









Braunford 2351

SPECIMEN OF

# The Post Circular.

(PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY.)

No. 1.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH, 1838.

Price 2½d.

LORD ASHBURTON on presenting a petition from merchants, bankers, men of science, and others, of the metropolis, to the House of Lords, May 30, 1837, thus addressed their Lordships: "The petition was on the subject of the Post-office; one most important, yet one which had been unfortunately neglected. Its object was to state to their Lordships the inconveniences which arose from the present charges for the conveyance of letters—inconveniences which disturbed social life, and strewed impediments in the way of science. He concurred in the view of the case taken by the petitioners; for he considered a tax on the transmission of letters, when carried to such an extent as it was in this country, to be most ill-judged and pernicious. The system required thorough re-consideration and an entire reform. He recommended to their Lordships the perusal of a pamphlet written by Mr. Rowland Hill: that pamphlet confirmed the impression which he had, that the grievances complained of might be remedied without a sacrifice of the revenue. The remedies suggested by that gentleman were—1st, a great reduction of charges; 2nd, the payment of the charges in advance; 3rd, equalization of the rate of charging. The expense of a Post-office establishment was the same whether the letters were conveyed twenty or two hundred miles—to Barnet or to Edinburgh; the only difference caused by distance being the expense of conveyance; and Mr. Hill had shown

that the expense of carrying a letter to Edinburgh did not amount to more than the one-thirty-sixth part of a penny, or the one-ninth part of a farthing. He thought, therefore, that it was an injustice to persons in distant towns to impose on them the present charges. Mr. Hill proposed that no payment should be made at the Post-office, but that covers or stamped envelopes should be purchased which should carry the letter free. Mr. Hill had calculated that a penny for a letter not weighing more than half an ounce would prove sufficient. He requested the noble Lords connected with the Government to give the matter their consideration, if it were only from the fact that the revenue was injuriously affected by the present system. In the year 1835, that revenue was 130,000*l.* less than it was in 1825, notwithstanding the increase of population and wealth, and the spread of education. It was clear, therefore, that the charge was too heavy, and also that it was fraudulently evaded. It certainly therefore was necessary, as well for the comforts of the people as for the sake of the revenue, that the matter should be seriously considered; and had it not been that the session was so far advanced he should have deemed it his duty to move that Mr. Hill's plan for remedying the evils complained of should be referred to a select committee."

## ADDRESS.

To the subject of Postage and its numerous important bearings on all departments of national policy and civilization, this publication is to be exclusively devoted; it is therefore hardly necessary to observe that all political discussion will be studiously avoided in its columns.

The POST CIRCULAR will attempt to carry out its object by impartially inquiring into the merits of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform Penny Postage, payable in advance, and the probable effects of this plan on the present system of Post-office administration and Post-office revenue—by carefully collecting all facts strengthening or controverting Mr. Hill's plan—by recording the proceedings of the legislature, the presentation of petitions, and all legislative enactments on Postage—by digesting the voluminous reports of the many Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, and reproducing the most remarkable portions of the evidence contained in these Reports—by recording the labours of any associations constituted to inquire into the subject of Postage, and all public meetings held with the same object,—by collecting all evidences of the state of public feeling on the Postage, manifested through the press or otherwise; and by opening its columns to all temperate communications on the subject of Postage.

The POST CIRCULAR will be distributed throughout the kingdom, in all quarters where its labours are likely to operate beneficially—to merchants, manufacturers, and commercial institutions—to the various corporations, both of a municipal, charitable, literary, and scientific character. It will likewise be sent weekly to every Provincial Paper, without reference to its politics, and a hope may be expressed, that the POST CIRCULAR will be favoured in return with any papers containing reports of local meetings or other notices on the subject of Postage.

It is requested that all communications may be sent (post free) to the Publisher, Mr. HENRY HOOPER, 13, Pall Mall East, London.

## MERCANTILE COMMITTEE ON POSTAGE.

An association of gentlemen of the first eminence in the city of London, has been formed, bearing this title. Their object will be best understood from a pamphlet which they have issued very diffusely throughout the kingdom. From this pamphlet the following extracts are taken.

### SUGGESTIONS

As to Facts which it is desirable to collect, and upon which Parties having information to give are requested to communicate to the Mercantile Committee on Postage, 6, Freeman's-court, Cornhill.

The House of Commons' Committee now sitting is appointed—

"To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill."

The members of that committee are, Mr. Wallace (Chairman), Mr. Poulett Thomson, Lord Visc. Lowther, Lord Seymour, Mr. Warburton, Sir Thomas Freemantle, Mr. Raikes Currie, Mr. Morgan John O'Connell, Mr. Thornely, Mr. Chalmers, Mr. Pease, Mr. Mahony, Mr. Parker (Sheffield), Mr. George William Wood, and Mr. Villiers.

The proposal advocated by Mr. Hill is—

That all letters not weighing more than half an ounce be charged one penny, and heavier packets an additional penny for each half-ounce to a quarter of a pound, to be paid in advance.

It is desirable to show to the Parliamentary Committee that the Revenue would not suffer by ALLOWING THE WHOLE OF THE REDUCTION PROPOSED BY MR. HILL.

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

The average cost of the actual carriage to any post-town in Great Britain is about one-tenth of a penny; and even allowing the whole present cost of the Post-office establishment, the tax is above 200 per cent.: a rate of tax which experience has demonstrated always produces an evasion of the law.

No law is so extensively evaded as this; and so general has the practice become, that even the best-regulated minds do not think they are committing offence by violating it.

It is proposed to call witnesses to prove—  
The great extent to which the practice of violating the law by the irregular conveyance of letters and evading postage is carried, and to give evidence of those modes, taking care to protect parties who may furnish this testimony.

That this correspondence, if the reduction be made, would immediately be transferred to the Post-office.

In addition to the very great increase in the number of letters which would thus be transferred to the lawful channel, and to changing the habit of *breaking*, into the habit of OBEYING the law, it is proposed to show—

That reducing the postage upon all communications under half an ounce to one penny, would produce an immense increase to the Post-office revenue: and, by the increase of business, lead to a great augmentation of the general revenue.

It is known to all commercial men that correspondence creates business, and that business re-acts, and again produces correspondence, and involves, of necessity, a consumption of articles which increases the general revenue.

As instances of direct increase in the number of letters, which may with certainty be calculated upon, if the postage is reduced to one penny, it is proposed to show—

That all invoices and letters of advice would be despatched by the post.

That letters of inquiry, letters of explanation, letters pointing out or supplying omissions in orders or directions, would be greatly multiplied.

That letters would be written to secure accuracy and expedition upon many smaller points which are allowed to lie over until more important matters occur.

That innumerable circulars accompanying prices-current, and letters inquiring and advising of the state of the markets, would be forwarded by post, which are now either not written at all or but rarely written, and that to stock, share, and produce-brokers, and to intermediate agents of all kinds, as well as to principals, a very great increase in the number of communications by post would necessarily result.\*

That this will lead to the publication of prices-current, or market statements, in all the principal marts of trade in the United Kingdom, for immediate transmission to parties interested therein; and to the collection of these statements into other lists and tabular statements, useful in new combinations for many other purposes, and that the whole will result in a great increase of correspondence through the Post-office.

That with regard to stock, share, and produce-brokers especially, correspondence creates business, and that with them, as with others, cheapness of postage would increase correspondence; for their clients are peculiarly anxious to be advised daily of the state of the markets, and to have the opinion of those in whose judgment they place confidence, as to their purchases and sales, and that their correspondence would thereby be largely increased.

That shares in joint-stock property, and the scrip or other documents respecting it, would be transmitted to the buyers by post, instead of being sent as they now are, when the buyer resides in the country, by parcels.

That the facilities thus afforded by increasing the number of transfers, which bear an ad-valorem duty, would lead to the increase of the general Revenue.

That to auctioneers the proposed reduction would open the means of conveying particulars of estates offered for sale into those channels which they know to be likely to afford purchasers, and to furnish copies of their advertisements, particulars, and catalogues, to the various classes and trades interested in the purchase and sale of particular descriptions of property.

That between all houses and trading companies having branch establishments or travellers, the communications would be greatly increased, as letters would be written immediately the occasion for writing occurred.

That orders for small parcels of goods, or even for a single article, would then be transmitted, to the great convenience

of the retail dealer; whereas now such orders are not sent, or the wholesale houses are obliged to charge the postage upon them. And that, to the very numerous classes engaged in those trades into which silk, cotton, and woollen enter, this would be a most important convenience, and the cause of very great additional correspondence.

That it would lead, in all trades requiring extended publicity, to an immense increase in the postage as a mode of advertising, because a thousand circulars, with a letter on the fly-leaf, could be despatched for 4*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* to parties thought by the senders most likely to become the purchasers. This would be particularly the case with publications addressed to men of science, and to particular classes or sections of society, and yet would not supersede the more extended appeal to the public through the medium of advertisements.

That to all religious and charitable institutions, particularly to those having branch societies, it would afford most essential aid in bringing their works of benevolence directly to the knowledge of those whom the societies thought especially likely to promote their objects, and facilitate their opportunities of communicating with their influential members, committees, officers, and subscribers.

That to all scientific, and particularly to statistical, geological, and guardian societies, and to authors and publishers upon all subjects, the means of collecting facts and information, and ascertaining the views of other men of science or of similar pursuits, would be of the highest value and importance, and largely increase their communications through the Post-office.

That authors would then be able to correct their own works when passing through the press; and as the proofs would be forwarded to them in sheets, the letters and packages, and the additional revises, would be very numerous.\*

That the great number of persons who are constantly seeking to arrest public attention on subjects which occur to them as of great religious, social, or political importance, would be able, at a small expense, to convey their views to those whom they desire to interest.

That to architects, engineers, medical men, and indeed to all professional men, having the charge of public works, or hospitals, or institutions of any kind, it would be highly useful and convenient; they could have, at an unimportant expense, reports from their subordinates by every post, and the institutions and works themselves would be benefited by the constant communication of the superior minds to the acting subordinates, of plans, drawings, and directions.

That great advantage would be taken of the reduction of postage by the legal profession, for the transmission of many documents now sent by coach.

That all insurance companies would very considerably increase their correspondence by a wider distribution of letters, prospectuses, advertisements, and circulars; making inquiries, transmitting policies, receipts, &c.

That to all joint-stock companies, benefit societies, savings' banks, and provident institutions, it would afford great and desirable facilities for communicating with their shareholders, committees, and members; and that letters would be sent to the shareholders and members, announcing meetings, dividends, calls, and other matters, in addition to public advertisements required by their acts or charters of incorporation.

That the proposed reduction would open a most extensive increase of communication through the Post-office, to the immense number of persons interested in the many great national measures and inquiries before Parliament, its numerous committees and government commissions, particularly as a large proportion of the many witnesses, and other persons in attendance upon them, are brought from the country, and would be daily communicating with home.

That an enormous increase would take place in what may be called FAMILY OF DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

That the masses of the rising generation are necessarily obliged to go forth from the family roof as apprentices, clerks, shopmen, travellers, teachers, domestic servants, and labourers of all kinds; that they often settle in marriage in places distant from their parents and relations; and that, to immense numbers of these, the present rates of postage prevent communications with relatives and friends.

That a great increase would arise in letters of advice and affection between parents and children, and from senior relatives, and amongst all the members, relatives, and friends of the same family; and from the very large class whose business avocations take them frequently from their homes; and out of the ever-changing incidents in life, such as sickness, accidents, rejoicings, and the in-

\* Vide the Evidence of Joshua Bates, Esq. (Baring & Co.)

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That all insurance companies would very considerably increase their correspondence by a wider distribution of letters, prospectuses, advertisements, and circulars; making inquiries, transmitting policies, receipts, &c.

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That an enormous increase would take place in what may be called FAMILY OR DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

That the masses of the rising generation are necessarily obliged to go forth from the family roof as apprentices, clerks, shopmen, travellers, teachers, domestic servants, and labourers of all kinds; that they often settle in marriage in places distant from their parents and relations; and that, to immense numbers of these, the present rates of postage prevent communications with relatives and friends.

That a great increase would arise in letters of advice and affection between parents and children, and from senior relatives, and amongst all the members, relatives, and friends of the same family; and from the very large class whose business avocations take them frequently from their homes; and out of the ever-changing incidents in life, such as sickness, accidents, rejoicings, and the in-

\* Vide the Evidence of Joshua Bates, Esq. (Baring & Co.)

\* Vide Path Report of Commissioners.

finite number of domestic incidents which occur among near and dear relatives, and are deeply interesting to them all, and the more so when distance intervenes.

That, if such letters could be transmitted for one penny each they would be multiplied to an almost inconceivable extent, as most of them would be written by the female branches of families, who are now almost debarred by heavy postage from correspondence, and that the ability to frank the letter for one penny, would be a strong additional reason for much of this correspondence, arising, as a large portion of it would, from motives of affection, duty, and friendship.

That these certain causes of increase—certain as far as it is possible to predict certainty by anticipation—will multiply the correspondence through the Post-office, at a moderate computation, tenfold; and as nearly the whole expense of collecting will be saved, there can be no rational fear that the direct revenue from postage will be decreased.

The Mercantile Committee have appended to these suggestions many portions of Mr. Hill's pamphlet, entitling them "Illustrations to the preceding Suggestions." The most forcible of these are also reprinted on the present occasion.

THE NON-INCREASE OF THE POST-OFFICE REVENUE.  
TABLE showing the Net Revenue actually obtained from the Post-office, for every fifth year, from 1815 to 1835 inclusive; also the Revenue which would have been obtained, had the Receipts kept pace with the Increase of Population (the Rate of which increase, since 1831, is assumed to be the same as from 1821 to 1831.)

Year.	Population.	Net revenue actually obtained.	Revenue which would have been obtained had the receipts kept pace with the increase of population from 1815.	Comparative loss.
1815	19,552,000	£ 1,557,291	£ 1,557,291	.....
1820	20,928,000	1,479,547	1,674,000	194,453
1825	22,362,000	1,670,219	1,789,000	118,781
1830	23,961,000	1,517,952	1,917,000	399,048
1835	25,605,000	1,540,300	2,048,000	507,700

It appears, then, that, during the last twenty years, the absolute revenue derived from the Post-office has slightly diminished; whereas, if it had kept pace with the growth of population, there would have been an increase of £507,700 per annum. As compared with the population, then, the Post-office revenue has fallen off to the extent of more than half a million per annum; but if the extension of education, and the increasing trade and prosperity of the country, during this period, be taken into account, there can be no doubt that the real deficit is even much greater.

The extent of this loss will probably be best estimated by comparing the Post-office revenue with that actually derived from some tax which, while less exorbitant, is in other respects liable to nearly as possible the same influences. The tax upon stage-coaches, obviously falls under these conditions.

Year.	STAGE-COACH DUTIES.		POST-OFFICE REVENUE.		
	Net Revenue produced by the Stage-coach duty.	Rate per cent. of the increase, as compared with the year 1815.	Net Revenue actually obtained from the Post-office.	Revenue which would have been obtained had the receipts of the Post-office increased at the same rate as the produce of the Stage-coach duty.	Comparative loss.
1815	£ 217,671	..	£ 1,557,291	£ 1,557,291	.....
1820	273,477	25	1,479,547	1,946,000	466,453
1825	362,631	66	1,670,219	2,585,000	914,781
1830	418,598	92	1,517,952	2,990,000	1,472,048
1835	498,497	128	1,540,300	3,550,000	2,009,700

If it be granted, then, that the demand for the conveyance of letters has increased during the last twenty years, in the same ratio as that for the conveyance of persons and parcels, which can scarcely be doubted, it follows inevitably, that for some cause or other, there is, in effect, a loss in the Post-office revenue of 2,000,000L. per annum.

The unsatisfactory state of our Post-office revenue is thus referred to by Sir Henry Parnell: "The revenue of the Post-office has been stationary, at about 1,400,000L. a year, since 1818. This can be accounted for only by the great duty charged on letters; for with a lower duty the correspondence of the country through the Post-office would have increased in proportion to the increase of population and national wealth."

COST OF CONVEYING A LETTER BY POST.

Let us now ascertain the natural cost of conveying a letter, if the Post-office were conducted on the ordinary commercial principles, and postage relieved entirely from taxation; and then add to the natural cost such amount of duty as may be necessary for producing the required revenue.

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

Without desiring to interfere with the franking privilege, or to relieve the Post-office of the cost of transmitting newspapers, we must, in order to obtain an accurate result, con-

\* Financial Reform, fourth edition, p. 41.

sider (for the present) a due share of the expenses of the Post-office, as charged to the account of franked letters and newspapers.

The number of letters chargeable with postage which pass through all the Post-offices of the United Kingdom per annum, is about*	88,600,000
The number of franked letters*	7,400,000
The number of newspapers*	30,000,000
<b>Total number of letters and newspapers per ann.</b>	<b>126,000,000</b>

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

Consequently, the average cost of conveying a letter or newspaper, including the cost of collecting the tax, is, under the present arrangements, about 1½d.

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

Of which the expense of TRANSIT is one-third, or 28 hundredths of a penny. And the cost of receipt, delivery, &c., two-thirds, or 56 hundredths of a penny.

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

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

Estimate of the Cost of conveying a letter from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles

MILEAGE ON THE WHOLE MAIL.	£	s.	d.
From London to York, 196 miles, at 1½d. per mile	1	5	6½
From York to Edinburgh, 204 miles, at 1½d. per mile	1	5	0
GUARDS' WAGES.—Say six Guards, one day each, at 10s. 6d. per week.	2	10	6½
Allow for tolls (which are paid in Scotland), and all other expenses	1	18	11½

Total cost of conveying the mail once from London to Edinburgh, including the mails of all intermediate places . . . . . 5 0 0

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

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

The cost of conveyance is therefore per cwt. 16s. 8d.  
Per ounce and a half, the average weight of a newspaper, about one-sixth of a penny.

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

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

It appears, then, that the cost of mere transit, incurred upon a letter sent from London to Edinburgh, a distance of 400 miles, is not more than one thirty-sixth part of a penny. If, therefore, the proper charge (exclusive of tax) upon a letter received and delivered in London itself were twopence, then the proper charge (exclusive of tax) upon a letter received in London, but delivered in Edinburgh, would be twopence plus one thirty-sixth part of a penny. Now, as the letters taken from London to Edinburgh are undoubtedly carried much more than an average distance, it follows, that when the charge for the receipt and delivery of the letter is determined, an additional charge of one thirty-sixth part of a penny would amply repay the expense of transit. If, therefore, the charge for postage be made proportionate to the whole expense incurred in the receipt, transit, and delivery of the letter, and in the collection of its postage, it must be made uniformly the same from every post-town to every other post-town in the United Kingdom, unless it can be shown how we are to collect so small a sum as the thirty-sixth part of a penny.

Again, the expenses of receipt and delivery are not much affected by the weight of each letter, within moderate limits; and as it would take a ninefold weight to make the expense of transit amount to one farthing, it follows that, taxation apart, the charge ought to be precisely the same for

\* The total number of letters, &c., transmitted through the Post is a statistical fact altogether unknown: the statement here given is the result of an estimate, which, however, may be relied upon as sufficiently accurate for the present purpose.

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

every packet of moderate weight, without reference to the number of its enclosures.

The preceding statement shows how trifling the actual cost of postage is to all the post-towns.

EXPENSES OF THE POST-OFFICE.

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

- Superintendents including Post-masters and keepers of receiving-houses.
- Clerks and Messengers.
- Letter-carriers.

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

EFFECT OF MR. HILL'S PLAN ON POST-OFFICE ARRANGEMENTS.  
Now imagine that the plan proposed adopted, namely, that the postage is uniform, and paid in advance.

Then look at the present duties of the clerks, which are as follows:—On the arrival of the mails in the morning, to examine all the letters, in order to see that the charge upon each letter for postage has been correctly made, and that each Deputy Post-master has debited himself with the correct amount of postage for paid letters; to stamp all the letters; to assort them for delivery (in this the Letter-carriers assist); to ascertain the amount of postage to be collected by each Letter-carrier, and to charge him therewith.

Previously to the departure of the mails in the evening, the duties of the clerks are principally to adjust the accounts for the post-paid letters brought from the receiving-houses; to "tax" the unpaid letters; that is to say, to write on each the charge for postage; to stamp all: to assort them for despatch to the different post-towns; to ascertain the amount of postage to be collected by each Deputy Post-master, and to charge him therewith.

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

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

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

Now if the letter were put in a stamped envelope, or stamped, the Revenue would be paid beforehand, and therefore secured. There would be no letters to be taxed; no examination of those taxed by others; no accounts to be made out against the Deputy Post-masters for letters transmitted to them, nor against the Letter-carriers.

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

But mark the further economy.—At the time of the investigation of this part of the subject, there was an "early delivery" to persons who paid the Postmen a gratuity, the letters were left without the payment of postage—that was called afterwards, and it appeared that out of 637 letters deliverable in the same district, 570 were delivered in half an hour, where the man had not to collect the postage, and that it took one hour and a half to deliver the remaining 67 where he had to collect the postage; consequently, the one delivery was about 25 times as quick as the other.

It appears, then, that with reference to the abridgment of the labours of the Letter-carriers, as well as of the Clerks, the great desideratum is, that the postage of all letters should be paid in advance. If such an arrangement could by any means be effected, it would undoubtedly economize the time of the Letter-carriers even more than that of the Clerks. There would not only be no stopping to collect the postage, but probably it would soon be unnecessary even to await the opening of the door, as every house might be provided with a box, into which the Letter-carrier would drop the letters, and, having knocked, he would pass on as fast as he could walk. By this means a man would go through a district of moderate extent in half an hour, and deliver within it almost any number of letters; for it must be borne in mind, that in a town (and at present we are only considering the arrangements for towns) a Letter-carrier's walk



would scarcely be lengthened by an increase, however great, in the number of letters, to be delivered; and that even the number of houses at which he would have to call would be increased but in a low ratio.

The cost of primary distribution under the new arrangements being only about one-third of a penny per letter, a profit or tax of 200 per cent. on such cost might be added, without raising the postage above one penny. An uniform rate of one penny would be sufficiently low to neutralize all pecuniary objection to its being invariably paid in advance. *ESTIMATE of the Revenue which would be derived from the*

*Post-office UNDER the proposed arrangements, assuming—*

The number of chargeable letters to remain as at present, and that it increase six and seven fold.

In each case the number of franked letters and newspapers is supposed to remain as at present.

The proposed arrangements provide for defraying the cost of distributing the franks and newspapers out of the postage received for letters; also increased expenses for mails and number of officers.

From this calculation it appears that, supposing the number of chargeable letters to increase six-fold, the benefit to the Exchequer would be practically the same as at present; and that, supposing it to increase seven-fold, that benefit would be augmented by about 280,000*l.*; while, on the most unfavourable supposition, one indeed which can never be verified, viz. that the enormous reduction in postage should produce no increase whatever in the number of letters, the Exchequer would sustain scarcely any injury beyond the loss of its present revenue. In other words, while every individual in the country would receive his letters at an almost nominal expense, the whole management of the Post-office would bring upon the state a charge of only 24,000*l.* per annum; and, as this would also cover the gratuitous distribution of franks and newspapers, it may fairly be considered as a mere deduction from the produce of the newspaper stamps.

