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THE

MERCHANTS' MAGAZINE

AND

COMMERCIAL REVIEW.

CONDUCTED BY FREEMAN HUNT,

EDITOR OF THE LIBRARY OF COMMERCE, ETC.; CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN AND LONDON STATISTICAL SOCIETIES; MEMBER OF THE NEW YORK HISTORICAL SOCIETY; HONORARY MEMBER OF THE MERCANTILE LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS OF NEW YORK, BOSTON, BALTIMORE, LOUISVILLE, CHARLESTON, AND CINCINNATI; ETC.

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, by James M. Wheaton, of Massachusetts,

Art. II.—POST-OFFICE REFORM, AND UNIFORM POSTAGES.

The post-office department of the United States is at this moment the subject of more public discussion than any other department of the public service. One can hardly take up a newspaper, or meet an individual in conversation, without reading or hearing complaints. The conviction is gaining ground among the people, that the whole system is inefficient and oppressive—the call for *reform* is almost universal.

The department finds itself embarrassed, and its revenue deficient. The postmaster-general is attempting, though quite ineffectually, to increase its revenue, by carrying into effect the laws which give the government the monopoly of the transportation of what is called "mail matter." His attempts are only vexatious to the public, and increase the conviction that prevails, of the worthlessness of the present post-office machinery.

No one pretends that the embarrassments of the department arise from the lowness of the rates charged. The rates of postage are most unreasonably extravagant. The government are now charging twelve and a half cents for conveying a single letter one hundred miles; and, at the same time, endeavoring to monopolize the carriage of all the newspapers that pass over post-routes, each of which weighs ten times as much as the letter, for a cent or a cent and a half each, and give one-half of this to the postmaster who delivers them. This fact, alone, proves the rates to be excessive; but the most certain test is the fact that, despite the law and the postmaster-general, the people employ other and cheaper modes of conveyance, and will continue to do so until the department, if not reformed and reconstructed, and made to suit the present wants of the people, shall fall to pieces.

The plan of organization of our post-office department is essentially the same as at the time of its organization. Some inconsiderable alterations have been made, from time to time; but its administration, in its main features, is essentially the same as at the beginning. For the sake of having a clear view of its evils and burdens, we will recapitulate here the substance of the laws now in force. Under existing laws, the rates of postage are as follows:—

For a single Letter.

Under 30 miles,.....	6 cents.
Over 30 " and under 80,.....	10 "
" 80 " " 150,.....	12½ "
" 150 " " 400,.....	18¾ "
" 400 "	25 "

Ship letters, delivered at the port of arrival, six cents; or elsewhere, at the ordinary postage, and two cents in addition. Two pieces of paper are double; three pieces, triple these rates; and so on.

For Pamphlets and Newspapers.

Newspapers in the state where published, or out of state, not over 100 miles,...	1 cent.
" " " " over 100 miles,.....	1½ "
Periodical pamphlets, under 100 miles,.....per sheet	1½ "
" " over " ..... "	2½ "
Not periodical, under 100 miles,..... "	4 "
" over " ..... "	6 "

The *franking privilege* is enjoyed as follows:—By the president of the United States; vice-president; heads of the departments; comptrollers

and auditors of the departments; members of the senate and house of representatives, commencing sixty days before the first session of the Congress to which they are elected, and ending with the commencement of the next Congress; postmasters, of whom there are now about fourteen thousand; clerks of the senate and house of representatives. Under the act of December 19th, 1821, certain documents are also free.

Compensation of Postmasters.—Since January 1, 1842, the compensation has been somewhat reduced. It is now a commission of 27 per cent on the first $100; between $100 and $400, 23 per cent; between $400 and $2,400, 17 per cent; above $2,400, 7 per cent. Also, 45 per cent on newspapers, at offices producing less than $500 per annum; and two cents on each free letter.

Regulations as to Dead Letters.—Letters remaining in the post-offices uncalled for, after a certain time, having been duly advertised, are sent to the dead letter office, at Washington. If, on examination, they are found to be *valuable*, measures are taken to find the parties to whom they are addressed. If not valuable, they are destroyed.

The *weight* of any one package transmitted through the mail, excepting public documents, is limited to three pounds.

Letters may be *prepaid*, or otherwise, at the option of the sender. Letters, whether paid or not, may be *marked up* at the place of delivery, if the postmaster deems them undercharged.

Such is an outline of the present system; and it is not difficult to show that the whole organization is based upon wrong principles. Its defects are of the most glaring description; and, on examination, are so evident, that the only matter of wonder is, that it has been tolerated so long.

To begin with the rates:—That they are extravagant, would seem evident at first sight, when it is considered that the government charge two-thirds as much for carrying a quarter of an ounce of paper from Boston to Albany, as the western railroad do to carry a barrel of flour over the same distance; or that Harnden & Co. could carry, between Boston and New York, (if the law permitted,) all the correspondence that now goes through the mail, for one-tenth of the price charged by the government, and get rich by so doing. This part of the system, it is admitted on all hands, is radically wrong. The enormous price of the commodity furnished the public, beyond its natural cost, as measured by the rates at which private individuals would be glad to carry on the business, not only embarrasses the department itself, but is vexatious to the public. The government will neither perform the service for what it is worth, nor allow others to do it. Consequently, an amount of postage is evaded, almost beyond belief. Facts have been made public, from time to time, showing that the extent of the evasion is immensely greater than might, at first sight, be supposed.* The extension of railroads, and steamboat navigation, afford facilities for this evasion, much greater than formerly existed.† Merchants often *club* together, and make up their packages alternately, and forward them by private hand. Between Boston and New York, a single individual will frequently convey eighty or one hundred letters. No passenger ever complains of the trouble—everybody

* See Document appended to the Report of the Postmaster-General, December, 1841, being the Report of S. R. Hobbie, Esq., on this subject.

† See Report of Postmaster-General at extra session, June, 1841.

seems to feel that he is performing a Christian duty, in aiding his neighbor to evade an enormously oppressive tax. Nothing is more common than for letters, frequently valuable ones, to be sent to a railroad station by a boy, who hands them to some good-looking stranger, with a request to carry them along, which is always cheerfully complied with. These letters seldom or never miscarry. Everything goes on as well as it would with government patronage, and $50,000 a year. Vast numbers are sent in bundles of goods, and by the expresses, without the knowledge of the carriers; and, on many lines, vast numbers *with* their knowledge. To make any exact estimate of the amount of this evasion, is obviously impossible; but, should an accurate inquiry be instituted, it would be found, no doubt, very much greater than has ever been imagined.

Government can stop this clandestine transmission of letters in only one way, viz: to carry them for a fair price; and, until it does this, the "private-hand" correspondence will increase, unless government shall find means to subject to examination all the packages, parcels, portmanteaus, and *pockets*, that are passing and repassing through every channel of communication in the country.

The conviction that the rates of postage are too high, is so universal, that argument is unnecessary. The fact is everywhere acknowledged; and, as we are here making a short-hand statement of the evils of the present system, we merely state it as the *first*.

Another evil, or, more correctly speaking, *abuse* in the present system, is the franking privilege. To what extent it is enjoyed, has been already stated. The abuse has become intolerable. Nearly fifteen thousand persons have the free use of the post-office. The amount of matter that weekly passes through the mails, free of postage, is enormous. Many persons, well qualified to form opinions upon the subject, think that, of all the matter that passes through the mails, the largest part in weight goes free. This enhances the cost of transmission upon the part that does pay, and thus operates as a tax, of the most obnoxious kind, upon the public, for the benefit of the privileged few. The wrong has become so great, the abuse so enormous, that, if the franking privilege is not abolished, the public will abolish the post-office, to all intents and purposes, by finding other modes of conveying their correspondence.

From a return made by the postmaster at Washington, it appears that, during three weeks, in 1841, the number of free letters sent from the post-office department was twenty-two thousand and thirty-eight; being over one thousand per day. From members of Congress, twenty thousand three hundred and sixty-three; being about seventy letters per day, from each member, upon an average. Of documents and franked packets, three hundred and ninety-two thousand two hundred and sixty-eight; being about one thousand from each member, in the space of three weeks —and these free letters, documents, and packets, averaged nearly an ounce and a quarter each. At this rate, the weight of the mails sent from Washington, during the three sessions of the late Congress, would be upwards of seven hundred thousand pounds; and the postage, supposing it to be charged as low as fifty cents per ounce, would amount to $575,000. This is but one item. It only gives the weight of mails sent *from* Washington. How many thousands of letters are *received by* the members of Congress, and the heads of departments? Probably not as many, but still an immense quantity.

But this is not all. Members of Congress not only frank their own letters, but, during their term of office, frank immense numbers for others. It has become so common for members to be solicited for *franks*, that it is almost uncivil to refuse. Often, the weight of letters is doubled and tripled, by this abuse. A person in Cincinnati writes a letter to a friend in Boston—he encloses it to some member of Congress in Washington, with a request that he would frank it. This makes a double letter; and, being directed to a member, goes free of the legal postage, fifty cents. The member encloses the letter to the person to whom it is directed—this makes another double letter; which, being franked by the member, goes free, also, of the additional postage. Thus government lose what, at present rates, should be worth a dollar, when a reasonable charge of a few cents would be cheerfully paid. This is no imaginary case—it has actually happened, in very many instances. The abuse of the franking privilege, by postmasters, is enormous. Partners in mercantile firms, cashiers of banks, attorneys, and others, solicit the commission of postmaster, for the purpose of covering their business letters with their frank, and thus saving themselves from an excessively burdensome tax.

The privilege is enjoyed by the members of Congress not only during their term of office, but to the commencement of the next session. There have been numerous changes among the members during the recent elections; and at this moment (November) there are nearly five hundred members, old and new, franking letters in various parts of the country, for themselves, their friends, neighbors, &c., &c.

The mere act of franking is a serious tax upon the time of members. They neither fold nor direct the pamphlets they forward to their constituents and others—they write their names, only, upon the cover; and even this is found, by many, to be an intolerable drudgery. Many members have a list of two or three thousand names, to whom, as an act of courtesy, and, in many cases, without much expectation of their being read, they send their speeches, and other documents; and, after all this folding, at public expense, this labor of franking, this overloading the mails, in many instances the documents are consigned by the receivers, unopened and unread, to the "receptacle of things lost on earth."

The franking privilege is an abuse—a tax upon the public, of the very worst kind—wrong in principle, and an unmitigated curse to the whole post-office system. It must be abolished, and the government not only pay its own postages, but that of members of Congress also, if necessary to relieve them from that burden. There is no more reason why the merchants and letter-writers of the country should pay the carriage of the correspondence of the departments of government, and the two houses of Congress, than that *they* should be taxed, exclusively, for the transmission, from place to place, of arms or public stores.

Another burden upon the mails is the dead letters. Large numbers of letters, received at the post-offices, are returned to the general post-office, as dead. Some regulation should be adopted for securing the department from loss, by returning them to the writers, or otherwise.

The transmission of newspapers, through the mails, tends to overload them, and delay their transmission. Unquestionably the government ought, in order to afford facilities for the dissemination of intelligence, to *permit* the mails to be used, under proper restrictions, for the transmission of papers at a low rate; but it should be left to the public to use the mail

or not, as best suits their convenience. It is a monstrous contradiction for the government to carry newspapers for almost nothing, to aid in the diffusion of intelligence, and, at the same time, *prohibit the diffusion of intelligence* by cheaper and more expeditious means.

Such is the present postage system of the United States. The post-office department is, as we have seen, full of abuses; and is, to the great part of the country, not what it should be—a blessing; but what ought not to be tolerated—a nuisance.

What is to be done? is the question; and fortunate will be the man who shall be able to answer it satisfactorily. If some Rowland Hill could arise, and point out a plan, founded on correct principles, and properly arranged in its details, the public, with united voice, would demand its adoption. Individuals in all parts of the country, unconnected by business or party relations, would start up at once, and labor, each in his own way, for the accomplishment of the common object. The press would demand it—public bodies would speak in its favor; and, under the influence of public sentiment, the desired end would be accomplished.

Previously to the year 1839, the state of public feeling in England, in respect to the post-office system in that country, was much the same as it is in this country, at this time. Previous to that time, the rates of postage were extravagantly high—in many instances equal to a half cent per mile, for a single letter. Despite the heavy penalties of the law, and the rigorous espionage of the post-office department, the public could not, and would not endure the burden; and the letters were, in various other ways, forwarded through the kingdom. The writer has frequently known merchants in Manchester and London associate together, and forward four or five hundred letters for a few shillings, by special messengers, which it would have cost twenty pounds to transport by mail. Schemes of all sorts were resorted to to evade the government monopoly; and so successfully, that, during twenty-five years, ending in 1838, while the population and business of the kingdom increased 40 per cent, the gross revenue of the post-office department remained nearly stationary.

So general did the feeling become that reform somewhere was necessary, that, sometime about 1836, a royal commission was appointed to "inquire into the management of the post-office department." During the sitting of this commission, a comparatively obscure individual in London published a pamphlet, in which he broached the bold scheme of conveying letters, by government, from any one part of the kingdom to any other part of the kingdom, at the rate of one penny per half ounce; and that, too, according to a series of calculations therein made, without ultimate loss to the revenue.

From the very boldness of the plan, it was likely enough that it should be quietly cast aside, as one of the whimsical schemes of the thousand and one *plan-mongers* who exist in every large community; and whose projects, ninety-nine times in the hundred, are not worth the paper they are written upon. But such was not the fact in this case. Although the project obtained no authority from the reputation of its author, who was little known to the public—although it could not encounter anything but opposition from the officers of government, who, naturally enough, look very coolly upon all new schemes, and especially upon schemes which threaten so startling an effect upon the revenue; yet, when the project was examined, the public discovered that it was founded on a correct prin-

ciple. It was examined and approved by the merchants, manufacturers, and bankers; by the clergy of the Church, and the clergy of the dissenter; by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, and other institutions. It found universal favor; and, in the space of about two years, the theory of a private individual, promulgated at first with very little prospect of success, was universally adopted; and, by enactment of the queen, lords, and commons, became the law of the land in Great Britain. Nor was this all—it excited the attention, and commended itself to the understanding and common sense of the whole civilized world.

In this country, the burdens of the post-office department had long been complained of; but, until the adoption of Rowland Hill's plan in England, little had been thought of reform, beyond a trifling reduction of the postages—perhaps merely altering the rates from Spanish fractions to decimals. But now, that an experience of three years has demonstrated the practicability and utility of Rowland Hill's plan in England, the public attention has been more aroused here. Many persons begin to think more extensive reforms can be made than have been heretofore contemplated; and the question is, whether a plan that has worked so well in England is adapted to this country, under our different circumstances. In respect to the mail service, there are two or three popular errors extensively prevalent, which may be here mentioned, in order to save the necessity of pointing them out at greater length hereafter.

One is, that it is impossible, in the nature of the case, that government can perform this service as cheaply as individuals can do it. The popular belief is expressed by Colonel Maberley, in his evidence before the committee of the house of commons. He says—"The price at which correspondence can be conveyed by coach, (that is, private conveyance,) is so infinitely lower than any price the post-office can put upon it, it is perfectly impossible the post-office price can ever be one that shall meet the smuggler in the market." The success of the penny system in England has already proved the common opinion to be a mistaken one.

The second prevailing notion is, that the post-office should be allowed to be a source of revenue to the state, if not directly, at least sufficiently to pay its own expenses; to transport the government correspondence free, and allow to certain privileged persons that free transmission of "mail matter" that now goes under frank. As to its being made a source of revenue, either directly or indirectly, a more correct opinion was never entertained in relation to it, than that of Lord Ashburton, who stigmatized it as the "worst of taxes." Mr. S. J. Lloyd goes further. He says, "that, if there be any one thing which the government ought to do gratuitously, it is the carriage of letters." Every advocate of post-office reform should maintain, everywhere, *that the post-office, as a source of revenue,* DIRECTLY *or* INDIRECTLY, *is not to be tolerated. That the public convenience is the primary, and indeed only object; and the financial result a matter of secondary importance.*

The third erroneous notion is, that the charge of transit should be increased according to the distance. On this subject, we propose to say a few words. It is evident that the cost of transmitting letters, to the government, may be, with propriety, divided into three heads:—

1. The cost of receiving the letter at the office where it is mailed.
2. The cost of transmitting it to the office of delivery.
3. The expense of delivery, and collecting postage.

It is evident that whether the letter be sent three miles, or three thousand, the expenses attending it, under the first and third of these heads, are the same, and in no way increased or diminished by the distance.

We have then, only, to consider the second head.

It would, indeed, seem evident, at first sight, that the cost of transmitting any article must be increased, in proportion to the distance travelled over. But we apprehend this will not prove correct in respect to lighter articles, more particularly in reference to so very light an article as a letter. In respect to these, or any articles of extreme lightness, the *cost diminishes in proportion as the quantity increases.* For example, suppose, between Boston and Roxbury, (three miles,) there were no conveyance except by special messengers. If one be employed to carry a letter, his charge would be at least half a dollar. Now, employ the same porter to convey a thousand letters, to be received at one place in Boston, and delivered at one place in New York, (two hundred and twenty miles,) and his charge would not amount to a cent and a half for each. We think this statement establishes our position, which we repeat—*that the cost of transit* (the second head of the expense) *is not in proportion to the distance travelled over, but the number of letters that travel together.* But, supposing it to be objected that an unfair example is adduced in the way of an illustration, by taking one of the greatest mail routes for that purpose; and that, because government can afford to carry letters between Boston and New York for two cents each, it can afford to do so through all the routes in the interior. Well, what then? Take, for example, the route between Northampton and Brattleborough, where the expenses of transit may be large, and the letters comparatively few. It only proves that it costs *more* to transmit letters forty miles than it does two hundred and twenty, and makes the position still stronger, that it is not distance that governs the cost, but the quantity carried.

It can, we believe, be demonstrated that the government can afford to carry letters from Boston to New Orleans cheaper than it can afford to carry them from Bangor, Maine, to Montpelier, Vermont, a twentieth part of the distance, but points between which there is comparatively little correspondence. It can be demonstrated, that the cost of transmission, heretofore considered the principal item, would, (if the government, by carrying at a low rate all the present correspondence and the increase that low rates would induce,) be so exceeding minute on each letter, that *absolute uniformity would be nearer to exact justice than any differences in rates could possibly be.* Therefore, if the cost of transmission, merely, should be uniform, and justly so, as the other two heads of expense ought from their nature to be, *let the rate be uniform.*

This view of the subject is established by the inquiries made by the committee of inquiry of the house of commons, who, after a careful and laborious investigation, found the cost per letter of all letters transmitted through the British mails, to be as follows, viz:—

Cost of reception and delivery,	0.57
Cost of transmission,	0.19
Total,	.76-100

of a penny. The cost of reception and delivery being much increased in England by their extensive penny-post system, which we have not in this country.

If the number of letters should be increased, it would reduce the item of nineteen-hundredths still lower; but whether reduced or not, the cost per letter, for mere transmission, was found to be so small, as to prove the justice of uniformity of change without respect to distance.

It will be seen, however, that uniformity of *rates* is based upon uniformity in *weight* of letters; and, where the weight of the letter is in excess of the standard allowed, the rates ought to be doubled, or trebled, or still more increased, as the case may be. But the principle of increase should be by weight, and not by the number of pieces, irrespective of weight, as is now the case. It is clearly unjust to the letter-writer to compel him to pay, on a sheet of thin paper and bank-note, double the rate of the coarse foolscap sheet that travels in its company, and weighs double. No feature of the law tends so much to injure the department as this; for seldom does the sender of a double or treble letter employ the post-office, if he can avoid it. Of the innumerable bank-notes, bills of exchange, and commercial obligations, that travel in letters, a very small proportion go through the mails. The limits of this article will permit no more than an allusion to this subject; but its injustice to the public is self-evident, as also its evil effect upon the revenue of the post-office.

Should an investigation be made, and should it be proved by the result that a uniform rate would come as near, or nearer, to exact justice, than differential rates, a question would then arise what that rate ought to be. To make the calculations necessary to determine this question, is beyond the power of any individual, who has not at his command the information and statistics that can be furnished by the post-office department only. A moment's reflection, however, will be sufficient to show that this rate would be found much lower than is generally supposed—certainly below *five cents*, for a single letter.

The present revenue of the department is probably about four and a half millions annually, from all sources. This is furnished by the postage collected on newspapers, pamphlets, and letters.

By the booksellers' memorial to Congress, 1842, it is stated that the quantity of newspapers annually printed in the United States is three hundred millions. If one-ninth, only, of these pass through the mails, it would be thirty-three millions annually. The postage on these papers, with the pamphlets, &c., might leave the amount of four millions of dollars to be derived from letter postage. This sum, at an average postage of twelve and a half cents, would represent thirty-two millions of letters.

The franked letters and free matter are estimated, by many persons, to amount to more than the postage-paying part of the mail. Whether it is so in number, or not, it undoubtedly does engross a great share of the *weight*. But, estimating the value of it at the same, it would give thirty-two millions of letters more.

These three amounts, added together, would give ninety-seven millions; or, roundly stated, the transmission of mail matter, of all kinds, may amount to one hundred millions of letters, &c., per annum.

If this estimate is anywhere near the truth, what does it show? It shows that, to transmit one hundred millions of letters, papers, &c., through the country, the government pay as follows:—

For compensation of postmasters,.....	$1,015,000
" incidentals,.....	330,000
Total, as taken from the report of 1841,.....	$1,345,000

These two items are the cost of *reception and delivery;* and, averaged upon the number of one hundred millions, gives the cost of each $1\frac{34}{100}$ cents, nearly.

The amount paid for transportation of the mails, from the same report, was, for the year, $3,145,000. This is the cost of *transportation;* and, averaged upon one hundred millions, gives the cost of each $3\frac{14}{100}$ cents, nearly.

The two items make, together, the total cost four and a half cents. The newspapers, now paying *under* four and a half cents, being taken into the account, would carry the letter postage above it; but we are confident that an accurate investigation would prove that the average cost of reception, transmission, and delivery, for single letters, to the government, would be *under five cents each.* But, supposing the postage to be now reduced to the uniform rate of four or five cents for letters under half an ounce in weight, franking abolished, and payment in advance required for everything sent through the mails, this cost would, no doubt, be materially reduced.

It is evident that mail contractors base their contracts upon the quantity of matter they may, under ordinary circumstances, be expected to carry. A railroad, for example, appropriates a car to the mails. If the car is empty, or full, the charge to the government is the same; the cost per letter being very high when the bags are empty, and very low when the bags are full. If the franking privilege were abolished, not only would room be provided for an immense increase of paying matter, without increasing the present weight of the mails, but the number of letters, being increased four-fold, would probably add little or nothing to the present cost of transportation.

Would the quantity of letters increase? Undoubtedly it would, at the low rate of four or five cents. At this rate, the government might reasonably expect to carry as follows:—

1. Newspapers, as at present—call this	$\frac{1}{2}$
2. Letters now paying postage,	$\frac{1}{4}$
3. Free matter, now carried by the mail,	$\frac{1}{4}$
Present amount of the mails,	1
4. Letters now sent by private hand, evasion, by writing on newspapers, &c., estimated at double the number sent by the mails, but call it same as those now paying,	$\frac{1}{2}$
5. Increased correspondence, in consequence of low rates, from persons at present writing letters, would double the present paying-letters	$\frac{1}{2}$
Total from present letter-writers,	$1\frac{1}{2}$
Add, for mercantile circulars, advertisements, catalogues, invoices of goods, and from the poorer classes of the community, who would be glad to write occasionally, but who, on account of the high postages, do not write at all,	$\frac{1}{2}$
Total,	2

This estimate is undoubtedly much below the truth. The results, in the English post-office, show a much greater increase than is here supposed. But, if the quantity of paying matter were only doubled, it would be found that, if the present cost to the government is four and a half cents per letter, it would, by doubling the quantity, be reduced to two and a quarter; or, in other words, the government could carry the newspapers, as at present, for one cent, and the letters for three cents, from any one part of the country to any other part.

