath several citizens in partnership with him. But I am truly informed that the income does not yet amount to three-fourths of the necessary charge to support it.

"This Penny-Post is thus managed. - The principal office, to which all accompts, &c., are daily transmitted, is in Lymestreet, at the dwelling-house of the said Mr. Dockwra, formerly the mansion-house of Sir Robert Abdy, knt.

"There are seven sorting-houses, proper to the seven precincts into which the under-takers have divided London, Westminster, and the suburbs, situated at equal distances, for the better maintenance of mutual correspondence.

"There are about 4 or 500 receiving houses to take in letters, where the messengers call every hour, and convey them as directed; as also post-letters, the writing of which are much increased by this accomodation, being carefully conveyed by them to the General Post-Office in Lombard-street.

"There are a great number of clerks and poor citizens daily employed as messengers, to collect, sort, enter, stamp, and deliver all letters, every person entertained giving £50 security, by bond, for his fidelity; and the undertakers oblige themselves to make good any thing delivered to their messengers under the value of £10 if sealed up, and the contents endorsed. By these messengers are conveyed letters and parcels, not exceeding one pound weight, to and from all parts of London, and all places within the bills of mortality; as also to the four towns of Hackney, Islington, South-Newington-Butts, and Lambeth, but to no other towns; and the letters only to be left at the receiving-houses of those four towns, and not delivered in the street; but if brought home to the houses in those towns, a penny more to be charged.

"They do now use stamps, to mark the hour of the day on all letters when sent out from their office to be delivered, by which persons are to expect their letters within one hour from the time marked thereon, by which the cause of delay of letters may be easily discern'd, viz., whether it be really in the office, or their own servants with whom the letters are left.

"All persons are desired not to leave any letters on



Saturday nights, after six of the clock in the winter, and seven in the summer, that the poor men employed may have a little time to provide for their families against the Lord's-Day, having no leisure all the week besides.

"To the most remote places, letters go four or five times of the day; to other places, six and eight times of the day; to inns of court, and places of business, especially in term or Parliament-time, 10 or 12 times of the day.

"London extends from Lymehouse to the end of Tuttle-street, seven miles and a half, which extraordinary length renders speedy communication very uneasie and troublesom. Now, to keep up a necessary correspondence, the way formerly used was, to hire porters, at excessive rates, to go on errands, and to send servants or apprentices, who lost time that should be spent to learn their trades and benefit their masters, and would often loyter, and get vicious habits and evil company, to their own and masters' hurt Or else, such as could not spare the porter so much money, nor kept servants, have been forced to sweat and toil, and leave their work for, it may be, half a day, to do that which now they may perform at the easie rate of a penny.

"The objections to this undertaking I have heard of are, 1st., from some sort of porters, that it hinders their livelihood; but the porters are an inconsiderable number in respect of the whole inhabitants of this great city, and a useful undertaking should not in equity or prudence be discountenanced,

for the peculiar advantage of some few. Others alledge, that their letters are not speedily answered, and therefore say they miscarry. But that may be, because the party is not at home, and his servants do not produce his letter as they ought, though punctually left by the Penny-Post messenger. Or the party may not be at leisure, or not willing to write, or removed, or would pretend he received it not, when dun'd for money, which he cannot or will not pay. And indeed I am informed, that abundance of letters are so ill superscribed, or uncertainly directed, (the particular trade of the party, the sign, or what noted place it is near, being omitted,) that it is impossible to deliver such, which is the fault of the senders, and not of the office."

Thus far from Mr. Delaune's zealous vindication of the novel undertaking.

James Broughton.

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§ The remains of the ancient College disclosed on clearing the site in 1818 were illustrated (with two engravings) in our vol. LXXXVIII. ii. 272, 393; LXXXIX. i. pp. 328, 414, 608 ; and an interesting volume, by Alfred John Kempe, Esq., F.S.A. was subsequently published, entitled "Historical Notices of the Collegiate Church or Royal Free Chapel and Sanctuary of St. Martin-le-Grand; with observations on the different kinds of Sanctuary formerly recognized by the Civil Law." ( See vol. xcv. ii. p. 245.)