These extracts present but a naked skeleton of Mr. Hill's plan. The authorities are omitted and almost all the arguments. If any objections arise, the reader, before forming his conclusion must consult Mr. Hill's own pamphlet, where he will find every point discussed with ability and at the requisite length.

#### LORD LOWTHER'S REPORT ON PRICES CURRENT.

Lord Lowther's valuable Report on Prices Current is printed in the Fifth Report of the present Commissioners on Post-office Inquiry—Lord Duncannon, Right Hon. H. Labouchere, and Lord Seymour—who themselves observe, "We have also obtained the opinion of Lord Lowther, who is intimately acquainted with all points relating to the transmission of Prices Current. We agree generally with the suggestions which he has made, and beg to submit his report and evidence for your Lordships' consideration."

The present Commissioners state that the Postmaster-General has authority to provide for the conveyance of unstamped periodicals, but that "the rates of composition which have been demanded by the Postmaster-General are so high as to amount almost to a prohibition." In France the circulation of Prices Current is encouraged by the Government. The present Commissioners "are of opinion that any facility which can be given for the transmission of mercantile information, must tend to promote the commercial interests of the country," and therefore recommend that Prices Current and similar publications should "be permitted to pass through the medium of the Post-office without the imposition of a charge so high as to impede their general circulation," and state "that their conveyance will not materially add to the weight of the mails." Within a month, two years will have elapsed since this Report was presented to the Treasury, the Report being dated April 11, 1836: and it would appear that the recommendations of Lord Lowther and the present Commissioners have not yet been carried into execution.

*Lord Lowther's Report, May 8, 1835.*

TO THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

Finding that, with respect to the question of facilitating the transmission of Prices Current by the Post-office, I cannot come to the same conclusions upon the evidence that my colleagues in the Commission of Inquiry have arrived at, I beg leave to submit to you a Report as an individual Commissioner. I think the evidence the Commissioners have taken not only sufficient upon which to form an opinion, but such as demands a recommendation for taking effectual measures to supply important facilities to commerce which are now wanting. I beg leave to report as follows:—

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

It does not appear that under the present system any advantage is held out to correspondence upon subjects of trade over general correspondence; on the contrary, it appears that, while political discussions and the miscellaneous contents of newspapers go free, under the privilege of a newspaper stamp, Prices Current, and other periodicals solely mercantile, though of smaller bulk than newspapers, have no privilege of the kind, but pay as highly as private letters.

It is, I think, plainly shown by the evidence\* taken, that great advantage would arise to trade from the trans-

mission of Prices Current at a small rate of postage. It is affirmed by various witnesses that throughout the country there is a continually increasing desire among persons in trade for such information of the state of the markets in London and elsewhere as Prices Current would afford. That the furnishing of this information is very much restricted by the high rate of postage, and that if it were more generally afforded, it is probable that much more business would be done. It is also stated, that the increase in the number transmitted at a low rate of postage would be such, that the Revenue acquired would be much greater than it now is under the high rate of postage,—one witness, Mr. Cook, estimating the increase, if allowed to be transmitted at a low rate of postage, at three millions of Prices Current annually.

It appears by the evidence of Mr. Critchett, of the Post-office (p. 39), that the Prices Current now sent by the Post-office under that denomination do not exceed a few hundreds. The lists prepared by the tea-trade are upon one sheet, and are transmitted as single letters, but they contain private written communications, which would still be sent as letters, even were the alteration made which I propose. The statements in the evidence also generally agree that the probable effect of facilitating the transmission of Prices Current would be to increase, instead of to diminish, the number of mercantile letters now written.

Over the whole of the continent of Europe, where the circulation of mercantile intelligence is probably of much less national importance, a privilege similar to this is allowed to printed Prices Current; and in the United States of America they are allowed to pass through the Post-office (according to the evidence of Mr. Cook) free of any charge, or, as stated by Mr. Bates, at a postage of 1 cent only.

With a view to ascertain the extent of the difficulty that might be experienced by the Post-office if Prices Current were circulated at a low rate of postage, His Majesty's Postmaster-General was requested to direct some person, competent to afford explanations upon the subject, to attend upon the Commissioners, and Mr. S. Johnson, Second President of the Inland Office, and Mr. Critchett, Inspector of Letter-carriers, were sent for that purpose. To their evidence I beg to refer. It will be seen that the chief objections stated by the Post-office are,—

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

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

After making all due allowance for these objections it appears to me that in an establishment which, by its energy and skill in arrangement, can meet the increase of business in two evenings of the week occasioned by the despatch of 20,000 additional Newspapers, there would in practice be found little difficulty in providing for the increase of business which the transmission of Prices Current would involve. With respect to the opportunities for fraud, I conceive that this danger would be greatly diminished by requiring all printed lists, &c., to which this privilege might be granted, to be put into the Post-office under a band open at the sides (as in the case of Newspapers), and that it should be extended to those only which, with the cover, may not exceed half an ounce in weight. The absolute necessity of a restriction as to weight is obvious; I believe that half an ounce will be sufficient for the object in view: and with these restrictions I venture to submit that Prices Current, or lists of any merchandise with prices attached, including booksellers' lists, be allowed to be transmitted by the post at a small charge. From the smallness of the size of these lists, and perhaps the thinness of the paper which would be used in order to keep within the weight, I think that there would be a much greater facility in detecting any writing than in the case of Newspapers, which the law permits to go free, notwithstanding this risk; nor is any limitation provided as to their number on account of the probable increase to the Post-office business. Mr. Critchett states that frauds to the extent of 100*l.* per week are detected, and that there is a suspicion of fraud to four times that extent. Now it is to be observed that, if a single word be found written on a Newspaper, it is charged as a letter of more than an ounce weight. If all those detected were merely charged as single letters, the amount would probably be not, at the utmost, more than one-twelfth of 100*l.* per week. The same witness says it is only people who have little to do who commit these frauds, and that they are never found in the Papers sent by News-agents, or those received by extensive houses. But as Prices Current would all be sent by men of business, and chiefly by extensive houses, it does not seem that the risk of fraud would be increased by allowing their free transmission as stamped Papers. It is presumed, therefore, that neither of these objections need to be held valid against attempting an improvement, otherwise desirable, in the transmission of mercantile intelligence, and which, it would seem, might be accomplished by employing a few additional sorters.

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

With regard to the transmission of Prices Current to the Continent, and the delivery of Foreign Prices Current sent to this country, I conceive that the same principle might be applied, and that they may be forwarded free from this country if bearing a stamp, but that Foreign Prices Current should be subject to a postage of 2*d.*, upon delivery here. And I would here beg to draw attention to the circumstance stated by Mr. Uzielli, a gentleman engaged in an extensive foreign business, as to the system at the Post-office of charging a Price Current or printed letter from the Continent, with a band round it, open at the sides (the manner in which they are circulated abroad), as a double letter, in consequence of the band.

It seems quite obvious that the practice of charging an additional rate of postage, equal to that of a single letter, for every scrap of paper, however light, although it may answer in this country, where the rate is known and acted upon, ought not to be observed with respect to letters and packets from abroad, where no such rule has obtained or is understood; and as it has been represented that it is impossible to make a foreign correspondent understand that a single sheet, no matter how large, is charged by the English Post-office 1*s.* 2*d.*, while several dozen separate bits of paper put up together, and weighing in all not half so much as the large single sheet, will be liable to a charge of 3*s.* 6*d.*, I therefore beg to submit it as my opinion that, at all events, the present system in this respect ought not to continue.

London, May 8, 1835.

LOWTHER.

I had prepared the draft of this Report, which my colleagues have only partially agreed to; but I have thought it best to give my own views on the subject.

#### THEORISTS AND PRACTICAL MEN.

*Preface to the Third Edition of Mr. Rowland Hill's Post-office Reform.*

In preparing my little work for a Third Edition I naturally look round to see how far that general criticism, which I invited, has strengthened or weakened my positions. I have the gratification to find, that so far as the plan has attracted public attention, the public voice has been, almost without exception, in its favour. That innovations, so numerous and extensive as I recommend, should meet with some opposition was inevitable, and I have only to express my surprise and pleasure that they have encountered so little. As is natural, the principal objectors are to be found amongst those, who, from long habit, have become attached to the plans in use, and in whom every change consequently breaks an association, and demands the trouble of acquiring new habits and learning new modes of procedure. Men so situated are the natural guards against reckless innovation; but it is almost proverbial that they find it difficult to believe that any change can be for the better, and are, above all, suspicious of reform from the hand of a stranger. To examine with care proposals so tendered is an excellent rule; to reject them without examination most erroneous. Nor is it much wiser to demand, as a *sine qua non*, that they should square with present practice; since that is in effect to forbid all such modifications, however advantageous. It should be remembered, that in few departments have important reforms been effected by those trained up in practical familiarity with their details. The men to detect blemishes and defects are among those who have not, by long familiarity, been made insensible to them. We need not look abroad for instances of this, for the very department of which we are treating furnishes a most striking example. Mr. Palmer, who unquestionably made by far the greatest improvement ever effected in letter-carrying, had not, at the time of devising his plan, any connexion whatever with the Post-office; on the contrary, his avocations were such as would be generally considered of a nature to unfit him for any share in its management,—he was manager of the Bath and Bristol theatres.

To enable the general reader to estimate the value of that which Mr. Palmer effected, it may be necessary to remind him that, previous to the adoption of Mr. Palmer's plan, in 1784, there was the greatest irregularity in the departure of mails and in the delivery of letters, that the robbing of the post was a thing of ordinary occurrence; and that, in the conveyance of the mail, the usual rate of progress was about 3½ miles per hour; lastly, that the net revenue for the twenty years preceding had been pretty uniformly about 150,000*l.* per annum:—that the effect of Mr. Palmer's improvements was greatly to increase the regularity both of departure and delivery, to put a complete stop to robbery wherever mail coaches were introduced, and to double the rate of progress; lastly, that the annual net revenue increased so rapidly, that at the end of the first ten years after the adoption of his plan, it was nearly 400,000*l.*; at the end of the second ten years upwards of 700,000*l.*; and, at the end of the third ten years, it had reached a million and a half, or ten times its former amount; from which time to the present it has remained almost stationary.

It may be supposed, however, by those who have not examined into the circumstances under which Mr. Palmer's improvements were effected, that for his particular plan, no knowledge of Post-office details could be deemed necessary; that the substitution of mail-

\* See Evidence, Nos. 12—29.

coaches for carts and saddle-horses, speed for slowness, punctuality for irregularity, security for hazard, was so obviously an improvement that the idea needed only to be started to be hailed with delight; and that the only astonishment would be, as is generally the case with the most valuable inventions, that a scheme so admirable and so simple had never been hit upon before. It may be imagined that those familiar with post-office details, and who from their familiarity were best acquainted with the annoyances incidental to the old plan, must have occupied a vantage ground from which they could most easily, most rapidly, and most fully discern the benefits to arise from the new arrangements. Surely, when the plan was laid before them, their opinion was unanimous in its favour. Doubtless they were eager to tender their assistance in its introduction, and evinced no impatience save at the delay necessarily attending so radical and extensive a change.

If any one has these impressions, let him turn to the parliamentary records of the period; he will there find "the oldest and ablest officers in the service representing Mr. Palmer's plan not only to be impracticable but dangerous to commerce and the revenue;"\* he will find one officer (Mr. Allen) giving in his written opinion, that "the more Mr. Palmer's plan was considered the greater number of difficulties and objections started to its ever being carried completely into execution,"† and labouring to shelter himself and his brother functionaries from the responsibility of this hazardous experiment by averring that they had, "to the best of their judgment and experience, given their separate opinions against the practicability of the scheme *in toto*."‡

Mr. Draper objects to coaches as travelling too fast; the progress of the mail, which, at the present day, is associated with all that is possible in rapidity, was, in his mind, indissolubly linked with the extreme of slowness. For his purposes the carrier-pigeon would be beaten hollow by the tortoise. He declares, that "the post cannot travel with the same expedition that chaises and diligences do, on account of the business necessary to be done at the offices in each town through which it passes, and without which correspondence would be thrown into the utmost confusion."

He finds another insurmountable difficulty in the utter unsuitableness, for Post-office purposes, of stage-coach hours; maintaining that the time for the Post to leave London "is unavoidably from one to three in the morning;" in which he is backed by Mr. Hodgson, who declares "that the shutting up of the Office at seven or eight o'clock in the evening is impracticable," and that an alteration of Post-office hours "would throw the whole correspondence throughout England, through London, as well as the bye and cross roads, into the utmost confusion." Mr. Draper adds, that the time allowed by Mr. Palmer for the guard to transact the necessary business at the various Post-towns, viz. a quarter of an hour (an allowance, by the by, the bare mention of which, except for a very few large towns, would bring a peal of laughter from a guard of the present day, who flings down one set of bags and takes up another while the coach scarcely slackens its speed), that this quarter of an hour is not enough, except at some small offices, and that "half an hour is hardly sufficient for the proper circulation of the country letters, as is well known by every body conversant in Post-office business."

With obstacles so hopelessly insurmountable before his eyes, it is no wonder that Mr. Hodgson should consider the new plan as requiring an impossible punctuality. He maintains, that "as the mails neither do nor can leave the general office at the same hour every morning, mail diligences would be less regular than others; and as to the guard, he might be waited for at every ale-house he should pass by."

To Mr. Hodgson's "humble apprehension, it pretty clearly appears that Mr. Palmer's plan would neither accelerate the mails in their conveyance, insure their safety, nor save expense, but very much the contrary."

The first of these points, however, he does not deem a matter of great importance, as he elsewhere states that he "does not see why the Post *should* be the swiftest conveyance in England." With respect to the second, lest the force of the observation should be lost in its generality, he condescends to be specific, observing that he "cannot think that a guard to each mail would add to its safety." This apparent paradox, however, he explains elsewhere, by representing safety as unattainable by any means—at least, any means in the command of the Post-office. He urges the cutting of bills of exchange and bank-notes in two, and so forth; and with that appears to think all human care must end, adding, "that there are no other means of preventing robberies with effect, as it had been proved that the strongest cart that could be made, lined and bound with iron, was soon broke open by a robber,

against whom it would, therefore, be in vain to attempt such kind of defence."

Mr. Draper is so deeply convinced that a robbery now and then is inevitable, as wisely to recommend that we should not run upon a greater evil by flying from a less, observing, that "when desperate fellows had once determined upon a mail robbery, the consequence would be murder in case of resistance." Like Dogberry, Mr. Draper is "a merciful man."

From all these disheartening and alarming circumstances, a hasty observer might infer that in those days the affairs of the Post-office were in a lamentable condition; happily he is set right by Mr. Hodgson, who informs us "that the constant eye that has been long kept towards their improvement in all situations, and under all circumstances, has made them now almost as perfect as can be, without exhausting the revenue arising therefrom."

The acme of perfection being thus attained, it would have been inexcusable in the Post-office functionaries not to entertain a lively apprehension of schemes which one scouts as "chimerical," another denounces as likely to "open a door for fraud," while a third predicts that "they will fling the whole commercial correspondence of the country into the utmost confusion, and will justly raise such a clamour as the Post-master will not be able to appease."

With this well-grounded dread of innovation, it is no wonder that they raise their voices in salutary warning to the theorist; that to his chimera, which to their capacious minds swelled far beyond that which imperiled Bellerophon, they opposed the buckler of their practical knowledge. Alas that the warning was in vain;—that innovation was attempted;—that the sober cart and quiet pad were exchanged for the headlong mail-coach;—that the convenient range of from one to three in the morning was exchanged for the unseasonable hour of eight in the evening, with a stern limitation to the minute;—alas for the heedless hurry; alas for the useless guard,—the vain resistance to robbers;—the universal confusion that has prevailed,—the deplorable injury to the revenue,—and the wanton overthrow of a perfect system. Let us, then, taught by dire experience, shun the perverse folly of those who have gone before us, and prostrate our minds in implicit reliance on the well-proved infallibility of Post-office wisdom.

Of Mr. Palmer's wilful obstinacy in urging his chimerical project, all must be convinced who read the following admonition: "It is a pity," says Mr. Hodgson, "that the author of the plan should not first have been informed of the nature of the business in question, to make him understand how very differently the Post and Post-offices are conducted to what he apprehends."

Mr. Hodgson subsequently "ventures to say, that the Post as now managed, is admirably connected in all its parts, well regulated, carefully attended to, and not to be improved by any person unacquainted with the whole."

Mr. Draper recommends a thorough examination for the purpose of ascertaining, whether the scheme is "as feasible in practice as it is specious in theory." In reply to an inconsiderate recommendation of Mr. Palmer's that the suggestions of commercial men, as to the management of the Post in their respective neighbourhoods should be received and considered. Mr. Hodgson checks the impertinence by maintaining that, "it is not probable, that any set of gentlemen, merchants, or outriders, can instruct officers brought up in the business of the Post-office, and it is particularly to be hoped, if not presumed, that the surveyors need no such information."

But the *coup de grace* is given by the same gentleman in another paragraph, by a *reductio ad absurdum*, the folly of the whole project being triumphantly exposed in a piece of argumentation which commences by his "supposing an impossibility; namely, that the Bath mail could be brought to London in sixteen or eighteen hours."

In conclusion, we have a remonstrance addressed to the Lords of the Treasury, by the Post-masters-General, eighteen months after the partial adoption of the plan, in which, after enlarging on the innumerable inconveniences which the change had occasioned, they proceed to declare that, "from a comparison of the gross produce of inland postage for four months, and from every other comparison they have been able to make, they were perfectly satisfied that this revenue has been very considerably decreased by the plan of mail-coaches."

Heavy must be the responsibility resting on those who thus persisted in folly and mischief; and wonderful is it that Mr. Palmer should have been able to beguile the government and the legislature into sanctioning his mad career. Who was the statesman, unworthy of the name, that thus gave the rein to audacity; that thus became in his besotted ignorance the tool of presumption? Who stood godfather to the vile abortion, and insisted on the admission of the hideous and deformed monster into the sacred precincts of Lombard-

street, the seat of perfection? His name,—alas! that the lynx should be guided by the mole! that Samson should be seduced by Delilah! Palinurus lured by a dream!—his name was WILLIAM PITT.

#### PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

1. Debates in the Houses of Lords and Commons.
2. Petitions.

From time to time, a record will appear of all the Petitions presented to Parliament, and the most important and remarkable will be reprinted.

#### PETITIONS FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

Presented during the present Session of Parliament; the date and number of signatures are shown.

Nov. 21. Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the city of Perth, seal 1.

— Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the royal burgh of Banff (Sir Andrew Leith Hay), seal 1.

— Subscribers, being Magistrates, Merchants, Shopkeepers, and other Inhabitants of the royal burgh of Elgin, in Scotland (Sir Andrew Leith Hay), 116.

— Chairman and members of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers of Dundee, signed by direction of a general Meeting of the Chamber, held 19th October, 1837, Alex. Balfour, chairman, 1.

Nov. 23. Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the city of Aberdeen, in council assembled (Mr. Bannerman), seal 1.

— Merchants, Manufacturers, Bankers, and Ship-owners of the city of Aberdeen, publicly assembled within the Court House of Aberdeen, upon the sixth day of November, in this present year, for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of Post-office improvement, and more especially the plan lately suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill, of an uniform rate of postage throughout the United Kingdom by means of stamped covers, signed in name, presence, and by appointment of the inhabitants of Aberdeen, publicly assembled by me, James Milne, Provost and chairman of the general meeting of the inhabitants of the city of Aberdeen (Mr. Bannerman), 1.

Nov. 24. Members of the Stock Exchange, and others connected therewith (Mr. Grote), 206.

Nov. 28. Noblemen, Gentlemen, Commissioners of Supply, Justices of the Peace, and Magistrates of towns, in the county of Renfrew, signed by the Lord Lieutenant and convener of the county in name and behalf, and by appointment of the meeting, Arch. Campbell, [App. 21.] 1.

Nov. 29. Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, established by royal charter in the city of Glasgow, seal 2.

(To be continued.)

#### RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

Under this head will appear an account of any Proceedings, Parliamentary or otherwise, on the subject of Mr. Hill's plan, which took place antecedently to the present Session of Parliament.

EVASIONS OF POSTAGE.—A. B. had a brother at Edinburgh, and when he wished to hear of him, he used to address him thus on the cover of a newspaper:—

Mr. Wrightson (write soon),  
Care of A. B., &c.

—A person about to start a newspaper, wished to advertise it in all the provincial papers, the number of which is several hundreds. The ordinary way of sending an advertisement to a provincial paper is by a post letter, paying the postage; but—to avoid the postage, an advertisement was inserted in a Sunday paper, addressed to all country papers, which set out the advertisement they were to copy, and directed them to insert the same in their paper, and referred them to an agent in town for payment. A copy of the Sunday paper was sent to every country paper.

—Gross receipts from the Post-office Revenue at the following cities and towns in 1832.

London	£637,178	Belfast	£9,693
Dublin	80,610	Nottingham	9,031
Liverpool	70,018	Aberdeen	8,584
Manchester	53,499	Dundee	7,353
Edinburgh	42,758	Potteries and } Newcastle }	6,712
Glasgow	35,754	Leicester	6,463
Bristol	33,887	Limerick	6,368
Birmingham	28,684	Waterford	5,377
Leeds	20,315	Preston	5,198
Hull	14,603	Coventry	4,444
Cork	11,511	Macclesfield	2,043
Sheffield	11,026	Drogheda	1,931
Norwich	9,991		

—Mr. Thornely, M.P. for Wolverhampton, communicates the following statement, showing how oppressively the present rates of postage are felt by the poor:—"I was surprised to learn at the Wolverhampton Post-office how many letters are detained for poor people till they can raise the amount of postage. The letter-carriers offer them in the first instance, and then they remain in the Post-office, perhaps two or three weeks, till the postage can be raised."

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Printed by HENRY HOOPER, at Beaufort House, Strand, and Published by him at 13, Pall Mall East, where all Communications and Advertisements are received.—Wednesday, March, 1838.

Agent for the City,

R. GROOMSBROOK, 6, Panzer Alley, Paternoster Row. And supplied by all Booksellers and News-venders in the United Kingdom.

\* Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the Public Offices—1788.

† Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1797, on Mr. Palmer's agreement for the Reform and Improvement of the Post-office and its Revenue, p. 115.

‡ Report in 1797, pp. 115, &c.

# The Post Circular.

OR, WEEKLY ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POSTAGE.

No. 1.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14, 1838.

Price 2½d.