All experience goes to show that a reduction in price of any commodity, universally desired by the people, increases its consumption in a greater proportion than the price is reduced. It would be interesting if the statistics of different railroad and steamboat companies, who have carried passengers for low fares, could be collected and analyzed, so as to discover the proportion in which numbers increase as price decreases. The North river steamers would be found to carry a thousand passengers at a trip, at a fare of twenty-five cents; while, at two dollars, they would scarcely carry a hundred. There is a curious propensity in people to avail themselves of any facility that happens to be cheap—the very *cheapness* of the article being a temptation to enjoy it, that is frequently irresistible. There is an illustration of this principle in the letter of the Irishman to his son, when the postage from London to Dublin was reduced from one shilling to one penny. "Write often," says he; "every letter you write saves eleven pence."

We copy here some statistics, brought forward in England at the time the reform of the post-office was in agitation, for the purpose of showing that the reduction of the rate would not only increase the quantity of letters, *but not diminish the income of the department.* They establish both points conclusively.

In 1781, Mr. Pitt made a reduction in the duty on tea, which reduced the price about one-third. The following is a statement of the effects of a diminished price upon consumption:—

Year.	Quantity of Tea sold.	Average prices.	Total expenditure in Tea.
1781,.....	5,031,649 lbs.		
1782,.....	6,495,518 "	6*s.*	£5,221,352
1783,.....	5,877,340 "		
	Duty reduced in 1784.		
1785,.....	14,921,893 lbs.		
1786,.....	15,943,682 "	4*s.*	9,417,699
1787,.....	16,222,923 "		

In 1837, the rates of admission to the tower of London were reduced from 3*s.* to 1*s.*, and in 1839, further reduced to 6*d.* The following is a statement of the effect of these reductions, taking the time from May to November, in each year:—

Year.	Rate.	No. of visiters.	Total receipts.	Rate of increase of visiters from 1837.
1837,.....	3*s.*	7,533	£1,130	.....
1838,.....	1*s.*	31,333	1,566	Over 3 for 1.
1839,.....	6*d.*	56,213	1,405	Nearly 7½ for 1.

About five years since, the stamp duty on newspapers in England was reduced, we believe, from 4*d.*, with 20 per cent discount, to one penny, with the following effect upon their circulation:—

	No. of papers sold.	Price.	Cost to public.
Twelve months before the reduction,.....	35,576,056	7 *d.*	£1,037,634
" after "	53,496,207	4¾	1,058,779

At the same time, the duty upon advertisements was also reduced, and with the following effect:—

	No. of advertisements.	Average cost.	Tot. cost to the public.
Annual number before reduction,.....	1,010,000	6*s.*	£303,000
" after "	1,670,000	4*s.*	334,000

To these might be added the statistics of the railroads in this country and in England; which, as before remarked, find success to result from the very principle we are recommending for the post-office. We have not at hand statistics of the roads in this country; and if we had, it would not be necessary to copy them here, as enough has been said to establish our position. The returns of some of the English railways are before us, and we copy from them the following statement:—

RAILROADS AT REDUCED, OR LOW FARES.

	Income per week.		Gain.
	1842.	1843.	
London and Brighton,.....per mile	£80	£102	26 per cent.
London and Blackwall,.....	247	315	27 "
Sheffield and Manchester,.....	29	60	101 "
Southeastern,.....	28	55	99 "
Railroads at high fares.			
Midlane Counties,.....per mile	£56	£50	12 per cent.
Eastern "	37	59	7½ "
North Union,.....	60	49	20 "

The management of the post-office, by the government, is a close monopoly. All competition is, by the hand of power, driven, or attempted to be driven, from the field. It is the only remnant of a system of monopolies which existed in earlier ages; but which, before advancing knowledge and wisdom, have been, one after another, abolished. It is a question with many whether this should not be abolished; but, properly managed, the people would, no doubt, be contented to let it remain. All the evidence collected by the British government in their investigations, previous to the adoption of the new system, tended to establish the fact that, at rates approximating towards those at which private individuals could afford to do the business, the government establishment would be universally preferred. Let it remain, then, but on condition only that the government, in carrying on their trade, conduct their operations on sound commercial principles, and sell the commodity they offer at its fair natural price.

Our railroads, as before stated, depend for success upon the very principle we have stated in respect to the post-office. Their income is enhanced, not by the high rates they can charge each single passenger, but by the numbers they can carry at once. Thus these corporations have laid out their money by millions, upon a calculation of profit, based upon this principle; and experience has everywhere demonstrated its correctness, by the success that has attended them in their business of carrying passengers and freight at rates lower than were ever dreamed of before their introduction. And shall the government, with the vast means and resources of the country at its command, hesitate at an experiment that a private company would laugh at?

What is wanted, is a complete remodelling of the whole post-office system. We want a much-reduced and uniform rate of postages. We want the entire abolition of franking, and free transmission of every kind. We want, on the score of economy, prepayment of postages, by stamps or otherwise, so that every man may be his own M. C., and frank his own letters. We want the principle of increase in the rates to be that of *weight* only. We want the whole system to be so arranged that its benefits may be enjoyed by all classes, the poor as well as the rich, and

become what it should be—the life-blood of our social and commercial system.

What shall be done? Are we to wait the tardy movements of government, and of politicians who are more busy at president-making than in promoting the public welfare? Let the people put their own shoulders to the wheel, and cease to call upon Hercules. Let meetings be called in the principal cities, and committees of correspondence appointed. Let a committee of inquiry be raised from the best qualified men in the country, and funds provided, by a very small contribution from citizens who feel an interest in the matter, to enable them to make a thorough investigation of the whole system, and collect statistics which will expose the abuses of that system. Let facts be published to awaken the public mind, so that a memorial to Congress shall be backed by the strong power of the public voice, and the work will be done.

HUNT'S

MERCHANTS' MAGAZINE.

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MARCH, 1844.

, by Hon. William B. Maclay, Member of Congress from New York,

ART. V.—POST-OFFICE REFORM.

IN this article, I propose to demonstrate that the postage of letters carried not over 30 miles, might be established at 3 cents; those carried over 30, and not over 400 miles, at 5 cents; and those carried over 400 miles, at 10 cents; and that this reduction can be made without embarrassing the post-office department.

"The idea of making the post-office department a source of revenue to the government, has not been entertained by any one charged with its management since the termination of the last war; during a short period of which, an increase of 50 per cent upon the then rates of postage was imposed for revenue purposes. Nevertheless, the principle upon which it was originally established—that its expenditures should be limited by its income—has been distinctly engrafted upon all the legislative enactments concerning its organization, and prescribing the duties of those charged with their administration."

But while I fully concede the justice of this fundamental principle, that the department is to be sustained by its own revenues, I maintain that it ever has been, and now is, a source of revenue to the government, to the extent of the cost of the franking privilege. As it is now conducted, it is in fact a business monopoly, limiting its profits to the amount of this cost; and in this respect, at least, the popular cry of monopoly now raised against it, is not without foundation.

What the cost of the franking privilege is, appears not to be known to the department itself—such discrepancies exist in the official reports.

Of the number of free letters and packets, no mention is made in the reports of the postmaster general, since the report dated December 3d, 1842. In that report, it is stated that "the whole number of free letters sent through the post-office annually, so far as the returns of the postmasters exhibit, is about 3,000,000," and "assuming 15 cents as the average rate of each letter, if charged with postage, $450,000 would be the amount received." It will be observed that this sum is mentioned as the amount which would be received from free *letters* only, and that their average rate has been set down by the postmaster general at 15 cents each, for the same year in which the average rate of other *single* letters was something less than 12½ cents, (as may be calculated from the estimate of the postmaster general himself, in his report, dated January 5, 1842,) showing that of every eight free letters, he has estimated two, as being, if charged, subject to the postage of double letters. And mark, further, that this sum of $450,000, is not *all* which would be received from free letters, but only as much as would be received from the free letters, "as far as the returns of the postmasters exhibit;" it being expressly said in the postmaster general's report, dated December 7th, 1840, that "the books of the department furnish no data for determining the number of free packets conveyed in the mail, as a large portion of them are not entered on the post bills."

In the "regulations for the government of the post-office department," printed in 1843, by order of the postmaster general, section 375 directs the returns of free letters in the following words: "If the commission on letters, newspapers, and pamphlets, do not exceed $500 in one quarter, the deputy postmaster will then set down the number of free letters received by mail for delivery at the office, and carry the amount, at 2 cents each, to his credit." From this order, we conclude, that deputy postmasters render an account only of the number of free letters, and sealed packets of written matter on which they are entitled to charge the commission of 2 cents, so that the books of the department now furnish no data whatever for ascertaining the annual number of free newspapers, pamphlets, and documents, nor the number of free letters and sealed packets of written matter which are received by deputy postmasters, nor that of those which are delivered by deputy postmasters, whose commissions otherwise exceed $500 per quarter.

In the report already quoted, after setting down $450,000 as the amount which would be received, if the stated number of free letters were charged with postage, the postmaster general adds: "The loss to the department does not stop here; 2 cents are paid to postmasters on each of these letters, constituting an annual charge upon the revenue of $60,000;" from which the conclusion seems to be, that our postmaster general has returns showing that the 2 cents commission amounted to $60,000; and, from the knowledge of this fact, *calculated* the estimated number of 3,000,000 of franked letters, forgetting that he had to add to this estimate the number delivered by deputy postmasters, receiving no commission on free letters, not to mention those received by deputy postmasters themselves, which, for the purpose of our argument, should be considered as a legitimate charge on the department. And it is also probable, from the round numbers mentioned in the estimate, that the number of free let-

ters, and the amount of the commissions thereon, have never been calculated with accuracy by the department. I am thus particular, in order to show that these numbers are a very low estimate, for in the report of December 7, 1840, two years before, the postmaster general estimates the 2 cents commission on the free letters and packets, (their number being estimated at 4,781,359,) *sent from* the office in Washington city only, during the session of thirty-three weeks, at $95,627; and Mr. George Plitt, a special agent of the department, in his report submitted to Congress, dated November, 1840, on the subject, says: "The actual number of franked packages sent from the post-office of Washington city, during the week ending on the 7th of July last, was 201.534; and the whole number sent during the last session of Congress, amounted to the enormous quantity of 4,314,948. All these packages are not only carried by the department into every section of the country, *free of charge*, but it is actually obliged to pay to every postmaster, whose commissions do not amount to $2,000 per annum, 2 cents for the delivery of each one. Supposing all the above to have been delivered, the department would lose for its revenue, for this one item, upwards of $80,000, besides paying for the mail transportation." Of these last two estimates—adopting that of Mr. Plitt, which is the less, and in which the number of free letters and packets subject to the 2 cents commission is not given as an estimate, but as the assertion of a fact—if we suppose that for every *two* sent from the office in Washington city, there was *one* received, we shall have 6,472,422, as the number of free letters and packets sent to and from this single office during a session of thirty-three weeks; and estimating these at the low average of 12½ cents each, they will amount to upwards of $800,000. How much should we add for the entire free printed matter, and how much for the free letters and packets, carried by the mails during the rest of the year.

Sufficient has been said to show the absence of correct information on this subject, and that the estimate of our present postmaster general is most probably too low. But admitting his estimate of $450,000 to be correct, how much shall we add for the free letters and packets delivered by deputy postmasters, who receive no commission thereon, and how much for the free printed matter on which no deputy postmaster receives any commission? And besides $60,000 paid to deputy postmasters as commissions thereon, how much shall we add for advertising the free letters which are not called for? this charge amounting in some cases to 4 cents each, and is never less than 2 cents each.

I venture to complete the estimate of the present postmaster general, thus:—

3,000,000 of free letters, "as exhibited by the returns of deputy postmasters," at 15 cents each,.....	$450,000
Commissions of deputy postmasters thereon, at 2 cents each,.	60,000
1,000,000 of free letters, *not* exhibited by the returns of deputy postmasters, at 15 cents each,.....	150,000
Cost of advertising free letters,.....	30,000
Free printed matter, if charged at the usual rates,.....	210,000
Total,.....	900,000

That the number of free letters here set down as *not* exhibited by the

returns of the deputy postmasters, is a low estimate, may be judged from the fact, that the total revenue which should be collected from free letters is, in this estimate, less by $200,000 than our former estimate of the revenue, which should be collected from the free letters sent to and from the single office in this city.

That the cost of advertising free letters is here set down at a low estimate, may be judged from the following passage, extracted from the report of the postmaster-general, dated December 7th, 1840: "It may be estimated that there has been abstracted from the revenue of the past year in the allowance of the 2 cents to postmasters for the delivery of free letters and packets, and the 2 cents paid for advertising free letters, the sum of $150,000." In my estimate, these two items together amount to only three-fifths of this sum.

And that the sum which would be collected from free printed matter, if paid for at the ordinary rates, is here set down at a very low estimate, will appear from the fact that the privilege of franking printed matter is not confined to those who frank their private correspondence. The governors of the several states may transmit by mail, free of postage, all laws and reports, whether bound or unbound, which may be directed by the legislatures of the several states to be transmitted to the executives of other states. And every printer of newspapers may send one paper to each and every other printer of newspapers within the United States, free of postage. This last item will, of itself, we believe, exceed our estimated sum. There are upwards of 1,300 publishers of newspapers in the United States, and it is notorious, that some of them have estimated their exchange papers at 200 per day. But suppose these newspapers to be all published once a week only, and that an exchange paper is sent to one of every other four printers of newspapers, each printer will transmit, free of postage, 16,900 papers annually, and altogether an annual number of 21,970,000, which, at only 1 cent each, will amount to $219,702, a sum exceeding my estimate for all free printed matter by nearly $10,000.

The argument is strengthened by the report of December, 1840. The postmaster general says, that "the increase of revenue from the modification and restriction of the franking privilege, may be estimated at $250,000." Now, as this modification and restriction is based on the supposition, that thereby "two-thirds of the mail matter now going free would be excluded, and what remained would be charged with postage," it conclusively follows, that he has in this case estimated the cost of the franking privilege at $750,000. And if to this sum we add his estimate of $150,000, for commissions to deputy postmasters, and the cost of advertising, we shall have at once the amount of our estimate, besides the cost of the franking privilege of printers of newspapers, which is expressly excluded in his proposed restrictions.

I know of no other official sources than the reports already mentioned, from which we can derive information on this subject; and this, it has been seen, is at once meagre, unsatisfactory, and contradictory.

With these views, I consider it safe to set down $900,000 as a *very low* and fair estimate of the cost of the franked matter carried by the mails in the year ending on the 30th day of June, 1842, the postages thereon being calculated at the same rates as other matter; and there is no reason why we should estimate this cost for the year ending on the 30th day of June, 1843, at a less sum; for the causes which produced in

this year a decrease of the revenue, on paid matter, could have had no effect on the franking privilege.* The question now is—what revenue collected from the matter now paying letter postage, would, together with the revenue which would be collected from franked matter, if it were subject to the same postage rates, be equal to the revenue which is now paid to the department as postages of business and friendly letters?

In considering the amount now paid for postages, I exclude that which is contributed by newspapers and pamphlets, for reasons which will afterwards appear.

From the report of the postmaster general, I learn that the gross revenue of his department for 1843, was less than that for 1842 by upwards of $250,000; and he ascribes this decrease of revenue principally to "the operations of the numerous private posts, under the name of expresses, which have sprung into existence within the past few years, extending themselves over the mail routes between the principal cities and towns, by which and at which, the railroads pass and terminate." Now, the numbers of franked matter not being affected by these expresses, its general proportional cost cannot be duly estimated by comparing it with the revenue of 1843; I shall, therefore, take the report of the year ending June 30, 1842, as the basis of my calculation, in which year the revenue from letters was $3,953,319 34, and the revenue which would have been collected from franked matter, at the same rates, was, according to the estimate, $900,000.

By calculating proportionally, it appears that if all mail matter had duly contributed to the revenue of the department, there should have been $733,103 91 collected as the postage of franked matter; and, as the postage of other matter, only $3,220,215 43, instead of $3,953,319 34. So that there has been paid for business and friendly correspondence, upwards of $730,000 *more* than its actual cost, and on this correspondence the franked letters have been a tax to the same amount. Thus, of every $100 paid by the merchant to the post office, he pays $18 50 as a tax to defray the expense of free letters; while the retired capitalist, who writes perhaps but half a dozen letters in a year, contributes scarcely anything—a tax unequally imposed, as well as unjust in principle.

By a similar calculation it will be found, that, for the year ending June 30, 1843, in which the gross revenue from letters was $3,712,786 23, there was over $24 contributed towards the expense of the franking privilege by every $100 paid for private correspondence. In this year, the true proportional revenue which should have been contributed by franked matter, was $724,401 14; and by private correspondence, $2,988,385 09.

With this view of the case, it is plain that letter postages may be, to some extent, reduced, and that the department will, notwithstanding, be still able to sustain itself by its own revenue, under the same gross expenditures, and at the same extent of franking privilege, even though the

* The report of the postmaster general, dated January 18th, 1844, is apparently at variance with my estimate of the cost of the franking privilege. During the month of October, 1843, there passed through the mails 130,744 letters franked by the postmasters or received free by them; 18,558 letters, franked by members of Congress; 85,339 letters, franked by other officers, state or national, and 596,760 free newspapers. But no estimate for the year can be based on this statement: for, during the month of October, Congress and many of the state legislatures were not in session.

numbers of paid matter should not be increased in consequence of this reduction.

It is at the same time certain, that, *without* an increase of paid matter, the rates cannot be reduced to that extent which petitioners now demand, without supplying the deficiency from the funds of the public treasury; and against this principle, which has met with some distinguished advocates, I protest, for similar reason as that which induced me to demand that the expense of the franking privilege should be paid from the public funds. Just in proportion to the extent they use the mails, should individuals be required to contribute to the expenditures of the department; whereas, if the whole or any part of the cost of their correspondence was appropriated from the treasury, every poor citizen, as well as the retired capitalist, would be necessarily required to contribute towards this expense as much as the merchant, who, for every one of their letters, perhaps writes a thousand.

The proper enquiry therefore is, what are the lowest rates of postage by which the same amount of revenue can be collected?

The advocates of a greatly reduced postage tariff, generally point to the example of England as a proof of its practicability, where the tariff imposes on single letters, for whatever distance they are carried, a uniform rate, about one third of what we pay for our lowest grade; and where, notwithstanding this enormous reduction from an average postage equal to our own, there was, the first year thereafter, realized a net revenue of $2,250,000.

We must be cautious, however, in following its example, as our case is, in various respects, widely different. In England, the gross amount of postages varied little for twenty years previous to the reduction, notwithstanding population and commerce was estimated to have increased within this period upwards of 40 per cent. Whereas, in this country, the postages have been quadrupled in the same length of time; and, since 1789, when the department was first instituted, have increased from an annual sum less than $38,000 to about $4,500,000.

Such, too, is the sparseness of our population, and the immense geographical extent of our country, that with our present high tariff, our expenditures have for the last seven years so much exceeded the receipts as to embarrass the department; while the post-office of the united kingdom, when its average postage tariff was very nearly the same as our own, contributed to government a clear revenue of nearly $8,000,000.

It is also to be remembered, that the penny postage system was adopted in England mainly from the representation that the reduced uniform rate would be followed by so great an increase in the number of letters posted, that the net revenue of the crown would sustain no diminution in consequence. Whereas, it appears from the late English papers that the revenue of the post-office for the last fiscal year was less than the net revenue of the fiscal year preceding; thereby showing that, at the end of less than three years, the *consequent* increase in the number of letters had reached its maximum, and settling the net revenue by the penny system at about $2,700,000, only 34¼ per cent of the net revenue before the reduction, when it was about $7,900,000.

From the official reports, however, of the results of the penny system, as far as they relate to an increase in the number of letters, we may derive some valuable lessons.

"In a week preceding the 24th November, 1839, under the old and high rates of postage, there were posted 1,585,973 letters. At this rate for the year, the annual number would be 82,470,596. But as it appears, from the documents accompanying the report of the postmaster general, dated December, 1842, this number included the franked letters, of the amount of which we have no distinct information, we set down the annual number of chargeable letters, as estimated by the committee of parliament, at 77,500,000."

"The gross revenue for the year preceding 5th January, 1839, under the old rates of postage, was $11,262,134."* This is the last year of which we have complete annual returns of the revenue under the former postage rates.

It hence appears that the average rate of each letter on which postage was charged, was $14\frac{53}{100}$ cents. But as this number is based on an estimate of the *real* number of letters, as plainly appears from the documents accompanying the report of December, 1842, we may set down the average rate of a *single* letter, before the reduction of postage, at 12½ cents; which will be the case, if we suppose that of every twelve chargeable letters, two of them were charged with double postage.

This is the true method of calculating the average; and we take this opportunity to caution others against drawing any conclusion from an average of the former rates, as given at length by the postmaster general.

"The number of *single* chargeable letters delivered, which annually pass through the post-office of the United States, has heretofore been estimated at 24,507,994." This estimate, taken from the report of the postmaster general, dated December, 1843, is that furnished in the year 1836, as appears from the report to the senate, dated January 5, 1843, in which he says: "I submit a table exhibiting the present rates of postage, and the distances and probable number of letters, and amount received upon each class of letters, compiled from data furnished by this department in 1836." [And that this table actually relates to the mail matter of 1836, will afterwards appear.]

Letters.		Miles.		Amount.
5,328,600	carried not over	30 at 6	cents,	$319,716
7,992,890	" "	80 " 10	"	799,289
5,328,600	" "	150 " 12½	"	666,075
3,992,896	" "	400 " 18¾	"	748,668
1,865,008	" over	400 " 25	"	466,252
24,507,994 total letters.		Total revenue,		$3,000,000

It hence follows that the average rate of a single chargeable letter delivered in the United States, in 1836, was somewhat over 12½ cents; and this average being nearly the same as the average in the United Kingdom before the reduction of postage, we may conclude that a reduction of our postage rates to a rate or rates equivalent to the uniform reduced postage of the United Kingdom, would be followed by an equal increase of correspondence.

The penny rate of the United Kingdom commenced on January 10th, 1840, and, forming an average from the number of letters delivered in the third week of each month for a year, commencing with the week ending

* Report of the postmaster general, dated December 2, 1843.

on the 23d of February, 1840, (as given in the report of the postmaster general, dated December, 1842,) we find that the average number of letters, delivered weekly, during the first year of the penny postage, was 3,282,085, being an increase of an average of 1,696,112 letters weekly; if we take the number of letters delivered in the week ending November 24, 1839, which was 1,585,973, as the former weekly average. The increase of letters was, therefore, about 107 per cent on the former number.

This per centage of increase is based on numbers representing the letters actually delivered, and of course including franks during the existence of the franking privilege. We may, therefore, consider it as a *safe* estimate of what would have been the increase on chargeable letters, if the franking privilege had not been abolished; for we can hardly suppose that franked letters would have increased in an equal ratio.

It is much to be regretted that the official returns of the posto-ffice in the United Kingdom do not exhibit the number of letters carried now and formerly at the former different grades of distance; for we might then deduce with accuracy the rates of increase in the number of letters, according to the different rates of reduction on the postage, and be furnished thereby with sure rules to guide us in calculating the effects of any proposed reduction on our present postage rates.