LORD ASHBURTON on presenting a petition from merchants, bankers, men of science, and others, of the metropolis, to the House of Lords, May 20, 1837, thus addressed their Lordships: "The petition was on the subject of the Post-office; one most important, yet one which had been unfortunately neglected. Its object was to state to their Lordships the inconveniences which arose from the present charges for the conveyance of letters—inconveniences which disturbed social life, and strewed impediments in the way of science. He concurred in the view of the case taken by the petitioners; for he considered a tax on the transmission of letters, when carried to such an extent as it was in this country, to be most ill-judged and pernicious. The system required thorough re-consideration and an entire reform. He recommended to their Lordships the perusal of a pamphlet written by Mr. Rowland Hill: that pamphlet confirmed the impression which he had, that the grievances complained of might be remedied without a sacrifice of the revenue. The remedies suggested by that gentleman were—1st, a great reduction of charges; 2nd, the payment of the charges in advance; 3rd, equalization of the rate of charging. The expense of a Post-office establishment was the same whether the letters were conveyed twenty or two hundred miles—to Barnet or to Edinburgh; the only difference caused by distance being the expense of conveyance; and Mr. Hill had shown

that the expense of carrying a letter to Edinburgh did not amount to more than the one-thirty-sixth part of a penny, or the one-ninth part of a farthing. He thought, therefore, that it was an injustice to persons in distant towns to impose on them the present charges. Mr. Hill proposed that no payment should be made at the Post-office, but that covers or stamped envelopes should be purchased which should carry the letter free. Mr. Hill had calculated that a penny for a letter not weighing more than half an ounce would prove sufficient. He requested the noble Lords connected with the Government to give the matter their consideration, if it were only from the fact that the revenue was injuriously affected by the present system. In the year 1835, that revenue was 130,000*l.* less than it was in 1825, notwithstanding the increase of population and wealth, and the spread of education. It was clear, therefore, that the charge was too heavy, and also that it was fraudulently evaded. It certainly therefore was necessary, as well for the comforts of the people as for the sake of the revenue, that the matter should be seriously considered; and had it not been that the session was so far advanced he should have deemed it his duty to move that Mr. Hill's plan for remedying the evils complained of should be referred to a select committee."

## ADDRESS.

To the subject of Postage and its numerous important bearings on all departments of national policy and civilization, this publication is to be chiefly devoted; it is therefore hardly necessary to observe that all political discussion will be studiously avoided in its columns.

The POST CIRCULAR will attempt to carry out its object by impartially inquiring into the merits of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform Penny Postage, payable in advance, and the probable effects of this plan on the present system of Post-office administration and Post-office revenue—by carefully collecting all facts strengthening or controverting Mr. Hill's plan—by recording the proceedings of the legislature, the presentation of petitions, and all legislative enactments on Postage—by digesting the voluminous reports of the many Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, and reproducing the most remarkable portions of the evidence contained in these Reports—by recording the labours of any associations constituted to inquire into the subject of Postage, and all public meetings held with the same object,—by collecting all evidences of the state of public feeling on the subject, manifested through the press or otherwise; and by opening its columns to all temperate communications on the question of Postage.

The POST CIRCULAR will be distributed throughout the kingdom, in all quarters where its labours are likely to operate beneficially—to merchants, manufacturers, and commercial institutions—to the various corporations, both of a municipal, charitable, literary, and scientific character. It will likewise be sent weekly to every Provincial Paper, without reference to its politics, and a hope may be expressed, that the POST CIRCULAR will be favoured in return with any papers containing reports of local meetings or other notices on the subject of Postage.

It is requested that all communications may be sent (post free if possible) to the Publisher, Mr. HENRY HOOPER, 13, Pall Mall East, London.

## MERCANTILE COMMITTEE ON POSTAGE.

AN association of gentlemen of the first commercial eminence in London, has been formed, bearing this title. Their object will be best understood from a pamphlet which they have issued very diffusely throughout the kingdom. From this pamphlet the following extracts are taken.

### SUGGESTIONS

As to Facts which it is desirable to collect, and upon which Parties having information to give are requested to communicate to the Mercantile Committee on Postage, 6, Freeman's-court, Cornhill.

The House of Commons' Committee now sitting is appointed—

"To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill."

The members of that committee are, Mr. Wallace (Chairman), Mr. Poulett Thomson, Lord Visc. Lowther, Lord Seymour, Mr. Warburton, Sir Thomas Freemantle, Mr. Raikes Currie, Mr. Morgan John O'Connell, Mr. Thornely, Mr. Chalmers, Mr. Pease, Mr. Mahony, Mr. Parker (Sheffield), Mr. George William Wood, and Mr. Villiers.

The proposal advocated by Mr. Hill is—  
That all letters not weighing more than half an ounce be charged one penny, and heavier packets an additional penny for each half-ounce to a quarter of a pound, to be paid in advance.

It is desirable to show to the Parliamentary Committee that the Revenue would not suffer BY ALLOWING THE WHOLE OF THE REDUCTION PROPOSED BY MR. HILL.

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

The average cost of the actual carriage to any post-town in Great Britain is about one-tenth of a penny; and even allowing the whole present cost of the Post-office establishment, the tax is above 200 per cent.: a rate of tax which experience has demonstrated always produces an evasion of the law.

No law is so extensively evaded as this; and so general has the practice become, that even the best-regulated minds do not think they are committing offence by violating it.

It is proposed to call witnesses to prove—

The great extent to which the practice of violating the law by the irregular conveyance of letters and evading postage is carried, and to give evidence of those modes, taking care to protect parties who may furnish this testimony.

That this correspondence, if the reduction be made, would immediately be transferred to the Post-office.

In addition to the very great increase in the number of letters which would thus be transferred to the lawful channel, and to changing the habit of breaking, into the habit of obeying the law, it is proposed to show—

That reducing the postage upon all communications under half an ounce to one penny, would produce an immense increase to the Post-office revenue; and, by the increase of business, lead to a great augmentation of the general revenue.

It is known to all commercial men that correspondence creates business, and that business re-acts, and again produces correspondence, and involves, of necessity, a consumption of articles which increases the general revenue.

As instances of direct increase in the number of letters, which may with certainty be calculated upon, if the postage is reduced to one penny, it is proposed to show—

That all invoices and letters of advice would be despatched by the post.

That letters of inquiry, letters of explanation, letters pointing out or supplying omissions in orders or directions, would be greatly multiplied.

That letters would be written to secure accuracy and expedition upon many smaller points which are allowed to lie over until more important matters occur.

That innumerable circulars accompanying prices-current, and letters inquiring and advising of the state of the markets, would be forwarded by post, which are now either not written at all or but rarely written, and that to stock, share, and produce-brokers, and to intermediate agents of all kinds, as well as to principals, a very great increase in the number of communications by post would necessarily result.\*

That this will lead to the publication of prices-current, or market statements, in all the principal marts of trade in the United Kingdom, for immediate transmission to parties interested therein; and to the collection of these statements into other lists and tabular statements, useful in new combinations for many other purposes, and that the whole will result in a great increase of correspondence through the Post-office.

That with regard to stock, share, and produce-brokers especially, correspondence creates business, and that with them, as with others, cheapness of postage would increase correspondence; for their clients are peculiarly anxious to be advised daily of the state of the markets, and to have the opinion of those in whose judgment they place confidence, as to their purchases and sales, and that their correspondence would thereby be largely increased.

That shares in joint-stock property, and the scrip or other documents respecting it, would be transmitted to the buyers by post, instead of being sent as they now are, when the buyer resides in the country, by parcels.

That the facilities thus afforded by increasing the number of transfers, which bear an ad-valorem duty, would lead to the increase of the general Revenue.

That to auctioneers the proposed reduction would open the means of conveying particulars of estates offered for sale into those channels which they know to be likely to afford purchasers, and to furnish copies of their advertisements, particulars, and catalogues, to the various classes and trades interested in the purchase and sale of particular descriptions of property.

That between all houses and trading companies having branch establishments or travellers, the communications would be greatly increased, as letters would be written immediately the occasion for writing occurred.

That orders for small parcels of goods, or even for a single article, would then be transmitted, to the great convenience

\* Vide the Evidence of Joshua Bates, Esq. (Baring & Co.), and other Commercialists in Fifth Report.

of the retail dealer; whereas now such orders are not sent, or the wholesale houses are obliged to charge the postage upon them. And that, to the very numerous classes engaged in those trades into which silk, cotton, and woollen enter, this would be a most important convenience, and the cause of very great additional correspondence.

That it would lead, in all trades requiring extended publicity, to an immense increase in the postage as a mode of advertising, because a thousand circulars, with a letter on the fly-leaf, could be despatched for 3*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.* to parties thought by the senders most likely to become the purchasers. This would be particularly the case with publications addressed to men of science, and to particular classes or sections of society, and yet would not supersede the more extended appeal to the public through the medium of advertisements.

That to all religious and charitable institutions, particularly to those having branch societies, it would afford most essential aid in bringing their works of benevolence directly to the knowledge of those whom the societies thought especially likely to promote their objects, and facilitate their opportunities of communicating with their influential members, committees, officers, and subscribers.

That to all scientific, and particularly to statistical, geological, and guardian societies, and to authors and publishers upon all subjects, the means of collecting facts and information, and ascertaining the views of other men of science or of similar pursuits, would be of the highest value and importance, and largely increase their communications through the Post-office.

That authors would then be able to correct their own works when passing through the press; and as the proofs would be forwarded to them in sheets, the letters and packages, and the additional revises, would be very numerous.\*

That the great number of persons who are constantly seeking to arrest public attention on subjects which occur to them as of great religious, social, or political importance, would be able, at a small expense, to convey their views to those whom they desire to interest.

That to architects, engineers, medical men, and indeed to all professional men, having the charge of public works, or hospitals, or institutions of any kind, it would be highly useful and convenient; they could have, at an unimportant expense, reports from their subordinates by every post, and the institutions and works themselves would be benefited by the constant communication of the superior minds to the acting subordinates, of plans, drawings, and directions.

That great advantage would be taken of the reduction of postage by the legal profession, for the transmission of many documents now sent by coach.

That all insurance companies would very considerably increase their correspondence by a wider distribution of letters, prospectuses, advertisements, and circulars; making inquiries, transmitting policies, receipts, &c.

That to all joint-stock companies, benefit societies, savings' banks, and provident institutions, it would afford great and desirable facilities for communicating with their shareholders, committees, and members; and that letters would be sent to the shareholders and members, announcing meetings, dividends, calls, and other matters, in addition to public advertisements required by their acts or charters of incorporation.

That the proposed reduction would open a most extensive increase of communication through the Post-office, to the immense number of persons interested in the many great national measures and inquiries before Parliament, its numerous committees and government commissions, particularly as a large proportion of the many witnesses, and other persons in attendance upon them, are brought from the country, and would be daily communicating with home.

That an enormous increase would take place in what may be called FAMILY OR DOMESTIC CORRESPONDENCE.

That the masses of the rising generation are necessarily obliged to go forth from the family roof as apprentices, clerks, shopmen, travellers, teachers, domestic servants, and labourers of all kinds; that they often settle in marriage in places distant from their parents and relations; and that, to immense numbers of these, the present rates of postage prevent communications with relatives and friends.

That a great increase would arise in letters of advice and affection between parents and children, and from senior relatives, and amongst all the members, relatives, and friends of the same family; and from the very large class whose business avocations take them frequently from their homes; and out of the ever-changing incidents in life, such as sickness, accidents, rejoicings, and the in-

\* Vide Fifth Report of Commissioners.





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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 21, 1838.

Price 2½d.

LORD ASHBURTON on presenting a petition from merchants, bankers, men of science, and others, of the metropolis, to the House of Lords, May 20, 1837, thus addressed their Lordships: "The petition was on the subject of the Post-office; one most important, yet one which had been unfortunately neglected. Its object was to state to their Lordships the inconveniences which arose from the present charges for the conveyance of letters—inconveniences which disturbed social life, and strewed impediments in the way of science. He concurred in the view of the case taken by the petitioners; for he considered a tax on the transmission of letters, when carried to such an extent as it was in this country, to be most ill-judged and pernicious. The system required thorough re-consideration and an entire reform. He recommended to their Lordships the perusal of a pamphlet written by Mr. Rowland Hill: that pamphlet confirmed the impression which he had, that the grievances complained of might be remedied without a sacrifice of the revenue. The remedies suggested by that gentleman were—1st, a great reduction of charges; 2nd, the payment of the charges in advance; 3rd, equalization of the rate of charging. The expense of a Post-office establishment was the same whether the letters were conveyed twenty or two hundred miles—to Barnet or to Edinburgh; the only difference caused by distance being the expense of conveyance; and Mr. Hill had shown

that the expense of carrying a letter to Edinburgh did not amount to more than the one-thirty-sixth part of a penny, or the one-ninth part of a farthing. He thought, therefore, that it was an injustice to persons in distant towns to impose on them the present charges. Mr. Hill proposed that no payment should be made at the Post-office, but that covers or stamped envelopes should be purchased which should carry the letter free. Mr. Hill had calculated that a penny for a letter not weighing more than half an ounce would prove sufficient. He requested the noble Lords connected with the Government to give the matter their consideration, if it were only from the fact that the revenue was injuriously affected by the present system. In the year 1835, that revenue was 130,000*l.* less than it was in 1825, notwithstanding the increase of population and wealth, and the spread of education. It was clear, therefore, that the charge was too heavy, and also that it was fraudulently evaded. It certainly therefore was necessary, as well for the comforts of the people as for the sake of the revenue, that the matter should be seriously considered; and had it not been that the session was so far advanced he should have deemed it his duty to move that Mr. Hill's plan for remedying the evils complained of should be referred to a select committee."

## RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW—AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, May, 9, 1837.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL.—It being most desirable that the Government should proceed with some important measures which stand upon the orders, with the least possible delay—I refer more particularly to the Irish Poor-law Bill—I trust that the honourable gentleman who has a motion on the paper for this evening, respecting the Post-office, will not prevent me from moving the committee on that bill, by persevering with his motion. Should, however, the honourable gentleman think proper to refuse my request, I shall feel it to be my duty to move the previous question.

Mr. WALLACE.—In answer to the appeal of the noble lord I will observe that no man is more desirous that the Irish Poor-law Bill should proceed, than myself; but I plainly see that unless the private members who have given notices of motions, persist in bringing them forward, notwithstanding the entreaties of Government to put them off from time to time, they will sacrifice an important privilege, and abandon their duty to their constituents and the country. I never attempt to take advantage of the orders of the day, and I have made up my mind that I will no longer yield to any such solicitations. The noble lord says he will endeavour, by a vote of the House to set aside my motion: now I feel that this is a matter affecting the privileges of private members of this House, and although I am at all times ready to bow to a vote of the House, I think that, at present, being in possession of the House, my better plan will be, at once, to proceed with my motion.

The subject I have to bring under the notice of the House is one of considerable importance; for perhaps of all the taxes with which we are burdened, none is more oppressive or detrimental than the heavy rate charged for the conveyance of letters; and while all other taxes which have not been altogether repealed, have in some measure been modified, the postage tax alone since the year 1815, remains without alterations. Now this is a great grievance, and an injury to the country. It is one, also, that cannot be advocated on the ground of the assistance it affords to the revenue; because, I contend, that the higher the rate of postage the less productive is it to the State. The revenue now derived from the postage duties is really less than it was twenty years ago. The present exorbitant rates of postage have also given rise to a system of smuggling in the conveyance of letters, which is carried on to an extent such as many an Honourable Member would hardly credit. This is not the first occasion upon which I have endeavoured to reform the rate of postage; but I now seek for a Committee, not with the intention of reducing the amount of revenue derived from the postage of letters, but that the instructions of the Committee shall be, to consider what reductions may be made, preserving the present amount of revenue, subject, however, to any reductions which the Chancellor of the Exchequer may propose on bringing forward his Budget. I do not pretend to say what is the most just rate of postage, but I will call the attention of the House to a pamphlet upon the subject, written with great ability, by Mr. Rowland Hill. It appears that the plan he proposes has been considered and approved of by some of the best financiers in the country. The principle is, that there should be one uniform rate of postage, in no way regulated by distance, and that payment should be made in advance, by means of stamped covers. I am not, however, prepared to stand by the very low rate of postage which Mr. Hill recommends; but I think the principle, upon the whole, is the best that has yet been proposed.

To prove that a low rate of postage is more productive to the State, than a high one, I need only to instance France;—there the revenue from the Post-office has been doubled since the rate of postage has been lowered; but while they have been always lowering their postage, we have been increasing ours, and the result has been, a proportionate loss to the revenue. Again, in the United States, the returns from the Post-office have actually trebled in a very short time in consequence of the reduction of the postage duties; and it is now the boast of the president of those states, that the post of that country is now almost free—and in short, according to the good old English way, the cost of carriage is all that is demanded: it is not attempted to make the conveyance of letters a matter of revenue. I do not go so far as this at present; I only seek for such a reduction as can be made without lessening the amount of revenue now derived from the Post-office; but, at the same time, it is my firm conviction, that ultimately we must have a free post. Every person is interested in, and all persons are desirous of, a low

rate of postage. Look with what avidity franks are caught up. It is now a matter of general complaint, that money cannot safely be sent by post;—an alteration in this respect is highly necessary; and, if a principle similar to Mr. Hill's were adopted, this evil would be obviated; because paper money might then safely be forwarded through the Post-office. In Ireland and Scotland they have still one-pound notes; these might be sent by post, under such a regulation without fear of abstraction. Some time ago there was a system in practice, in Ireland, for the safety of money forwarded by post. There was a register kept, and all persons sending money by post were required to see the entry made in this register:—this had the desired effect; but, for some reason or other, I understand it has been discontinued. I know that I am not wrong in saying, that the revenue would be benefited by lowering the rate of postage; for prices current, proof sheets, and many other things which are now conveyed by other means, would be then forwarded by post. Soldiers and sailors in his Majesty's service can now send letters to their friends on the payment of one penny. I have made it my duty to inquire what effect this privilege has upon the habits of the men; and I find that those are, invariably the better soldiers who have the most correspondents: it is the same with sailors,—and instances are not rare, in which men have entered the service perfectly unacquainted with penmanship, who have, in consequence of the facility which the low rate of postage affords them, become constant writers to their friends. Captain Bouton of the 52nd Light Infantry, from whom I have received much valuable information upon this subject, assures me he has observed that the better the man the more he corresponds.

Having been a constant supporter of the Poor-law Bill for Ireland, I would ask the Members of his Majesty's Government, whether it would not be advisable to allow those whom they compel to go into the workhouse, to have the opportunity of communicating with their relations on the same terms as soldiers and sailors—that is, that they should only pay one penny postage? If the Government would extend to these poor persons this privilege, it would be, in my opinion, the best means of putting an end to the slanders and calumnies that have been, and will be, circulated respecting the working of the new system. An Honourable Friend of mine has, on more than one occasion, introduced a Bill for regulating wages. Now if workmen could communicate, in different parts of the country, without being taxed with a heavy rate of postage, there would be no need of such a Bill; because they would know then in what part of the country wages were higher or lower, and where a demand for labour existed. I maintain also that by adopting the principle of the stamped envelope, the great expense of the Post-office establishment would be saved to the country. Nothing would be lost by the country postmasters,—the Chancellor of the Exchequer would get his money in advance,—and the whole duty of the establishment would ultimately, I have no doubt, merge into the Stamp-office, by which the country would save not less than 500,000*l.* a year.

The next point to which I wish to call the attention of the House is, the superadding of postage on general post letters. I believe this to be not only illegal, but at the same time, one of the most mean and mercenary modes of raising a revenue that has ever been resorted to. I do not care whether this additional charge is 3*d.*, 2*d.*, or 1*d.* I say it ought not to be imposed at all. We have, I know, the assurance of the Right Honourable Gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it shall not be laid upon newspapers; but that is not enough—I object to this postage being superadded in any case. I have also to complain that, by the present system, letters are frequently sent by circuitous routes; thus, when a letter is sent from one place, perhaps six or seven miles distant, to the destination of the letter, it is taken forty or fifty, and sometimes sixty, miles round, and charged, not according to the distance between the two places, but to the distance the letter is thus carried. Thus I have found that letters which, if conveyed the direct road, would have been charged about 4*d.* and delivered in a few hours, have been charged 9*d.* and detained two days upon the journey. I do hope, when a Bill is brought in for the improvement of the Post-office, this system of a 1*d.* and 2*d.* post will be done away with. There are no less than 1157 penny posts in England, 211 in Ireland, and 165 in Scotland. I want the letters to be delivered to the people in the country without being detained fourteen hours every day, and, in some instances all day on the Sunday. It is of the utmost importance to the country, that letters should be delivered at different hours as they arrive. I believe that, in all towns, except London, there is a bill published at the Post-office, stating the hour

at which letters arrive, and also the time they go out; but at St. Martin's-le-Grand all the information to be obtained is at nine o'clock in the morning, and eight at night. I cannot see what reason there is against a greater number of deliveries per day of general post letters in London. At Liverpool there are six deliveries, daily; at Dublin, four; and Glasgow, four; and at Dublin and Glasgow letters are delivered on Sundays, as on all other days; but in London it is not so, because the convenience of the Post-office people must be consulted. And then on Mondays, we all know that we must wait an hour later for our letters than on other days, in order as it is said that an opportunity may be given at the Post-office, to sort them; but why could not that be done by the Post-office people going to business an hour earlier on Monday morning? Every honourable member of this House has to endure the inconvenience of waiting until ten o'clock on Monday mornings for his letters; and, as is well known, the mails are ordered to travel slowly on Sundays, because the morning slumbers of the gentlemen connected with the Post-office must not be disturbed. Another change that is greatly required, in order to enable the merchants and manufacturers of this country to keep pace with those of America, is to have their letters only charged by the weight.

The last part of my notice refers to the detention of letters. A most stringent Act was passed relative to this subject in the reign of Queen Anne: by that Act it was declared, that letters shall not be detained at the Post office. The Postmaster-General is bound to take an oath that this law shall not be violated. A similar oath is taken by all the postmasters in London and the country. I do not say that this oath is intentionally violated, but I must complain of the detention of letters in the Post-offices. I believe that the great cause of the plundering of letters is, the detention of letters in the country, in order that there may not be a delivery in London upon the Sunday. I think, that instead of the letters being detained in the country, they ought, at once, to be sent to the General Post-office. I admit that in London the letters are in safe custody; while in the country Post-offices the letters are opened, family secrets are disclosed, and money is frequently abstracted. I have also to observe, that if I bring an action against a postmaster in the country for the detention of a letter, the Postmaster-General will come forward and employ the public funds to defend his agents. This is, I think, a just subject for complaint; and it is my intention to propose a resolution that the Postmaster-General, and the Treasury will betray the public trust, if either shall employ the public money for the purpose of defending the postmasters or other officers of that establishment, who may, in future, violate the law by detaining letters. Last year, a bill was brought into this House for doing away with the office of Postmaster-General. I believe, however, there was a great dislike on the part of his Majesty's government, and especially on the part of the Right Honourable Chancellor of the Exchequer, to do away with that office. I say this, because, instead of acting immediately upon the Report, government kept it back for eight or nine months. Then the progress of the bill was very slow in that House. It, however, passed through this House without a division, and was sent up to the other House; but there among other good measures it most unceremoniously and rapidly received its *quiescent*. This session had no sooner commenced than the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and other members of the government, gave notice of their intention to bring in again those bills which were thrown out by the other House during the last session. I had a sort of feeling that they would not be brought forward, and I asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intended to do any thing with respect to the bill in question? I understood him to say that it should be brought forward shortly. As some delay, however, took place, another Hon. Member asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer the same question, and then the Right Honourable gentleman said that he would bring it forward in April. April came, but no bill came with it. After that month had elapsed, I put my present motion on the books, and the House has now to decide the fate of it. There is one important matter connected with the financial department of the Post-office,—it is, whether the packet establishment is to be managed in future by contract, or upon the same system as it is at present? For my own part I am an advocate for contracts, as I know the present system occasions a great loss to the government. I have a sufficient number of returns respecting the Post-office to fill a portmanteau; but I am sorry to say that many are of no use to me, being falsified either by an alteration in the terms in which they were called for, or by their not being made in accordance with

the terms in which they were ordered. One return I have moved for has been altered by altering one word, I find that by one return, the amount of paper sold is 42l. 11s. 6d.; but by an amended return it appears to be 98l. 19s.; and if I understand rightly, the difference has been put into the pocket of a certain individual. I will not mention names, but I say that an immediate dismissal should have been the consequence, and I should like to know whether any such dismissal has taken place.