We are happily, however, enabled to make one other calculation, on this subject, from the following statement in the report of December, 1842:

"The rate of postage in the London district averaged 2½*d.* for each letter, before the changes previous to January, 1840; at present, the postage of each letter averages about 1¼*d.* The gross receipts in 1838 (the last complete year under the old rates) were (after deducting certain receipts for general post letters) £118,000."

Now, 12,137,143 letters, at 2½*d.* each, will represent the former annual revenue of £118,000; and by adding the monthly returns contained in the same report, we find that the actual number of letters which passed through the London district post in the year ending January 2, 1841, was (exclusive of all general post-office letters) 20,305,915, being an increase of 8,168,772, and showing that a reduction of 46½ per cent on the rate, was followed by an increase of over 67 per cent on the former number of letters.

Whatever may be the estimates of the number of letters now carried by the mails of the United States, at the several different grades of distance,—the expresses already mentioned must have had such a disturbing influence on their ordinary proportion,—it would be wrong to depend upon them as a sufficient test of any proposed reduction on the present rates of postage, especially if the proposed reduction was so great as to destroy the influence of the expresses. And as our future calculations will be based on the supposed truth of this hypothesis, we shall first estimate the future revenue of the department on the basis of the revenue for the year ending June 30, 1842.

In the fourth page of the report already quoted, dated January 5, 1843, the postmaster general says:

"In the foregoing estimate of income and expenditure, I have adopted the amount of mail matter in 1836, and the amount of expenditure for 1842. There has been no account taken of the number of letters which passed through the mail during the last year. An estimate of the number may be made by the amount of letter postage received during the

year 1842. That amount was $3,953,319 34. To produce this sum, would require 32,295,972 letters charged with postage to have been delivered through the mail."

This estimate shows that the average rate of *single* chargeable letters, delivered in 1842, was $12\frac{34}{100}$ cents, an average about a quarter of a cent less than the average of 1836. We shall compute the estimate of the postmaster general thus :—

Letters.		Miles.		Amount.
7,021,886	carried *not* over	30 at 6 cts.	each,	$421,313 16
10,532,815	"	80 " 10	"	1,053,281 50
7,021,887	"	150 " $12\frac{1}{2}$	"	877,735 87
5,261,731	"	400 " $18\frac{3}{4}$	"	986,574 56
2,457,657	" over	400 " 25	"	614,414 25
32,295,976	at an average of	$12\frac{34}{100}$		$3,953,319 34

And on the supposition that the postage of letters carried under 30 miles be reduced to 5 cents, and all over that distance at 10-cents, the postmaster general, in this same report, gives the following estimate of the probable result :—

" Postage on 7,021,900 letters at 5 cents,..... $351,095 00
" 25,274,072 " 10 " 2,527,407 20
Add 20 per cent for probable increase of 10-cent letters, 505,481 55."

By this estimate, the gross revenue from chargeable letters will be $3,383,983 75.

To complete properly the total aggregate revenue, we shall have to add to this amount the sum which should be paid from the treasury, as the postage of franked matter at the ordinary rates. This sum we estimated at $900,000 for 1842. And as we cannot calculate on an increase of this matter, in consequence of reduced rates, we shall have to estimate its future amount under this estimate of the postmaster general, by supposing it reduced in the proportion of the former gross revenue ($3,953,319) to the future gross revenue ($2,878,502) from the *same* number of letters. It will thus be found to amount to $655,310; and the total aggregate revenue from letters and franked matter, will be $4,039,294, a sum exceeding the revenue from letters in 1842 by $85,974. So that, according to the estimate by the present postmaster general of the increase of letters in consequence of this reduction, the department will, if our views of franked matter be adopted, be still able to sustain itself at these reduced rates of letter postage. And it is to be remembered that the postmaster general remarks, that " others, whose opinions are entitled to respectful consideration, estimate a greater increase, varying from 20 to 50 per cent."

But as this estimate is founded on the returns of 1842, and the rates are not reduced sufficiently to destroy the influence of the expresses, we cannot depend on it with that certainty which is desirable.

Such is the present influence of these expresses, and so much does it continue to increase, that we may reasonably expect a farther decrease of postage revenue during the current fiscal year; and that the department will, if its present principles be continued, be compelled to lessen its public utility by abandoning all the unprofitable routes. Nor is it to be wondered that the prohibitory laws are universally disregarded, as long as the

present exorbitant rates are maintained—unjust, also, inasmuch as they exact from commercial and friendly letters a sum, as we have already shown, exceeding $730,000 over and above the expenditures on their account incurred.

I have already established the proposition, that a reduction of our postage rates to a rate equivalent to the uniform reduced postage of the United Kingdom, would be followed by an equal increase of correspondence. Of course, its truth depends on the proviso, (which, we believe, will not be controverted,) that the number of letters now carried by the expresses and by other means, bears the same proportion to the number carried by the mails, as existed in England previous to the adoption of the penny system.

Now the increase of letters in the United Kingdom was, for the first year, 107 per cent; and we may therefore expect, that on the 32,295,976 chargeable letters now delivered in the United States, there would be an increase of 34,556,694 letters for the first year, in consequence of the supposed adoption of an equivalent uniform rate.

Let us suppose 3 cents in this country to be, in its effects of securing an equal increase of correspondence, *equivalent* to one penny sterling in the United Kingdom.

Now, if all letters were charged 3 cents, there would be a reduction on the 6-cent letters, of 50 per cent; on the 10-cent letters, 70 per cent; on the 12½-cent letters, 76 per cent; on the 18¾-cent letters, 84 per cent; and on the 25-cent letters, 88 per cent.

In the absence of all tangible data, I will suppose the increase of letters delivered at the different grades of distance to be in proportion to this reduction per cent on the rates; and the number of letters, at the uniform rate of 3 cents, will stand thus:—

On	7,021,886	letters,	an increase of	5,320,609	or	75¾	per cent.
"	10,532,815	"	"	11,173,263	"	106	"
"	7,021,887	"	"	8,087,326	"	115	"
"	5,261,731	"	"	6,698,006	"	127	"
"	2,457,657	"	"	3,277,490	"	133⅓	"
"	32,295,976	"	"	34,556,694	"	107	"

On an examination of this increase per cent, one would be ready to suppose there was an undue increase on the 6-cent letters, (and if there was, observe, that on lessening this per centage on the 6-cent letters, we must proportionally extend the per centage of increase on the other letters to make up the definite number of increase, viz: 34,556,694;) but from the returns of the London district post, it has been already shown, that a reduction of 46½ per cent on a rate of 2½ pence sterling was followed by an increase of over 67 per cent.

It cannot, therefore, be far from the truth, to say that the larger deduction of 50 per cent on the 6-cent letters will increase the number 75¾ per cent, and, it being remembered, that if the estimated increase on the 6-cent letters is too much, the estimated increase on the other letters must be too low in proportion; this estimate may be safely taken as a basis of further calculation.

Now this estimate of the increase per cent on the number of letters, is very nearly one-half more than the reduction per cent on the present

rates, if they were reduced, as here supposed, to the uniform rate of 3 cents. If it were exactly 50 per cent, we should have an increase of 75 per cent, instead of 75¾; 105, instead of 106; 114, instead of 115; 126, instead of 127; and 132, instead of 133¼.

Whence it may be established as a safe proposition, that *when the reduction of postage on a given rate, is not less than* 50 *per cent, it will be followed by an increase of letters on this rate at a per centage one-half greater than the per centage of reduction on the rate.*

So that, on reducing the 6-cent letters to 3 cents, there will be an increase of 75 per cent on their number; the 10-cent letters to 5 cents, also 75 per cent; the 12½-cent letters to 5 cents, 90 per cent; the 18¾-cent letters to 5 cents, 110 per cent; and the 25-cent letters to 10 cents, 90 per cent on their present number. By this estimate there will be a gross increase of 27,495,519 letters, being an average of 85 per cent, of increase on the present number; and the gross revenue will be $2,976,786 13. The account stands thus:—

Letters— Present number.	Increased number.				
7,021,886	5,266,415	(75 per cent,)	at	3 cents,	$368,649 03
10,532,815	7,899,611	(75 ")	"	5 "	921,621 30
7,021,887	6,319,698	(90 ")	"	5 "	667,079 25
5,261,731	5,787,904	(110 ")	"	5 "	562,481 75
2,457,657	2,221,891	(90 ")	"	10 "	466,954 80
32,295,976	27,495,519	(85 ")	"	5 nearly,	$2,976,786 13

It will be remembered that this *estimate* is based on the returns of 1842, where the gross revenue from letters was $3,953,319 34; so that the first year of the reduced tariff would (nothing else considered) produce a deficit of $976,533 21. And allowing that the *annual* increase of letters in consequence of the reduction of postage will be 15 per cent, there will be, for the second year, a deficit of $530,015; and for the third year, $16,520.

This is a moderate estimate of the annual increase; for we learn from the postmaster general's report for 1842 (pages 750, 753,) that the annual increase in the United Kingdom, for the second year after the reduction of postage, was 21 per cent.

If we proceed with the estimate for a fourth year, instead of a deficit, there will be a surplus of $574,000.

But I am not disposed to depend on an annual increase to this extent; the probability being that the letters now diverted from their legitimate course, would, say in two or three years at the utmost, find their proper channel, and that the subsequent rate of increase would continue, as heretofore, no more than sufficient to enable the department to extend its operations as the public exigency might demand.

Indeed, the late news from England shows, as we have already remarked, that at the end of three years after the adoption of the penny system, the net revenue had become stationary at about 34 per cent of the former net revenue.

It should be observed that I use the proposition relative to the increase of letters, only where the reduction of the rates is not less than 50, nor over 73¾ per cent. I have already shown, in the case of the London dis-

trict post, that a reduction of 46½ per cent on the postage rate was followed by an increase of letters of only 67 per cent, instead of 69$\frac{6}{10}$ according to the proposition; and it is very certain that a very small reduction in the rates would be followed by no increase whatever in the number of letters. I do not presume to determine the precise extent of reduction on the rates at which the increase of letters would commence; but think it very probable that a change of the present rates of 6, and 12½ cents, to 5 and 10 cents, being a reduction of 16⅔ per cent in the former case, and 20 per cent in the latter, would not sensibly affect the present number of letters, whilst it would considerably lessen the present gross revenue. The probability is, that after that extent of reduction on the rates which first begins to operate as a cause of increase in the letters, a greater reduction on the rates would be followed by an increase of letters in a much greater ratio than the ratio of increase on the reduction of rates; and that, after reaching a certain extent of reduction on the rates, the ratio of increase of letters would be very little affected by a still greater reduction on the rates. And, for this latter reason, it is no objection to our proposition to say, that according it a reduction of 100 per cent on the ratio, would produce an increase of letters of only 150 per cent. By the penny system, in England, I have shown from official sources, which cannot be contradicted, that the average increase of letters for the first year after the reduction, was not ten times, or seven times, or even four times their former number, as is commonly stated in our newspapers—but only 107 per cent of that number. We may reasonably suppose, that those who in England are deterred from writing a letter by the postage of one penny, would be also deterred by the price of paper and ink, were the postages abolished altogether; and that (newspapers not being considered) the main effect of this hypothesis would be, that "no cure, no pay" handbills, and such like matter, which does not now pass through the mails at all, would be thrust in their faces under the appearance of friendly correspondence.

I shall now test the proposition relative to the increase of letters, by applying it to the hypothesis of the postmaster general, that a uniform rate of 10 cents on all letters carried over 30 miles, would be followed by a probable increase of 20 per cent on this class of letters. On the 10-cent letters there would certainly be no increase; nor can we calculate on an increase of either the 6-cent or the 12½-cent letters, the reduction not being over 20 per cent; on the 18¾-cent letters, the reduction being 46⅔ per cent, the increase would be 67 per cent, (as in London district post,) while on the 25-cent letters, the reduction being 60 per cent, there would be an increase of 90 per cent, according to my proposition. This increase would amount to 5,737,251 letters, which, on the present number of 25,274,090, is about 22$\frac{7}{10}$ per cent; a per centage only 2$\frac{7}{10}$ more than the low estimate of the postmaster general—being a difference so small, that I cannot but conclude that the estimated increase of letters in consequence of the adoption of my proposed rates, must certainly meet the approbation of the present postmaster general.

Let us now estimate the probable result of the adoption of the uniform rate of 5 cents. In this case, we can calculate upon no increase of the 6-cent letters; and on the 25-cent letters, the reduction on the rates being 80 per cent, there will be a probable increase of 120 per cent, according to my proposition.

Letters.	Increase.			Gross revenue.
7,021,886			at 5 cents,	$351,094 30
10,532,815	7,899,611	(or 75 per cent,)	" "	921,621 30
7,021,887	6,319,698	(" 90 ")	" "	667,079 25
5,261,731	5,787,904	(" 110 ")	" "	552,481 75
2,457,657	2,949,188	(" 120 ")	" "	270,342 25
32,295,976	22,956,401		" "	$2,762,618 85

This estimate shows a deficiency in the gross revenue of—

($3,953,319 34—$2,762,618 85)=$1,190,700 49,

being a deficiency greater than that which would be produced from the adoption of my proposed tariff by $214,167 28. And, as it appears to me that this deficit cannot be sustained by the department without an appropriation from the treasury, it is unnecessary to consider farther the effects of this uniform rate. I may observe, however, that it has not the recommendation of reducing the 6-cent letters to a rate sufficiently low as to remove the temptation to evade the postage laws in the thickly settled portions of our country; whilst my proposed rate of 3 cents, besides being sufficient and just, would actually increase the revenue from this class of letters, viz :—($868,649 03—$351,094 30=$17,554 73.)

I shall now consider the probable effects of the adoption of the bill proposed in the senate by the Hon. Mr. Merrick, testing it by the same plan of calculation.

By this bill, single letters carried under 100 miles are to be charged 5 cents, and all over that distance, 10 cents. In this case, as in the last, there would be no probable increase of the 6-cent letters. On the 10-cent letters there would be 75 per cent of increase. On a portion of the 12½-cent letters, the reduction on the rate being 60 per cent, the increase would be 90 per cent; but on the remaining portion, there would be no probable increase, the reduction on their rate being only 20 per cent. On the 18¾-cent letters, the increase would be 67 per cent, the reduction on their rate being only 46⅔ per cent. And on the 25-cent letters, the reduction of rate being 60 per cent, the increase will be 90 per cent.

In the report transmitted to the senate, by the postmaster general, dated January 5th, 1843, it is estimated that when the number of letters, under 30 miles, was 5,328,600, the number of letters carried over 30 to 100 miles, 9,515,390; we may therefore conclude, that when the number of letters carried under 30 miles is (as in 1842) 7,021,886, the number of letters carried over 30 to 100 miles is 12,539,125. Now, the number of letters carried over 30 to 80 miles being 10,532,815, it appears that the letters carried over 80 to 100 miles is 2,006,310; and the number of letters carried over 80 to 150 miles being 7,021,887, that the number of letters carried over 100 to 150 miles is 5,015,577.

The gross revenue under this bill, will, therefore, stand thus :—

Letters.	Increase.			
7,021,886			at 5 cents,	$351,094 30
10,532,815+	7,899,611	(or 75 per cent,)	" 5 "	921,621 30
2,006,310+	1,805,679	(" 90 ")	" 5 "	190,599 45
5,015,577			" 10 "	501,557 70
5,261,731+	3,525,360	(" 67 ")	" 10 "	878,709 10
2,457,657+	2,221,891	(" 90 ")	" 10 "	466,954 80
32,295,976+	15,452,541			$3,310,536 65

For convenient reference, I subjoin a table of these results, as far as they exhibit the gross revenue that will be obtained from chargeable letters, delivered at the present and the different proposed rates; and, also, the deficit for the first year under the reduced rates.

Miles.	Present Tariff.		P. M. G.'s T'riff.		Merrick's T'ff.		Uniform Rate.		Proposed T'r'ff.	
Not over	Rates.	Revenue.	Rates.	Revenue	Rates.	Revenue.	Rates.	Revenue.	Rates.	Revenue.
		Dollars.		Dollars.		Dollars.		Dollars.		Dollars.
30	6 cts.	421,313	5 cts.	351,094	5 cts.	351,094	5 cts.	351,094	3 cts.	368,649
80	10	1,053,281	10	1,053,281	5	921,621	5	921,621	5	921,621
100	—	—	—	—	5	190,599	—	—	—	—
150	12½	877,736	10	702,189	10	501,558	5	667,079	5	667,079
400	18¾	986,575	10	878,709	10	878,709	5	552,482	5	552,482
Over 400	25	614,414	10	466,955	10	466,955	5	270,342	10	466,955
Total,..		3,953,319		3,452,228		3,310,536		2,762,618		2,976,786
Deficit, the first year,...				501,091		642,783		1,190,701		976,533

In the above table, the revenue under the tariff proposed by the postmaster general, is estimated on the basis of my proposition on the increase of letters. It will be perceived that the total revenue thus exceeds his own estimate by $68,244.

I proceed with my argument on the supposition that the lowest tariff which will be sufficient to cover the expenditures, is that which Congress should adopt.

My proposed tariff has this two-fold advantage over all the others: 1st, it will produce a greater revenue on the first class of letters; and, 2d, it will remove all objections to the adoption of the prepayment system; for, under it, a double charge on letters not prepaid will in no case exceed the present rate.

It is not liable to the objection that may be urged against the tariffs proposed by the postmaster general and Senator Merrick—that the rates are not sufficiently low as to destroy the influence of the expresses—an objection of so great weight, as to make doubtful the estimated increase in the number of letters under their tariffs.

My proposed rates are, moreover, low enough to satisfy the just demands of the public, and render the penal laws on postage no longer oppressive and odious; and, for this reason, (besides the two-fold advantage already mentioned,) I prefer them to the proposed uniform rate of 5 cents. Better to adopt a tariff which will probably bear a further reduction in future years, than one which is in any degree likely to become a burden on the public treasury, or else need to be altered to higher rates.

From the documents accompanying the report of the postmaster general, dated December 3d, 1842, I learn that of the 52,681,252 letters which passed through the London general post for the year ending February 27th, 1841, (the first complete year under the new system,) 48,130,159 were prepaid, or about 91 per cent of the whole number, whilst formerly there was only 14 per cent; being a difference of 77 per cent in favor of the new system. There is no reason why the prepayment system should not be followed by the same effects here. Now, the postmaster general, in his report, dated January 18th, 1844, says, "the number of dead letters returned to the general post-office, may be stated at not less than 1,200,000."

On this number, 77 per cent will be $924,000, which, at the average of 5 cents each, will produce an additional revenue of $46,200.

To secure the full benefit of the prepayment system, labels or receipts of postage should be introduced. They will, as Sir Rowland Hill predicted, in the case of England, "simplify and accelerate the posting of letters, both to the public and the post-office; will secure prepayment, by relieving messengers from the temptation to purloin the postage; will register accurately the receipts of the postage revenue, and afford, for the first time, an effectual check upon the receivers; will economise the trouble of paying postage, to suit every one's taste and convenience; and, lastly, will effect a voluntary forestalment of the revenue."

The postmaster general proposes that the lowest rate of letter postage (which, according to the reduction here suggested, would be 3 cents) should be imposed on drop letters.

This proposition appears to me to be reasonable; and would, in combination with the prepayment system, withdraw these letters from their present course, as far as their now increased number is the effect of the expresses. Their present annual number is estimated in the report last named, at 1,026,504. On every one of those which would hereafter pass through the regular mails, the department would receive an average of 4 cents more than it does at present; while each of those which would remain "drop letters," would contribute 2 cents additional. This would add at least $20,000 to the revenue.

Justice to the department would seem to require that an extra charge of 2 cents should be imposed on every letter which has been advertised, to defray their extra cost. From an authentic statement, already quoted, I set down the amount which would be thus added to the revenue at not less than $60,000.

To recapitulate—by these modifications of the tariff I have proposed, there would be added to the revenue—

From dead letters, by the prepayment system,.....	$46,200
From "drop letters," by the charge of 3 cents,.....	20,000
From the extra charge on advertised letters,.....	60,000
Making a total addition to the revenue,.....	$126,200
This will reduce my former estimated deficit to.....	850,333
The estimated deficit, without these modifications, being....	$976,533

To meet the deficit the first year after the reduction, I ask for no appropriation from the treasury to the *aid* of the department: I ask only for the just payment to the department, from the public funds, of the expense of the $900,000 to which it has been this year subjected on account of the franking privilege—a privilege (whatever might be said of it) that was granted by Congress for the benefit, not of letter-writers only, but the entire public;—and, for every year afterwards, the actual cost of the free letters carried by the mails during the preceding fiscal year; their cost being calculated at the same rates as other letters. I take this stand, solely because I consider my estimate a very safe one, and likely to produce, rather than a deficit, a surplus of nearly $50,000. For, if we suppose the real cost of the franked matter to have been always in the same proportion to the real cost of paid matter, it will be found that the latter

has, since the organization of the department, contributed to the legitimate expenses of the government about *seventeen millions* of dollars; and, this being the case, we might surely stretch a point to effect such a permanent public good. Speaking of the new English system, I find it said in the report of the postmaster general, December 3d, 1842, "it is impossible to doubt that the domestic, social, moral, and commercial effects of the change have been as extensive as they are beneficial—as productive of public advantage as they have been conducive to individual happiness."

But as a call for assistance from the treasury, even on this strong ground, would be a dangerous precedent, I should be reluctant to recommend any tariff which would require it. Happily for us, it is not necessary.

I have already stated that the first year after the adoption of the pre-payment system, the paid letters in the London general post were 91 per cent of the entire number; the unpaid letters, of course, being 9 per cent. Now, my estimates having been formed on the number of letters *delivered* —if unpaid letters be charged at double rates, it is plain that, to find the true revenue, there should be 9 per cent added to my former estimate of the revenue. This per centage will produce the additional sum of $267,910, so that, for the first year after the reduction of postage, there would be an actual surplus revenue of over $300,000.

If we suppose the number of free letters to remain the same, their proportional cost under my proposed tariff will be found to be $363,626.

The following table exhibits the gross revenue, according to the foregoing estimates, for the first three years after the adoption of the reduced rates. The column marked P, expresses the sums that would be added to the revenue by the adoption of the pre-payment system, supposing that, of all the chargeable letters delivered, there were for the first year 9 per cent not pre-paid, for the second year 6 per cent, and for the third year only 3 per cent.

		Annual incr.	(P.)	Free letters.	Drop letters, &c.	Total revenue.	Surplus.
1st year,	$2,976,786	.....	$267,910	$900,000	$126,200	$4,270,896	$317,577
2d "	2,976,786	$446,518	205,398	363,626	126,200	4,118,528	165,209
3d "	3,423,304	513,495	118,104	363,626	126,200	4,544,729	591,520

It will be remembered that these estimates have all been founded on the returns of the year 1842, in which year the greatest amount for letter postage was received; and that in that year the number of chargeable letters delivered at the several rates of postage, continued in the same proportion as in 1836. This I consider the only proper foundation whereon to base estimates of the effects of a tariff sufficiently reduced as to destroy the influence of the expresses; and to have been properly adopted by the postmaster general himself in his report, dated January 5, 1843; though I do not for a moment suppose but that the *actual* number of letters in 1842 was in a very different proportion from my estimate, for in that year the expresses had already exerted a most disturbing influence. It will be observed, also, that they rest on the supposition that the franking privilege, the expense of transportation, and *the compensation to deputy postmasters*, will remain the same.

In order that no objection may remain unanswered, let us now examine the late report of the postmaster general, dated January 16, 1844.

"From the returns as made for the month of October, 1843, estimating the same amount of mail matter for each month in the year, it appears

(A) that 4,126,692 letters rated at 6 cents, 5,553,924 letters rated at 10 cents, 4,710,900 rated at 12½ cents, 5,369,556 letters rated at 18¾ cents, and 4,506,480 letters rated at 25 cents, (total letters chargeable with postage, 24,267,552) pass through the mails in each year; from which should be deducted the number of dead letters returned to the general post-office. This number may be stated at not less than 1,200,000." And the gross number of letters received at the post-offices which failed to make returns, he estimates in the same manner to be 747,792. To find, therefore, the true number (D) of chargeable letters *delivered* at the different rates, I shall add this number (B) when divided in the ratio of the letters received, and then deduct the 1,200,000 dead letters (C) when divided in the same manner, thus :—

(A.)	(B.)	(C.)	(D.)			
4,126,692	127,303	204,287	4,049,708	a 6	cents,	$242,982 48
5,553,924	171,074	274,526	5,450,472	a 10	"	545,047 20
4,710,900	145,182	232,976	4,623,106	a 12½	"	577,888 25
5,369,556	165,525	265,623	5,269,458	a 18¾	"	988,023 38
4,506,480	138,708	222,588	4,422,600	a 25	"	1,105,650 00
24,267,552	747,792	1,200,000	23,815,344	a 14½	"	$3,459,591 31

If the month of October (the fourth month in the fiscal year) is a correct monthly average, it thus appears that, during the current fiscal year, 23,815,344 chargeable letters will be delivered from the post-office, at an average of 14½ cents each, producing a revenue of $3,459,591, a sum $253,195 less than the similar revenue of the year ending June 30, 1843; the revenue of which year was also less than the revenue from letters in the fiscal year preceding by over $240,000. The average rate of each *single* letter (for the number of letters here estimated are stated in the report to be *single* letters) is 2 cents greater than our estimated average of England, before the reduction, so that it can no longer be said that the English postage was "the heaviest in the world; in comparison with which the so much complained of American postage is but a mite."—[*Madisonian of Feb.* 3, 1844.]

If we compare the number of letters here estimated for the current year with the number that was delivered in 1836, we shall have a most convincing argument in favor of reduced rates. To make the comparison properly, I set down the number of chargeable letters that should have been delivered in 1836, to produce the estimated revenue therefrom in 1844, viz :—$3,459,591.

1836.	1844.	Increase.	Per cent.	Decrease.	Per cent.
6,144,925	4,049,708	.....	.....	2,095,217	34+
9,217,377	5,450,472	.....	.....	3,766,905	40¾+
6,144,925	4,623,106	.....	.....	1,521,819	24¾+
4,604,589	5,269,458	664,869	10+	.....	.....
2,150,721	4,422,600	2,271,879	105½+	.....	.....

These results are exactly such as we expected. The letters rated at 25 cents, which are still but little affected by the expresses, have increased 105 per cent, which is the ordinary increase in course of time, as may be seen by comparing the gross postage income in 1836, namely $3,398,455, with the gross postage income in 1828, which was $1,664,759. And if we suppose that, in the absence of the expresses, the letters at the other rates would have increased in the same proportion, say 100 per cent, the

revenue from letters in 1844 would be exactly $3,000,000, a sum exceeding the probable actual revenue by $2,540,000: a supposition not so very unlikely when we are told that the letters carried by the expresses for a single commercial house in New York, to and from Boston only, would, if carried by the mails, cost $3,000 annually.

This shows conclusively, the safety of my estimated ratio of increase in the number of letters; it having been based on the increase of letters in the United Kingdom, where expresses had no existence, and where the laws effectually compelled all letters to be carried by the mails.

The greatest opposition to a reduction of letter postage comes from deputy postmasters, whose compensation would thereby be reduced. To remedy this, if necessary, I would propose that they should be allowed the same per centage on *free* letters as if they were charged at the ordinary rates; a proposition not unjust, when we consider that, if my views be entertained, they will be subjected to the extra trouble of calculating the postage of free matter at the same rates as other matter. By this measure their compensation will, even for the first year after the reduction, be very nearly the same as at present.

As some check to the abuse of the franking privilege, provision might be made that whoever might receive a franked letter or package, should pay therefor to the postmaster who delivers it, the 2 cents now paid him by the department, unless the said 2 cents may have been pre-paid. This small charge would relieve the department of a burden, amounting, at the lowest estimate, to $60,000. A proposition has been made to me by a distinguished member of the senate, that the franking privilege on printed matter should be entirely abolished. This measure would effectually "tend to arrest the concentration at the seat of government of those influences which, for some time past, appear to have directed and controlled the politics of the country, and to add to that stimulus which aggravates political excitements."

The penal laws seem, to a considerable extent, to have been engrafted on our statutes, from the universal example of foreign countries. We seem to have overlooked the fact that, in these countries, a fraud against the post-office is a fraud against the national revenue; while, in this country, the department seeks only to sustain itself by the collection of a sum equal to its current expenses. Inasmuch, therefore, as they relate to the transportation of printed matter otherwise than through the mails, newspapers and magazines being articles of merchandise, they certainly should be abolished.

I have no doubt but the postage of printed matter might be advantageously reduced. My examination, however, furnishes no data whereby to calculate the amount. All distinction in the rates for printed matter should be abolished, and the rates equalized according to size or weight.

AMERICAN MANUFACTURES IN CANADA.

The Toronto Herald says, the imports from the United States into the port of Toronto, from the 6th to the 25th of July, were 930 packages, the duties on which will amount to between £750 and £800. Some cotton fabrics of the United States have been imported, and this is probably a trade that will increase, unless the Provincial Parliament augment the duty on the present rates. The coarser cotton goods of the United States are likely to rival the manufacture of Great Britain in this market.

THE

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BY FREEMAN HUNT, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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THE POSTAL TREATY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN.

We publish below the official notice of the Postmaster General, to the public, with instructions to Postmasters. It embraces the rates of postage established on foreign letters by the two governments, and all the regulations necessary for postmasters and the public.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC, AND INSTRUCTIONS TO POSTMASTERS.

I. A Postal Treaty has been entered into between Great Britain and the United States, placing the correspondence between the two countries, the mail packets of each Government, and the postage charges upon an equal and reciprocal footing.

II. Letters posted or charged in the United States will be rated at half an ounce to the single letter, over a half and not exceeding an ounce as a double letter, over an ounce and not exceeding an ounce and a half as a treble letter, and so on, each half ounce or fractional excess constituting a rate. In England the half ounce limits the single letter, the full ounce the double letter, but on letters exceeding the ounce and not exceeding two ounces four rates are charged; also, on letters exceeding two ounces and not exceeding three ounces, six rates are charged; that is, two rates are imposed for each excess over an ounce.

III. The single rate to be charged on each letter posted in the United States addressed to any place in Great Britain or Ireland is 24 cents, the double rate 48 cents, the triple rate 72 cents, and so on according to the United States scale of progression in weight.—See No. 2.

IV. Like single, double, triple, &c., rates will be collected on each letter according to its weight, which is posted in Great Britain or Ireland without being prepaid, and is received at any office in the United States for delivery.

V. Said postage on letters going to any place in Great Britain or Ireland may be prepaid, if the whole amount is tendered at the office in the United States, when mailed, at the option of the sender.

VI. Newspapers may be mailed at any office in the United States to any place in the United Kingdom on the payment of 2 cents, and may, on receipt from any place in Great Britain or Ireland, be delivered at any office in the United States on payment of 2 cents. *Note.*—Each Government is to charge 2 cents on each newspaper. These are to be sent in bands or covers, open at the sides and ends, or to contain no manuscript whatever.

VII. On each pamphlet to be sent to any place in the United Kingdom, and on each pamphlet received therefrom, there is to be prepaid in the first place, and charged and collected in the second, one cent for each ounce in weight, or a fractional excess of an ounce. These are to be sent in bands or covers, open at the ends or sides, so as readily to be examined, and to contain no manuscript whatever.

VIII. On letters addressed to any place in British North America, not to be conveyed by sea, there shall be charged a postage equal to the United States postage and the Province postage combined; but, as this Department is yet uninformed of the British Province rates, the United States postage to the lines will be charged, and prepayment thereof re-

quired, until the details are ascertained and settled, as required by the 21st article of the Treaty. United States postage on newspapers to Canada and other British Provinces is to be prepaid.

IX. On letters to be sent to any foreign country or British possession, and mailed for that purpose to any Post Office in the Island of Great Britain, there must be prepaid, if sent by a British packet, 5 cents the single rate, and if by an American packet, 21 cents —to be doubled, tripled, &c., according to weight.

X. On letters received from foreign countries or English possessions, through the London or any other Post Office in Great Britain, to be delivered in the United States, the foreign and British postage is to be prepaid, and what remains to be collected on delivery here in such cases as simply the United States postage—5 cents, single, if brought by a British packet; 21 cents if brought by an American packet; 40 cents if such letters are delivered at San Francisco, Astoria, or any other place in the territory of the United States on the Pacific, when brought to an Atlantic port by a British steamship, and 56 cents if brought by an American steamship.

XI. On British or foreign letters received in the United States to be forwarded to the West Indies by American packets, or any place on the Gulf of Mexico, to Chagres or Panama, in the United States mails, the single postage charged will be (as the British postage and the postage arising in its transit to Great Britain must be prepaid) 12½ cents if to Havana, 20 cents if to any other place in the West Indies or on the Gulf of Mexico, or to Chagres; 30 cents if to Panama, with 16 cents added if brought to the United States from Great Britain in an American packet.

XII. Care is to be taken to see that all American postage on letters from Havana, from other places in the Gulf of Mexico, from our Pacific possessions, and from the British North American provinces, is paid in the United States before the same is dispatched by mail to Great Britain.

XIII. Newspapers for countries beyond Great Britain may be sent on the prepayment of two cents each—also pamphlets as stipulated under No. 7—and newspapers and pamphlets received from countries beyond Great Britain are to be delivered on payment of the two cents for each newspaper, and one cent per ounce in weight of each pamphlet.

XIV. Postmasters are cautioned to write on their post-bills, opposite each entry of a foreign letter, newspaper or pamphlet posted by them respectively, the word "foreign," the better to enable the Postmasters of New York and Boston, and any others that may be designated, to make a separate quarterly report of the amount of foreign postage.

XV. The Postmasters of Boston and New York will be specially instructed as to the closed mails contemplated by the treaty, the mode of keeping their accounts of foreign postage, and of mailing and acknowledging receipt of foreign matter.

C. JOHNSON, Postmaster General.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, January 8, 1849.

THE

MERCHANTS' MAGAZINE,

Established July, 1839,

BY FREEMAN HUNT, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOLUME XXI. SEPTEMBER, 1849. NUMBER III.

REVENUE OF THE BRITISH POST-OFFICE.

An account showing the gross and net post-office revenue and cost of management for the United Kingdom for the year ending January 5, 1838, and for each subsequent year, excluding from the account, whether of gross revenue or cost of management, any advances that may have been made by the English to the Irish post-office, and advances to the money order office; also disregarding, in the return for each year, any old debts written off, or postage remitted, or any other deductions which relate to previous years:—

Years.	Gross revenue.*	Cost of management.†	Net revenue.	Postage charged on government departments.
1838.....	$2,339,737	£687,313	£1,652,424	£38,528
1839.....	2,346,278	686,768	1,659,509	45,156
1840‡.....	2,390,763	756,999	1,633,764	44,277
1841.....	1,359,466	858,677	500,789	90,761
1842.....	1,499,418	938,169	561,249	113,255
1843.....	1,578,145	977,504	600,641	122,161
1844.....	1,620,967	980,650	640,217	116,503
1845.....	1,705,067	985,110	719,957	109,232
1846.....	1,887,576	1,125,594	761,982	101,191
1847.....	1,963,857	1,138,745	825,112	100,355
1848.....	2,181,016	1,196,520	984,496	121,290
1849.....	2,143,680	§1,403,250	740,429	115,902

* Namely, the gross receipts, after deducting the returns for "refused letters," &c.

† Including all payments out of the revenue in its progress to the exchequer, except advances to the money order office. Of these sums, £10,307 10s. per annum is for pensions, and forms no part of the disbursements on account of the service of the post-office.

‡ This year includes one month of the fourpenny rate.

§ This includes a payment of £196,086 5s. 1d. for the conveyance of mails by railway in previous years.

It will be seen that the years ending January 5, 1846 and 1847, differ in certain items from the former returns of those years. This arises from the East India Company's postage having been, in the returns referred to, included both in the "gross revenue" and "postage charged on government department." It is now entirely excluded from the account.

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VOLUME XXX. JANUARY, 1854. NUMBER I

COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS.

POSTAL CONVENTION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BREMEN.

ADDITIONAL ARTICLES AGREED UPON BETWEEN THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT OF THE HANSEATIC REPUBLIC OF BREMEN, MODIFYING THE ARRANGEMENT ENTERED INTO BY SAID POST DEPARTMENTS IN 1847 FOR THE RECIPROCAL RECEIPT AND DELIVERY OF MAILS TO BE CONVEYED BY THE UNITED STATES AND BREMEN LINES OF STEAMERS, DIRECT BETWEEN NEW YORK AND BREMENHAVEN.

ARTICLE 1. The post-office of New York shall be the United States office of exchange, and Bremen the office of exchange of that republic, for all mails transmitted under this arrangement.

ART. 2. The international correspondence, conveyed either by United States or by Bremen steamers, as hereinafter stated, between the United States or its territories, and Bremen, will be subject to the following postage charges, viz.:—

Postage on each letter or packet not exceeding half an ounce in weight	10 cents
Above half an ounce, and not over one ounce	20 "
Above one ounce, but not exceeding two ounces.....	40 "

And the postage will increase in this scale of progression, to wit: Additional 20 cents for each additional ounce, or fraction of an ounce.

Payment in advance shall be optional in either country. It shall not, however, be permitted to pay less than the whole rate; and no account shall be taken of the prepayment of any fraction of that rate.

ART. 3. All the States belonging to the German-Austrian Postal Union, respectively, are to have the advantage of the rate of ten cents, established by the preceding article, (2d,) whenever their postage to and from Bremen, for letters to and from the United States, shall be reduced to the uniform rate of five cents, or less. On all correspondence for or from such of said States as shall not so reduce their rates, the charge between the United States and Bremen, by either of the two lines, will be fifteen cents the single rate.

And optional prepayment, a regular progressive scale, &c., upon the same principles as in article 2d, shall be admitted and observed.

ART. 4. On all letters originating and posted in other countries beyond the United States, and mailed to, and deliverable in Bremen, or originating and posted in countries beyond Bremen, and mailed to, and deliverable in the United States or its territories, the foreign postage, (other than that of Bremen, and other than that of the United States,) is to be added to the postage stated in article 2d or 3d, as the case may be. And the two Post-office Departments are mutually to furnish each other with lists stating the foreign countries, or places in foreign countries, to which the foreign postage, and the amount thereof, must be absolutely prepaid, or must be left unpaid. And until such lists are duly furnished, neither country is to mail to the other any letter from foreign countries beyond it, or for foreign countries beyond the country to which the mail is sent.

ART. 5. Newspapers not weighing more than three ounces each, may be sent by the United States and Bremen steamers when the whole postage of two cents is prepaid thereon at the mailing office. The postage on pamphlets and magazines per ounce, or fraction of an ounce, shall be one cent, prepayment of which shall likewise be required in both countries. Said newspapers, pamphlets, and magazines, are to be subject to the laws and regulations of each country, respectively, in regard to their liability to be rated with letter postage when containing written matter, or for any other cause specified in said laws and regulations. They must be sent in narrow bands, open at the sides or ends.

ART. 6. The postage for which the United States and Bremen post-offices shall reciprocally account to each other upon letters which shall be exchanged between them, shall be established, letter by letter, according to the scales of progression determined by the preceding 2d and 3d articles, as follows, viz.:—

The Bremen office shall pay to the United States office for each unpaid letter, weighing half an ounce or less, originating in the United States and destined for

Bremen, as well as for each letter of like weight prepaid in Bremen and destined for the United States, when conveyed, under article 2d, by United States steamer ..... 9 cents
And when by Bremen steamer ..... 5 "
When conveyed, under article 3d, by United States steamer ..... 14 "
And when by Bremen steamer ..... 5 "

The United States office shall pay to the Bremen office for each unpaid letter, weighing half an ounce or less, originating in Bremen and destined for the United States, as well as for each letter of like weight prepaid in the United States and destined for Bremen, when conveyed, under article 2d, by United States steamer ..... 1 cent
And when by Bremen steamer ..... 5 cents
When conveyed, under article 3d, by United States steamer ..... 1 cent
And when by Bremen steamer ..... 10 cents

Respecting the postage for newspapers, pamphlets, and magazines received in either country, the whole is to be paid to the United States office when the same are sent by United States steamers, and one-half to the United States and the other half to the Bremen office when sent by Bremen steamers.

It is understood and agreed that, of the portion of the postage for which the United States office is to account to Bremen, as well as of what Bremen may collect, all but one cent a single letter is to go to the benefit of the proprietors of the Bremen line of steamers.

Letter bills and acknowledgments, as well as forms of account, shall be made to conform to these articles.

ART. 7. The accounts between the two Departments shall be closed at the expiration of each quarter of the calendar year, by quarterly statements and accounts prepared by the General Post-office in Washington; and, having been examined, compared, and settled by the Post-office of Bremen, the balance shall be paid, without delay, by that Department which shall be found indebted to the other. If the balance is in favor of Bremen, it shall be paid over by the United States at Bremen; and if in favor of the United States, it shall be paid over by Bremen at Washington, or to the General Post-office at London, to the credit of the United States, as the Postmaster-General of the United States shall direct. Neither office is to charge to the other any commissions upon any postage it may collect. The 20 per cent commission to the Postmaster of Bremen, stipulated in article 6th of the arrangement of 1847, is to cease from and after the date when these articles take effect; and Bremen is to receive no other compensation for the services required by the arrangement of 1847 than as provided in article 6th of the present convention.

ART. 8. The steamers of the two lines shall be required to convey all dead and returned letters, and the official communications of the respective post departments of the United States and Bremen, free of charge.

ART. 9. This arrangement, which supersedes the temporary arrangement of 6th July, 1853, is to go into effect on the 15th of August, 1853, and it is to be continued in force until annulled by mutual consent, or by either post department after the expiration of three months' previous notice to the other; and it may also cease whenever the Bremen steamers cease running.

In witness whereof, we have hereto set our names and affixed the seals of our respective offices, this 4th day of August, one thousand eight hundred fifty-three, at the city of Washington.

JAMES CAMPBELL,
Postmaster-General.
RUDOLPH SCHLEIDEN,
Minister resident of the Republic of Bremen.

POSTAGE IN FRANCE.

A letter sent from the United States to any place in France is invariably charged with double postage when inclosed in an envelope. This fact should be remembered by those writing to their friends in that country. In order to save postage, letters should be written very close on good, thin paper, and directed without an envelope. Letters without envelopes, weighing over 7½ grains, (¼ of an ounce,) are charged double postage in France. A letter on light paper, without an envelope, sent by an American steamer, costs twenty-four cents to Liverpool, and seventeen cents from there to Bordeaux, France, making forty-one cents if single, and eighty-two cents if enveloped or over weight. If sent by a British steamer, there is an additional charge of ten cents.

LAW RELATING TO THE NEW RECEIPT STAMP IN GREAT BRITAIN.

In consequence of some doubts having been entertained on one or two points connected with the British Stamp Act, the following queries were submitted by a firm in the city of London to the Chancellor of the Exchequer:—

1. Does the purchase of goods for money over the counter of a shop or elsewhere, where no bill is desired or given, require a stamped receipt, should the purchase exceed £2?

2. Does a stamp attached to the back of a common banker's check, and written over with the name of the party receiving the money, fulfil the requirements of the new act, as to the use of the stamp?

I have just settled two accounts; one person required the stamp to be attached to the back of the banker's check, drawn in the usual form, and my name written over it; the other required the stamp to be affixed to the bottom of the account, and written over it in the same way.

Mr. R. W. Wilbraham, by direction of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has given the annexed replies:—

1. That whatever pecuniary transactions have hitherto required a receipt-stamp when amounting to £5, will now require the penny receipt-stamp when amounting to 40s. and upward, the alteration made by the recent act of Parliament consisting in fixing the price of stamps at 1d., and altering the amount of the transactions requiring a stamp from £5 to 40s.

2. That the Chancellor of the Exchequer apprehends that either a check, or any piece of paper with a receipt-stamp attached, suffices for a valid receipt.

A question having also been raised whether a letter by post acknowledging the receipt of bills of exchange, &c., required a stamp, a correspondent of the *Shipping Gazette* refers a contemporary to the fifty-fifth of Geo. III., c. 184, by which "letters by the general post, acknowledging the arrival of any bills of exchange, promissory notes, or other securities for money," are specially exempted from stamp duty, and such exemptions are declared by the new act to be still in force.

June 1854.

POSTAGE ON PRINTED MATTER IN CUBA.

We are authorized to say that the Postmaster-general has received, through the Department of State, official information of the increase of postage on printed matter in the island of Cuba to just double the former rates. The following extract of a royal decree of the 9th November, 1853, published by order of the Captain-general in the Havana Official Gazette of the 13th January, 1854, will explain itself. The rates therein stated are, of course, in addition to the United States postage, which has to be prepaid on all similar publications sent to Cuba. The decree provides that:—

Foreign newspapers, coming from any country whatsoever, shall pay one rial (12½ cents) per ounce, if loose, and eight dollars per *arroba*, (25 Spanish pounds,) should they come direct from the editors' offices; provided that their agents in this island give the necessary security to the effect that the package contain no other printed matter but that designated on the band they must be covered with, nor any private ciphers or other manuscript but that of the address. No charge to be made for inland conveyance.

Periodicals of any other class, including also pamphlets taking that title, and books published in periodical numbers, shall pay twenty-five cents (2 rials) per ounce, if loose, twelve dollars per aroba, (25 Spanish pounds,) when proceeding direct from the editors' offices, and provided they are inclosed in the requisite form. Such publications, to circulate through the island, must pay twenty-five cents per ounce, if loose and six dollars per arroba.

THE

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BY FREEMAN HUNT, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

VOLUME XXI. DECEMBER, 1849. NUMBER VI.

By Joshua Leavitt, Corresponding Secretary of the Boston Cheap Postage Association.

Art. II.—THE MORAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF CHEAP POSTAGE.

Cheap Postage is no longer an experiment; its success has justified the anticipations of its promoters, and silenced the cavils of incredulity. The principles on which it rests are no longer theoretical. The arguments and calculations, which seemed so conclusive, when only seen on paper, have now been subjected to a trial-process, which must satisfy even those over-cautious minds that believe nothing they do not see. "Rowland Hill's System of Postage" is now as distinct a subject of study and of history, as Professor Morse's System of Electro-Magnetic Telegraphs; and the principles and rules of operation are as necessary to be understood, in order to successful application in practice. Dr. Franklin's system of electricity will afford as much help in one case, as Dr. Franklin's system of postage in the other.

It is Rowland Hill's system which has wrought the wonders of cheap postage in Great Britain; and that will do the same here, if applied according to Rowland Hill's principles. That the expense of postage per letter is inversely as the number of letters, is seen in the fact that in 1839, under the old system, 76,000,000 letters cost, on an average, two-pence half-penny per letter; while in 1840, the first year of the new system, 169,000,000

cost less than a penny—a farthing, per letter; and, in 1847, the whole 322,000,000 cost only three and a half farthings per letter. The distance, greater or less, which a letter is carried, is matter of small consequence. Ten letters carried a hundred miles may cost the government a dollar per letter; when 10,000 letters could be carried the same distance, and the transportation cost only one mill per letter. And if government runs one mail from Boston to New York, and another from New York to Philadelphia, it costs no more to carry the Boston letters to Philadelphia. Hence, distance is laid out of the calculation, and uniformity becomes the rule of postage. Hence, also, the productiveness of the post-office is proportioned to the increase of numbers; and therefore the interest of the department requires it to do everything to increase the number of letters, by increasing the public accommodation. The genius of the new system is public accommodation; and the measure of success in administration is the number of letters it induces the people to write, by the facilities it affords for their conveyance.