I think the office of Postmaster-General should have no salary annexed to it. I think the honour of so distinguished an office is a sufficient recompense. In order to guard against the consequences resulting from the rejection of any measure which we may send up to the other branch of the Legislature on this subject, I shall, certainly upon a future occasion, take a division in this House upon the question, that the salaries attached to the office of Postmaster-General, and of his private secretary, shall be withheld from, and after the 5th July next.

With regard to my resolution as to the fitness of continuing the harbours of Port Patrick and Donaghadee as stations for communicating by Post-office steam-packets between Ireland and Scotland, I will wait till I hear what answer will be given to my statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or whatever officer of the Treasury may be appointed to reply to me. If that answer be not satisfactory, I intend to move for the appointment of a select committee to inquire into that subject. I hope, however, that, at any rate, the Secretary of the Treasury will inform us whether Sir E. Parry has made any report on the fitness of those harbours. Upon a review of the whole of the steam-packet department, it is my opinion that that department of the Post-office is a disgrace to the establishment, and a waste of the public money; and I am therefore glad that it has got into the hands of the Admiralty. I do not intend to move all my resolutions at present; I will, now merely move the first of them, and into that I will introduce an alteration which will make it run in the following terms:—"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report what alterations and reductions may be made in the present rates, and under the present mode of charging postage, or by the adoption of the principle and mode proposed in a pamphlet by Mr. Rowland Hill; keeping in view the maintenance of the present net revenue, subject, however, to any reduction on postage the Chancellor of the Exchequer may recommend when he brings out the Budget." This, sir, is the motion I beg now to submit to the House.

Mr. EWART.—I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of the Honourable Member who had just sat down, and I fully concur with him in the opinion that, so far from a reduction in the rate of postage being detrimental to the revenue, it will rather have a contrary effect. I think with him, also, that the present defective steam-packet system requires amendment. The subject of my Honourable Friend's motion being one of the greatest importance to all classes of the community, and it being generally admitted that an alteration in respect to the rates of postage is necessary, I hope the House will agree with me in the propriety of supporting it.

Question proposed.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL.—I do not rise to answer the statement of the Honourable Member for Greenock, but to call the attention of the House to the state of public business now before it. It is certainly usual, when a public Bill has once gone into committee, that it should be proceeded with night after night, until the committee has concluded its deliberations. I stated to the committee the other evening, that this was the way I intended to proceed with the Irish Poor Bill; but the Honourable Member for Greenock has thought proper to bring forward his motion, and has complained of the slow progress of the Bills relating to the Post-office through this House last year, and also that they have not been yet introduced during the present Session; totally forgetting that the introduction of a multiplicity of various business, before one particular measure is settled, acts rather as a barrier to all the business which may be before the House. Now I would suggest to the Honourable Member for Greenock, that such Bills as may be necessary for the reform of that, or any other department, are much more likely to be passed, if the attention of the House be not occupied with fifteen or twenty different motions on the subject. I do think, that it would be much better and much more to the convenience of the House to proceed at once with those bills which are already before it in order to send them up to the other House sufficiently early in the session to allow their lordships ample time for consideration,—than, by entertaining a number of new propositions, detain the measure now before us to so late a period of the session as will give the other House of Parliament some justification for rejecting them upon the ground that they cannot at so late a period enter upon such a mass of legislation. I think the House has had some experience of the mischievous consequences of this desultory mode of legislation, and, therefore, without meaning any disrespect to the honourable member for Greenock, I beg to move, as an amendment to his motion, that the order of the day for the House to resolve itself into committee upon the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill be now read. Before I sit down I will just state, that I do not intend to resume the committee on that bill to-morrow; but shall move that it be resumed on Thursday.

Question proposed.

Several Honourable Members.—Divide, divide!

Mr. ALDERMAN COPELAND.—I perfectly concur with the noble lord, that when a bill is before the House, it is most desirable that it should be proceeded with; but I must, at the same time, express my gratitude to the honourable member for Greenock for the very able manner in which he has brought this motion forward. As a commercial man, I can speak practically to its importance. From my own experience I can say, that some inquiry into the management

of the Post-office, and into the rates of postage, is absolutely necessary. I myself, sent some letters to Rio Janeiro some time ago, on which I paid a very heavy postage, and those letters have not yet reached their destination. Last week I received two prices current, one from Canton, and another from Calcutta. For one I was charged 5d., for the other, 10d. The price current for the one place cost 3d., and the envelope 2d.; and for the other the price current was 3d., and the envelope 2d. There is so much inconsistency in this, that to me it appears to require explanation. I trust that the Government will take up this subject, which all commercial men deem to be one of great importance.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, "It appears to me that the simple question before the House is, whether the measures of the Government shall be postponed, or the motion of an individual member?" And he proceeded to the discussion of this point, concluding by stating, "I shall certainly vote with the honourable member for Greenock; and if that honourable member be defeated, I shall then persist in bringing forward my own motion."

Lord John Russell, and Mr. Duncombe entered into further explanations.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—Although the course taken by my noble friend appears to be objectionable, I still hope to be able to reconcile honourable members to it. I assure the House that it is far from our intention, in taking the course suggested by my noble friend, either to undervalue the objections made, or the plan proposed, by the honourable member for Greenock. I certainly am prepared to show, and I think I could state adequate grounds to convince the House, that the object the honourable member for Greenock has in view, would not be best attained by the plan he proposes. The subject, however, occupies the attention of his Majesty's government at the present moment; and I hope to be able, during the present session, to state the result, and to bring forward some measure upon the subject. I would put it to the House whether it would be proper to refer a question involving no less than a million and a half of revenue, to a select committee? I think, also, that it will be admitted that the steps already taken by the present Government afford a pledge that this subject will be fully inquired into? They have already made a considerable reduction on the postage of ship letters. They have shown at least what their wishes are, and I hope that they will be enabled to realize them. I assure the House that the government have no intention to defeat the motion of any independent member, but they are naturally anxious to get forward a measure of so much importance to the tranquillity of Ireland as the Poor-law Bill. I will only add, with respect to what has been said as to contracts, that no consideration shall induce me to depart from that system, unless it be an absolute failure of the experiment.

Mr. HUTT.—After the statement of the right honourable gentleman, I will join with him in requesting my honourable friend the member for Greenock to withdraw his motion.

Mr. PEASE.—I should be extremely sorry to interfere with the Irish Poor-law Bill, and will therefore move that the debate be adjourned till the 8th of June.

The question, "that the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question," was then put and negatived; words added; main question, as amended, put and agreed to.—[From the Mirror of Parliament.]

#### PETITIONS FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

Presented during the present Session of Parliament; the date and number of signatures are shown.

Nov. 21. Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the city of Perth, seal 1.

— Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the royal burgh of Banff (Sir Andrew Leith Hay), seal 1.

— Subscribers, being Magistrates, Merchants, Shopkeepers, and other Inhabitants of the royal burgh of Elgin, in Scotland (Sir Andrew Leith Hay), 116.

— Chairman and members of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers of Dundee, signed by direction of a general Meeting of the Chamber, held 19th October, 1837, Alex. Balfour, chairman, 1.

Nov. 23. Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the city of Aberdeen, in council assembled (Mr. Bannerman), seal 1.

— Merchants, Manufacturers, Bankers, and Ship-owners of the city of Aberdeen, publicly assembled within the Court House of Aberdeen, upon the sixth day of November, in this present year, for the purpose of taking into consideration the subject of Post-office improvement, and more especially the plan lately suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill, of an uniform rate of postage throughout the United Kingdom by means of stamped covers, signed in name, presence, and by appointment of the inhabitants of Aberdeen, publicly assembled by me, James Milne, Provost and chairman of the general meeting of the inhabitants of the city of Aberdeen (Mr. Bannerman), 1.

Nov. 24. Members of the Stock Exchange, and others connected therewith (Mr. Grote), 206.

Nov. 28. Noblemen, Gentlemen, Commissioners of Supply, Justices of the Peace, and Magistrates of towns, in the county of Renfrew, signed by the Lord Lieutenant and convener of the county in name and behalf, and by appointment of the meeting, Arch. Campbell, [App. 21.] 1.

Nov. 29. Directors of the Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers, established by royal charter in the city of Glasgow, seal 2.

Dec. 1. Company of Merchants of the city of Edinburgh, incorporated by royal charter and act of Parliament (Mr. Bannerman), seal 1.

Dec. 4. Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the city of London, in common council assembled, signed by order of Court, Henry Woodthorpe (Sheriffs of London), [App. 22.] 1.

— Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the city of Edinburgh (Attorney-General), seal 1.

— Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the royal borough of Montrose, in Scotland, as representing the whole community thereof (Mr. Chalmers), seal 1.

Dec. 5. Directors of the Chamber of Commerce, Bankers, Merchants, Solicitors, Manufacturers, and other inhabitants of the town and port of Kingston-upon-Hull, [App. 23.] 134.

— Provost, Magistrates, and Council of the burgh of Kilmarnock, 16.

Dec. 8. Inhabitants of the parish of St. Giles, Camberwell, and its vicinity (Mr. Hawes), 193.

— Chairman, Deputy Chairman, Directors, and Manager of the Birmingham and Midland Bank (Mr. Scholefield), [App. 24.] 9.

— Magistrates and Town Council of the burgh of Dumfries (General Sharpe), seal 24.

— Chamber of Commerce and manufactures of the city of Edinburgh, constituted by royal charter, seal 2.

(To be continued.)

[App. 21.]

The humble Petition of the Noblemen, Gentlemen, Commissioners of Supply, Justices of the Peace, and Magistrates of Towns in the county of Renfrew.

SHREWETH.—That, as your Petitioners humbly conceive it would be of vast importance to the trade and commerce, and ultimately not injurious to the revenue of this country, were the rates of postage, presently chargeable for letters sent through the Post-office, greatly reduced; that the charges upon ship letters are particularly objectionable.

That it would also be of great importance to the community to equalize the rates of postage and to establish more generally penny postages of a certain weight throughout the country; on this point your Petitioners cannot help noticing, that at present among other similar anomalies in the Post-office of this country, a letter of three ounces weight is carried from the town of Renfrew to the town of Lochwinnoch, a distance of fourteen miles, for one penny, while a letter of the same weight carried from the town of Paisley, or Renfrew, only half the distance, or seven miles, to Pollockshaws, would cost four shillings.

That such a state of things existing in one and the same county, ought forthwith to be corrected.

May it, therefore, please this honourable House to consider this matter, and to do therein as in its wisdom shall appear proper. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

Signed by the Lord Lieutenant and Convener of the County, in name and behalf, and by appointment of the meeting.

November, 19, 1837.

[App. 22.]

— Sheriffs of London. Sig. 1. 85.

The humble Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons of the City of London, in Common Council assembled.

SHREWETH.—That, in the opinion of your Petitioners, a swift, certain, and cheap communication by post tends greatly to the advancement of the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of this country, and is also of high importance, as affording facilities for the collection and diffusion of information, by which the education of the people would be greatly accelerated, and as promoting friendly intercourse amongst all classes of the community.

That, although the present communication by post is tolerably certain, yet, owing to the infrequency of transmission, and the slowness of delivery, it is not so swift as it readily might be, and it is not so cheap. That these evils of slowness and high cost are serious impediments to an extended and prosperous state of commerce and manufactures. That, by creating obstacles and involving expenses in almost every stage of the progress of a literary work, they constitute a heavy tax on literature, and prevent the diffusion of information, and the progress of education, and that they are also productive of moral disadvantages, by checking the spread of friendly intercourse.

That these evils of slowness and high cost are not justified by any ultimate advantage to the Revenue; on the contrary, your Petitioners are decidedly of opinion that, by giving rise to a large amount of illicit carriage of letters, and by preventing, to a great extent, communication altogether, the present high rates of postage have been positively injurious to the Revenue itself, in proof of which your Petitioners have only to refer to the extraordinary fact, that, during the last twenty years, whilst the population of the country has increased nearly one-third, and commerce and education have increased in even a greater ratio, the revenue from the Post-office has not improved at all.

That, as an approximation to a system of equalized and reduced rate of postage, payable in advance, your Petitioners have noticed with great satisfaction the recommendation contained in the Ninth Report of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, for the adopting of the same in the Twopenny Post Department.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honourable House, that a uniform and low rate of postage, payable in advance, may be established, instead of the present varying and high rate, that advantage may be taken of the facilities which exist (particularly as respects large towns) for the more frequent transmission of letters than once in twenty-four hours; and that, pending the necessary arrangements for the general adoption of these improvements, immediate effect may be given to the recommendation of the Commissioners for introducing similar improvements in the Twopenny Post Department.

(Signed by order of Court.)

—"The pregnancy of the Duchess of Orleans," says the *Presse*, a ministerial journal, "is no longer doubtful, and will shortly be officially announced."





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# The Post Circular.

OR, WEEKLY ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POSTAGE.

No. 3.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 28, 1838.

Price 2½d.

The House of Commons now sitting is appointed—  
 "To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill."

The plan proposed by Mr. Hill is:—  
 That all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, be charged one penny for each half-ounce, to be paid in advance through the medium of stamped covers, or that letters should be stamped when delivered at the Post-offices.

This system would introduce uniformity and simplicity.—  
 An easy and cheap collection of the Revenue.—  
 Avoid a multiplicity of accounts kept at the Post-office.—  
 Save time in charging by pen and ink a varying rate on each letter, and in the delivery.  
 Avoid candle scrutiny into each letter to ascertain whether single or double as at present and consequent temptation to fraud.

The English Post-office Revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly diminished.  
 The French Post-office Revenue has increased more than half since 1821.  
 The United States Post-office Revenue has more than tripled during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.  
 The vast extent to which the trade of the country has increased within the last twenty years,

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

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

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

The average cost of its actual carriage to any post town is about one-tenth of a penny.  
 The penny posts of large towns are very profitable, even though these pence have to be collected from house to house.

The average cost of managing the twopenny-post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only 34 per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

The chargeable letters do not weigh more than about one-fourth of the whole mail.  
 These facts are stated that it may be seen upon what grounds the question of the reduction of postage is urged upon public attention,—but for a full view of this important subject, Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, on Post-office reform, should be read, which is published by Charles Knight and Co., 22, Ludgate-street, London.

## NOTICE.

The POST CIRCULAR hastens to allay the public irritation excited by the charge of postage made on its first number, and submits the following satisfactory and courteous communication.

General Post-office, March 24th, 1838.

Sir,—I reply to your letter of the 23d inst. I beg to acquaint you, that should any application be made for the return of postage on the *Post Circular*, the charge will be allowed, and those already returned as refused will be forwarded free of postage. The *Post Circular* was charged, as no authority had then been received to pass it free as a newspaper. I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,

THOMAS LAWRENCE.

Mr. Hooper, 13 Pall-mall East.

## WHAT IS A NEWSPAPER?

To the Editor of the *Post Circular*.

Sir,—The enclosed correspondence with the Postmaster-General, will show that the *Post Circulars* of last week were charged with postage, under circumstances it is proper to draw the attention of your readers to, and all others who are desirous of rational powers only being intrusted to a fellow subject.

It will be seen that the Postmaster-General possesses the right, at any rate he exercises the power, of deciding what shall constitute a newspaper. He, a peer of Parliament totally unacquainted with mercantile affairs, exercises also the same inquisitorial power in determining what shall constitute Mercantile Circulars and Prices Current. These by law, however carefully concealed the privilege has been, may pass under a penny stamp, or a penny postage, but their form and substance comes within the grasp of the Postmaster-General; and the mercantile world know, from sad experience, what an iron hand they have to deal with.

This is a power which would well befit the Autocrat of Russia; and I exhibit its existence that the people may judge for themselves how long they will submit to be degraded by the infliction of such a law.

Colonel Maberly stated lately before the Committee on Postage, of which I am Chairman, that my franks are regularly watched and counted at the General Post-office; it now appears that my handwriting on the back of a newspaper is also watched for there. No doubt this is very flattering to me; but let us inquire "who pays the piper," as we say in Scotland. Why the people do, as they are made to do for many other similar vagaries of legislation now-a-days. There being one man then to count the franks of an humble individual, and another to watch his handwriting, there need be no wonder at the enormous sum expended in maintaining the present system of Post-office mismanagement, and the extravagant postage requisite to uphold all the drones who benefit thereby.

Sir, your obedient servant,  
 ROBERT WALLACE.

P. S. The papers were sent I rather think on the evening of Thursday.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of Lichfield, &c. &c.  
 General Post-office, March 29, 1838.

My Lord,—On Friday last I sent six copies of the *Post Circular* newspaper to different parties, one of which was to Mrs. Wallace, at Fairlie House, Kilmarnock. By this day's post, Mrs. Wallace informs me that a paper, apparently a newspaper, was sent, charged with a postage of 2s. 4d., which she refused to pay, and the paper was retained. I require to be informed by your lordship if the *Post Circulars* of last week were charged with postage generally. If so, if they were so charged by your lordship's orders, and why; and if those now issued for the present week are also to be charged, why they are to be so.

If no general charge was made last week, I beg to be informed why the paper I addressed to Mrs. Wallace, was charged with postage. I have the honour to be, &c.

(Signed) ROBERT WALLACE.

General Post-office, March 23, 1838.

Sir,—In reply to your note of the 22d instant, I am commanded by the Postmaster-General, to inform you that, in consequence of the *Post Circulars* being without any previous instructions at the Inland Office, on Thursday the 16th instant, they were all charged with postage, the officers on duty being doubtful whether the publication alluded to could be considered a newspaper, under the act. This question, however, being submitted to the Solicitor and Postmaster-General the following morning, it was decided by the Postmaster-General to be a newspaper, and orders consequently given, that it should circulate free of charge for the future.

The amount has been refunded in all those cases where applications have been made; and, of course, the same will be followed with respect to Mrs. Wallace, who will be relieved from the charge of postage.

The circumstance of a *Post Circular*, apparently in your handwriting, being charged, is distinctly recollected in the Inland-office; but it occurred on Thursday, and not on Friday night, and upon this point, therefore, there must be some misapprehension.

I have the honour to be, Sir,  
 your obedient, humble servant,  
 W. MABERLY.

Robert Wallace, Esq., M.P.  
 1, Great Scotland-yard.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—MONDAY, MARCH 27.  
 THE POST-OFFICE.

MR. COLQUHOUN begged to ask the noble lord the Secretary for Ireland a question relative to some conduct on the part of the Post-office of an extraordinary nature, and he wished to know whether it had received the sanction of the Irish government. A newspaper called *The Cashel Missionary Herald*, which was issued on stamps, had lately been refused any longer a free transmission by the Post-office. He believed the only objection to the paper was, that it was the advocate of Protestant principles, and was strongly condemned by Dr. M'Hale, the Catholic archbishop of the diocese.

LORD MORPETH said the hon. gentleman had given him notice of his intention to ask this question, and he had therefore made the necessary inquiries at the Post-office, the matter not being within his cognizance, or indeed in his department! (hear, hear). It appeared from the statement of the authorities that the publication being considered not to be a newspaper, and not entitled to free transmission, it was charged with a postage, but the question appearing on further consideration to be doubtful, it was referred to the Stamp-office, and afterwards to the Treasury, for a decision. By a letter enclosed from Lord Lichfield it seemed that that noble lord had recommended that the publication should be considered a newspaper, and pass free.

Colonel PERCEVAL said, that the paper in question had been transmitted to him through the Post-office from the period of its commencement. He did not hesitate to declare himself one of its subscribers. Was the noble lord aware of the long-continued free transmission! The noble lord should satisfy himself whether the excuse made by the Post-office was correct or not.

LORD MORPETH: I have stated all I know on the subject, I know nothing at all of the paper (hear, hear!).

RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.  
HOUSE OF LORDS.

POST-OFFICE.

After a discussion in the House of Lords, on Thursday, the 15th of June, 1837, relative to the Post-office Bills—the disproportionate variations in the rates of postage, and the privilege of mails in going toll free.

LORD ASHBURTON said—The consolidation of the Post-office Acts will render future changes in the system more simple and easy. I think that the Noble Earl may venture upon a considerable reduction of the postage duties. It has been found in other departments that a reduction of duty

has led to an increase of revenue, and I see no reason to doubt but that such will also be the result of a reduction of the postage duties.

VISCOUNT DUNCANNON observed—In respect to referring the Bills to a Select Committee, I have no objection where it is practicable, that such a course shall be adopted; but in the present case, if the Bills be altered, they will be thrown out by the other House; and if they are in consequence reconstructed by that House, it will be very difficult to get them through Parliament at so advanced a period of the Session. In reference to the rate of postage, I beg to say that it is the intention of the Post-office to make an alteration in the mode of charging letters, and in future letters will be charged according to the direct distance they are taken. I hope your Lordships will allow the Bills to go into Committee.

THE EARL OF LICHFIELD.—Where letters are sent by a circuitous route, there will be no extra charge made. With respect to the revenue of the Post-office, I beg to say that there has been no falling off, but an increase, as will be seen from the following return:

Years.	Gross Revenue.	Net Revenue.
1827 . . .	£2,278,412 . . .	£1,484,164 . . .
1828 . . .	2,287,961 . . .	1,544,224 . . .
1829 . . .	2,265,481 . . .	1,509,347 . . .
1830 . . .	2,301,432 . . .	1,517,951 . . .
1831 . . .	2,321,310 . . .	1,569,038 . . .
1832 . . .	2,277,274 . . .	1,531,828 . . .
1833 . . .	2,294,911 . . .	1,532,270 . . .
1834 . . .	2,319,979 . . .	1,513,052 . . .
1835 . . .	2,353,340 . . .	1,574,458 . . .
1836 . . .	2,461,806 . . .	1,645,835 . . .