The increase of letters in Great Britain, from 76,000,000 in 1839, to 169,000,000 in 1840, and 346,000,000 in 1848, shows something of what the system is capable of doing; while the fact that the addition of 93,000,000 letters the first year added only £101,678 to the expense, which is only at the rate of one farthing per letter, shows that the great increase of expenditure, £528,176, added between 1840 and 1848, was caused by increased public accommodation, rather than the increase in the number of letters.

Our own "reduced postage," established by the act of Congress of 1845, contained only one solitary feature of Rowland Hill's system—that of rating letters solely by weight—a great improvement, it is true. And in regard to letters going not more than thirty miles, which make up one-fifth of the whole, and were before carried for six cents, the reduction to five cents was too trifling to produce any considerable effect in increasing the number sent. And yet the results of the act of 1845 all go to confirm the soundness of Rowland Hill's principles, and show that his system is just as applicable, and will prove quite as successful and beneficial in this country, as in Great Britain.

It is quite remarkable, that while the whole cost of management of the British post-office is $6,712,368, that of the United States is only $4,346,850—a difference of $2,365,518. And the cost of transportation, in which we should naturally expect the difference to be very great, on account of the immense distances traversed by our mails, is $2,229,763 in Great Britain, and $2,448,756 in the United States, which is only $210,993 more. There is, therefore, no shadow of a reason why the rate of postage on letters should be greater here than there.

This system has been in operation for ten years, in Great Britain, before the eyes of the people of the United States. Thousands of our citizens, visiting England, have witnessed its facilities, and experienced its benefits, and have wished that our own country might enjoy the same blessing. Its practicability and adaptedness to this country have been demonstrated over and over again; and yet we do not get cheap postage. None of our leading statesmen have made the cause their own, or have shown that they had taken pains to understand the elementary principles of the system. Congress meets and adjourns, without passing the bill, and the men by whose apathy or opposition so great a good is lost, hold up their heads before the people, and are reelected. Why does not Congress pass a bill establishing Rowland Hill's system of cheap letter postage? The true and only reason is, that the *people*—the PEOPLE have never willed it, with that energy of purpose which Congressmen always understand and obey.

The truth is, the people at large have hardly begun to be impressed with the real value of cheap postage. They like the idea very well, of sending their letters at a cheaper rate; but the few letters which they now write, do not make their bill for letter postage much of a burden; or, if their business requires many letters, the postage amount is a per centage so small, as to be but little thought of. The public mind has been too much occupied with the financial and pecuniary bearings of the question. On the first introduction of the subject, it found our public men so deeply imbued with the old saw that the "post-office must support itself"—a principle grounded on nothing in the constitution, and contradicted by its own history for two years out of five, that the first objection everywhere to be met was, "Will it pay?" And we were obliged to wait until the department became convinced, by full experiment, that the old system could not be made to pay, before we could get the partial and unskillful reduction of postage, granted by the act of 1845.

That reduction was made, avowedly, not with the idea of copying Rowland Hill's system, but mainly for the purpose of putting down the private mails, by underbidding them. That reduction also relieved the business community so far, that it was impossible, for a time, to obtain the attention of the public to the claims of the true system of cheap postage. And when, at length, the question came up, early last year, in a form to awaken interest, the friends of cheap postage found themselves embarrassed by a strong prejudice, in the people and representatives of the more thinly settled parts of the country, who had imbibed the notion that the call for cheap postage came only from the cities, and was a mere scheme for the great merchants and manufacturers of the East, and in a strong impression, hastily taken up in high quarters, that the length of our routes was a good reason for insisting that cheap postage, in this country, should be three cents, rather than two cents, which is the nearest equivalent for Mr. Hill's penny sterling. In meeting these and other minor difficulties, we have too much lost sight of the real object in view, the grand social and moral benefits of cheap postage, which make it one of the beneficent wonders of the age.

It was a conviction of these benefits which, in the early part of last year, led a few individuals, in Boston and New York, themselves mostly disconnected either with the commercial or the publishing interest, to associate together for the purpose of awakening the public mind to the greatness of the loss which our country is suffering every year that we remain without cheap postage. It is in this light that we wish the people to regard it. And when they once begin to consider what cheap postage will do for society, they will be so earnest in demanding it that their rulers cannot choose but yield and grant the boon.

The post-office is, by its very constitution, a great social machine, intended to weave a net-work of personal intercourse between the people all over the country. The authors of the Federalist so understood it. In their decisive plea for our present constitution, (No. 42,) they argue for the establishment of a post-office by this simple consideration, that "NOTHING WHICH TENDS TO FACILITATE INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE STATES, CAN BE DEEMED UNWORTHY OF THE PUBLIC CARE." That ought to be the spirit of all legislation and administration for the post-office—to facilitate intercourse. When the post-office does this most effectually, it best subserves the object of its creation.

To facilitate intercourse is to advance society, in all its great interests. The interchange of thought is the advancement of society. Where this inter-

change is hindered or clogged, thought is stifled, inquiry suppressed, affection chilled, enterprise hampered, freedom chained. In proportion to the actual exercise of this interchange, mankind rise, and advance, and grow, in all that constitutes the glory of humanity. To "facilitate intercourse" is about the only positive act for the advancement of society which the constitution empowers our national government to put forth. To this power alone it has interposed no limitations, but those which bound the resources of the government, and the capacities of the people.

Congress has, from the beginning, acted in the spirit of this principle, in one remarkable particular—the postage of newspapers. To "facilitate intercourse among the States," the charge for newspapers has approached to uniformity, and has been fixed at a rate very far below the expense incurred. Even with the very great increase of newspapers, within the last five years, they do not pay above two-thirds of what they cost the department. Yet Congress has carried them from one end of the country to the other, and the sole reason has been, that by this liberality, the government could "facilitate intercourse among the States." Rowland Hill's system itself, glorious as it is, may be considered as little more than an application with a slight emendation of our plan of newspaper postage to the postage on letters. As he has demonstrated, and experience in England has proved, that the application of the same principle to letters is practicable, and within the reasonable ability of the government, what the friends of cheap postage now ask is, that Congress will apply their own principle to letters, as they have always done to newspapers. The chief emendation is the adoption of absolute uniformity of rate, which is grounded on the discovery that there is no practicable difference in the expense.

Cheap postage on newspapers has made us a newspaper-reading people; cheap postage on letters would make us a letter-writing people. The power and practice of writing one's thoughts is itself an advanced stage of education. The mere ability to read the Bible, to write one's name, and to tell the numbers on a bank-note, is an achievement of great value, compared with the absence of that ability. And one reason why so many remain without even this medium of learning, in this land of schools and Bibles, can be no other but the lack of an operating motive to learn, brought to bear upon the mind in early life, when the opportunity was enjoyed. Cheap postage furnishes that motive. All the educational systems in the world cannot be a substitute for it. The proverb says—"A child can lead a horse to the water, but ten men cannot make him drink." Neither can legislation compel the youthful mind to dip and drink at the fountain of knowledge. The expectation of writing letters, to be sent by mail for two cents, will make millions of young eyes glisten with enthusiastic determination to master the mysteries of reading and penmanship. And the practice of writing thus encouraged, and of course commenced with the first ability to shape a letter with a pen, will train, and stimulate, and discipline, and strengthen the minds of a rising generation to a pitch of intellectual advancement far beyond their predecessors.

And then, the practice of writing will keep knowledge always bright, and the intellectual powers continually advancing. Vast multitudes of people never advance in the knowledge of letters beyond their attainments at school. Perhaps at that time they would indite a letter, in tolerable English. But the cost of postage has stood in the way of frequent letter-writing; and, in fact, the man or woman of five-and-thirty finds it an irksome task to write a

few lines of necessary information, and, at sixty, has lost the faculty altogether. Cheap postage would have made them good letter-writers in youth, and would have kept them continually improving in that faculty, even to old age.

Lord Bacon tells us that "Reading makes a full man, conversation a ready man, and writing an exact man." There is no more salutary discipline of the mind than the exercise of mastering its thoughts, and arranging them in order, so as to express them to its own satisfaction with the pen. Conceive of a whole community trained to this exercise, and continuing in it always, and you have the idea of a people more intellectual than ever lived. And cheap postage will do it.

It is impossible to give in books, or magazines, or newspapers, that precision and particularity of information which is necessary for the practical application of the knowledge they disseminate. Individuals have their own questions to ask, and their own difficulties to remove. A single word of personal inquiry would often save much laborious study, preserve from embarrassing mistakes, and make knowledge practically available, in cases where now it comes to no fruit. In the prosecution of philosophical investigations, in historical research, in the construction of machinery, in the application of useful improvements, in looking up evidence for the support of just claims, every facility given to correspondence is of immense value. By cheap postage, the minutiæ of knowledge will be diffused among mankind, as they never can be by printing. And the collection of knowledge will be equally facilitated. The number of seekers and of dispensers will be indefinitely increased. Innumerable researches will be set on foot. Truths, buried in the minds of obscure individuals, will be brought out. Facts that will soon be beyond the reach of human inquiry, will be gathered up and preserved. All the treasures of wisdom—even the golden sands will be collected and added to the common stock of useful knowledge. Who can tell how much of the advancement of science in Great Britain is to be traced to the influence of the 350,000,000 letters annually written there? Cheap postage will do more for us than it has done for them, because it will act upon a more active and inventive people.

Cheap postage is much more essential to the cultivation of the affections than of the intellect. The wise statesman will carefully cherish the social affections among the people, for there courage and honor, patriotism and public spirit, the vital energies of the republic, have their seat. In this eager and money-getting age, we are in no small danger of suffering a deterioration of the kindly sympathies, which bind man to man, and sweeten life, and keep the mind from sinking into sordid avarice, or unrelenting ambition. The government has the power, by the grant of cheap postage, to rekindle and preserve, in glowing freshness, the warm sympathies of millions of hearts towards each other, which are now languishing and ready to die, for the mere want of personal intercourse. Distance, and other difficulties, render visiting impossible. But the frequent interchange of letters, which would certainly take place if the postage was "only two cents," would be a precious and effectual substitute. It would be hazarding nothing to predict that a million of persons, who now write but rarely, would write letters to distant friends within the first week after they became acquainted with the existence of cheap postage. And the still continuing increase of letter-writing in Great Britain, from 169,000,000 the first year, to 195,000,000, to 200,000,000, to 220,000,000, and 242,000,000, and 271,000,000, and 299,000,000, and

322,000,000, and, finally, to 346,000,000 in the ninth year, while the very latest reports show an increase of £100,000 in the *net* revenue of the post-office, for the tenth year ending the 5th of October, requiring an addition of 24,000,000 letters for its production; these facts prove that when once the impulse of cheap postage is begun to be felt, it will go on indefinitely; or, in other words, the more letters people write, the more they wish to write. From writing annually, they will wish to correspond monthly, and from monthly, weekly, and from weekly, daily. When the number of letters shall have increased in this country to 300,000,000, or only four times the present number, what freights of love and friendship will be continually borne from one extremity of the land to another, thrilling every day a million of hearts with kind and pure sympathies! Cheap postage will do this.

A gentleman of eminence in the legal profession, who has been employed professionally in a large number of divorce cases before the courts, remarked that a large proportion of those unhappy marriages originated in some slight interruption of affection, occasioned by temporary absence, during which there was not a constant intercourse kept up by letter. And he had no doubt that the establishment of cheap postage would, in thousands of cases, forestall these little alienations, by the facility it would afford for the continued interchange of sympathies, by frequent correspondence. What father, driven by the demands of business or benevolence, or in the public service, to be absent from his home, would not feel the frequent letters of his sons, his daughters, the childish first scrawls of his little ones, coming by every mail, to be like guardian angels, hovering around him to keep off every contaminating breath, and fanning with their wings the pure flame of domestic love in his heart? Children, too, absent at school, boys put to trades, or in counting-rooms, young persons pushing their fortunes in any of the thousand forms of enterprise created by our busy Anglo-Saxon race, would find that the frequent "letters from home"—the kind greetings of father and mother, of sister and brother, would surround them as with a continual presence of *home*, with all its blessed restraints and genial influences. It would so strengthen the stakes of the paternal tent, that the heart could never be torn from its hold; and it would so lengthen its cords, that it would cover every member of the household, however far removed. The old roof-tree would send its fibres, and spread out its shadow, to embrace and shelter every wanderer who had been born at its root. Preserve the domestic affections, and you have almost a sure guaranty for the domestic virtues, the foundation of all good morals. And even if a young man should be led by temptation away from the path of virtue, these incessant letters from home will find their way to his heart, and win him back to the hallowed circle, because they have never allowed him to sink into the cold isolation of confirmed vice. All this ministry of heavenly beneficene is the effect of cheap postage.

The usefulness of cheap postage, in aiding the various enterprises of benevolence and reform, should not be lost sight of, in this recital. Hundreds of thousands of our citizens are interested in behalf of some one or other of these objects; and will welcome anything as a boon to themselves which will make them more efficient. The power of the newspaper press to advance these enterprises, has apparently reached its acme. We have secured about as much newspaper material as can be read. Nearly every attempt to crowd in new papers to sustain new movements is a failure, or, at best, short lived, and of limited influence. But cheap postage, by making these efforts direct and personal, carrying their message from an individual to an individual, will

open a new surface to the influence of truth; will awaken to activity new and deeper tissues of sensibility; and, by combining as well as arousing, by union as well as action, will reduplicate, to a thousand fold, the benevolent and moral energies thus produced. A pleasant illustration of the working of this sort of "mind-machinery," may be seen in Mr. Burritt's description of the preparatory process which preceded Mr. Cobden's motion in Parliament, in favor of the great Peace measure of international arbitration:—

First of the dynamics of this mind-machinery of popular opinion, planted in "a little upper room," and opened upon the Legislature of the greatest empire in the world, was the PENNY POST. For the six months' "agitation" of the national mind, which the Peace Congress Committee had originated and conducted, in favor of the measure to be brought forward by Mr. Cobden, the Penny Post had been plied with unremitting activity. Nearly 50,000 letters, and other missiles, in manuscript or lithograph, had been sent out in every direction, like radiating veins of thought, through which "the one idea" was kept in lively circulation. Thus it acquired a constituency of earnest minds, in almost every town in the kingdom, which sent a representative to Parliament; and that representative had perhaps been surprised to receive at St. Stephen's by the Penny Post, communications from his own constituents, requesting him, with the emphasis of electors, to give his voice and vote for Mr. Cobden's motion. Then hundreds of thousands of printed leaves, elucidating "the one idea," had been scattered with a sower's hand among the masses of the people, which they had read eagerly on their way to the field or factory; and the silent conviction of myriads of men, women and children of the laboring classes, who had no votes to give or withhold, had strengthened the pressure of the people's mind upon Parliament. Then every night, for six months, a public meeting in some city, town, or village, had given an utterance to "the one idea," which the press echoed and re-echoed among the populations far and near. Thus, one hundred and fifty assemblies of the people, from Land's End to John O'Groat's, embracing the active minds of as many communities, had thrown into the gathering tide of public opinion the force of their sympathies. And the great meeting in Exeter Hall was to give a great voice to these convictions and sympathies of the people, and to speak to Parliament the last words of the nation in favor of the measure to be discussed in the House of Commons on the ensuing evening.

There is one other social interest on which cheap postage will bear with a benign effect, which should secure its speedy adoption, and the favor of every lover of his country and her institutions. It will ensure forever the continuance of our glorious Union. This precious interest has ever been a subject of the most tender solicitude to every patriotic bosom. The Father of his Country, in his Farewell Address to the People of the United States, gives utterance to his solicitude in these memorable words:—

It is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of our National Union; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to it; accustoming yourself to think and speak of it as of the palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can, in any event, be abandoned; and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

Since these oracular exhortations were given, fifteen States have become thirty, and others are already pressing for admission to the Union. The multiplication of interests, the expansion of our territory to so vast an extent, and the convulsions with which the world is agitated, have multiplied the dangers of disunion, and increased the solicitude of the statesman. One of the

foremost of our senators has not hesitated to commit his reputation to the prophecy, that it is impossible to extend the cords of our Union so as to embrace the new empire which is to rise on the shores of the Pacific. But we must surely try; and no man deserves the confidence of the American people, as a legislator, who is not ready to do all and everything that is within the constitutional power and the reasonable ability of the government, to make our Union as lasting as time, whatever may be its extent. Canals and railroads, commerce and education, the circulation of newspapers, and the habit of meeting by our representatives in the halls of national legislation, may do much to preserve the Union. But no intelligent citizen will affirm that these ties of political connection and pecuniary interest afford a satisfactory guaranty for the perpetuity of the Union in all contingencies, or make it what all wish it to be—INDISSOLUBLE. We need a more intimate intercourse of individuals; such interchange of individual thoughts and feelings as will make our nation "E Pluribus Unum," all one heart. The strength of the three-fold cord, proverbial from the time of Solomon, is derived from the intertwining of innumerable small fibres. And this principle has received a new illustration, in the wire cables, which have just completed a solid communication at Wheeling, between the oldest of the "Old Thirteen," and the "Territory north-west of the Ohio." Where solid bars of iron would fall assunder by their own weight, these twisted wires easily sustain the tread of an army. Cheap postage will strengthen the fibres and twist the cables of living thought and feeling, which will make our Union as lasting as human nature on earth.

Cheap postage, in its various forms of influence, secures our Union from danger, by its operation upon all the causes of danger. The safety-lamp, invented by Sir Humphrey Davy, renders the explosive gases of the coal mine harmless, by dividing them, and forcing them through the fine meshes of the wire screen. The flames that light our city are not dangerous, because the inflammable gas is made to pass through capillary tubes. Cheap postage will perform the same function in regard to all noxious principles, and all enlightening processes in the body politic. The agitations of controversy, the measures of reform, even the machinations of the malcontents of every description, will become innocuous; while the true advancement of society will advance with steady course, aided, not endangered, by every wind that blows, and every wave that rolls and rocks.

This has been its effect in England. While it quickens all the elements of political and social reform, it has made the government and social order of the country stable and secure, while all the rest of Europe has been tossed upon the billows of revolution and civil strife. Cheap postage disarmed Chartism, and brought the friends of the written charter to strive for their object solely by peaceful agitation through the forms of the constitution. Cheap postage repealed the Corn-Laws, and gave the starving millions the blessings of free bread. Cheap postage has just repealed the Navigation Laws. Cheap postage has repeatedly interposed the veto of the minority, and defeated favorite schemes for consolidating the power of the aristocracy, in legislating for the benefit of the few against the many. In the year 1843, the writer of this spent a few weeks in England, where his attention was turned to the examination of the workings of cheap postage. Shortly after his return home, he penned the following description, and published it as an editorial leader, in a daily paper, of which he then had the control. The pledge with which it concludes has never been lost sight of. From that day

to this, he has lost no opportunity of urging upon the community, and upon Congress, by all means in his power, the importance of the adoption of ROWLAND HILL'S SYSTEM OF CHEAP POSTAGE.

(*From the Boston Morning Chronicle.*)

No person can realize the value of the "British system" of postage, who has not experienced its benefits. It is the most beautiful manifestation of pure beneficence in human government, that can be found upon earth. By it, the government comes to every man, every woman, every child, every day in the year, (Sundays excepted,) and for a compensation so small as hardly to differ from mere gratuity, offers to carry all their letters of business, affection, or philanthrophy, to any and every spot in the empire, with the utmost speed and the most unfailing certainty that human ingenuity and power can attain. It is a complete leveler. The poorest peasant, the factory-girl, the match-vender, the beggar, even, enjoy the benefits of the cheap postage, as they do of the vital air, on precisely the same terms with the richest banker, the proudest peer, or royalty itself.

It is the grand conservative power of the realm, as well as one of the most effective instruments of reform. It equalizes excitement in all parts of the body politic. It draws the thunder from every threatening cloud by innumerable conducting points. It allows the blazing gas to burn with complete freedom, because the millions of capillary orifices create no danger of an explosion. It is a system full formed, and all but perfect, at its first trial. No invention, no deduction of science, no experiment in legislation, was ever brought forth so complete in all its results. And then it is so simple, in every one of its parts and movements, bringing out so many effects with so little complication of causes, that in this respect it approximates more nearly to the works of the infinite Creator than any other human device or discovery on record. Indeed, its working and its effects are so much in conformity to the mind of God, that we are bound to place it high among those "good and perfect gifts which are from above, and come down from the Father of rights."

Now the simple question is, whether the people of this republic shall continue to have the channels of business and social intercourse obstructed by an enormous tax, or shall be allowed by our rulers to enjoy the same privileges that the British monarchy allows to its taxed and pitied subjects. We shall aim to hold the public mind to this question. The American system has failed, and cannot be restored. The British system has been tried, and proved to be both practicable and capable of self-support. In Great Britain it is already, in four years, a source of revenue. With our wide-spread territory, but lower salaries, we have no doubt in four years it will support itself, with all the privileges now afforded.

A system which is proved to be so simple, so economical, so perfectly practicable, and fraught with such vast benefits to the highest interests of the nation, ought to enlist the earnest support of every good citizen, both to secure its adoption by Congress, and to aid its working, when it goes into effect. By the uniformity and cheapness of rate, it is made dependent for its success entirely upon the perfect accommodation it affords to the public, so as to induce the greatest possible number of letters to be sent by the mail. And this necessarily leads to the utmost simplicity and economy in the details, the most compact and methodical arrangements in all branches of the service, and inspires every faithful functionary with its own spirit, which is to diffuse its utmost advantages to every citizen, with the fewest possible disappointments and failures.

The British post-office, though very far from perfection, and though loaded still with many cumbrous appendages retained from the old system, is yet in its practical working as a means of conferring benefits upon the people, the most complete piece of governmental machinery ever adopted by man. It is the glory of the government of God, to accomplish numer-

ous and complicated results, by few and simple means—as seen in the manifold operations of electricity, gravitation, &c. Men, on the contrary, are forced to combine numerous and complicated instrumentalities for the production of isolated effects. In the establishment of cheap postage, human government seems to approach toward this glorious model, and shows itself in some measure worthy of its claims to a divine origin, for it presents itself as a wise and benificent dispenser of impartial favors upon all its subjects. It is the best answer that can be given to the allegation that all government is usurped and tyrannical, and will go far to justify the position taken in Scripture, that "the powers that be are ordained of God." Who can limit the good effects of a system, which every day presents the government of the country traversing every village in the land with its visits of kindness, and rendering its services to every family at a rate so cheap as to be all but gratuitous?

Unless the bill to establish cheap postage is passed by Congress early in the session, it will be impossible to complete all the arrangements for working the new system with success, in time for the act to go into operation on the first of July, the beginning of the "fiscal year," as it is termed, by which it is convenient to regulate all the business of the government. What is needed, therefore, is such a general expression of earnest desire, on the part of the people, as shall convince Congress that, in adopting cheap postage, they shall be giving effect to the public will. It is desirable, especially, that all the classes of citizens who take an interest in the advancement of society, in education, in social happiness, in morals and religion, should give utterance to their views through every appropriate channel. The press, and especially those portions of it particularly devoted to the general interests of mankind, should speak out, with fervor and force, with frequency and constancy, as if resolved to be heard and to make an impression. Petitions may well go to Congress from every college, academy, and school, every literary institution, every professional seminary, every learned society, every library and lyceum, every association of men for any purpose of mutual benefit or public improvement, with the simple request that we may have letter postage at two cents for half an ounce. Individual citizens, in every path of life, can help, by addressing letters to their representatives. There is not half pains enough taken in this way to keep members of Congress acquainted with the minds of their constituents. It is for this very purpose that they have the franking privilege, and now is a favorable opportunity for the people to use it for so great an object. Let Congress give us cheap postage for the people, and the continuance or repeal of the franking privilege becomes of small account. A union of effort and influence, to do one thing at a time, cannot fail to succeed. And a new era to our free republic and happy Union, will commence the day that we begin to enjoy

THE MORAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS OF CHEAP POSTAGE

COMMERCIAL REGULATIONS.

POSTAL TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES.

TABLES AND INSTRUCTIONS.

With respect to letters above the weight of a single letter, which is fixed at half an ounce in either country, the respective offices, in accounting to each other, shall employ the following scale of progression:—

For every letter not exceeding half an ounce in weight, one single rate.
Above half an ounce, but not exceeding one ounce, two rates.
Above one ounce, but not exceeding two ounces, four rates.
Above two ounces, but not exceeding three ounces, six rates.
Above three ounces, but not exceeding four ounces, eight rates.
And so on, two rates being added for every ounce or fraction of an ounce.

1. Between any office in the United States (Oregon and California excepted) and any office in Great Britain and Ireland, the entire postage is 24 cents the single letter, which may be prepaid or sent unpaid. Of this amount the British post-office, when it conveys the letter by its own packet and collects the postage, accounts to the United States for 5 cents; when it collects the postage without conveying the letter, it accounts for 21 cents. The United States post-office accounts to the British for 3 cents the letter when it carries and collects, and for 19 cents when it collects only. Payment by the party of anything less than the entire postage goes for nothing. The offices of exchange will treat such letters as wholly unpaid.

2. Between the offices of California and Oregon and those of Great Britain and Ireland, the entire postage is 59 cents the single letter, which may be prepaid or unpaid, and of which the British share is 3, or 19 cents, depending on the circumstances whether conveyed by the United States or British packet, and the United States share is 56, or 40 cents, depending on the same circumstances.

3. On all correspondence between the United States and the following named countries, the United States postage, and that only, *must* be collected in the United States by prepayment when sent, and on delivery when received, at the rate of 5 cents the single letter when conveyed by British packet, [unless from or to Oregon or California, then 40 cents,] and 21 cents the single letter when conveyed by United States packet, unless, as aforesaid, from or to Oregon or California, then 56 cents, to wit:—

Alexandria, city of, via Marseilles.
Algeria.
Austria, and the Austrian States.
Baden.
Bavaria.
Belgium.
Bremen, Free City of.
Brunswick.
Beyroot, city of, via Marseilles.
Dardanelles, the, via Marseilles.
Denmark.
France.
German States.
Gibraltar.
Greece, via Marseilles.
Hamburg and Cuxhaven.
Hanover.
Holland.
Hong Kong, China, island of.
Ionian Islands.
Lubec, Free City of.
Malta, island of.
Mechlenburg Schwerin.
Mechlenburg Strelitz.
Moldavia.
Naples, kingdom of, via Marseilles.
Norway.
Oldenburg.
Poland.
Prussia.
Roman or Papal States.
Russia.
Saxony.
Scutari, city of, via Marseilles.
Smyrna, city of, via Marseilles.
Sweden.
Switzerland.
Turkey in Europe.
Tuscany, via Marseilles.
Venetian States.
Wallachia.
Wurtemberg.
West Indies, &c., British, namely, Antigua. Barbadoes, Bahamas, Berbice, Cariacou, Demerara, Dominica, Essequibo, Grenada, Honduras, Jamaica, Montserat, Nevis, St. Kitts, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, Tortola, and Trinidad.

This leaves, in those cases, the British and foreign postage to be collected at the other end of the route. But no British inland postage is to be charged in such cases.

[*Mem.* The foregoing provision does not supercede the pre-existing arrangements for sending correspondence to the German States and the countries east and south of them by the American line to Bremen, by which the entire postage to destination on the German correspondence may be prepaid or left unpaid, at the option of the sender.]

4. On all correspondence between the United States (Oregon and California excepted) and the following named countries through the United Kingdom, and by the routes here specified, there *must* be prepaid when sent, and collected when received, the following rates, of which the United States post-office will account to the British for all but 5 cents the single letter, unless a United States packet conveys it to or from England, and then for all but 21 cents:—

	Single letter.
Aden, Asia, via Southampton	45 cents.
Australia, via Southampton and India	53 "
" by private ship	37 "
Azores, islands, via Southampton and Lisbon	63 "
Bourbon and Borneo, islands of, via Southampton and India	53 "
Brazils, via Falmouth	87 "
Buenos Ayres, via Falmouth	83 "
Canary Islands, via Falmouth	65 "
Cape de Verd Islands	65 "
Ceylon, island of, via Southampton	45 "
China, via Southampton	45 "
Egypt, via Southampton	57 "
Greece, via Southampton	57 "
Heligoland, island of, via London	33 "
Indies, East, via Southampton	45 "
Java and Labuan, via Southampton and India	53 "
Lucca and Modena, via Fracne	31 "
Madeira, island of, via Southampton	65 "
Mauritius, via Southampton and India	45 "
Moluccas, via Southampton and India	53 "
Monte Video, via Falmouth	83 "
New Grenada, via Southampton	45 "
New South Wales, via Southampton and India	53 "
" " by private ship	37 "
New Zealand, via Southampton and India	53 "
" by private ship	37 "

	Single letter.
Parma and Placentia, via France	31 "
Philippine Islands, via Southampton	45 "
Portugal, via Southampton	63 "
Sierra Leone	45 "
Spain, via Southampton	73 "
Sumatra, island of, via Southampton and India	53 "
Syria, via Southampton	57 "
Van Dieman's Land, via Southampton and India	53 "
Venezuela, via Southampton	45 "
West Indies, foreign, namely, Cuba, via Southampton	75 "
Guadaloupe, Hayti, Martinique, Porto Rico, St. Croix, St. Eustatius, St. Martin, St. Thomas, via Southampton	55 "
Any British colony or foreign country, when conveyed to or from the United Kingdom by private ships	37 "

For single letters, which must be less than one-quarter of an ounce in weight:—

Aden, East Indies, Ceylon, island of, China, Hong Kong, island of, Mauritius, Philippine Islands, By closed mail, via Marseilles	British and sea	50 cents.
	Foreign	10 "
	American inland	5 "
	Total	65 "
Australia, New Zealand, Van Dieman's Land, Bourbon, Borneo, Java, Labuan, Moluccas, Sumatra, Or any other place in Indian Archipelago, By closed mail, via Marseilles	British and sea	58 cents.
	Foreign	10 "
	American inland	5 "
	Total	73 "
Egypt, Syria, By closed mail, via Marseilles	British and sea	46 cents.
	Foreign	10 "
	American inland	5 "
	Total	61 "
Egypt, Syria, Sicily, island of, Tunis, Africa, By French packet, via Marseilles	British and sea	26 cents.
	Foreign	20 "
	American inland	5 "
	Total	51 "
Sardinia, Spain, Via France	British and sea	26 cents.
	Foreign	10 "
	American inland	5 "
	Total	41 "

Note.—The *foreign* portion of the above rates is to be charged according to the following scale, namely:—

Weighing under a ¼ ounce	1 rate.
" ¼ ounce, and under ½ ounce	2 rates.
" ½ " " ¾ "	3 rates.
" ¾ " " 1 "	4 rates.
" 1 " " 1¼ "	5 rates.

And so on, an additional rate being charged for each *quarter of an ounce.*

Where the correspondence with the countries in the foregoing list is from or to Oregon or California, the single letter rate, to be collected by prepayment or on delivery, is to be in each instance 35 cents more than the amounts stated in the preceding table, of which the United States is to account to the British post-office for all but 40 cents, unless its packet conveys the letter to England, and, in that case, for all but 56 cents.

[*Mem.* There is a direct conveyance to Cuba, by United States packet, between

Charleston, United States, and Havana; the uniform rate of postage 12½ cents the single letter. There is, also, conveyance by British packet between New York and Mobile, in the United States, and the West India Islands, 5 cents being United States postage, to be prepaid when sent from said ports, and collected when received in the United States, unless mailed from or to a post-office more than 300 miles from port, then 10 cents—English and foreign postage unknown, the service not being embraced in the treaty.]

5. On all correspondence passing through the United States, between the United Kingdom and the following named countries, the British is to account and pay to the United States post-office the following stated amounts per each single letter, to wit:—

Countries.	When sent by United States packet.	When sent by British packet.
Canada and New Brunswick, (by the general mail).....	26 cents.	10 cents.
Havana, (by United States packet from Charleston).....	28½ "	12½ "
California and Oregon.....	56 "	40 "
Panama, (by United States packet from New York).....	46 "	30 "
Chagres, (by United States packet from New York).....	36 "	20 "
Any place in the West Indies or Gulf of Mexico, (by British packet from New York).....	21 "	5 "
Any place in the West Indies or Gulf of Mexico, (by British packet from Mobile).....	26 "	10 "

6. On all letters conveyed by *closed* mails between the United Kingdom and the British North American provinces, (the same being transported by British steamers,) the British is to account and pay to the United States post-office at the rate of 12½ cents for each ounce, net weight, and 2 cents for each newspaper.

7. On newspapers transmitted between the United Kingdon and the United States, there is a separate postage of 2 cents per newspaper, (or stamp duty in lieu of postage,) which is to be paid separately in each country.

8. But newspapers may be sent *in transit* through the United States, and also through Great Britain, to or from foreign countries, &c., at a transit charge of 2 cents per newspaper, to be paid by the post-office of one country to that of the other. The postage to be paid by the party sending a newspaper to, or receiving it from, a foreign country through Great Britain is 4 cents each.

9. Periodical works and pamphlets are not entitled by the treaty to transit conveyance, but they may be sent from the United Kingdom to the United States, and *vice versa*, at 2 cents of United States postage each, if they do not exceed 2 ounces in weight, and at 1 cent per ounce, or fraction of an ounce, when they exceed that weight, to be collected in all cases in the United States; and the same will be subject to an additional like charge in the United Kingdom, when not exceeding 2 ounces; but the third ounce raises the British charge to 6 pence, with an additional charge of 2 pence for each additional ounce.

10. All British and foreign letters, and all *foreign* newspapers remaining on hand, refused or not called for, are to be returned by the postmasters as dead letters and newspapers to the General Post-office, under address to the Third Assistant Postmaster General, separately from all other letters, and as frequently as regulations require. This is necessary to enable the United States post-office to reclaim the amount with which it stands debited upon each letter and newspaper.

11. Until the impracticability of forming a combined rate of postage upon the principles prescribed in the treaty is obviated by a change of the Canada and New Brunswick rates, (which change is confidently expected,) postage on correspondence between the United States and those provinces must be prepaid in each country.

12. The exchange offices of the two countries, in mailing to each other, are to postmark the letter, not with the entire postage, but with the credit and debit portions of it only; if a paid letter, with the credit amount in favor of the other country, in *red* ink, and with a "paid" stamp in the same color; if unpaid, with the debit amount against the other country, in *black* ink. But before the exchange office receiving such letter delivers it, or mails it to the interior, it is to restamp the letter with its own office stamp, in all cases, and with the "paid" stamp in *red* ink, if paid, if unpaid, with the amount, in *black*, of the *entire postage* to be collected.

J. COLLAMER, *Postmaster General.*

Sept 49

THE MANUFACTURE OF ENVELOPES FOR LETTERS.

The recent change in the post office regulations, has enabled letter writers to make use of the desirable facility and guard of an envelope. It may seem a little thing to manufacture this article, but on the contrary, the machine employed is of the most complex and ingenious character, and the various stages of the operation are highly interesting.

We had the pleasure of spending an hour or two recently in the establishment of Messrs. Colman & Jones, South Fifth-street, and of viewing the processes through which the paper passes before being converted into its destined form. The manufacture is as yet in its infancy, and all its departments have scarcely yet been fully organized; but they will be completed in a short time, and then it will be, perhaps, the most extensive establishment in the country. But four folding machines, and one cutting press, were in operation while we were present; yet from the rapidity with which they turned out the finished envelopes, we could easily conjecture, that when all the contemplated improvements are completed, the daily manufacture will be immense.

A pile of paper is first laid under the cutting press, and the flat forms of the envelope are cut out at once. These are then taken to the folding machine, which is one of the most singularly constructed and beautiful pieces of mechanism we have ever seen. It requires but one person to feed it, and performs all the rest of the operations itself; for the paper, cut in proper form, being placed in a fixed position, is seized by nippers, and drawn forward to a bed, where it is held firmly by an overhanging plate of metal, which covers just so much as marks the size intended to be made, leaving the parts to be folded over loose. The sides are then, by means of plates advancing toward each other, folded over, and as they retire, a roller covered with gum passes under the surface of a double curved piece of brass, which instantly falls upon the paper, and, as it rises, another plate turns over the outside fold, while, at the same time, a roller presses on it and causes adhesion. This being done, the bed on which the envelope rests falls to an inclined position, and being caught between rollers, the finished article is passed through a trough into a receiving basket. The only remaining labor is to gather the envelopes up, and sort them into packages of twenty-five each. The whole is done with great rapidity, and so various and contrary are the motions of the machine, that it appears almost to be, in some degree, sentient.

THE

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BY FREEMAN HUNT, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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By Joshua Leavitt, Corresponding Secretary of the Boston Cheap Postage Association.

Art. III.—THE FINANCE OF CHEAP POSTAGE.

While the people of this country are beginning to inquire why they cannot enjoy that blessing of cheap postage, which, they are told, has now for ten years produced so many benefits in England, the statesman who is called to consider the subject in its details, and to be politically responsible for all its consequences, naturally raises the financial question—How will it pay? Having at hand a variety of statistical facts, which I have never seen brought together in one view, the idea occurred to me that a few tables could be prepared, which would be appropriate to the pages of the *Merchants' Magazine*, if you will give them place.

The British Cheap Postage Act went into operation at the beginning of the year 1840. Prior to that time, for twenty years, there had been no advance in the post-office, notwithstanding the great advance in population, trade, and general intelligence. During twenty years, ending with 1839, the highest amount of gross receipts was, in that year, £2,390,763; and the lowest was in 1821, £2,038,706; a difference of only £362,057. The average of the whole twenty years was £2,211,918; the average of the first five years was £2,081,036, which was £130,882 less, and of the last five years was £2,334,134, which was £132,216 more than the general average. This shows that under the old system the average was wholly unaffected by the general progress of the country. The average receipts had increased but 12½ per cent in twenty years.

The expenditures, though somewhat more fluctuating in particular years, were equally immovable in their general average; the first five years giving yearly £640,049, and the last £709,898—an increase of only 12½ per cent.

The average expense of the twenty years was £686,616; the highest amount, £756,999, in 1839, and the lowest £615,981, in 1823. Of course it is to be inferred that the general accommodation of the public, and the general use of the post-office were little varied. The operation of cheap postage will be shown by the following table, giving at one view the gross receipts, the cost of management, the net revenue, the number of letters, and the average cost per letter, for the year 1839, which was the last year of the old postage, and the succeeding nine years, showing the progress of cheap postage:—

Years.	Gross receipts.	Management.	Net revenue.	No. of letters.	Cost per letter. d.	grs.
1839.....	£2,390,763	£756,999	£1,633,764	76,000,000	2	1.562
1840.....	1,359,466	858,677	500,789	169,000,000	1	0.871
1841..... ...	1,499,418	938,168	561,249	195,500,000	1	0.827
1842.....	1,578,145	977,504	600,641	208,500,000	1	0.479
1843.....	1,620,867	980,650	640,217	220,500,000	1	0.269

Years.	Gross receipts.	Management.	Net revenue.	No. of letters.	Cost per letter. d. qrs.
1844.....	£1,705,067	£985,110	£719,957	242,000,000	0 3.871
1845.....	1,901,580	1,125,594	761,982	271,500,000	0 3.976
1846.....	1,978,293	1,138,745	825,112	299,500,000	0 3.650
1847.....	2,201,114	1,196,520	984,491	322,000,000	0 3.567
1848.....	2,192,478	1,386,853	740,429	346,861,268	0 3.838

The falling off in the gross receipts, the first year of cheap postage, was 40 per cent; by the ninth year the receipts were but 4½ per cent below those under the old postage. The increase of receipts in nine years after the introduction of cheap postage, was 61 per cent; showing a most vigorous growth, not yet exhausted.

The increase in the number of letters the first year of cheap postage was 122 per cent, and in nine years was 356 per cent above the number under the old postage. A corresponding increase in this country would give us the first year over 128,000,000 of letters, which, at two cents, would yield $2,560,000.

The increase in the cost of management in the first year of cheap postage, including the extra expense of introducing the new system, was less than 13½ per cent; thus reducing the cost per letter 50 per cent. The subsequent increase in the expense of management is mostly to be charged to the cost of railway carriages, and many other increased accommodations which have been introduced.

If we average the increase of cost for the first year upon the increase in the number of letters, we shall find that each additional letter added just one farthing to the expenses of the department. A striking illustration of the accumulative power of small profits on large business.

The next table will show the amounts paid for government postage, the cost of conveyance of the mails by railroad, and the cost of the mail packet service. This latter is charged to the admiralty, and not to the post-office; also, the number of newspaper stamps, and the amount of duty paid into the Treasury; but to balance this, the post-office receives nothing for carrying newspapers.

Years.	Government postage.	Railway service.	Packet service.	Newspaper stamps.	Duty.
1839.....	£44,277	.....	.....	60,932,151	£244,416
1840.....	90,761	£51,301	£417,744	59,936,000	252,348
1841.....	113,255	9[illegible],818	473,068	63,591,146	247,663
1842.....	122,161	77,570	560,413	65,767,035	253,779
1843.....	116,503	96,360	564,577	71,215,498	.....
1844.....	109,232	89,809	554,197	.....	.....
1845.....	101,190	179,257	655,418	.....	.....
1846.....	100,354	107,890	717,860	.....	.....
1847.....	121,290	119,983	701,580	.....	.....
1848.....	115,902	316,941	.....	.....	.....

The increase of government postage the first year after the abolition of the franking privilege was 105 per cent; increased the eighth year to 142 per cent. The government postage increased 33 per cent in seven years after the first year of cheap postage.

The cost of transporting the mails by railroad increased more than 519 per cent in eight years. The increase in one year, from 1847 to 1848, was 164 per cent.

The increase in the cost of packet service in seven years is 68 per cent, which is greater than the ratio of increase of the general cost of management. This confirms the idea that the increased expense is chiefly charge-

able to increased accommodation. With cheap postage, the increase of public accommodation naturally becomes the characteristic or predominant policy of the department.

In the first introduction of cheap postage, Mr. Rowland Hill, the projector, was sanguine in the belief that he had discovered a scheme for recovering two millions sterling of annual revenue, which, he maintained, had been sacrificed by the high rates of postage. But the experienced statesmen who adopted the system, had no such expectations. Mr. Goulburn estimated the probable loss of revenue at £500,000 to £1,000,000. Lord Ashburton believed it would be equal to the whole net revenue from the post-office. Mr. Francis Baring, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in introducing the bill, admitted that the loss would be "very considerable indeed." Sir Robert Peel said they were risking the loss of a million and a half of revenue, but that "it was impossible to exaggerate its benefits;" and "great social and commercial advantages would arise from the change, independent of financial considerations."

The actual loss of *net* revenue was 68 per cent the first year. Last year's net revenue was £749,429. The great increase in the cost of management has kept the net revenue from increasing in proportion to the increase of gross receipts. It is now only equal to one-half the amount under the old system.

STATISTICS OF THE AMERICAN POST-OFFICE FOR TEN YEARS.

Years.	Post-offices.	Post-roads. *Miles.*	Receipts.	Expenses.	Letters.
1839.....	12,680	133,999	æ4,477,619	$4,654,718	.....
1840.....	13,468	155,639	4,530,265	4,759.110	27,535,554
1841.....	13,682	155,026	4,379,317	4,567,228	.....
1842.....	13,733	149,732	4,546,246	4,627,716	.....
1843.....	13,814	142,295	4,295,925	4,374,713	24,267,552
1844.....	14,103	144,687	4,237,285	4,320,731	.....
1845.....	14,183	143,844	4,269,841	4,320,731	.....
1846.....	14,601	147,679	3,487,199	4,084,296	.....
1847.....	15,146	153,818	3,945,893	3,971,310	52,173,480
1848.....	16,159	163,208	4,371,077	4,326,850	58,069,075

In 1790 there were 76 post-offices, and 1,875 miles of post roads; the receipts for postage were $37,935, and the expenses only $32,140.

In 1800 the post-offices were 903; miles of post roads, 25,315; receipts, $280,804.

In 1808, during the embargo, the receipts fell short of the expenses by $2,264.

In 1820 there were 4,500 offices, 67,586 miles of road; receipts $1,111,927; and for a second time the expenses were greater than the receipts. There have been only eight years since in which the receipts have exceeded the expenses.

In twenty years, from 1820 to 1840, the post-offices were increased threefold, the miles of roads more than doubled, and the receipts four-fold.

From 1840 to 1848, the post-offices have increased 20 per cent, and the miles of post-roads only 5 per cent—the routes to Oregon and California not being yet included in the last returns.

During fifty-nine years that the reports have been published, the receipts have been in excess thirty-eight years, and the expenditures in excess twenty-one years. The total excess of receipts is $3,774,058, and the total excess of expenditures, $2,665,165; showing that the post-office has netted to the general treasury a balance of $1,108,893, besides supporting itself, even through all the difficulties of the last ten years.

The receipts maintained a general increase, corresponding with the growth and advancement of the country, until 1839; after this the growth was small to 1842, when the highest point was reached. The falling off from 1846 to 1847, the last year under the old postage, was nearly 6 per cent. The cessation of growth and actual decline was attributed to the increase of private mails.

The decrease of receipts the first year of the reduced postage, under the act of 1845, was 19 per cent.

The increase of the receipts in the second year of reduced postage, over the first, was 13 per cent; in the third over the first, 25 per cent, showing, conclusively, that the same law of the increase of consumption by the diminution of price obtains in regard to postage here, which has been so signally illustrated in the case of British postage.

The expenses of the post-office were reduced 12½ per cent, or one-eighth, from 1842 to 1847. This was owing to a more rigid economy, and better arrangement in the contracts for carrying mails.

The increase of letters from 1842, the last return made under the old postage, to 1847, the first return under the reduced postage, is 138 per cent. How full of encouragement!

In 1837, the number of letters paying postage was estimated by the then Postmaster-General, at 29,360,992. Instead of increasing, as it ought, at the rate of 4 per cent per annum, it diminished 17 per cent in eight years.

The increase of letters last year, according to the returns, was 11 per cent. The increase of expenses, 10 per cent.

According to the estimates of the Department, if the post-office is to support itself, it is necessary that letters should pay $2,650,000; to meet which sum, at two cents per letter, would require 132,500,000 letters—an amount which could not fail to be reached the third year, if not sooner.

An appropriation of what the Government has already received from the post-office—$1,108,893—would meet all the deficiencies in the meantime.