—That revenue is now produced by 170,000,000 of letters that are annually circulated in England; and if the reduction of duty for which some individuals call be acceded to, it will require the enormous number of 416,000,000 of letters annually to produce the same amount of revenue. With respect to the plan sent forth by Mr. Hill, of all the wild and visionary schemes which I have ever heard or read of, it is the most extravagant. One part of his plan is, that letters sent through the Post-office, shall be confined to a primary distribution; and if the expense of the final distribution cannot be met in any other way, it is to be defrayed out of a parochial rate. Now, I believe that, at the present moment particularly, very few people will be found to advocate the increase of parochial rates. If the Legislature chooses that letters shall be conveyed for nothing, they may adopt that course, but they had better consider whether the finances of the country will admit of such a change. They ought also to inquire whether, in all countries, the conveyance of letters has not constantly been viewed as a fair and legitimate source of revenue. I trust that, under all the circumstances, the progress of these Bills will not be opposed.

LORD ASHBURTON.—The Noble Earl, like all other Postmasters, looks on the Post-office as a means of taxation, rather than as an engine of civilization and commerce. I will contend that the increase of letters will be immense if the rate of postage be diminished.

The Bills were then read a second time.  
 [To the subject of revenue, the *Post Circular* will pay attention hereafter. For the present, Lord Lichfield may be asked why he happened to omit the revenue for 1815 and 1825. In 1815 the net revenue was 1,557,291l., and in 1825, 1,670,219l. Do these years exhibit an increase? His lordship's estimate of the number of letters, viz. 170,000,000, contrasts curiously with his subsequent contradiction of Mr. Hill's estimate of 88,000,000. There may be some misprint. The report is taken from the *Mirror of Parliament*.]

TUESDAY, MAY 30, 1837.

LORD ASHBURTON.—I am requested to present to your lordships a petition, which I consider particularly deserving of your attention. It is signed by a considerable number of publishers and bankers of the metropolis, also by several solicitors and gentlemen of science. The subject to which the Petitioners call the attention of Parliament, is that of the Post-office in this country,—one which, under the various reforms, of late years, seems to me to have been most unfortunately neglected; yet one, more important to the success of the trades of the country, and all the best interests of the empire, than can, perhaps, be imagined

The object of the Petitioners is, to state to your Lordships the great and serious inconvenience which arises from the enormous charges for the conveyance of letters, which tend to disturb social life, to injure the commercial interests, and to throw impediments in the way of science and literature. I concur in this view of the case, taken by the petitioners; for I consider a tax on the transmission of letters, when carried to such an extent as it is in this country, to be most ill-judged and pernicious. It is further stated that the mode of raising this enormous income has injured the revenue, and that therefore this system does require serious consideration and entire reform. I should take up much more of your lordship's time than I should be warranted in doing upon the presentation of a petition, were I to go, at length, into this subject; I will, therefore, merely recommend to your Lordships the perusal of a pamphlet, written by a gentleman named Rowland Hill. That pamphlet confirms the impression which I had, that the grievances, justly complained of by the Petitioners, might be remedied without any material sacrifice of revenue. The remedies suggested by this gentleman are,—first, a reduction of the charges; secondly, payment in advance; and, thirdly, an equalization of the duties. He proposes also, that an equal charge shall be made upon all letters, whether they be carried 20 or 200 miles. And although this may seem, at first sight, to be inconsistent, yet it is shown by Mr. Hill, that the amount of additional charge for the longer distance is scarcely more than for the shorter distance; for the actual charge incurred for conveying a letter to Edinburgh, which is 400 miles distant from London, is only the thirty-sixth part of one penny, or the ninth part of a farthing; and it is not equitable to charge so much for the postage of a letter sent to a distance as is now done, where the difference of charge is so little beyond that for one which is sent to a shorter distance. Another proposition of Mr. Hill is, that all letters shall be paid for when they are put into the Post-office, as a great delay arises from the carrier having to stop at each place where he delivers letters, and has to receive the postage, which causes the employ, necessarily, of a large number of persons.

I do most earnestly request your Lordships to turn your serious consideration to this subject, which, whether considered with reference to the extension of commerce or of education, is of the utmost consequence; and if it were not that the Session is considerably advanced, I should propose to refer the matter to a Select Committee. The Parliamentary returns show that, notwithstanding the great increase in population and commerce, there has been a considerable falling off in the Post-office revenue. The diminution, comparing 1825 with 1830, is not less than one-tenth; and comparing 1825 with 1835, the falling off amounts to 130,000*l.*; at the same time, the increase of wealth, and the spread of intelligence, have a direct tendency to augment it. It is clear, therefore, that the charge is too heavy; and also that it is fraudulently evaded. It certainly, therefore, is necessary, as well for the comforts of the people as the sake of the revenue, that the matter should be seriously considered.—The Petition was then read at length.

VISCOUNT DUNCANSON.—The pamphlet to which the Noble Lord has alluded has been under the consideration of the Post-office commissioners for some time. The treasury was not advised, at once, to adopt the whole of Mr. Hill's plan; but it is thought desirable to try it to a certain extent. My right honourable friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, proposes to reduce, to a certain extent, the charges on the transmission of letters; and though it is considered inexpedient to deprive persons of the opportunity of sending unpaid letters by the twopenny-post, they will shortly be enabled to purchase envelopes, which will carry them for a penny each. No doubt it will lead to a great saving in the expense of managing the Post-office if the public pay the postage in advance, but I doubt if such an arrangement will be generally liked. With regard to foreign letters, there will be great difficulty in carrying Mr. Hill's plan into execution.

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON.—I hope that in any plan uniformity will be observed.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.—Mr. Hill proposes that there should be an uniform charge of 3*d.* on all letters; and he calculates, that inasmuch as five or six times the number of letters sent now will be sent if the postage be so reduced, the amount derived by the revenue will not be less than at present; but he altogether loses sight of the fact, that to convey the increased number of letters, four, five, or six times the number of mails now employed will be requisite. I, however, am glad to learn that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is going to try the effect of a partial reduction of the charge. I am of opinion that great difficulties will be found in the way of any attempt to get the public to pay the postage in advance. Many of the letters are put into the Post-offices at the last moment, and as much time would be occupied in taking the money with the letters, many more of what are called "windows" for the receipt of letters would be necessary. I cannot agree with those who contend that no reform has taken place in the Post-office. During the last ten years—I may say during the last twenty years—that department has been gradually improving; I beg to add, that if your Lordships adopt, too hastily, the plan which is proposed, you may throw the whole establishment into serious embarrassment.

LORD ASHBURTON.—I do not intend to cast any blame on the officers employed in the Post-office. In reference to the increase of letters, a carrier would be able to deliver a much larger number of letters than he now does, in the same time, if the postage were paid in advance, than if he had to collect it.

THE DUKE OF RICHMOND.—In respect to foreign letters, a greater length of time is occupied in receiving a part of the postage, than if no part of it were paid.

The Petition was then ordered to lie on the table.

[From the Mirror of Parliament.]

[It may be doubted if the Duke of Richmond's speech be correctly reported, because his Grace must have seen that a sixfold increase of letters will not require a sixfold increase of mails.—Newspapers, Parliamentary papers, franks, and chargeable letters are carried by the mails. The three first will not increase at all, but perhaps decrease, if the chargeable letters increase sixfold. And if the chargeable letters should increase sixfold, their weight would only equal the present weight of the three first classes—or, in other words, double the present weight. Many of the mails could carry double the present weight of their bags. Mr. Hill has fully entered upon this point in his pamphlet.]

#### PETITIONS FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

(Continued from No. II.)

Dec. 13. Undersigned Printers, Booksellers, and Publishers (Mr. Wallace), [App. 69.] 119.

Dec. 15. Merchants, Bankers, and other inhabitants of Wolverhampton (Mr. Villiers), 144.

Dec. 21. Inhabitants of the parish of Streadham, and the neighbourhood thereof (Mr. Villiers), 53.

— Dean of Guild, Treasurer, Councillors, and Members of the Guildry incorporation of the royal burgh of Arbroath, N. B. (Mr. Chalmers), 58.

Dec. 22. Governors, and the Secretary, and the Medical Director of the United Royal Jennerian and London Vaccine Institutions (Mr. Wadley), 30.

Jan. 22. Manufacturers, Bankers, Traders, and other inhabitants of the town of Leicester, 1412.

— Merchants, Bankers, Solicitors, Manufacturers, Traders, Shopkeepers, and other inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Banbury, in the county of Oxford, 107.

— Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the royal burgh of Nairn, in North Britain (Mr. Macleod), 13.

Jan. 26. Magistrates and Council of the royal burgh of Crail (Mr. Edward Ellice), seal 1.

— Magistrates and Town Council of the royal burgh of Anstruther Easter (Mr. Edward Ellice), seal 1.

— Commissioners of Police of the barony of Gorbals, in the county of Lanark (Lord William Bentinck), seal 1.

— Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of the royal burgh of Cupar in Fife, in Council assembled (Mr. Edward Ellice), seal 1.

— Lord Provost Magistrates, and Common Council of the city of Glasgow, in Council assembled (Lord William Bentinck), seal 1. (To be continued.)

#### EFFECTS OF "THE POST CIRCULAR."

Not having permission to publish the name of the writer of the following, it has been omitted. The letter was addressed and delivered, *not by post*, to Mr. Hooper.

Sir,—I return you my thanks for sending me No. 1 of the *Post Circular*, I shall certainly order it of my bookseller, and most heartily wish success to the cause. I expect there will be a petition from — on the subject. I know by my own experience that when I can send letters for 1*d.* I send at least ten times as many as when they cost 6*d.* or 8*d.* But it is to the moral effect that would probably take place by the great reduction of postage that I look. Servants and poor people are now almost deprived of any intercourse with their distant friends.

I am, your humble servant,

Rector of —.

March 21, 1838.

— POST OFFICE REFORM.—We have received a copy of the first number of a newly-established London Journal, entitled the *Post Circular*, the object of which is to advocate "a cheap, swift, and sure postage." We are glad to see the subject taken up in such a manner, and we hope that this journal will be the means of diffusing largely such information as will prove to the public, the necessity and the practicability of the rates of postage being made much lower than they now are. The number now before us contains much interesting matter on the subject.—*Plymouth and Devonport Journal*.

— We have this week to acknowledge the receipt of the *Post Circular*, No. 1. We cheerfully hail its appearance, and ardently hope that the objects of its originators will speedily be attained. We have frequently given our opinion on the subject of Post-office Reform; the arguments in favour of Mr. Hill's plan appear to us unanswerable, and that what he states as probabilities may almost be reckoned as absolute certainties. We shall not lose sight of the object.—*Aylesbury News*.

— We have been favoured with the first number of the *Post Circular*, which as its name imports, is to be devoted chiefly to the promotion of reform in the Post-office. We heartily wish it success in so desirable an undertaking. In our future numbers we purpose co-operating with the *Circular* in effecting such a necessary object.—*Downpatrick Recorder*.

— (From a Correspondent, who gives his name.)—"Very great dissatisfaction exists in part of Devonport, in consequence of an additional penny being charged upon all letters, delivered beyond the fortifications, at Stoke and Maurice Town; although there are few houses in those districts five hundred, and some not more than three hundred yards from the nearest houses within the lines. Both places are comprised in the municipal boundaries of the borough. A great proportion of the inhabitants are connected with the navy or army, and a large number are wives or widows of soldiers and sailors. The penny alluded to, is charged upon their letters, although *franked and marked free* in London, or elsewhere. The postmaster-general, has been memorialized upon this subject without effect."

— POST OFFICE REFORM.—Some active and benevolent individuals are exerting themselves to obtain such a reform

in the Post-office as shall ensure a safe, cheap, and swift postage to the merchants and inhabitants of this country. It is proved that a reduction of postage will be a gain rather than a loss to the government, and an immense advantage to the governed. With the anomalies of the present system our readers must be aware. We, at Aylesbury, are called upon to pay 7*d.*, and sometimes 1*s.* 1*d.* for the carriage of half a sheet of paper ten miles, while for eight miles we are charged but 2*d.*; in either case a carrier would convey the same for 1*d.* Why do not the Aylesbury professionals and tradesmen immediately send a petition to Parliament, praying for the speedy adoption of Mr. Hill's plan? This is no party affair; all are interested in the removal of this crying grievance. We intend to call attention to the subject.—*Aylesbury News*.

— We (*the Western Flying Post*) extract the following from a new and very useful paper—*The Post Circular*, the objects of which are of great importance to all connected with the pursuits of business:—viz.: petitions on postage, and letters from Keinton, in No. 2.

— POST OFFICE REFORM.—We have received two numbers of a new publication called the "*Post Circular*," or weekly advocate for a cheap, swift, and sure postage," the establishment of which we hail with great satisfaction, as it will keep alive public feeling on this important question, and place the merits of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of an uniform penny postage payment in advance, more fully and clearly before the country than has hitherto been attempted. That the present system of charges for postage is based on false and highly unjust principles, extremely injurious in its operation on the community, and unsuited to the wants of the times, it does not require much reflection or examination to prove; and we strongly recommend the adoption of petitions in the various towns of this county in favour of a fair trial of Mr. Hill's plan, which the rapid extension of the railway system will very materially aid. We will take an early opportunity of recurring to the *Post Circular*, and submit to our readers a form of a short general petition for reduction of postage.—*Gloucester Chronicle*.

— POST CIRCULAR.—This is a small weekly newspaper, established for the temporary and especial purpose of communicating, easily and cheaply, throughout the country, such information as may promote the reform of our postage system.—*Sheffield Independent*.

#### EFFECTS OF THE HEAVY RATES OF POSTAGE ON THE RESIDENT CLERGY, AND ON DISSENTING MINISTERS.

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

March 19, 1838.

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

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

"There is another case for you. My friend, the Rev. Mr. —, of —, a village, four miles from a market town, and four miles from my own house, is a most earnest, diligent, and pious minister of the Gospel, labouring incessantly among the people of his charge. But he has not a large income; he has, however, ten amiable and affectionate children, situated in various parts of the country, honourably providing themselves with respectable means of subsistence. For instance, his eldest son resides at a town, from whence the postage each way is one shilling, *that is two shillings!* He has a daughter in another county, from whence the single postage is *nine pence* (and observe those letters are sent for the convenience of the Post-office a number of miles round the country, and the Post-office charges for the distance it affects to carry them). He has a son and daughter at —, the county town, at the distance of thirty-nine miles (from whence the postage is seven pence). You, my dear friend, who know Mr. — are aware that this family have been trained up from their childhood to give instruction to the children of the poor wherever they are placed; and in all places where they are located, they are cheerfully and intelligently employed, in giving Sunday School and religious instruction to the children of the poor families in their several neighbourhoods. Suppose these children had a power to communicate a slight thought, originating in the changed aspect, or some other circumstances, of some one who had hitherto been wayward, whose habits had been changed—who had turned from sullenness to cheerfulness, and fierce defiance to placid and beautiful obedience. These are scenes which, I can assure you, frequently come under our observation in these towns, arising, we hope and believe, from the example and precepts of those young people who undertake the gratuitous task of instructing them. You must try and imagine what that result would be if this family of children

were thus permitted to communicate; no one can do it so well as yourself, you know that a simple and humble thought has often led to the most great and powerful results. The Post-officetax entirely shuts out the communication of mind between this amiable and affectionate family, and whenever they do write to their parents, or one another, they sit down under the idea that they must write a letter, that their father may think *worth the postage*. The short line expressed from the heart, at the moment, would be worth twenty such letters! The government by such a course is taking the most effectual step to estrange from each other the very best members that constitute any community.

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

P.S.—I forgot the conveyance of letters by private individuals: I am an extensive carrier in this way. Persons in a town like this,—widows who have sons in London,—and in many cases, poor labourers who have children—these show laudable anxiety to get a letter conveyed. Lately, a farming man asked to have a letter conveyed, adding, "it was only that Benjamin wanted to know about the child sent down for his health." You may say these letters must pass through the Twopenny-post: but this is not the case; for I have known eighteen out of twenty letters delivered before the second day without any expense whatever.

—Mr. Thornely, M.P. for Wolverhampton, communicates the following statement, showing how oppressively the present rates of postage are felt by the poor:—"I was surprised to learn at the Wolverhampton Post-office how many letters are detained for poor people till they can raise the amount of postage. The letter-carriers offer them in the first instance, and then they remain in the Post-office, perhaps two or three weeks, till the postage can be raised."

—Gross receipts from the Post-office Revenue at the following cities and towns in 1832.

London	£637,173	Belfast	£9,693
Dublin	80,610	Nottingham	9,031
Liverpool	70,018	Aberdeen	8,584
Manchester	53,499	Dundee	7,353
Edinburgh	42,758	Potteries and	} 6,712
Glasgow	35,754	Newcastle	
Bristol	33,887	Leicester	6,463
Birmingham	28,684	Limerick	6,368
Leeds	20,315	Waterford	5,377
Hull	14,603	Preston	5,198
Cork	11,511	Coventry	4,444
Sheffield	11,026	Macclesfield	2,043
Norwich	9,991	Drogheda	1,931

EVASIONS OF POSTAGE.—A. B. had a brother at Edinburgh, and when he wished to hear of him, he used to address him thus on the cover of a newspaper:—

Mr. Wrightson (write soon),  
Care of A. B., &c.

—A person about to start a newspaper, wished to advertise it in all the provincial papers, the number of which is several hundreds. The ordinary way of sending an advertisement to a provincial paper is by a post letter, paying the postage; but—to avoid the postage, an advertisement was inserted in a Sunday paper, addressed to all country papers, which set out the advertisement they were to copy, and directed them to insert the same in their paper, and referred them to an agent in town for payment. A copy of the Sunday paper was sent to every country paper.

POSSIBILITY OF A PROFITABLE FARTHING POST.—The cases of the Penny Magazine, Saturday Magazine, Chambers' Edinburgh Journal, and other cheap periodicals, afford illustrations of the very low rates at which distribution of large numbers may be conducted. The Penny Magazine is distributed weekly in considerable towns, at the houses of its subscribers. It reaches the subscriber for ONE PENNY—which he pays generally after a credit. Out of this penny the following charges take place:—

1. For the labour and capital of the retail bookseller;
2. For the carriage and distribution to all parts of the kingdom;
3. For the agency of the London publisher;
4. The profit of its producers;
5. The cost of actual production, viz.—  
Composition of eight folio pages.  
Engravings.  
Artists' Designs.  
Authorship.  
Paper, and  
Machinery for Printing each Copy.

Each of these departments bearing its own profit. If a private agency were willing to distribute any number of these papers, weekly, for ONE FARTHING each, it may be readily imagined, how eager the same agency would be to do the same business every day for the same profit of one farthing on each paper.

If private establishments could and actually did perform this distribution profitably at this cost, besides embarking capital and taking risk, can it be said with any foundation that a GOVERNMENT is unable to execute the distribution of a piece of paper of less size and weight than the Penny Magazine, without embarking any capital and taking no risks, NOT FOR A FARTHING each letter but for ONE PENNY?

THEORISTS AND PRACTICAL MEN.

Preface to the Third Edition of Mr. Rowland Hill's Post-office Reform.

In preparing my little work for a Third Edition I naturally look round to see how far that general criticism, which I invited, has strengthened or weakened my positions. I have the gratification to find, that so far as the plan has attracted public attention, the public voice has been, almost without exception, in its favour. That innovations, so numerous and extensive as I recommend, should meet with some opposition was inevitable, and I have only to express my surprise and pleasure that they have encountered so little. As is natural, the principal objectors are to be found amongst those, who, from long habit, have become attached to the plans in use, and in whom every change consequently breaks an association, and demands the trouble of acquiring new habits and learning new modes of procedure. Men so situated are the natural guards against reckless innovation; but it is almost proverbial that they find it difficult to believe that any change can be for the better, and are, above all, suspicious of reform from the hand of a stranger. To examine with care proposals so tendered is an excellent rule; to reject them without examination most erroneous. Nor is it much wiser to demand, as a *sine qua non*, that they should square with present practice; since that is in effect to forbid all such modifications, however advantageous. It should be remembered, that in few departments have important reforms been effected by those trained up in practical familiarity with their details. The men to detect blemishes and defects are among those who have not, by long familiarity, been made insensible to them. We need not look abroad for instances of this, for the very department of which we are treating furnishes a most striking example. Mr. Palmer, who unquestionably made by far the greatest improvement ever effected in letter-carrying, had not, at the time of devising his plan, any connexion whatever with the Post-office; on the contrary, his avocations were such as would be generally considered of a nature to unfit him for any share in its management,—he was manager of the Bath and Bristol theatres.

To enable the general reader to estimate the value of that which Mr. Palmer effected, it may be necessary to remind him that, previous to the adoption of Mr. Palmer's plan, in 1784, there was the greatest irregularity in the departure of mails and in the delivery of letters, that the robbing of the post was a thing of ordinary occurrence; and that, in the conveyance of the mail, the usual rate of progress was about 3½ miles per hour; lastly, that the net revenue for the twenty years preceding had been pretty uniformly about 150,000*l.* per annum:—that the effect of Mr. Palmer's improvements was greatly to increase the regularity both of departure and delivery, to put a complete stop to robbery wherever mail coaches were introduced, and to double the rate of progress; lastly, that the annual net revenue increased so rapidly, that at the end of the first ten years after the adoption of his plan, it was nearly 400,000*l.*; at the end of the second ten years upwards of 700,000*l.*; and, at the end of the third ten years, it had reached a million and a half, or ten times its former amount; from which time to the present it has remained almost stationary.

It may be supposed, however, by those who have not examined into the circumstances under which Mr. Palmer's improvements were effected, that for his particular plan, no knowledge of Post-office details could be deemed necessary; that the substitution of mail-coaches for carts and saddle-horses, speed for slowness, punctuality for irregularity, security for hazard, was so obviously an improvement that the idea needed only to be started to be hailed with delight; and that the only astonishment would be, as is generally the case with the most valuable inventions, that a scheme so admirable and so simple had never been hit upon before. It may be imagined that those familiar with post-office details, and who from their familiarity were best acquainted with the annoyances incidental to the old plan, must have occupied a vantage ground from which they could most easily, most rapidly, and most fully discern the benefits to arise from the new arrangements. Surely, when the plan was laid before them, their opinion was unanimous in its favour. Doubtless they were eager to tender their assistance in its introduction, and evinced no impatience save at the delay necessarily attending so radical and extensive a change.