Those who have occasion to study minutely the subject of post-office administration in this country, will find instruction in the following detailed account of the "charges of management" of the English Post-office, for the year ending 5th January, 1848:—

Salaries and allowances—		
To Postmaster General, officers, and clerks, and wages in the London, Edinburg, and Dublin offices	£204,053	
To deputy postmasters and agents	242,394	
To officers and carriers in the London district post-office	86,557	
Poundage on the sale of postage stamps	6,523	
		£539,420
Allowance for special service and traveling		35,771
Conveyance of mails—		
Riding work and expenses in the United Kingdom	140,272	
Conveyance by railways	123,944	
Mileage, guards, and other expenses of mail coaches	135,108	
Tolls on mail choaches	19,853	
American colonies	35,140	
London district post-office	9,516	
Postage through foreign countries	34,039	
Ship letter payments	9,890	
		507,773
Rents, taxes, and tithes		6,756
Tradesmen's bills, binding, repairs, &c		30,031
Law charges		11,011

Stationery and printing	£2,717
Postages	22,473
Superannuation allowances	13,054
Allowances for loss of fees	14,057
Miscellaneous payments	2,260
Total	£1,185,337

The amount of "salaries and allowances," in 1848, was £554,538; the "conveyance of mails" was £698,405, of which £316,941 was by railway. The total increase in conveyance is only £12,118, a little over 2 per cent; while the increase on railway conveyance is £192,997, or 154 per cent. The average cost of the railway service for the last four years, is £181,018; in the preceding four years, £89,639. The cost has increased more than five-fold since 1840, not as the consequence of cheap postage, but from the necessity of increased speed.

COMPARISON OF THE BRITISH AND AMERICAN POST-OFFICES, REDUCING THE FORMER RETURNS TO FEDERAL CURRENCY, AT $4 84 TO THE £ STERLING.

	British.	American.
Gross receipts or income	$10,610,593	$4,371,077
Cost of management, or expenses	6,712,368	4,346,850
Cost of internal transportation	2,229,763	2,448,756
Cost of railway service	*599,889	584,192
Population served with mails	27,000,000	21,000,000
Square miles served with wants	116,000	1,199,000
Receipts from letter postage	$6,937,225	$3,350,000
Receipts from newspaper postage	.....	767,334

The fact that with all our extent of country, (excluding the territories,) our cost of transportation is only $218,993, or less than 10 per cent greater than the British, and that our whole cost of management is less, by $2,385,518, or 35 per cent, shows how much more cheaply our government manages its business, and proves, beyond a question, that cheap postage is as practicable here as there; and removes the only ground of argument against our adoption of the same rate of postage which has worked so well in the British experiment. The "Financial Question," therefore, in regard to the practicability of cheap postage must be considered as settled.

From the best information, I am enabled to add two other circumstances, besides the immense increase of railway conveyance, in explanation of the increased cost of management of the British Post-office. One is, the very great multiplication of rural posts and sub-post-offices, for the accommodation of titled and other influential individuals, where great expense is incurred amidst a rural population that furnishes few letters except from a single family. The other is the great increase in the staff of the seven "District Surveyors," who in fact rule England and Wales, so far as concerns postal details. Each rural post has to be surveyed, and a report made thereon, by a surveyor from London, at an expense of £10, or more, to obtain local information, which could be given as well by the postmaster of the next town. That's the way John Bull does his business.

* The sum given in the second table above, which is from another Parliamentary return, would make the cost of railway conveyance $1,545,994.

M.173

Art. III.—THE GENERAL POST OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES.*

Posts, for public use, are a modern invention. Correspondence is a result of advanced civilization. When the people are enslaved by serfish ignorance, and rarely leave the domestic hearth, the government alone has occasion for writing letters. The earliest attempt at a postal system, of which we have an account, was made by Augustus in the Roman empire. The next is due to Charles V., who instituted a riding post through his vast dominions in Europe, in 1843, over which he appointed Leonard, Count of Thurn and Taxis, his Postmaster General. But posts, in the sense of mounted messengers, for the dispatch of government orders, were in use in Persia, according to Herodotus, as far back as the days of Xerxes and Cyrus. They were also employed at various times by several of the European courts during the middle ages, and in subsequent periods. Foot posts, for similar purposes, were employed by the Incas of Peru at the time of the Spanish invasion.

Posting, as now in use on the continent, embraces, in addition to the transmission of letters and printed matter, the forwarding of travelers and their equipages—the business being monopolized, with one or two exceptions, by the government, and performed with a view to revenue. For this purpose postmasters are required to keep relays of horses at designated stations along the principal lines of travel, to forward travelers at specified rates of speed and fare. Great Britain and the United States are the only modern nations whose mail systems are disconnected with business of this description. As railroads and other traveling facilities multiply in the other European States, it is presumed they will assimilate their postal establishments to those of these countries.

The United States post office—a part of the wise system of government and laws under which we live—may justly be regarded by its citizens with pride. The extent of its ramifications, and the magnitude of its operations, are highly illustrative of the rapid development of our national resources. The tendency of improved and accelerated mails being to bring into close proximity, in point of social intercourse, the inhabitants of widely-separated States, thereby cementing the bonds of the Union, as well as to promote public intelligence and virtue by a rapid diffusion of information and interchange of sympathies, it also constitutes a source of lively gratitude to the Giver of all good. All classes are benefited by its beneficent ministrations. Civilization and social happiness attend its footsteps. Its mission is one of peace and good-will.

The colonial annals, our only source of information in this matter, show no traces of a mail or post office on this side of the Atlantic prior to 1672. In that year Governor Lovelace, of the New York colony, in pursuance of instructions from the mother country, organized a mail, "to goe monthly," between the cities of New York and Boston. Eleven years subsequently the general court of Massachusetts, in session at Boston, on the petition of sundry merchants, appointed John Hayward, the scrivener, postmaster of that place, "to take in letters and convey them according to their direc-

* This valuable and interesting paper was originally prepared for the Washington *Union*, by D. D. T. Leech, Esq., of the Post Office Department. We have appended at the close of the article more detailed statistics of the working of the postal system, derived and compiled from the latest official documents.—*Editor Merchants' Magazine.*

tions." In 1683 the benevolent William Penn, the proprietary governor of Pennsylvania, appointed Henry Waldy postmaster of Philadelphia, with authority to send a weekly mail to New Castle, Delaware, and "the Falls," the time of departure of which was to be "carefully published on the meeting-house door and in other public places." In 1692 the Virginia assembly granted to Thomas Neal a patent constituting him postmaster general for that colony, and other parts of America, which, however, was never carried into effect in consequence of the dispersed condition of the inhabitants. In 1700, the British government authorized Colonel John Hamilton, of New Jersey, to establish post offices, and organize post-routes in its American colonies for a period of twenty-one years; but his patent for this purpose was abrogated a few years thereafter, owing to the statute of Queen Anne of 1710, consolidating the colonial post office with that of Great Britain and Ireland. The last mentioned date is to be regarded as the commencement of the American post office.

The next event of note in its history was the association with it of that great man Benjamin Franklin, Colonel Spotswood, the British deputy postmaster general for the colonies, having commissioned him postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737. At this date he was the editor of a newspaper on Market street in that city, the circulation and advertisements of which, we learn from his autobiography, were much enlarged by the appointment. On the death of Colonel S. in 1753, the Crown appointed him, jointly with a Mr. William Hunter, to the charge of the colonial establishment. At this time the aggregate length of post road in the country was but 1532 miles, and there was no regular mail except between Boston and Philadelphia, although post-riders went occasionally as far south as Williamsburg, Virginia, sometimes extending their trips to Charleston, South Carolina.

The author of Poor Richard—who was no doubt largely indebted to his then brilliant European reputation as a philosopher for this official elevation—proved, as might have been anticipated, active and efficient in his new position. He tells us in his life that, in 1763, in company with an invalid daughter, he traveled five months on a tour for the inspection of his northern post offices; also, that he effected such improvements in the service as to enable the citizens of Philadelphia to write to Boston and get replies in three weeks, instead of six, the time previously required. Owing to a "freak of ministers," as he styles the proceeding, he was removed from the office in 1774, at which date the British institution on this side of the water may be considered as broken up.

On the 26th of July of next year (1775) the great men composing the Colonial Congress, at its second session, held in the State house at Philadelphia, resolved to have a postal establishment of their own, and thereupon unanimously elected Dr. Franklin as its chief—an appointment, it is presumable, far more acceptable to the patriot than the one of which he had so unceremoniously been deprived. Contemporaneous resolves of this venerable convention show that they invested him with a very unlimited discretion in regard to the management of the institution. It appears, however, that he vacated the position soon after, in consequence, it is supposed, of being called to higher trusts, and that Congress, in November, 1776, appointed as his successor his son-in-law and assistant in the office, Richard Bache.

On the adoption of the articles of confederation by the colonies in 1778,

the Confederated Congress passed resolutions setting forth the importance of the establishment, and their exclusive right to establish post offices and post routes. On the 28th of January, 1782, the same body elected Ebenezer Hazard, who had acted as an inspector of the posts, and in that capacity had rendered important service, postmaster general to succeed Mr. Bache. The records of the time furnish but meagre details as to the operations of the concern during the official terms of those gentlemen, a period of over twelve years. Owing to the stagnation of business, resulting from the war of the revolution, and the consequent inactivity of correspondence, its energies slumbered, as is shown by the fact that its gross yearly receipts averaged but about $30,000 per annum—a sum inferior to the product of a third-class city office at the present time. Other causes are believed to have contributed to this inefficiency, among which may be set down its exorbitant tariff of postages, and its inability, without the consent of the individual colonies, to arrest and punish mail-robbers and other offenders against its laws. A more potent authority than that of the Confederated Congress was required to impart to it due vigor. The constitutional government, which went into effect in 1789, supplied this.

In September of that year Washington commissioned Samuel Osgood, previously a delegate in Congress from Massachusetts, to administer the office, which was then located in the city of New York, it having been customary to keep it where that body held its sessions. Thence it was taken to Philadelphia, in December, 1790, from which place it was removed to Washington, with the other executive bureaus, in 1802. I insert here the names of the individuals who have presided over the establishment since the organization of the federal government, and the dates of their appointment:—

Samuel Osgood, of Massachusetts, September 26, 1789.
Timothy Pickering, of Pennsylvania, August 12, 1791.
Joseph Habersham, of Georgia, February 25, 1795.
Gideon Granger, of Connecticut, November 28, 1801.
Return J. Meigs, of Ohio, March 17, 1814.
John McLean, of Ohio, June 26, 1823.
William T. Barry, of Kentucky, March 9, 1829.
Amos Kendall, of Kentucky, May 1, 1835.
John M. Niles, of Connecticut, May 25, 1840.
Francis Granger, of New York, March 6, 1841.
Charles A. Wickliffe, of Kentucky, September 13, 1841.
Cave Johnson, of Tennessee, March 5, 1845.
Jacob Collamer, of Vermont, March 7, 1849.
Nathan K. Hall, of New York, July 20, 1850.
S. D. Hubbard, of Connecticut, September 14, 1852.
James Campbell, of Pennsylvania, March 8, 1853.

It will be seen that Gideon Granger and Return J. Meigs, together, held office about twenty-two years, and that the combined term of Messrs. Niles, Francis Granger, and Hubbard was less than two years.

When the new government commenced operations there were but seventy-five post-offices in the Union, and only 1,875 miles of post-road, made up of a seaboard line, through the principal towns between Wiscasset, in Maine, and Savannah, in Georgia, and a few intersecting cross posts, on much of which the mails were conveyed but once a fortnight. The entire annual revenue of the office was $37,395, and its expenditures $32,140. The following is an exhibit of its subsequent progress:—

Year.	Post Offices.	Post road. Miles.	Annual cost of transportation.	Receipts.	Expenditures.
1790.....	75	1,875	$22,081	$37,935	$32,140
1795.....	453	13,207	75,359	160,620	117,893
1800.....	903	20,817	128,644	280,804	213,994
1805.....	1,558	31,076	239,635	421,373	377,367
1810.....	2,300	36,406	327,966	551,684	495,969
1815.....	3,000	43,748	487,779	1,043,065	748,121
1820.....	4,500	72,492	782,425	1,111,927	1,160,926
1825.....	5,677	94,052	785,646	1,306,525	1,229,043
1830.....	8,450	115,176	1,272,156	1,919,300	1,959,108
1835.....	10,770	112,774	1,533,222	3,152,376	2,585,108
1840.....	13,468	155,739	3,213,042	4,543,522	4,718,236
1845.....	14,183	143,940	2,898,630	4,439,842	4,320,731
1850.....	18,417	178,672	2,965,786	5,499,985	5,212,958
1853.....	22,320	217,743	4,495,968	5,940,725	7,982,757

This statement makes it clear that a galvanic energy seized the establishment under its new control, its receipts having run up in the next fifteen years to more than half a million of dollars, and its expenditures to nearly as much. The entire results to the present show a development which the eminent forecast of Franklin probably never anticipated. Should its operations continue to enlarge in a like ratio during the next fifty years, how immense will be its ramifications, how stupendous its blessings to the teeming millions destined to inhabit our wide-spread borders at the opening of the coming century!

The mails have increased correspondingly. Fifty years ago but a few pounds of matter were sent in the largest mails; and only thirty years back the boot of a four-horse coach would hold the heaviest out-going mail at the city of New York, whereas at present several tons of mail matter leave that place daily for each of the cardinal points of the compass. Probably more than 100,000,000 of letters, and over 130,000,000 of newspapers and pamphlets, pass through the United States post-offices annually. The free matter of Congress and the executive departments, sent and received through the Washington city post-office three years ago, (doubtless much greater now,) was estimated by its postmaster at 600 tons per annum, the income from which, if taxable with postage, even at the present low rates, would have been $892,960. The quarterly returns of postmasters received at the department alone amount to one thousand bushels in a year.

Few striking occurrences are recorded in the annals of the infant establishment during the official terms of Messrs. Pickering, Habersham, and Gideon Granger, which lasted from 1791 to 1814. That they were talented men is made apparent by their reports to Congress. The postal laws underwent a number of important revisions at their suggestions; and the above table shows that the mail service was vastly extended during the period. The last-mentioned gentleman, in a report made to Congress in 1810, complacently stated that a great increase of expedition had been given to the mails in the previous eleven years. He illustrated this by the following comparative statement of the times required at the two periods to dispatch letters and get answers:—

Portland to Savannah and back, in 1799, forty days; in 1810, twenty-seven.

Philadelphia to Lexington, Ky., and back, in 1799, thirty-two days; in 1810, sixteen.

Philadelphia to Nashville and back, in 1799, forty-four days; in 1810, thirty.

New York to Canandaigua and back, in 1799, twenty days; in 1810, twelve.

The present schedule time—thanks to the inventors of steamboats and railroads—stands thus:—

Portland to Savannah and back, 9 days.
Philadelphia to Lexington and back, 7 days.
Philadelphia to Nashville and back, 8 days.
New York to Canandaigua and back, 1 day.

In the early part of the same year, Mr. G. complained to Congress that he was cramped for office room. The building known as "The Hotel," situated on the site of the present establishment, was therefore purchased for its use, at a cost of $10,000—rather an insignificant sum contrasted with the expense of the splendid structure occupied by the office since 1841, $600,000. In The Hotel building alluded to were crowded also the city post-office and the patent office.

In 1815 fifty per cent increase was made, by direction of Congress, in the postage rates, to aid in defraying the expenses of the war of that period. This was taken off the next year.

In 1825, during the official term of that eminent postmaster-general, Mr. McLean, a revised postal act, which remains at the present time the fundamental law of the department, was passed by the national legislature. Its details seem so plain on perusal, as not to have required great skill or legal knowledge on the part of its framers, yet it had taken an experience of forty years, and numerous revisions, to perfect it.

Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.

Previous to this period, postmasters had transmitted their revenues to headquarters in bank-notes, sometimes substituting certificates of deposit. The assistant postmaster-general who received, also disbursed these moneys, so that he was without effective check. This was obviously a cumbrous and hazardous mode of procedure; and it is exceedingly creditable to the accuracy and honesty of Abraham Bradley, who discharged the duty for more than a quarter of a century, that no serious losses occurred within the period. Mr. McLean improved the system by paying his contractors, to a large extent, in drafts on the postmasters on their routes. Mr. Barry, his successor, ameliorated the matter further, by directing the postmasters to remit their balances, in all cases, in certificates of deposit, instead of bank-notes, and that no funds should be paid out at the department except through checks signed by two of its officers, acting separately, and each certifying to the correctness of the act.

During the six years—1829 to 1835—of the administration of Mr. Barry—the first chief of the establishment who took a seat in the President's cabinet—numerous improvements and great extensions were made in the postal service. For many of these he ordered large extra allowances to contractors, owing to which the establishment was unable to meet its engagements without a resort to loans from banks. This resulted in a tedious investigation of its affairs by a congressional committee. President Jackson in consequence transferred Mr. B. to a sphere of duty calling for less financial ability, and placed in the postal chair Amos Kendall, a

man of singular clearness of intellect, fine administrative qualifications, and Herculean energy, who immediately set on foot measures destined promptly to elevate the credit and relieve the embarrassments of the institution.

We now arrive at an important epoch in the history of the establishment, viz., its reorganization under the act of July 2, 1836, on a plan suggested by Mr. K. Prior to this date, the postmaster-general had practically combined in himself the three functions of making contracts for the service, adjusting the accounts originating under the same, and paying the money. This system—if system it can be called—not only imposed on him a greater amount of labor than any single individual could properly perform, but was entirely at variance with that adopted for the War and Navy departments, as well as unsafe—it being a recognized principle with regard to government finances, that a public officer who has an agency in making contracts should have no connection with the settlement of claims arising under the same. The law of 1836 referred to, vested the settling duty in an officer styled Auditor, who was to be directly responsible to the Secretary of the Treasury, although charged to make periodical reports to, and receive instructions from the Postmaster-General, in regard to sundry particulars bearing on the condition and mode of conducting the business of his office. This officer being competent to refuse the payment of illegal claims, although directed by the Postmaster-General to be allowed, constitutes, it will be seen, a salutary check on the latter functionary.

In December, 1836, the department was destroyed by fire. Its books and papers suffered but little damage in consequence.

On the 7th of July, 1838, Congress enacted its first statute on the subject of that very valuable, but very expensive class of service—railroad—by declaring all such roads to be post-routes, and directing the Postmaster-General to have the mails conveyed upon them, provided he could do so on reasonable terms, and within limits prescribed by the act. This opened a new era in mail communication.

I insert here an exhibit of the amount and cost of this class of service, as well as of steamboat, at several subsequent dates:—

RAILROAD.			STEAMBOAT.		
Year.	Length. Miles.	Annual cost.	Year.	Length. Miles.	Annual cost.
1843.....	3,714	$531,752	1843.....	5,792	$264,773
1845.....	4,092	562,141	1845.....	7,625	279,307
1846.....	4,462	587,769	1846.....	8,373	229,464
1847.....	4,735	597,921	1847.....	8,856	236,743
1848.....	4,957	584,192	1848.....	8,280	262,019
1849.....	6,138	635,740	1849.....	10,169	278,650
1850.....	7,190	818,227	1850.....	10,826	313,943
1851.....	8,216	985,019	1851.....	13,411	421,692
1852	11,172	1,275,520	1852.....	13,785	505,815
1853.....	13,412	1,601,329	1853.....	16,329	560,572

To show the full cost of this service, a heavy sum is to be added for route agency and mail messenger duty, made necessary in consequence.

It will be perceived from this statement that railroad transportation has enlarged of late far more rapidly than steamboat, it having nearly quadrupled in ten years; also, that the expense for each mile of the former is about quadruple that of the latter.

Should this species of service continue to multiply in any such ratio for

the next ten years—its present cost amounting to about one-third of the department's entire postage revenue—it is quite apparent that, at the rates of pay now allowed the companies, its entire income from that source will be required for that single item of expenditure.

March 3, 1845, is a notable day in the annals of the office, in consequence of the passage by Congress on that date of four acts materially affecting its policy. The first of these made it the duty of the Postmaster-General, at all future lettings of contracts, to award the acceptances without other reference to the mode of transportation than might be necessary to the *due celerity, security, and certainty* of the mails. The second directed him to arrange the railroad routes under three classes, according to their respective importance as channels of mail communication, and prescribed a limit of compensation for each class. The third authorized him to contract, for periods not exceeding ten years, for transportation of the mails to any foreign port, giving the preference to the tenders of persons proposing to perform the service in steamships suitable for vessels-of-war, and claimable by government when needed for that purpose, at valuation. The fourth abolished the franking privilege, and adopted, for the first time in the history of the establishment, a scale of letter postage based on weight—the just method—reducing the charge for a single letter, (limited to half an ounce,) going not over 300 miles, to five cents, and ten cents for greater distances. It also prescribed an improved scale for newspapers and other printed matter, allowing the former to go postage-free to subscribers within 30 miles of the place of publication. Let us notice each of these enactments more particularly.

The one in regard to the mode of letting the mail contracts was designed to aid the department in carrying into successful execution the reduced postage tariff referred to, by preventing the application of any of its funds to the maintenance of mail-coach lines for the benefit of the traveling community. That it is serviceable in reducing the expense of transportation, is shown by the fact that during the first four years of its operation—1845 to 1849—the curtailment under that head amounted to $328,000, although the post-roads were extended within the period 23,763 miles. Owing, however, to the latitude of construction of which the terms "due celerity, certainty, and security of the mail," are susceptible, and difficulties connected with its execution, the principle embodied in this statute has not been stringently enforced in all cases.

The act concerning the classification of the railroad pay has materially aided the department in resisting exorbitant demands for such service. But, in view of the rapid augmentation of this class of contracts, and the large decline in its revenue under the present cheap rates of postage, it is obvious that the limits fixed thereby (ranging from fifty to three hundred dollars a mile per annum for length of road) are more liberal than the establishment will be able hereafter to measure up to, without leaning upon the national treasury—a recourse pointed out as objectionable by reasons of the most weighty character. The companies could not consistently, under the circumstances, complain if Congress should pass a more restrictive statute on the subject, because the conveyance of the mails does not materially increase their expenditures, while their stockholders, and the communities along their lines, are furnished thereby with important social, intellectual, and commercial advantages. A generous public spirit should dispose these gentlemen to forward the mails at prices merely remunerative.

The enactment in regard to foreign mails seems to have been intended by the national legislature as an incipient step towards the creation of a steam navy, in imitation of a policy extensively pursued in late years by Great Britain—the national defence and the protection of Commerce in the emergency of a foreign war being the principal objects in view, the conveyance of the mails being subordinate. A fresh impulse was given to the enterprise by the act of March 3, 1847, instructing the Secretary of the Navy to contract for the transportation of the mails between New York and Liverpool, and between New York, New Orleans, Aspinwall, San Francisco, and Astoria, in steamers constructed on the plan, and tendered by the owners on the conditions, above referred to, as contained in the statute of 1845. To aid in carrying these laws into effect, as well as the first contract made under their provisions, (New York to Bremenhaven, in Germany,) Postmaster-General Johnson, in the summer of 1847, dispatched to Europe his accomplished first assistant, S. R. Hobbie, Esq., with authority to enter into international postal arrangements, who succeeded in effecting a treaty with one of the German States on terms very favorable to the citizens of this country. Under its articles, the city of Bremen, with which we have an extensive Commerce, and which is closely connected with St. Petersburgh, Vienna, Trieste, and other important cities on the continent, by railroads and other traveling lines, became the trans-Atlantic exchange office for all mails sent by the new ocean line. The rates of postage adopted, which have since been largely reduced, curtailed one-half the previous expense for correspondence, and had the further merit of being left optional as to prepayment. The citizens of the United States and the thirty millions of Germany were thus enabled to correspond with each other without serious impediment. Both in a social and commercial point of view this was a convention of vast importance. Postal treaties have since been effected with Great Britain and Prussia, and others are contemplated with France and Belgium. By virtue of the British treaty, their citizens and ours can exchange letters and newspapers with each other as conveniently as with those of their own countries. It also secures to the citizens of the United States wishing to forward correspondence to the ports of the most distant nations the benefits of the extensive mail packet system of that enlightened nation, the vessels of which convey regular mails to all parts of the civilized world. Under the articles of this treaty our department now dispatches by the British steamers mail packages to all prominent ports in the West Indies, and on the northern and western coasts of South America. The Prussian treaty provides for a semi-weekly closed mail, which is sent by the British and American steamers, *via* England and Belgium. The cost of transmitting letters under these conventions (varying from ten to twenty-four cents for a single letter) is considerably greater than the spirit of the age, or the public convenience and necessities, make desirable; yet, in view of their effect upon our national reputation, the great intellectual, social, religious, and commercial benefits secured by them, and their utility in diffusing a knowledge of our free political institutions among the misruled multitudes of the old world, it would be difficult to overrate their importance. It is proper to add that an arrangement has been made by Judge Campbell with the owners of a line of clipper ships for a monthly conveyance of letters to Australia at two cents each for the ocean postage, which, it is hoped, will prove the entering wedge to a series of improvements of that class.