If any one has these impressions, let him turn to the parliamentary records of the period; he will there find "the oldest and ablest officers in the service representing Mr. Palmer's plan not only to be impracticable but dangerous to commerce and the revenue:"\* he will find one officer (Mr. Allen) giving in his written opinion, that "the more Mr. Palmer's plan was considered the greater number of difficulties and objections started to its ever being carried completely into execu-

tion,"\* and labouring to shelter himself and his brother functionaries from the responsibility of this hazardous experiment by averring that they had, "to the best of their judgment and experience, given their separate opinions against the practicability of the scheme *in toto*."†

Mr. Draper objects to coaches as travelling too fast; the progress of the mail, which, at the present day, is associated with all that is possible in rapidity, was, in his mind, indissolubly linked with the extreme of slowness. For his purposes the carrier-pigeon would be beaten hollow by the tortoise. He declares, that "the post cannot travel with the same expedition that chaises and diligences do, on account of the business necessary to be done at the offices in each town through which it passes, and without which correspondence would be thrown into the utmost confusion."

He finds another insurmountable difficulty in the utter unsuitableness, for Post-office purposes, of stage-coach hours; maintaining that the time for the Post to leave London "is unavoidably from one to three in the morning:" in which he is backed by Mr. Hodgson, who declares "that the shutting up of the Office at seven or eight o'clock in the evening is impracticable," and that an alteration of Post-office hours "would throw the whole correspondence throughout England, through London, as well as the bye and cross roads, into the utmost confusion." Mr. Draper adds, that the time allowed by Mr. Palmer for the guard to transact the necessary business at the various Post-towns, viz. a quarter of an hour (an allowance, by the by, the bare mention of which, except for a very few large towns, would bring a peal of laughter from a guard of the present day, who flings down one set of bags and takes up another while the coach scarcely slackens its speed), that this quarter of an hour is not enough, except at some small offices, and that "half an hour is hardly sufficient for the proper circulation of the country letters, as is well known by every body conversant in Post-office business."

With obstacles so hopelessly insurmountable before his eyes, it is no wonder that Mr. Hodgson should consider the new plan as requiring an impossible punctuality. He maintains, that "as the mails neither do nor can leave the general office at the same hour every morning, mail diligences would be less regular than others; and as to the guard, he might be waited for at every ale-house he should pass by."

To Mr. Hodgson's "humble apprehension, it pretty clearly appears that Mr. Palmer's plan would neither accelerate the mails in their conveyance, insure their safety, nor save expense, but very much the contrary."

The first of these points, however, he does not deem a matter of great importance, as he elsewhere states that he "does not see why the Post should be the swiftest conveyance in England." With respect to the second, lest the force of the observation should be lost in its generality, he condescends to be specific, observing that he "cannot think that a guard to each mail would add to its safety." This apparent paradox, however, he explains elsewhere, by representing safety as unattainable by any means—at least, any means in the command of the Post-office. He urges the cutting of bills of exchange and bank-notes in two, and so forth; and with that appears to think all human care must end, adding, "that there are no other means of preventing robberies with effect, as it had been proved that the strongest cart that could be made, lined and bound with iron, was soon broken open by a robber, against whom it would, therefore, be in vain to attempt such kind of defence."

Mr. Draper is so deeply convinced that a robbery now and then is inevitable, as wisely to recommend that we should not run upon a greater evil by flying from a less, observing, that "when desperate fellows had once determined upon a mail robbery, the consequence would be murder in case of resistance." Like Dogberry, Mr. Draper is "a merciful man."

From all these disheartening and alarming circumstances, a hasty observer might infer that in those days the affairs of the Post-office were in a lamentable condition; happily he is set right by Mr. Hodgson, who informs us "that the constant eye that has been long kept towards their improvement in all situations, and under all circumstances, has made them now almost as perfect as can be, without exhausting the revenue arising therefrom."

The acme of perfection being thus attained, it would have been inexcusable in the Post-office functionaries not to entertain a lively apprehension of schemes which one scouts as "chimerical," another denounces as likely to "open a door for fraud," while a third predicts that "they will fling the whole commercial correspondence of the country into the utmost confusion, and will justly raise such a clamour as the Postmaster will not be able to appease."

With this well-grounded dread of innovation, it is no wonder that they raise their voices in salutary

\* Report of the Committee of the House of Commons, in 1797, on Mr. Palmer's agreement for the Reform and Improvement of the Post-office and its Revenue, p. 115.  
† Report in 1797, pp. 115, &c.

\* Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the Public Offices—1788.

warning to the theorist; that to his chimera, which to their capacious minds swelled far beyond that which imperiled Bellerophon, they opposed the buckler of their practical knowledge. Alas that the warning was in vain;—that innovation was attempted;—that the sober cart and quiet pad were exchanged for the headlong mail-coach;—that the convenient range of from one to three in the morning was exchanged for the unseasonable hour of eight in the evening, with a stern limitation to the minute;—alas for the heedless hurry; alas for the useless guard,—the vain resistance to robbers;—the universal confusion that has prevailed,—the deplorable injury to the revenue,—and the wanton overthrow of a perfect system. Let us, then, taught by dire experience, shun the perverse folly of those who have gone before us, and prostrate our minds in implicit reliance on the well-proved infallibility of Post-office wisdom.

Of Mr. Palmer's wilful obstinacy in urging his chimerical project, all must be convinced who read the following admonition: "It is a pity," says Mr. Hodgson, "that the author of the plan should not first have been informed of the nature of the business in question, to make him understand how very differently the Post and Post-offices are conducted to what he apprehends."

Mr. Hodgson subsequently "ventures to say, that the Post as now managed, is admirably connected in all its parts, well regulated, carefully attended to, and not to be improved by any person unacquainted with the whole."

Mr. Draper recommends a thorough examination for the purpose of ascertaining, whether the scheme is "as feasible in practice as it is specious in theory." In reply to an inconsiderate recommendation of Mr. Palmer's that the suggestions of commercial men, as to the management of the Post in their respective neighbourhoods should be received and considered. Mr. Hodgson checks the impertinence by maintaining that, "it is not probable, that any set of gentlemen, merchants, or outriders, can instruct officers brought up in the business of the Post-office, and it is particularly to be hoped, if not presumed, that the surveyors need no such information."

But the *coup de grace* is given by the same gentleman in another paragraph, by a *reductio ad absurdum*, the folly of the whole project being triumphantly exposed in a piece of argumentation which commences by his "supposing an impossibility; namely, that the Bath mail could be brought to London in sixteen or eighteen hours."

In conclusion, we have a remonstrance addressed to the Lords of the Treasury, by the Postmasters-General, eighteen months after the partial adoption of the plan, in which, after enlarging on the innumerable inconveniences which the change had occasioned, they proceed to declare that, "from a comparison of the gross produce of inland postage for four months, and from every other comparison they have been able to make, they were perfectly satisfied that this revenue has been very considerably decreased by the plan of mail-coaches."

Heavy must be the responsibility resting on those who thus persisted in folly and mischief; and wonderful is it that Mr. Palmer should have been able to beguile the government and the legislature into sanctioning his mad career. Who was the statesman, unworthy of the name, that thus gave the rein to audacity; that thus became in his besotted ignorance the tool of presumption? Who stood godfather to the vile abortion, and insisted on the admission of the hideous and deformed monster into the sacred precincts of Lombard-street, the seat of perfection? His name,—alas! that the lynx should be guided by the mole! that Samson should be seduced by Delilah! Palinurus lured by a dream!—his name was WILLIAM PITT.

**THE NEW ROYAL EXCHANGE.**—The committee of the Common Council have adopted and recommended the following suggestions on this subject from the Mercers' Company:—"To rebuild the Royal Exchange upon an enlarged scale, and so as to afford increased accommodation to the mercantile interests. To improve the approaches, and to render the building in all respects worthy of the metropolis: for which purpose it would be necessary to take down the whole of the Bank-buildings and a number of houses between Cornhill and Threadneedle-street, on the eastern side of the present site. That as the new Exchange may be erected for the sum of 150,000*l.*, that sum should be paid by the Corporation of the City of London and the Company of Mercers in equal proportions, they being reimbursed (after paying the lecturers and trusts) out of the future surplus moneys of the Gresham estates, the Gresham trustees to give up to the public so much of the ground now forming part of the site of the Exchange as shall be required for the public convenience, and in lieu thereof the site of ground on which the proposed Exchange and buildings shall be erected do become part of the Gresham trust; and as all the outlay beyond the sum of 150,000*l.* will be rendered necessary for the public convenience, and not for the benefit of the Gresham trust, it will be necessary to make an application to the government for a grant of money sufficient for the purpose, which it is calculated will not exceed 200,000*l.*"

#### PETITIONS ON POSTAGE.

It is highly desirable that no time should be lost in forwarding to members of Parliament those petitions which are ready for presentation. They may be transmitted through the Post-office directed to any member, if open at both ends. Several members of all shades of politics manifest an interest in this most important measure. Mr. Wallace, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Bannerman, Mr. C. P. Villiers, &c., have presented many petitions during the present session of Parliament.

#### FORM OF A SHORT GENERAL PETITION FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

To the Right Honourable the [Lords, spiritual and temporal, or Commons, as the case may be] in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned, inhabitants of \_\_\_\_\_ in the County of \_\_\_\_\_

SHewETH,—That the dearth of the present rates of postage is injurious to the industry of the people, and prevents much correspondence between relatives and friends at a distance from each other, and causes many letters to be illegally sent in parcels and by private hands.

That a great increase would take place in all sorts of correspondence if the rates of postage were reduced, and that the law would be obeyed and not broken.

That your petitioners pray your honourable House to give Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of an uniform penny postage for all letters payable in advance a fair trial. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The members of the House of Commons who have kindly permitted general post letters under an ounce weight on the subject of postage to be addressed to them marked POSTAGE, are as follows.

Letters from the counties of	
Hereford, Gloucester, Monmouth, Somerset, Cornwall, Devon, Wilts, Dorset, Worcester . . . . .	Sir Charles Lemon, Bart., M.P., 46 Charles-street, Berkeley-square.
Herts, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex, Berks, Oxford, Stafford, Salop.	Charles P. Villiers, Esq., M.P., 11, Wilton-street.
Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancaster, York . . . . .	R. M. Milnes, Esq., M.P., 23, Pall-mall.
Rutland, Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Warwick, Bedford, Bucks, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Norfolk, and Suffolk . . . . .	Charles Buller, jun., Esq., M.P., 1 Queen's Square Place, Westminster.
IRELAND . . . . .	The Hon. P. Butler, M.P., 24, York-road.
SCOTLAND AND WALES . . . . .	Edward Ellice, jun., Esq., M.P., 18 Arlington-street.

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The letter from Croydon signed J. T., with its remarkable spelling shall appear, unless displaced by more important matter.

### The Post Circular.

LONDON, MARCH 28, 1838.

The evidence which has been given before the Parliamentary Committee is not permitted to be published, but establishes, we hear, the oppressive and the suppressive effects of the present rates of postage, and the certainty, in the opinion of the witnesses, that the direct revenue of the Post-office itself would be greatly increased if postage be reduced to one penny for each letter from any one post-town in the United Kingdom to any other. It is of the most decisive character, and the instances of certain increase most convincing.

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

As to the revenue, we undertake to demonstrate that it will not only be safe, but that it will be increased, and largely increased, if the postage be reduced to one penny; but the evidence which would be most pertinent to this subject, the public are at present prohibited from seeing, because of the wise decree which enables M. P.'s to shut themselves up in a private room to discharge their public duties.

We of course cannot know in this instance what is the conduct of the members of the present Committee, but we do know how wholesome publicity is to all Committees and to all men discharging public duties, and we have seen, in numerous instances of Committees sitting in private, how pregnant with foregone conclusions—how partial—how twisting and perverting—how false in the assumptions—how illogical—are many of the questions. We have known members, after a witness has declared he knew nothing of a particular part of the subject, wait a few minutes, and then forgetting (of course they forgot, for otherwise such conduct would be unpardonable) the declaration of the witness, put assumed cases in the shape of questions as founded upon previous matter which did not exist; and ask opinions from a witness who had declared he had not examined that part of the subject, but being pressed, ventured the first impression, which was then recorded as an opinion.

True it is that such opinions are not entitled to any weight in the argument, but being in the evidence when the subject comes into the House of Commons, these opinions are twisted, perverted, and crammed into the ears against the stomach of the sense, and assist in raising a fog of words to smother reason in its birth.

Looking at the names of the members upon this Committee, and knowing from inquiry that Lord Seymour, Lord Lowther, Mr. Thornely, Mr. Parker, Mr. Chalmers, and the indefatigable chairman constantly attend, we ought not to be apprehensive that any such course will be pursued; but it would be to us, and we know it would be to the public, who take a strong interest in the subject, very satisfactory if the Committee were sitting under the wholesome influence of public inspection.

Publicity is the only security for responsibility, and we do not imagine that any twelve or thirteen men, be they who they may, are wholly free from those influences of position and prejudice which act upon all other men; and particularly we do not believe that any twelve members of parliament can be free from such influences, earwigged and baited about as they are during the session, particularly upon questions involving the details of any great monopoly.

Few of the public, and of the poor especially, are aware that it costs less than a halfpenny to carry a letter from one post-town to another in the United Kingdom.

That the letters and papers which go free, weigh considerably above three times more than those letters which are chargeable, and that each chargeable letter carries three unpaid, besides giving a large revenue to government. It is not proposed to take any privileges from those who now enjoy them, and yet the revenue will not only be safe but largely increased by allowing all to send their letters for a penny each. Our readers need not be under apprehension on this subject. Figures admit of demonstration, and Mr. Hill is too cool and quiet a calculator to advance any calculations which he cannot sustain—and they will, be sustained, when witnesses such as those whom the Committee has examined, and amongst whom are men paying themselves upwards of 1000*l.* a year in postage, have, in their examination, stated that the present revenue would be more than safe at one penny. And when they have not only stated that conviction as the result of their extensive experience, but have given the figures and facts upon which it is founded, Government need be under no apprehension for the revenue. But we shall show our readers, yet, such astounding facts upon this subject, and such an immensity of good to flow from the reduction to one penny, that the wonder will be how a commercial people should have subjected themselves so long to an oppression so enormous. It is a part of that old financial error, that the heaviest tax produces the greatest revenue—a rule which experience has shown, should be inverted with reference to every article of universal use.

We draw attention in another column to a letter upon the subject, affecting a very large class of the community, and of the oppressive effects of the present heavy rates in suppressing the communications of the best feelings, and checking the flow of the tenderest affections of human nature.

—The *Manchester Guardian* of last Saturday gives a full report of a special general meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, held on Thursday the 22nd ult., "to consider the best mode of obtaining a reduction of the rates of postage." The meeting appears to have been attended by the first commercialists of that greatest commercial hive, and the feeling was unanimous for an extensive change of the present system. Mr. Samuel Fletcher truly observed, "no small reduction would meet the case—it must be a large reduction; one which the public would feel at once, and lead them to say, 'It is not worth my while to pass the Post-office; for it is at once the cheapest, safest and most expeditious mode of conveyance.'" And Mr. Henry Tootal said, "that to ask for a small reduction was not asking enough."—This Manchester meeting is surely but the forerunner of similar meetings all over the country. Mr. Poulett Thomson would do well to fix it in his memory when seated at a cabinet Council, and remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the representation of Manchester is not to be trifled with. A report of this meeting appears in another part of our paper.

### IMPORTANT MEETING AT MANCHESTER FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

A special general meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures was held at the office of the chamber on Thursday last, "to consider the best mode of obtaining a reduction of the rates of postage."

Mr. RICHARD BIRLEY, having been called to the chair, said, that the directors had met on the 14th inst. to consider the best mode of obtaining a reduction of postage, and the subject was then considered of sufficient importance to call a special meeting of the chamber; and the present meeting was accordingly convened by circular. At another meeting of the directors, held the preceding day to consider the subject in preparation for the present meeting, several resolutions were drawn up. These the chairman read *pro forma*; and then said, that Mr. Rowland Hill, in his pamphlet on the subject, had recommended that the whole postage should be reduced to a penny, to whatever part of the kingdom a letter might be sent. This appeared a very startling recommendation when it was considered, that some letters were charged as much as 11d. single postage,—and on first taking up the pamphlet, he had thought the plan absurd; but after reading it, he had found Mr. Hill's arguments so good and forcible, that he should recommend the meeting to petition parliament that Mr. Hill's plan be adopted. The carriage of a letter from London to Edinburgh, 400 miles, really cost only *one thirty-sixth part of a penny*, the principal expense being in receiving and in delivering the letter; and on this ground it seemed just, that no letter should be charged at any higher rate than another letter, whatever distance it might be carried. In order to gain the same amount of revenue that now accrued from the present plan, it would require six times as many letters to be sent through the Post-office; but it should be remembered, that it did not follow that six times as many letters must be written—(hear);—because a very great number of letters were now sent otherwise than through the Post-office.—(Hear.)

Mr. RICHARD COBDEN, in moving the first resolution, said, that when in London last week, he was glad to find that this subject had taken fast hold of the intelligent part of the commercial classes, and that a very intelligent body of men had formed themselves into an association for the purpose of bringing the question before the public, and disseminating their opinions throughout the country. He thought it would be expected, that Manchester should also demonstrate its feeling in this matter; and, being the centre of the manufacturing trade of this country, he thought they might lay before the committee of the House of Commons some facts which would probably have more weight than any hitherto adduced. He thought, that from the fact that there had been no increase in the revenue from postage during the last twenty years, while the population had increased one-third, and while civilization, education, and trade, had gone on in an increasing ratio, there might be deduced the inference that the postage had not been merely unchanged, but had even been raised in charge, and that it had become objectionable to the people. Our prices in our own commodities, for instance, had been reduced in that period some 30, 40, or 50, some 100 fold; and what was the result of those reductions in price? A great increase in the consumption, and a consequent increase in the profitable trade of the country. Thus we might adduce from our own experience a positive proof, that, if the Post-office would adopt the same plan that we had found successful in prints, yarns, and calicoes, it would be followed by similar results as to profits and returns. It appeared from Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, that the actual cost of the transmission of a letter from Edinburgh to London was the one-ninth part of a farthing; and, including the expense of delivery, he estimated that one-third of a penny would cover the expense of carriage and delivery. He proposed, then, that 200 per cent. should be the profit for government, which would make the postage of each letter a penny; and he (Mr. Cobden) thought if that plan were adopted, judging from the results in our own trade and in the trade of the world, it would ultimately produce a greater revenue than now accrued. What was wanted was not an increased revenue from postage, but merely that the present amount should continue to be paid; but it should be recollected what an enormous increase of business would arise from the same amount of revenue. He should be very glad if some steps could be taken in this town to exhibit some facts connected with the subject; if, for instance, a sub-committee were appointed to collect facts, to show the committee of the House of Commons what would be the probable effect of Mr. Hill's plan upon the trade in Manchester. He thought it could be fairly shown, that an immense number of invoices were now enclosed in parcels with the goods, which, as a matter of course, would then be sent by post. (Hear.) He believed there was scarcely one parcel in a thousand from Manchester, that did not contain an invoice; and if, instead of that practice, it became an invariable custom to send invoices through the post—(which would doubtless be the case if Mr. Hill's plan were adopted),—if the invoice were not sent by post, the party to whom the parcel was sent would not hold himself responsible for the goods if lost. The consequence would be, that a party ordering goods would always say, "Send your invoice by post;" as was now the case in London as to goods sent by smack to Edinburgh or Glasgow; otherwise the Scotch purchaser would consider himself exonerated from the responsibility, if the parcel were lost at sea. If we had a committee formed to ascertain what number of parcels went out of this town in one week, from which could be made an approximate estimate of the number in a year; and it might safely be said, that for each parcel one additional letter would be sent by post, in the event of the penny postage being adopted. Besides invoices, too, it was well known that a number of letters were sent in parcels to London; and in this way many gentlemen in this town did not hesi-

tate to evade the payment of postage. He knew several houses who sent parcels three or four times a-week; and they sent the whole of their own and their friends' correspondence by these coach parcels. Here, too, there would be an immense gain, if the postage were so low as to offer an inducement to prefer the Post-office to any other conveyance. Then, with respect to the operation of the plan on our own business—take, for instance, a fancy print trade, where an establishment was producing novelties every week. If the penny postage were universal, every house in the print business would be in the habit, on every occasion of producing a new pattern, to transmit 100 or 200 slips of this pattern to their chief customers by post, in letters, intimating that the pattern was just produced, and soliciting orders. That would also be the case with the silk trade, in which, from the fine material and small weight of the pattern, there would be still greater facilities for sending patterns. So, in London, the fancy jewelers and other trades, and in this district machine-makers and patentees of all kinds of mechanical inventions, would send their drawings, specifications, and explanations, in circulars through the post, to all parts of the kingdom, setting forth the advantages of the new invention, and soliciting orders. There was another very tangible mode of increasing the number of post letters, which had occurred to him. Manufacturing and commercial houses were in the habit of sending out travellers—some houses three or four each—and it would be a great convenience if these houses could send notices to their customers in the different towns, to say that their travellers were coming at such a time. He knew two or three old-fashioned houses in London that did so; but then, they must get large profits, and have comparatively few customers, or they could not do it. He was satisfied, from conversations which he had had with commercial travellers, that they would be glad of an inexpensive mode of sending such letters from the next town, to say, "I shall be with you to-morrow, or the next day." Such a convenience would enable travellers to do their business better and more expeditiously; and their customers would be enabled to get their money ready, if money was due; or if orders only were sought, to look over and see what they were likely to want. These were points bearing particularly upon our business in this neighbourhood; and it appeared to him, that the most desirable information which they could furnish to the committee of the House of Commons would be that which did so bear upon our own business. Our proximity to some large towns, which received almost the whole of their letters by carriers, coaches, and waggons—such, for instance, as Bolton and Blackburn—might enable us to show a considerable addition, in this way, to letters passing through the post. He had limited his observations to the points bearing upon our own business; but he considered the question as a social, an educational, and an intellectual question, and he thought the plan devised by Mr. Hill one of the most important he had ever heard of, and well deserving the name given it by a gentleman present, that of a great invention. As an important economical invention, bearing closely upon our own interests, he was glad to see that Manchester had taken it up, and he thanked the directors for having assembled the chamber to consider it.—Mr. HENRY NEWERY seconded the motion.—Mr. JAMES FERNLEY commented on the inequality of the rates of postage; observing, that the postage of a letter from Manchester to Liverpool, the distance being about 90 miles, was sevenpence, while that of a letter from London to Manchester, six times the distance, was elevenpence. The statement as to the inclosure of letters in parcels applied very forcibly to those sent hence to Liverpool; for it was a very common practice to enclose a number, say twenty, of invoices and receipts in one packet, and to send it by railway, which cost a very trifling sum, compared with what the postage would be. If all such invoices and receipts were now sent through the post, the charge would be enormous; but if the change suggested in Mr. Hill's pamphlet were made, he had no doubt they would all be transmitted by post.—Mr. BERNARD adverted to the advice of commercial correspondents, which he said were not so frequent, as sometimes they were not worth a single postage; but if the postage were a penny, commercial houses would advise their correspondents two or three times a-day in some cases. Manchester being surrounded by large towns at short distances, upon which distances the tax of the present postage fell most heavily, he thought Manchester suffered from this cause more than perhaps any other place in the kingdom. As a proof that short distances were most heavily taxed in proportion, as to postage, he stated, that to Liverpool, a distance of 32 miles, the postage was sevenpence; whereas to Birmingham, which was 80 miles distant, the postage was eightpence. [Birmingham is distant about 85 miles by mail route, and the postage is ninepence.] Considering the great shipping trade of Liverpool, there was no doubt, that the reduced rate of postage suggested by Mr. Hill would very much increase the number of letters between these towns.—The CHAIRMAN said, he thought Mr. Cobden's suggestion as to a committee a very good one, and it would be very desirable if gentlemen present would state any facts bearing upon the subject. He then put the resolution, which passed unanimously.

Mr. SAM'L FLETCHER, in proposing the second resolution, said it was so comprehensive in itself that it left him nothing to add in support of it. He perfectly agreed with all its statements, and with what had been said by Mr. Cobden and other gentlemen.—Mr. WM. NEILD, in seconding the motion, said the various points connected with the question of postage were so numerous, that the meeting, if it discussed them all, might be occupied a very long time; but looking at it in the way laid down as a general principle, in regard to the revenue itself, if there were no other argument, he thought that was quite sufficient to show that the present system was bad in principle. Considered merely as a question of reve-

nue, he should say that the present plan was decidedly unsound; because to lay a tax upon all the commercial portion of the community, which constituted an impediment to that very class from which the revenues of the country were mainly derived, could not be good in principle or policy. He thought that this was the fact, was proved by the smallness of the amount itself.—(Hear.) He believed that the whole community felt the amount of postage to be excessive, and that every man felt that, in point of economy, he must do all in his power to evade it. He had no hesitation in saying, that a large portion of the community would sacrifice five times the amount of postage in other ways rather than pay it. He observed, as to the present transmission of patterns by post, that the parties sending them found that they lost more in postage than the profit upon the articles sold. A few years ago the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in fixing the amount of duty upon certain articles, wisely made his estimate as to what the amount was at which he could come in competition with the smuggler; and in many cases the duties were lowered to meet this object. This appeared to be the wise course. But had it been pursued by the Post-office? No; for the carriers beat the Post-office completely in charge, and in many cases they would deliver parcels, of course much larger in bulk, in less time than the Post-office. Some years ago the Post-office regulations were considered a credit to the country; but how had they kept pace with other institutions? They had either stood still or retrograded, while every thing else had gone onward most rapidly.—(Hear.) What gentleman who had been charged with a letter from private friends, which he was bound to deliver personally, but would give five times the amount of the postage, rather than be at the trouble of delivering it himself? It had been a custom, many years ago, to send letters from this town by carriers; but the Post-office at length, finding the carriers' bags as large as their own, seized them. What was the result? Did the Post-office gain by it? Not one shilling. In many cases invoices, instead of being sent by carriers, were enclosed in the bales; the law was complied with; the trade was inconvenienced; while the Post-office were no gainers.—(Hear.) It was a fixed conviction, in the mind of the whole community, that the Post-office charge was excessive; and he would therefore submit, that no small reduction would meet the case.—(Hear.) It must be a large reduction; one which the public would feel at once, and lead them to say, "It is not worth my while to pass the Post-office; for it is at once the cheapest, safest, and most expeditious mode of conveyances."—(Hear.) If that were done, the revenue would be materially increased, and what was of far more consequence, the commercial community would be largely benefited. It was a matter of great importance, therefore, that the commercial community of this district, now that the matter was brought before the public, should exert themselves, and show the legislature and the government the perfect absurdity of the present plan.—Mr. P. F. WILLERT said, that the greatest number of letters to the continent, connected with the yarn trade, were invariably sent by parcel, or amongst other samples where wool, &c. was sent to the continent. One of the most grievous things in connexion with foreign postage was, that the smallest trifle enclosed in a letter from abroad was heavily charged in postage. He had received a letter the other day from the continent [which he produced], which contained a small ticket, and the postage thereon was 2s. 5d. extra. A single small bill from Germany, Holland, or France, thus enclosed, involved an additional postage of 2s. 4d. 2s. 1d. and 2s. 5d.; and in this respect a uniform reduced charge would be a great benefit to the public. He perfectly agreed in the observations made by Mr. Neild.—The second resolution was then put from the chair, and passed unanimously.

Mr. HENRY TOOTAL said, there was one subject which had not been named, and which it might be as well to bring before the public, though it was named by Mr. Rowland Hill in his pamphlet, for which he was entitled to their best thanks. He would assert, that out of every 100 gentlemen who read that pamphlet, 90, if not 99, would say they were convinced by its reasoning; for Mr. Hill's plan was so plain and simple, that they must say it was sound sense, and ought to be adopted. Looking at the French Post-office during the same period of twenty years in which our Post-office had not only not increased its revenue but had decreased it, the French Post-office had increased 54 per cent. He believed that its revenue in fourteen years had increased from nearly 24,000,000 francs to 37,000,000. The postage in France was much less than ours: he did not exactly know in what proportion, but it so struck him. His own letters were charged very much less than in England. The United States, in the same period of twenty years, had increased three-fold, as appeared from statistical documents; therefore, they might draw the same conclusion, and agree with Mr. Neild, that to ask for a small reduction was not asking enough. He would not do any government the injustice to suppose, that they did not wish to decrease the rates of postage; for looking at it in a fiscal point of view, the revenue would not be kept up under the present system. Men's minds were so made up to evade the postage, when the charge was high, that he for one felt no compunction of conscience in trying to evade it. He agreed with Mr. Cobden in his recommendation, that a plan might be devised by which they might inquire from every carrier and from every coach office, as to the number of parcels sent by them, and they might then ascertain something near the number of letters sent in that manner. They might assume that there was one sent in every parcel, and sometimes more. There was one remarkable fact which he would mention, a parcel in a carrier's warehouse at Birmingham was opened, and found to contain 1,100 letters, every one of which was going in the parcels to evade the postage.—(Hear.) From a calculation which had been made, it would require, to keep up the revenue, that somewhere about five times as many letters should be transmitted through the Post-office as there

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are now; but they would not have to write five times as many letters, because many were written now that were not sent through the Post-office. But he thought they ought to bear in mind, and the government also ought to bear in mind, that the Post-office was not established to produce a revenue; and perhaps gentlemen would excuse him reading a report presented by Lord Lowther, who was entitled to their thanks for his services in that department: he said, "The principle of the Post-office, as distinctly laid down by the 12th Charles II., was to afford protection and accommodation to trade and commerce; the direct revenue from the Post-office was not the primary object." Another report from the late Commissioners of Inquiry into the Post-office said, "We have sufficiently informed ourselves on this subject, to be satisfied that an alteration of the present system is absolutely necessary." It was, therefore, well to give this matter their most serious consideration.

Mr. P. F. WILLIAMS said, that Mr. Tootal having made an observation as to postage in France, he would state that the letters there were charged according to their weight; any letter under half an ounce was charged single, above that up to one ounce double, and an ounce and a half treble. But here the grievance was, that for the thinnest slip of paper that was enclosed in a letter, we had to pay double postage.

Mr. BERNHARD, with reference to what Mr. Tootal had said, regarding the rates of French postage, would observe, that the rates there were about one half of the English postage. From Paris to Rouen, a distance of 83 English miles, the charge was eight sous, or about 4s. English; whereas the postage for 80 miles in England is 8d.

Mr. JAMES ATHERTON said, he had great pleasure in moving the third resolution. A gentleman had stated to him, that out of one hundred letters from his establishment, not more than one went through the Post-office. The subject had been adverted to, so far, only in its effects on their commercial operations; but it also materially effected the poorer classes, who were debarred from many advantages by the high charges of the Post-office. They all knew the great pleasure they had in receiving letters from their friends; and the greater the distance, the greater the bar to this pleasure, as enjoyed by the poorer classes.—Mr. A. HENRY seconded the resolution.—Mr. JOHN SPENCER said, he had not read Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet; but he was prepared to say, that any change from the present would be for the better. People had now a pleasure in evading the law which ought, at all times, to be treated with respect. The penalties were so oppressive, that people were anxious to know how far they could go safely in evading them. Persons thought, a while ago, that the sending of invoices by other conveyances than through the Post-office, without writing under them, was not an evasion of the law. Under that impression many, himself amongst the number, sent them by a carrier, which they did according to the instructions of their customers; proceedings were commenced against seventy-five individuals, among whom were himself and Mr. Fletcher; and, in addition to the penalty of 10*l.*, his own expenses were 23*l.*

Mr. RICHARD COBDEN said, there was a gentleman sitting near him who thought they could not get an alteration of the present system, if it decreased the revenue. He (Mr. Cobden) did not think they could get it, unless they could make a promise that the revenue would not suffer. Unless the postage were exceedingly low, they could not with propriety insist that the postage should be paid in advance. If they charged a penny postage in advance, and made it available by stamps which they could purchase by the thousand at once, they would get rid of the whole machinery of treasurer and collectors in the post-office, and they would transfer a great number of the clerks to be receivers. By insisting upon payment in advance, they might calculate upon carrying on four times the extent of business with the same number of clerks: this was a very important consideration. He thought payment in advance would be the only means; and where there were small payments, it had become the universal practice to pay in advance.—The CHAIRMAN then put the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. ROBERT GARDNER moved the fourth resolution. He said he would just beg to remark, that he was in Liverpool yesterday, and took a few letters—(laughter); and the broker to whom he delivered them said, he hoped they would pass some strong resolutions at this meeting, for a parcel never arrived but it entailed upon him the delivery of a dozen letters.—(Hear.) He was convinced, that not a fiftieth, or even one hundredth part of the letters found their way into the Post-office. He must confess he had not been prepared for what had been said with reference to the importance of the subject, but he was perfectly convinced of it now. As many gentlemen were wishful to leave the room, he would mention, though quite out of order, that he had received an application from Greenock and Glasgow, which ought to have been addressed to the secretary, wishing the chamber to co-operate with them in favour of sugar manufactories being licensed both for home and foreign refinement.—Mr. THOS. TOWNEND seconded the resolution.

Mr. COBDEN proposed that that meeting recommend to the directors to form a sub-committee to collect information bearing upon this question, and that the result of their inquiries be presented to the committee of the House of Commons, in any way they might deem desirable.—Mr. H. TOOTAL seconded the motion.

Mr. Wm. NEILD said that would be very well, but gentlemen should bear in mind that an inquiry of that kind would make parties liable to penalties; and they knew that the Post-office was ever ready to punish, however reluctant it might be to reform. Of the first, they had had abundance of proof; of the latter, he was sorry to say, none.—Mr. BANNERMAN said the law did not prevent their sending an invoice in their own parcels.—Mr. THOS. BOOTHMAN, jun. said it was not illegal to take a letter if the party undertook to deliver it; but, formerly, if a person carried a letter at all, he was liable to a penalty of 3*l.*

Mr. BANNERMAN observed that one of the rules was, that any evidence given before the committee of the House of Commons should not criminate the party who gave it, and that no proceedings should be taken against any one upon that evidence.—The CHAIRMAN then put the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

Mr. H. TOOTAL said, he should be very sorry if it went abroad that there would be any risk in giving information. He should wish it to be clearly understood, that in any evidence which was given, care should be taken that the parties should not criminate themselves. The object would be to see how many parcels were sent by coaches or carriers; and then they should assume, that one letter at least would be sent in every parcel.

Mr. ROBERT GARDNER said it would be well if every gentleman who was on the committee would get information, under fictitious names, and it would show that the letters sent by other means than the Post-office would be as 40 or 50 to 1.—Mr. BOOTHMAN said, fictitious names would not do; but he would pledge himself that no names should go forth.—Mr. FENLEY said it would be well to invite the public to give all the information they could.—Mr. Gardner said he had had some conversation with the Blackburn postmaster, who had mentioned to him the quantity of letters put into that Post-office, and passing through it, from men in the army. He said, "Hang these letters, they come to nothing, and they are as much in bulk as the whole of the letters which pay!" He (the postmaster) wished they would give the army more employ, for they appeared to have nothing to do but to write. Those letters paid a penny, and they were franked by the officers.

The CHAIRMAN said, it would further the object of that meeting, if gentlemen would communicate everything they could relating to it.—Mr. DAVID PRICE, one of the Constables of Manchester, then took the chair; and Mr. ROBERT INGLEY moved a vote of thanks to the chairman.—Mr. JAMES FENLEY seconded the motion, which passed unanimously, and the proceedings then terminated.—*Manchester Guardian.*

INSTANCES OF INCREASE OF CONSUMPTION WITH DECREASE OF PRICE.

The price of soap has recently fallen by about one-eighth; the consumption in the same time has increased by one-third.—The consumption of silk goods, which, subsequently to the year 1823, has fallen in price by about one-fifth, has more than doubled.—The consumption of cotton goods, the price of which, during the last twenty years, has fallen by nearly one-half, has in the same time been fourfold.—The coffee trade affords another striking illustration of the advantageous effect of a low duty.—In 1783, the duty on coffee was 1*s. 6d.* per pound, and the revenue yielded only 2869*l. 10*s. 10½*d.**; in 1784 the duty was reduced to sixpence per pound, and yielded immediately 7200*l. 15*s. 9d.***

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

Year	Duty.	Quantity entered for Home Consumption.	Revenue.
	per lb.	lbs.	£. s. d.
1807	1 <i>s. 8d.</i>	1,170,164	161,245 11 4
	reduced to	in 1809.	
1808	7 <i>d.</i>	9,251,847	245,856 8 4
1824	raised in the interval		
	1 <i>s.</i>	7,993,041	407,544 4 3
	reduced in 1824 again		
	to 6 <i>d.</i>		
1831	6 <i>d.</i>	22,740,627	583,731 0 0

—POSTAGE OF NEWSPAPERS.—In the HOUSE OF COMMONS on Wednesday, Mr. LITTON presented a petition from an individual residing in the county of Essex, stating that he had been in the habit of receiving a weekly newspaper, free of postage, until the 1st of March last, when two papers which reached him were charged with postage, although stamped as usual. He made a communication on the subject to the Postmaster-General, but had not as yet received any satisfactory answer.—*Essex Standard.*

—EVASIONS OF POSTAGE.—On Monday, Mr. THOMAS ROBERTS, the opulent bookseller of Exeter, was brought before the city magistrates, at the Guildhall, charged by the Postmaster-General of Great Britain with committing three misdemeanors, in fraudulently writing on the inside of newspapers transmitted by him to London from Exeter. The counsel for the Post office read the clause of the Act, by which any person writing, printing, or using any signs on a newspaper transmitted by the post, and intended as a communication to evade the postage, should be punished by a fine of three times the amount of postage, or indicted at the quarter sessions for a misdemeanor, at the option of the Postmaster-General, and his Lordship had in this instance chosen to proceed against the defendant by indictment. He therefore called on the Bench to order Mr. Roberts to find bail to appear at the forthcoming sessions. Paul Measer, Esq., the Postmaster of Exeter, produced an order from the Earl of Lichfield, and signed by his secretary, commanding the present proceeding; but as Mr. Measer had mislaid the envelope, the Court adjourned the further proceedings until Saturday, that it might be produced.—*Exeter Flying Post.*

[If Lord Lichfield intends to hunt up and prosecute all cases of writing in newspapers, his Lordship has a prospect of a busy time, and the Post-office lawyers may rub their hands with delight at the certainty of increasing their fees. Penalties will not destroy the system—but a cheap postage would.]

—Her Majesty's Attorney-General is said to be a great sufferer by the late fire in the Temple, not being insured. The whole of the contents of his chambers are consumed, including his library, valued at 3,000 guineas; also papers and documents respecting the Montague peerage.

LORD LOWTHER'S REPORT ON PRICES CURRENT.

Lord Lowther's valuable Report on Prices Current is printed in the Fifth Report of the present Commissioners on Post-office Inquiry—Lord Duncannon, Right Hon. H. Labouchere, and Lord Seymour—who themselves observe, "We have also obtained the opinion of Lord Lowther, who is intimately acquainted with all points relating to the transmission of Prices Current. We agree generally with the suggestions which he has made, and beg to submit his report and evidence for your Lordships' consideration."

The present Commissioners state that the Postmaster-General has authority to provide for the conveyance of unstamped periodicals, but that "the rates of composition which have been demanded by the Postmaster-General are so high as to amount almost to a prohibition." In France the circulation of Prices Current is encouraged by the Government. The present Commissioners "are of opinion that any facility which can be given for the transmission of mercantile information, must tend to promote the commercial interests of the country," and therefore recommend that Prices Current and similar publications should "be permitted to pass through the medium of the Post-office without the imposition of a charge so high as to impede their general circulation," and state "that their conveyance will not materially add to the weight of the mails." Within a month, two years will have elapsed since this Report was presented to the Treasury, the Report being dated April 11, 1836: and it would appear that the recommendations of Lord Lowther and the present Commissioners have not yet been carried into execution.

*Lord Lowther's Report, May 3, 1835.*

TO THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S TREASURY.

Finding that, with respect to the question of facilitating the transmission of Prices Current by the Post-office, I cannot come to the same conclusions upon the evidence that my colleagues in the Commission of Inquiry have arrived at, I beg leave to submit to you a Report as an individual Commissioner. I think the evidence the Commissioners have taken not only sufficient upon which to form an opinion, but such as demands a recommendation for taking effectual measures to supply important facilities to commerce which are now wanting. I beg leave to report as follows:—

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

It does not appear that under the present system any advantage is held out to correspondence upon subjects of trade over general correspondence; on the contrary, it appears that, while political discussions and the miscellaneous contents of newspapers go free, under the privilege of a newspaper stamp, Prices Current, and other periodicals solely mercantile, though of smaller bulk than newspapers, have no privilege of the kind, but pay as highly as private letters.

It is, I think, plainly shown by the evidence taken, that great advantage would arise to trade from the transmission of Prices Current at a small rate of postage. It is affirmed by various witnesses that throughout the country there is a continually increasing desire among persons in trade for such information of the state of the markets in London and elsewhere as Prices Current would afford. That the furnishing of this information is very much restricted by the high rate of postage, and that if it were more generally afforded, it is probable that much more business would be done. It is also stated, that the increase in the number transmitted at a low rate of postage would be such, that the Revenue acquired would be much greater than it now is under the high rate of postage.—one witness, Mr. Cook, estimating the increase, if allowed to be transmitted at a low rate of postage, at three millions of Prices Current annually.

It appears by the evidence of Mr. Critchett, of the Post-office (p. 39), that the Prices Current now sent by the Post-office under that denomination do not exceed a few hundreds. The lists prepared by the tea-trade are upon one sheet, and are transmitted as single letters, but they contain private written communications, which would still be sent as letters, even were the alteration made which I propose. The statements in the evidence also generally agree that the probable effect of facilitating the transmission of Prices Current would be to increase, instead of to diminish, the number of mercantile letters now written.

Over the whole of the continent of Europe, where the circulation of mercantile intelligence is probably of much less national importance, a privilege similar to this is allowed to printed Prices Current; and in the United States of America they are allowed to pass through the Post-office (according to the evidence of Mr. Cook) free of any charge, or, as stated by Mr. Bates, at a postage of 1 cent only.

With a view to ascertain the extent of the difficulty that might be experienced by the Post-office if Prices Current were circulated at a low rate of postage, His Majesty's Postmaster-General was requested to direct some person, competent to afford explanations upon the subject, to attend upon the Commissioners, and Mr. S. JOHNSON, Second President of the Inland Office, and Mr. CRITCHETT, Inspector of Letter-carriers, were sent for that purpose. To their evidence I beg to refer. It will be seen that the chief objections stated by the Post-office are,—



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

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

After making all due allowance for these objections it appears to me that in an establishment which, by its energy and skill in arrangement, can meet the increase of business in two evenings of the week occasioned by the despatch of 20,000 additional Newspapers, there would in practice be found little difficulty in providing for the increase of business which the transmission of Prices Current would involve. With respect to the opportunities for fraud, I conceive that this danger would be greatly diminished by requiring all printed lists, &c., to which this privilege might be granted, to be put into the Post-office under a band open at the sides (as in the case of Newspapers), and that it should be extended to those only which, with the cover, may not exceed half an ounce in weight. The absolute necessity of a restriction as to weight is obvious; I believe that half an ounce will be sufficient for the object in view: and with these restrictions I venture to submit that Prices Current, or lists of any merchandise with prices attached, including booksellers' lists, be allowed to be transmitted by the post at a small charge. From the smallness of the size of these lists, and perhaps the thinness of the paper which would be used in order to keep within the weight, I think that there would be a much greater facility in detecting any writing than in the case of Newspapers, which the law permits to go free, notwithstanding this risk; nor is any limitation provided as to their number on account of the probable increase to the Post-office business. Mr. Critchett states that frauds to the extent of 100*l.* per week are detected, and that there is a suspicion of fraud to four times that extent. Now it is to be observed that, if a single word be found written on a Newspaper, it is charged as a letter of more than an ounce weight. If all those detected were merely charged as single letters, the amount would probably be not, at the utmost, more than one-twelfth of 100*l.* per week. The same witness says it is only people who have little to do who commit these frauds, and that they are never found in the Papers sent by News-agents, or those received by extensive houses. But as Prices Current would all be sent by men of business, and chiefly by extensive houses, it does not seem that the risk of fraud would be increased by allowing their free transmission as stamped Papers. It is presumed, therefore, that neither of these objections need to be held valid against attempting an improvement, otherwise desirable, in the transmission of mercantile intelligence, and which, it would seem, might be accomplished by employing a few additional sorters.

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

With regard to the transmission of Prices Current to the Continent, and the delivery of Foreign Prices Current sent to this country, I conceive that the same principle might be applied, and that they may be forwarded free from this country if bearing a stamp, but that Foreign Prices Current should be subject to a postage of 2*d.*, upon delivery here. And I would here beg to draw attention to the circumstance stated by Mr. Uzielli, a gentleman engaged in an extensive foreign business, as to the system at the Post-office of charging a Price Current or printed letter from the Continent, with a band round it, open at the sides (the manner in which they are circulated abroad), as a double letter, in consequence of the band.

It seems quite obvious that the practice of charging an additional rate of postage, equal to that of a single letter for every scrap of paper, however light, although it may answer in this country, where the rate is known and acted upon, ought not to be observed with respect to letters and packets from abroad, where no such rule has obtained or is understood; and as it has been represented that it is impossible to make a foreign correspondent understand that a single sheet, no matter how large, is charged by the English Post-office 1*s.* 2*d.*, while several dozen separate bits of paper put up together, and weighing in all not half so much as the large single sheet, will be liable to a charge of 3*s.* 6*d.*, I therefore beg to submit it as my opinion that, at all events, the present system in this respect ought not to continue.

I had prepared the draft of this Report, which my colleagues have only partially agreed to; but I have thought it best to give my own views on the subject.