The United States government has under contract at present the following ocean routes, at an annual expense of about two millions of dollars, three-fourths of which is defrayed by the Navy Department:—

		Miles.
New York to Bremenhaven, *via* Southampton	monthly trips	3,760
" Havre, *via* Cowes		3,270
" Liverpool	semi-monthly trips	3,100
" Aspinwall, New Grenada		2,000
" New Orleans, *via* Havana		2,000
New Orleans to Aspinwall		1,400
" Vera Cruz, Mexico		950
Charleston to Havana		669
Panama to Astoria, *via* San Francisco		4,200
Total		21,349

The portion of the postage act of 1845 abolishing the franking privilege resulted in the resignation of one-third of all the postmasters in the Union in about twenty months. It operated with peculiar hardship on that class of officers, owing to the fact that their commissions were virtually diminished by the same bill in proportion to the decrease in their postage receipts which resulted from its passage.

From 1792 to 1845 the charge on a single letter—limited to one piece of paper—had ranged from six to twenty-five cents, under a graduated table of distances, and that on newspapers had stood at one cent for distances not over 300 miles, and one and a half cents for greater ones. The new tables of the latter year, while they made several changes calculated greatly to enlarge the circulation of newspapers and other printed matter, did not materially diminish the rates therefor. The decrease in the charge for letters, although not equal to that since effected, was a vast contribution to the convenience and happiness of the public, because it lessened the tax on an article which may properly be regarded in the present age as one of the necessaries of life. Under its operation the receipts for printed matter steadily advanced, whereas those for letters suffered a great decline during the first year, but partially recovered during the second, and steadily advanced thereafter.

On the second of March, 1847, Congress restored the franking privilege to all postmasters receiving a compensation not exceeding $200 a year. On the 3d of the same month that body authorized the issue of stamps for the prepayment of postage—a facility since so much resorted to that the sales of them amounted during the last fiscal year to $1,629,262. In the course of the same year the department extended its mail service over Texas. The act of August 4, 1848, directed a similar step in reference to California and Oregon.

In the summer of 1849 the clerical force of the General Post Office was considerably enlarged. This has stood at various periods thus: In 1795, four clerks; in 1810, twelve; in 1820, twenty-one; in 1830, forty-eight; in 1835, ninety-two; in 1840, ninety-five; in 1850, one hundred and thirty-eight; in 1853, one hundred and eighty-two. At first blush the increase in latter years would seem to exceed the ratio of enlargement of the service. But it is to be borne in mind that as the business of the establishment extends, and becomes complicated, new classes of entries and records are made necessary to furnish an adequate system of checks and references; also that the frequent alterations in the rates of postage

and commissions of postmasters authorized within the last ten years have operated to throw an immense amount of labor on its different bureaus.

The postage tariff of 1845 having proved popular and successful, Congress, on the 3d of March, 1851, in accordance with the suggestions of that very efficient Postmaster General, N. K. Hall, (whose motto seemed to be *omni homines qui sese student præstare cæteris animalibus sumna ope niti decet*,) further reduced the rate for single letters, prepaid, to three cents, for distances not over 3,000 miles, and largely diminished that for newspapers, pamphlets, etc., sent to regular subscribers, but increased the charge on transient papers. The last-mentioned feature made the newspaper change obnoxious to the public, while the postmasters were dissatisfied because that portion of the bill varied the rates by a graduated scale of distances, which multiplied their labor. To remedy these defects, a new table for printed matter was adopted by Congress on the 30th of August, 1852, discarding the objectionable features referred to, as well as reducing the already cheap rates for such matter one-half, when pre-paid quarterly or yearly. The effects upon the revenue resulting from the bills of 1845, 1851, and 1852, are exhibited by the following figures for the fiscal year ending—

June 30,	1840,	letter postage,	$4,073,776	newspaper postage,	$535,520
Do.	1845,	do.	3,666,231	do.	608,765
Do.	1846,	do.	2,881,697	do.	652,142
Do.	1847,	do.	3,198,957	do.	643,160
Do.	1848,	do.	3,340,201	do.	767,334
Do.	1849,	do.	3,882,762	do.	819,016
Do.	1850,	do.	4,575,663	do.	919,486
Do.	1851,	do.	5,369,242	do.	1,035,131
Do.	1852,	do.	4,226,792	do.	789,246
Do.	1853,	do.	4,473,227	do.	611,833

This, it must be granted, is not a favorable showing for the two last-mentioned acts; but as it is an admitted principle that increased postal facilities stimulate correspondence, as well as the circulation of newspapers, it is presumable that, as the resources of the nation become developed, and the people become accustomed to cheap postage, there will be a partial, if not an entire, recovery in the matter. But, disregarding hypothesis, considerations connected with the contentment, cultivation, and convenience of the masses—important elements in the pyramid of national strength—clearly prohibit any retrograde movement on the subject.

Prior to 1825 an annual revenue from the establishment to the United States treasury seems to have entered largely into the policy of the Postmasters General, as will be perceived from the following statement of net profits paid over by them at periods when it was yet in its infancy :—

Pickering—December, 1793, to March, 1795	$47,499
Habersham—June, 1795, to September, 1801	863,310
G. Granger—December, 1801, to December, 1813	291,579
Meigs—March, 1814, to June, 1823	387,209
McLean—July, 1823, to December, 1828	13,466

Mr. McLean avowed it as his policy—obviously a good one—to keep the funds of the concern in active use in the extension and improvement of the routes, and his successors have generally pursued a similar course. Indeed, for the last twenty-five years, Congress, the Postmaster General, and the public, seem to have coincided in the view that the establishment

should simply be self-sustaining, neither running in debt or aiming at profits. But within a very recent date a few well-meaning people, moved by a wish to have the postage rates further cheapened, or to have more liberal rates of pay made to the railroad companies, have manifested a willingness to cast it to a considerable extent for support on the public treasury—a policy both impolitic and unnecessary: *impolitic* because it is unjust to tax those of our citizens who seldom write letters for the correspondence of those who write many, and because the making the office depend on its own revenues for means to defray its expenditures has a potent tendency to create a watchful economy in its disbursements; *unnecessary*, because if Congress will compensate it, at the regular rates of postage, for the free matter sent through the mails, (say to the amount of a million and a half of dollars per annum,) will restrict by statute the railroad pay to rates barely remunerative, and will place the expense of the ocean contracts—at least so much of it as is not returned in postages—upon the Navy Department; also, if future Postmasters General shall (as I am confident the present one intends doing) rigidly execute the requirement of the act of 1845, in regard to the mode of letting the contracts, there is little reason to doubt its ability to defray, unaided, its current engagements, as well as to make all needful enlargements and improvements in the service. During the few years just past the organization of foreign routes, the extension of the inland ones over an immense amount of new territory, and the rapid augmentation of the railroad service, have vastly enlarged the department's outlays. A further increase under these heads may be anticipated. Yet it will be able, I am quite sure, on the conditions specified, to pay its own way, without leaning upon the national exchequer. To the weak argument, often made, that the post office may as properly be thrown upon the government treasury for support as the War and Navy Departments, I have only to remark, that the former has a current revenue on which to lean, whereas the latter have no such resource.

The public are daily made familiar, to a greater or less degree, through contact with postmasters, mail-carriers, and other agents of the institution, with its external operations; but with its internal organization, constituting the main-spring and balance-wheel that move and regulate all its outer movements, they know but little. A few remarks on this head.

The General Post Office is located in a beautiful marble edifice, built in Corinthian style, 204 feet in length, with wings 116 feet deep; situated half way between the Capitol and the President's House, on a gentle elevation, looking southerly towards the beautiful Potomac, about a mile distant. The department proper, including the Postmaster General, his three assistants, and 79 clerks, occupies the western portion and wing; the Auditor, with 103 clerks, the eastern. To the Postmaster General is intrusted by the constitution and laws, its executive, or administrative management. His principal functions are to establish post offices, appoint postmasters, provide for the conveyance of the mails, exercise a general superintendence over the collection and disbursement of its funds, and make reports to Congress and the President of the state of its affairs. His assistants and clerks share no part of his authority, but are merely his ministerial agents to perform services which he has not time to attend to in person. The preparation of cases for his decision he commits to four distinct bureaus, styled appointment, contract, finance, and inspection,

supervised respectively by an assistant or the chief clerk. The Bureau of Appointment, under charge of the First Assistant, Horatio King, Esq., aided by sixteen clerks, investigates all cases having reference to the establishment and discontinuance of post offices, and the appointment or removal of postmasters and route agents. The Contract Bureau, superintended by W. H. Dundas, Esq., the second assistant, who has 24 clerks, attends to the arranging, advertising, and placing under contract the mail-routes, as well as altering the service on them, from time to time, as the public wants may require. It has also in charge the mail-messenger arrangements. The Bureau of Finance, under the supervision of the Third Assistant, John Marron, Esq., assisted by 21 clerks, manages so much of the fiscal operations of the establishment as the law does not devolve upon the Auditor. It prescribes the mode in which the postmasters shall pay over their balances, makes drafts for the collection and transfer of its funds, and issues warrants on the treasury to pay balances reported by the Auditor to be owing. This office also receives the quarterly returns of postmasters, and has charge of all business relating to dead letters and the issue of postage stamps. The Inspection Bureau, under the care of the chief clerk, John Oakford, Esq., aided by sixteen clerks, examines all reports from postmasters and others touching the performance of mail contractors, with a view to holding them to a faithful compliance with their obligations. It also makes periodical reports to the Auditor of all deductions from their pay for delinquent performance, and takes cognizance of all matters connected with mail depredations and the issuing of mail-bags.

The office of the Auditor, which is not a bureau of the Post-Office Department, as above stated, but of the Treasury Department, collects debts due to the establishment, adjusts and settles the accounts of its mail contractors, postmasters, and other agents, and generally all claims originating under orders of the Postmaster-General. No other executive office at Washington can compare with it in amount of labor. It numbers 103 clerks, appointed by the Secretary of the Treasury, classed as follows:—pay clerks 12, examiners of postmaster's returns 44, book-keepers 11, registers 8, collection clerks 18, miscellaneous 10.

The following individuals have presided over this great bureau since its organization, viz.:—

Charles K. Gardner, appointed July 2, 1836; Elisha Whittlesey, appointed March 19, 1841; M. St. C. Clarke, appointed December 20, 1843; Peter G. Washington, appointed March 29, 1845; J. W. Farelly, appointed November 5, 1849; W. F. Phillips, appointed April 7, 1853.

Messrs. Whittlesey and Washington proved very efficient officers. The latter made valuable improvements in the mode of arranging and preserving its books and papers.

The department's agents, independent of an army of post-riders and clerks in post-offices, number nearly thirty thousand, embracing 22,320 local postmasters, 209 traveling ones, (route agents on railroad lines,) 5,500 mail contractors, 900 mail messengers, (employed at railroad depots and steamboat landings,) 18 special and 26 local agents. Its inland mail routes are divided into four geographical sections, and let to service for periods of four years. One of the sections being placed under contract each spring, the entire circle is kept in constant motion. Of the Postmasters, those whose offices produce a revenue of $1,000 a year, of which there are 258, are appointed by the President and Senate, the others by the Postmaster-General. For the convenience of the contract and account-

ing business, the offices are further classified under the following denominations, viz.: distribution, special, collection, draft, and deposit. The peculiar duty of the distributing portion, which are usually located at the gateways of States, or other large mail districts, is to consolidate, assort, and dispatch by the most direct lines the packages coming to them from different quarters. The special offices, exceeding 3,000, are generally situated in retired locations, off any public route, and have to pay for their mail supplies out of what they make. Those styled collection—over 17,000—are under instructions to hand their revenues quarterly to the contractors furnishing them with the mail. The draft offices—about 1,000—are directed to retain their postages to meet special drafts made on them, by the authorities at Washington. Those denominated deposit, nearly as many—place their balances periodically in designated depositories.

The present energetic postal chief and his able assistants manifest a commendable solicitude to infuse the utmost practical vitality into every branch of the business intrusted to their supervision. The office of Postmaster-General, although connected with much power and patronage, has peculiar trials, owing to the fact that no man, however well-meaning and sagacious, can dispense this patronage to the satisfaction of all, or, however watchful and energetic, prevent, amid the multitude of agents attached to the postal service, numerous daily deficiencies and malpractices in duty, which give rise to much public annoyance, and bring down on the head of the department loud complaints, both on the part of the press and of individuals. The fact that Judge Campbell took charge of the establishment at a period when its expenditures considerably exceeded its revenues, whereby he is precluded from giving effect to many meritorious applications from different sections of the Union for increase of mail facilities, must have augmented the ordinary difficulties of the position.

Several reports from the department to Congress within a few years past have alluded to serious defects in our postal system—particularly its arrangements for mail billing, mail distribution, and securing the accountability of postmasters. In a small, compactly settled country, like Great Britain, from which we derived our theory on these subjects, it is easy to apply a proper corrective, which was accordingly done there a few years ago. But owing to the widely-scattered condition of the population of the United States, and the constant changes going on in the locations of its post-offices and the direction of its routes, insurmountable obstacles have opposed themselves to all plans suggested for reforming the matter on this side of the Atlantic. A serious additional impediment to the efficiency of the American office grows out of the fact that it has not, in all cases, as the British and French postal departments have, entire control over the times of arrival and departure of the railroad mails.

Notwithstanding, however, this opening for improvement, the operations of the General Post-Office constitute, as hinted in the outset of this article, on account of their vigor and magnitude, a subject for general congratulation. The New York evening papers are perused the next afternoon in Cleveland, Ohio, and in Weldon, North Carolina—the former 671 and the latter 451 miles distant; and the following day in Chicago and Charleston. Similar instances of celerity in the dispatch of the mail-bags in other quarters of the country are numerous. Almost the entire distance from Maine to Texas, and from Massachusetts to Iowa, immense quantities of letters and printed matter are daily forwarded by its agencies with all the velocity attainable by the iron horse and steamboat paddle. A regular mail con-

veyance, by coach and horseback, is made once a month from the banks of the Rio Grande to those of the Missouri, about 2,000 miles, through districts till recently settled only by half-breed Indians and imbecile Mexicans. From the latter point the post-riders again periodically take up the line of march another 2,000 miles over boundless uncultivated prairies and gigantic mountain ranges, rarely trodden except by the foot of the red man, to our remote possessions on the Pacific, fructifying the soil in their passage with the seeds of intellectual, social, and moral culture, as well as potently aiding to dispel the gloom of savage barbarity. The railroad and steamboat lines conveying the department's mails, if formed into a single route, would girdle the globe; and its ocean routes, if united in like manner, would nearly encompass it again. The tide of enlightened political sentiment wafted to the Old World by the latter promises a mightier influence in emancipating its masses from the thraldom of despotic civil institutions than revolutionary bayonets or imperial armies ever effected.

The following table shows the amounts actually credited for the transportation of the mails, by States and Territories, and the amount of postages collected in the same:—

States and Territories.	Letter postage.	Newspaper postage.	Stamps sold.	Total postage collected.	Transportation.
Maine	$68,300 73	$15,433 29	$41,460 92	$125,194 94	$52,767 88
N. Hampshire	43,276 13	10,740 77	27,686 63	81,703 53	31,999 45
Vermont	41,041 08	12,000 34	25,597 44	78,638 86	62,476 85
Massachusetts	230,526 28	31,013 50	192,427 04	453,966 80	130,117 13
Rhode Island.	22,337 19	3,164 98	21,875 62	47,377 79	12,139 72
Connecticut....	70,545 94	15,156 57	60,661 99	146,364 50	64,173 13
New York...	686,509 29	111,752 43	377,254 35	1,175,516 06	455,019 76
Delaware....	9,660 38	1,989 22	4,661 11	16,310 71	9,412 00
New Jersey...	58,461 42	8,639 16	21,973 59	89,074 17	74,139 55
Pennsylvania..	273,372 91	61,001 69	153,933 70	488,308 30	238,019 69
Maryland.....	83,189 05	15,443 91	53,925 15	152,158 11	191,586 20
D. of Columbia	18,595 01	3,191 64	16,046 24	37,832 89	.....
Virginia.....	90,894 86	28,112 26	64,465 07	183,472 19	313,234 72
N. Carolina...	28,838 43	12,107 45	19,805 63	60,751 51	175,630 59
S. Carolina...	41,302 78	10,144 03	31,538 94	82,985 75	127,169 19
Georgia.....	76,316 01	19,079 75	47,404 38	142,800 14	215,238 78
Florida	8,721 69	2,447 31	5,709 83	16,788 83	38,661 99
Alabama.....	53,804 18	15,491 93	26,795 74	96,091 85	178,543 35
Mississippi ...	42,228 09	13,655 44	17,224 68	73,108 21	115,924 92
Texas.....	29,916 73	8,078 03	9,169 70	47,164 46	139,362 19
Kentucky.....	61,080 71	15,977 08	35,484 81	112,542 60	139,038 15
Michigan.....	53,048 34	14,470 76	29,238 09	96,757 19	136,260 14
Wisconsin....	44,493 41	13,132 09	15,945 33	73,570 83	46,608 00
Louisiana	80,822 52	13,440 96	33,906 70	128,170 18	90,420 73
Tennessee ...	45,272 79	13,943 83	26,484 48	85,701 10	92,885 29
Missouri.....	58,485 03	12,765 01	27,531 78	98,781 82	140,454 41
Illinois.....	99,425 85	28,069 78	47,851 20	175,346 83	181,611 19
Ohio.....	202,317 11	49,295 44	124,147 17	375,759 72	363,182 37
Indiana	77,520 25	24,399 02	35,420 16	137,339 43	109,392 96
Arkansas....	16,188 71	4,595 27	4,321 91	25,105 89	90,859 15
Iowa	23,776 21	7,234 61	9,969 40	40,980 22	36,393 82
California....	93,951 04	13,111 56	16,089 40	123,152 90	174,243 02
Oregon.....	6,276 31	1,580 35	1,940 69	9,797 35	47,682 16
Minnesota ...	1,680 11	560 84	1,328 91	3,529 86	2,386 28
New Mexico .	351 17	85 12	80 93	517 22	19,647 22
Utah	715 15	41 51	199 00	955 66	3,269 70
Nebraska	459 54	60 64	.....	520 18	.....
Washington..	149 66	12 49	74 74	236 89	.....
	2,843,752 06	611,420 06	1,629,292 45	5,084,464 57	4,199,951 68

The following table exhibits the number of miles the mails were transported in the several States, together with the cost in each year from 1848 to 1853, inclusive :—

RAILROAD SERVICE AND COST FOR THE YEARS 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1852, AND 1853.

States.	1848. Transportation, miles.	1848. Cost.	1849. Transportation, miles.	1849. Cost.	1850. Transportation, miles.	1850. Cost.
Maine.....	70,824	$6,733	91,416	$6,823	117,000	$12,254
N. Hampshire	144,768	10,504	144,768	10,504	187.200	17,139
Vermont....	.....	.....	.....	.....	188,604	28,875
Massachusetts	906,284	70,706	942,486	72,654	1,143,626	98,319
Rhode Island	30,264	4,850	30,264	4,850	86,112	8,612
Connecticut..	230,444	22,192	230,444	22,192	592,678	46,014
New York...	735,076	62,958	808,812	66,872	1,413,042	123,920
New Jersey..	208,728	37,551	264,992	37,422	273,728	37,622
Pennsylvania..	356,720	43,357	394,342	39,055	472,446	48,050
Maryland....	391,768	95,745	396,656	94,612	396,656	99.612
Ohio.....	96,928	9.115	183,460	19,730	183,660	19,730
Virginia....	118,248	25,043	211,393	51,107	211,393	51,107
N. Carolina...	179.816	46,700	179,816	46,700	179,816	46,700
S. Carolina...	150,696	39,812	179,816	41,862	179,816	41,862
Georgia.....	404,196	74,037	429,156	76,017	470,152	80,376
Florida.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	7,176	620
Michigan.....	149,760	13.374	214,968	23,188	305,864	33,593
Indiana	53,664	3,729	54,288	3,729	64,896	4,029
Illinois.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	....
Kentucky....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	....
Tennessee....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	....
Alabama....	70,512	13.843	70,512	13,843	70 512	13,843
Mississippi...	28,704	3,943	33,488	4,600	43,316	5.950
Louisiana ...	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	....
	4,327,400	584,192	4,861,177	635,740	6,524,593	818,227

States.	1851. Transportation, miles.	1851. Cost.	1852. Transportation, miles.	1852. Cost.	1853. Transportation, miles.	1853. Cost.
Maine.....	177,528	$15.397	177,528	$15,397	223,704	$18,357
N. Hampshire	212.160	18,240	220,272	16,498	280,176	18,418
Vermont....	235.668	32,262	270,660	31,508	393 588	42,884
Massachusetts	1,218,312	100,603	1,276,912	101,320	1,289,808	102,205
Rhode Island..	86,112	8,612	86,112	8,612	86.112	8,612
Connecticut..	552,944	46,471	565,365	47,236	580.029	48,586
New York...	2,177,604	176,175	2,837,276	262,830	3,009,958	302,209
New Jersey..	264,368	36,972	307,320	49.122	361.608	55.367
Pennsylvania..	561,990	57,915	866,606	71,165	907,946	108,196
Maryland....	601,224	113,450	597,064	112,700	725,504	156.495
Ohio.....	516,984	76,799	671,632	100,674	1,225,992	213,203
Virginia.....	233,961	52,507	366,946	78,393	612,490	85.007
N. Carolina...	179,816	46,700	263,016	53,571	299.208	59.475
S. Carolina...	230,828	45,366	411,528	52,010	510,328	61,812
Georgia.....	470,152	80,376	820,071	116,989	923,634	134,075
Florida.....	7,176	620	.....	.....	.....	.....
Michigan.....	304,720	34,482	601,120	83,958	602,368	76,341
Indiana	99,216	10,650	215.904	22,511	222,768	23,211
Illinois.....	65,520	6,344	106,704	9,164	240,552	31,349
Kentucky ...	40,040	1,535	136,864	8,040	136,864	8,840
Tennessee....	.....	.....	83,616	5,742	139,360	12,800
Alabama....	83,616	17,443	155.688	26,180	160,160	26,487
Mississippi...	43,316	5,950	43,316	5,950	43.316	5,950
Louisiana....	1,248	150	1,248	150	11,232	450
	8,364,508	985,019	11,082,768	1,275,520	12,986,705	1,601,329