We had intended to have pursued our inquiries into the Steam-packet establishment of the Post-office, and had called for various Returns as to the prime cost and outfit of Steam-boats, and the expense of working them, with a view to consider how far it might be for the public advantage that the service should be performed by contract or establishment. But as we were aware that a strong opinion had been expressed in favour of performing the Post-office Packet Service by contract in the Report of the Commissioners in the year 1788, by the Finance Committee in the year 1797, and by the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry in the year 1830, the Commissioners had not an opportunity of investigating the subject, and can

therefore only transmit to your Lordships the documents relating thereto which have been furnished to them by the Post-office.

We had also examined the Solicitor as to his fees and emoluments, and proposed to have consulted the heads of other Revenue Boards, with a view to considering whether it might not be expedient that this officer should be remunerated entirely by a fixed salary, instead of fees, as recommended by the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry.

We had procured a detailed statement of the establishment of the Post-office in London for the last year, but we had not investigated sufficiently the nature of the receipts from the public, in the shape of fees, for various services, to be able to judge how far it might be proper to abolish them. It may be observed, however, that they are in general carried to the public account, the officers of the establishment being paid, for the most part, entirely by fixed salaries.

I found that the Commission appointed by the Lords of the Treasury in August last had furnished the Postmaster-General with a statement of the several recommendations of the Commissioners of Revenue Inquiry, and requested him to prepare a paper showing in what cases these had been carried into effect, and the reasons which had prevented the remainder being adopted. This paper had not been furnished when that Commission closed its proceedings, and we therefore applied for it as soon as we were appointed by your Lordships to continue the Inquiry, but it has not been transmitted to us.

London, May 8, 1835.

LOWTHER.

#### POST-OFFICE ACCURACY. (!)

Our readers must not suppose that they are justified in pinning their faith upon Post-office returns. Upon the same subject, and in several departments, seriously inaccurate returns have been made; and when we tell them that it appears, from a correspondence printed in the tenth Report of the Commissioners of Inquiry, that a return of income and fees was made in writing—we do not say falsely—but erroneously, FIVE times, and was not corrected till the errors had been discovered and pointed out by the Commissioners, we are sure the public will feel that Mr. Hill has no great authority for accuracy to contend against.

We submit the conclusion of the correspondence on the subject to which we refer, as reported by the Commissioners, and we can well imagine how excessively annoyed the active and able Secretary of the Post-office must have been in having, thus shortly after entering upon his duties, to write such a letter as he did, on the 11th of January last, on the subject of an old subordinate.

General Post-office,

January 8th, 1838.

Sir,—Having referred the enclosed papers, which you left with me on the 5th inst. to Mr. Watts, acquainting him with the desire of the Commissioners of Inquiry to be furnished with some explanation as to the apparent discrepancy between the return he lately made direct to your order, of the amount of profits of the money-order office in the year 1834, compared with the return made through this office in 1835 for the same year, Mr. Watts acquaints me that he has now forwarded an amended return with the required explanation. The return made from this office to Parliament in 1835, and again to the Treasury Fee Committee in November, but afterwards transferred to the Commissioners of Inquiry, were both prepared from statements furnished by the proprietors of the money-order office at the time, and which were certified to be correct by the parties.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) W. L. MABERLY.

J. R. Gardiner, Esq.

Office of Woods, 10th January, 1838.

Sir,—I have received your letter of yesterday's date, stating that Mr. Watts has acquainted you that he has now forwarded an amended return of the profits of the money-order office, with an explanation of the apparent discrepancy between the return formerly made to Parliament and the Finance Committee, and that which has been recently sent to the Commissioners of Inquiry. I regret much to find, on referring to Mr. Watts's letter, that no satisfactory explanation is given of this discrepancy, and I find that not one of the five returns which have been made of the profits of the money-order office for the year 1834 corresponds with another. The first of these, which I obtained for the Post-office Commissioners, and which was afterwards presented to Parliament, is dated 16th July, 1835, and signed by Mr. Watts and the late Mr. Stow. The second, which was prepared by the Fee Committee, and afterwards transmitted to the Post-office Commissioners, is authenticated by your signature. The third, fourth, and fifth are signed by Mr. Watts. Having been instructed by the Post-office Commissioners to examine carefully the returns appended to their reports, and to endeavour to have them made as correct as possible,\* it becomes my duty to call your attention again to the accounts which have been transmitted by the Post-office, and also by Mr. Watts individually relative to the money-order office. I regret being obliged to trouble you so frequently on the subject of these accounts, but, as they are to be laid before Parliament, I think it important that there should be no inaccuracy, or apparent inaccuracy, on the face of them, the more especially as, in case of the abolition of the money-order office, and a claim for compensation being made by Mr. Watts, the Lords of the Treasury would probably refer to these accounts in the consideration of such a claim.

I have, &c.,

(Signed) J. R. GARDINER.

Lieut-Col. Maberly.

General Post-office, 11th January, 1838.

Sir,—I have to acknowledge your further letter of yester-

day's date, and regret to find that Mr. Watts's explanation of the discrepancy in the returns made by the proprietors of the money-order office should not have proved satisfactory. I have lost no time in again calling upon Mr. Watts on this subject, and I beg to enclose his statement of this date for the information of the Commissioners, transmitting an amended return, for the accuracy of which he assures me he can vouch.

I beg to point out to you that the returns made through this office to Parliament in July 1835, and to the Treasury Committee on Fees in January last, both state the net profits of the money-order office, in the year 1834, at the same amount, viz., 520*l.*, so that there is no discrepancy on this point in the official returns. I have already explained to you that those returns were made upon the statements furnished at the time by the proprietors, and authenticated by their signatures, and that the Postmaster-General having no means of checking or controlling the accounts of the money-order office, his lordship could not be responsible for their accuracy.†

It is evident that the three returns which you designate as Nos. 3, 4, and 5, made by Mr. Watts, direct to the Commissioners during the last week, are contradictory; and upon comparing the enclosed amended return with that made to the Fee Committee in January last, I observe a further variance as regards the net profits for the years 1834 and 1835. The net profits for 1834 are stated in the Treasury account of 1837 at 520*l.*; Mr. Watts now returns them as only 446*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.* In the Treasury account the net profits for the year 1835 are stated at 458*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.*; Mr. Watts now returns them at 520*l.* 5*s.* 7*d.* I have, therefore, felt it my duty, before I forwarded the enclosed (see return, Appendix No. 24), again to direct his attention to this additional discrepancy. He has once more compared the enclosed return with his books, and assures me that it is the real and correct account. He laments that, having no trace of the papers or calculations from which the returns were made in 1835 and 1837, (!!) he is quite unable to account for their inaccuracy; and repeats, what he has already stated in the enclosed letter, that he can only throw himself on the indulgence of the Commissioners, expressing his regret for the trouble which has been occasioned.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) W. L. MABERLY.

Money-order Office, 10th January, 1838.

Sir,—I was honoured by your letter of the 9th, the contents of which have given me the greatest concern. You only do me justice when you say, you give me credit for being anxious to make my returns correct. I most certainly always have been, and so was my late partner, Mr. Stow, when making out together the account of the year in question, namely 1834, yet, wonderful to say, we never once thought at the time of charging the account with the interest of the money employed in carrying on the concern, nor did it ever occur to my mind when called upon to make any of the various returns within these last few years. I have, however, at length discovered my former inaccuracies, and can only rely upon your favourable indulgence for such gross blunders. I beg now to send herewith what I hope may prove a satisfactory statement, it being my most earnest wish that every paper coming from me should be fair and candid to the greatest degree.‡ I PLEAD GUILTY TO HAVING SIGNED MANY INACCURATE PAPERS, BUT WITHOUT DESIGN.

I have, &c.,

J. R. Gardiner, Esq. (Signed) R. WATTS.

Let us now ask any merchant or tradesman whether, if in any matter of finance, in any department of a large establishment, such returns were presented to him, he would not say there must be something peccant or grossly negligent in the system to admit of so many "erroneous" returns undetected by any party in the department. Let them imagine that Mr. R. Hill, who must have had, as those who have read his pamphlet will see, an immensity of trouble in wading through accounts of returns furnished by such an establishment, let them only suppose that he had made such errors, and been obliged to conclude by saying, "I plead guilty to having signed many inaccurate calculations, but without design;" and then imagine what a crowing there would have been against him! An error of one who has been labouring to improve a system in which he had discovered much deserving of correction, would have been held by all the officials as worthy of many stripes. Our readers shall fully understand the whole question of Post-office Inquiry ere we quit it.

\* Mark the censure that such language implies.

† It would seem also that Post-office officials have no eyes to see—what means had Mr. Gardiner that they had not?

‡ And yet "he has no trace of the papers or calculations from which the returns were made in 1835 and 1837," this being written in January 1838!

—SELECT COMMITTEE FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.—

Since the last announcement of the proceedings of this Committee the following witnesses have been examined: One of the partners of Messrs. Warren's large blacking establishment. Mr. L. Fenwick de Porquet, the scholastic agent. The Secretary of the Atlas Insurance Company. Mr. Michael Brankston, Superintendent of the business of Messrs. Leaf, Coles, and Co., the extensive warehousemen. A witness from a large manufacturing town. Mr. Richard Taylor, publisher and printer; and Mr. George Moffatt, of the firm of Moffatt and Company, tea and colonial agents. Very numerous and valuable communications are daily made to the Mercantile Committee on Postage; the universal object of all these communications shows the rapid growth of a demand for the reduction of postage which will be irresistible.

—Mr. Charles Buller, M.P. for Liskeard, is about to go to Canada, with Lord Durham, as chief secretary. It is understood, that the Hon. Member will pair off with some conservative M.P. previous to his departure.

## MR. ROWLAND HILL'S LETTERS TO LORD LICHFIELD.

NO. I.

My Lord,—In the present position of affairs as regards Post-office reform, I feel it due to the public and to the very distinguished individuals by whom my statements, calculations, and conclusions have been adopted as correct, to take notice of such objections to them as may in themselves appear weighty, or may derive weight from their origin.

In the series of letters which I shall take the liberty of addressing to your lordship, I hope I shall carefully maintain that respect for the claims and consideration for the feelings of others which, I trust, have marked all that I have hitherto written. Your lordship must be well aware, that whoever enters on the task of innovation must expect some amount of ridicule or abuse aimed either at his plan or himself. Your lordship must feel that a person so circumstanced ought not to allow such a necessary consequence of his attempt either to deter him from his adopted course or to provoke retaliation.

I take this opportunity of publicly thanking your lordship for the courtesy which I have in private experienced at your hands in every communication with which I have been honoured, whether in person or by letter. I have also to acknowledge your lordship's declaration in Parliament that "no one would rejoice more than yourself if it were practicable to carry my plan into effect without, at the same time, materially injuring the revenue." And, lastly, I have to express the gratification with which I, in common with others, receive the announcement of your lordship's opinion, "that a very considerable reduction might take place in the rates of postage without inflicting any injury on the revenue." I am happy to find that I am thus placed, to a certain extent, in the honourable situation of a co-operator with your lordship.

Before proceeding to a consideration of objections, I deem it necessary succinctly to describe the main features of the plan. The ends proposed are—

1. A great diminution in the rate of postage.
2. Increased speed in the delivery of letters.
3. More frequent opportunities for their despatch.

In calculating on attaining these benefits without a proportionate diminution in the revenue derived from the Post-office, I depend—

1. On the increase in the number of post letters certain to follow a great reduction of postage, and other improvements; and
2. On the result of certain plans intended to secure great amplification and constant economy in the operations of the Post-office.

With a view to obtain this simplification I propose—

- 1st—That there should be a uniform rate of postage, according to weight; and
- 2d—That the payment should always be in advance; and to rid this mode of payment of the trouble and risk which it would otherwise entail on the senders of letters, as well as for other important considerations, I propose that the postage be collected by the sale of stamped covers.

Increased speed in the delivery of letters will obviously result from the plan of payment in advance, whereby the time now spent in collecting the postage will be saved.

More frequent opportunity for the despatch of letters, especially in populous neighbourhoods, will be justified and required by the increase in the number of letters, and will in turn become a great source of additional increase.

Such is a summary of my plan. In my next letter I shall descend somewhat further into particulars.

I have the honour to be your lordship's most obedient humble servant,  
2, Burton-crescent, Jan. 9. ROWLAND HILL.

NO. II.

My Lord,—Having in my last letter given a summary of my plan, I now enter somewhat more into particulars.

The uniform rate of postage which I propose is a penny for each letter or packet not exceeding half an ounce in weight, with an additional penny for each additional ounce.

The rate of a penny was adopted, not as having any magical virtue or essential propriety, but because it appears from detailed calculations that such a reduction was expedient, and also because it is, with very little exception, the lowest rate of postage now in use.

Of course an approximation to this would be an improvement on the present state of things; but I fear there will be many obstacles to the establishment of a higher uniform rate. I apprehend a less reduction will scarcely reconcile the public to payment in advance, will in many instances be insufficient to stop the illicit conveyance of letters, and will exclude from the post a vast number of circular letters and other printed papers the circulation of which is of high importance to commerce.

The increase in the number of letters to result from the reductions and other improvements which I propose cannot of course be estimated with accuracy. A variety of information, however, as to the effect of other reduc-

tions in taxation, as to the amount of correspondence at present suppressed, and as to the extent of illicit conveyance of letters, furnishes my estimate with a good basis.

The increase in the number of letters necessary according to my calculation to secure the revenue from diminution is to sixfold the present amount, and such an increase my information warrants me in regarding as not improbable. To the feasibility of my plan, however, such an increase is not essential—the increase which I have counted upon being to little more than fivefold, as I did not reckon on securing the Post-office Revenue from diminution, but I estimated its probable loss at nearly 300,000*l.* per annum; nor do I think that I am sanguine when I confidently expect that such a deficit would be much more than supplied by an increase in the other departments of the Revenue consequent on the stimulus given to commerce by the greater freedom of correspondence.

I must notice here, in passing, that, according to your lordship's estimate, the required increase in the number of letters is not sixfold but twelvefold on the present amount. To this I shall not fail to attend in its proper place.

Uniformity in the rate of postage, of which I spoke in my last letter, is justified by the fact, that the necessary cost attendant on the transmission of letters by the post bears practically no relation whatever to the distance over which they are conveyed. For instance, I have shown by detailed calculations that the present actual cost of conveying letters from London to Edinburgh does not exceed one penny for thirty-six letters. The London booksellers, in their petition on this subject, estimate the cost of conveyance by steam-boat between these two towns so low as one penny for eighty letters. It therefore follows that there is no practical difference between the expense of conveying a letter all the way to Edinburgh or merely to Edmonton. Uniformity of postage, however, is proposed, not merely on the ground of its practical justice, but as a most important step in simplification, and consequently in economy; so important, indeed, that it must be considered an essential condition of the great reduction I propose, inasmuch as its adoption, by rendering practicable the use of stamped covers, relieves the Post-office of all financial accounts, at present, probably, the most costly part of its business.

Payment in advance, it must be acknowledged, does, in the abstract, impose on the public a sacrifice of long-established habit; and would, therefore, if proposed as a solitary measure, meet with no small amount of objection. When, however, this new form of demand is accompanied with a great reduction in postage, and as a measure essential to the effecting of that reduction—when the question is really between a low rate paid in advance and a high rate paid on delivery—such objection will doubtless give way.

The stamped covers are proposed merely as a means of removing some of the difficulties attaching to compulsory payment in advance, and are not recommended as possessing any intrinsic advantage, they are merely the means to an end; they constitute no part of the principle of my plan; but their aid is perhaps indispensable in reducing one of its principles to practice.

In my next letter I shall enter on a consideration of the measures contemplated by government.

I have the honour to be  
Your lordship's most obedient humble servant,  
2, Burton-crescent, Jan. ROWLAND HILL.

—BRILL—PRIVATE POSTAGES.—At the second meeting on the subject of the Post-office, a letter was read from the Marquis of Chandos, to the effect that his lordship would allow his man to carry the bag from Wotton to Aylesbury, but advised a private post in lieu of connecting themselves with government. Advantage was taken of the hint, and it was proposed that they should elect a person as *postmaster*, which was immediately done. Mr. Hewlett felt confident that the plan proposed would not answer—Thame was now the post-town, and unless the postmaster-general altered the route, the correspondence would be through Thame, with 6*d.* extra attached. It was afterwards arranged that the Postmaster-general should be written to, soliciting his concurrence in the plan.—*From a Correspondent of the Aylesbury News*, which adds, we are happy to say that it is the intention of government to establish a Post-office at Brill.

—MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL.—MONDAY, MARCH 19th, 1838.—Present, the Mayor; Alderman Sheen, Butler, Mallam, Sadler, L. Wyatt, Browning, and Parsons; Mr. Sheriff Walsh; Councillors Sheard, Taylor, North, Wyatt, Floyd, Turner, Badcock, Steane, Warne, Alden, Weaving, Costar, Hastings, C. Butler, T. Dry, Fisher, Chaundy, Slatter, Latchmore, Pilcher, Bartlett, Talboys, Cooke, Waddel, R. Dry, and Warburton. The minutes of the last council were read, and also letters from Lord Ashburton and Mr. Wallace, acknowledging the receipt of the petitions in favour of a reform in the Post-office, on Mr. Rowland Hill's plan, and signifying their intention to present them at the earliest period.—*Oxford Herald*.

—The auxiliary mail from London to Falmouth, through this town, ceased to run on the 15th instant, so that the large manufacturing towns of Sherborne, Yeovil, Crewkerne, and Chard, will get their letters by mail carts.—*Plymouth Journal*.

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## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES.

—Manchester, 22d March, 1838. At a Special General Meeting of the Chamber held this day, to consider the best mode of obtaining a reduction of postage:

RICHARD BIRLEY, Esq., Vice-President, in the Chair.  
The following Resolutions were unanimously adopted:  
Moved by Mr. Cobden, seconded by Mr. Newbery:  
That, in the opinion of this meeting, the rates of postage levied on the transmission of letters are excessive, varying and unequal, and therefore unjust, injurious to the beneficial interests, and to the social happiness of the people, and ought to be reduced.

Moved by Mr. S. Fletcher, seconded by Mr. William

Nield:—  
That, viewed apart from the moral requisites of the people, they are, even as fiscal regulations, indefensible. Amidst an enormous increase in every other branch of revenue, with an acknowledged spread of education amongst a largely augmented population, the revenue derived from the Post-office has not increased, during more than twenty years of peace; proving incontestably, that under the present system, it is incapable of extension, and that the Post-office does not afford that cheap and useful accommodation to which the people are entitled.

Moved by Mr. James Atherton, seconded by Mr. Alexander Henry:—  
That this meeting has heard, with great satisfaction, that a select committee has been appointed by the House of Commons, to inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage; and, in order to lay before the legislature the opinions of this meeting, that a petition be forthwith presented to the House of Commons, stating, that the plan suggested in Mr. R. Hill's pamphlet is well calculated to remedy the evils complained of, and praying that it may be adopted.

Moved by Mr. Richd. Cobden, seconded by Mr. Tootal:—  
That this meeting recommends to the directors to appoint a sub-committee, to inquire into the facts favouring the adoption of Mr. Rowland Hill's project, and to present the results to the committee of the House of Commons now sitting, in such a manner as they may deem proper.

Richard Birley, Esq., having left the chair, David Price, Esq., one of the constables of Manchester, was called thereto, when it was unanimously resolved,  
That the thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Richard Birley, for his conduct in the chair.

Dedicated by Special Permission to Her Most Gracious Majesty.

## AUTOGRAPH LETTERS, CHARACTERISTIC

Extracts, and Signatures of Illustrious and Distinguished Women of Great Britain, from the 14th to the 19th Century. Copied in perfect fac-simile from Original Documents, by J. Nethercliff.

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"No worthier compliment was ever paid to the sex than Mr. Nethercliff has preferred in the production of this curious and beautiful volume."—*Court Journal*.

## THE MECHAN DRESSING-CASE.

THE most portable ever invented, measuring only 6½ inches long, 3½ wide, three-fourths of an inch deep—in fact, the size of a pocket-book, and contains one pair of Mechi's Ivory-handled peculiar steel razors, his magic strop and comb, badger-hair shaving-brush, his patent castellated tooth-brush, and a neat useful nail-brush—price only 25*s.* The same with hair-brush and soap-dish, 35*s.* To military men, and as a steambath or travelling companion, this invention must prove an invaluable acquisition, the articles therein being all of the first quality. An immense variety of other dressing-cases for both gentlemen and ladies, either in fancy woods or leather, at all prices from 20*s.* to 30 Guineas, at Mechi's Cutlery and Dressing-Case Manufactory, 4, Leadenhall-street, London (four doors from Cornhill). An extensive stock of leather writing-cases, work-boxes, bagatelle-tables, razors, razor-strops, Sheffield plated goods, tea-trays, tins, &c. cheaper than any house in London. Every article warranted, or the money returned if not approved.

Printed by HENRY HOOPER, at Beaufort House, Strand, and Published by him at 13, Pall Mall East, where all Communications and Advertisements are received.—Wednesday, March 25, 1838.

Agent for the City,  
R. GROOMBRIDGE, 6, Panzer Alley, Paternoster Row. And supplied by all Booksellers and News-vendors in the United Kingdom.

# The Post Circular



OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POSTAGE.

No. 4.

THURSDAY, APRIL 5, 1838.

Price 2½d.

The House of Commons now sitting is appointed—  
"To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made without injury to the Revenue; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill."

The plan proposed by Mr. Hill is:—  
That all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, be charged one penny for each half-ounce, to be paid in advance through the medium of stamped covers, on stamps or that letters should be stamped when delivered at the Post-offices.

This system would introduce uniformity and simplicity.—  
An easy and cheap collection of the Revenue.—  
Avoid a multiplicity of accounts kept at the Post-office.—  
Save time in charging by pen and ink a varying rate on each letter, and in the delivery.  
Avoid candle scrutiny into each letter to ascertain whether single or double as at present and consequent temptation to fraud.

The English Post-office Revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly diminished.  
The United States Post-office Revenue has increased more than half since 1821.  
The United States Post-office Revenue has more than tripled during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.  
The vast extent to which the trade of the country has increased within the last twenty years,

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

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

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

The average cost of its actual carriage to any post town is about one tenth of a penny.  
The penny postage of large towns are very profitable, even though these pence have to be collected from house to house.

The average cost of managing the twopenny-post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only 34 per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

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

These facts are stated that it may be seen upon what grounds the question of the reduction of postage is urged upon public attention,—but for a full view of this important subject, Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, on Post-office reform, should be read, which is published by Charles Knight and Co., 22, Ludgate-street, London.

## MR. ROWLAND HILL'S LETTERS TO LORD LICHFIELD.

### LETTER III.—MEASURES CONTEMPLATED BY GOVERNMENT.

MY LORD—The changes which Government proposes to make in the Post-office Department, as appears by the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, are, first, The reduction of the fourpenny postage to twopence; and second, The introduction of stamped covers to the twopenny-post department.

Your Lordship will be aware that this is an abandonment of the intention announced by Lord Duncannon in the House of Lords on the 30th of May last, which was as follows:—"My right hon. friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposes to reduce, to a certain extent, the charge on the transmission of letters, and although it is considered inexpedient to deprive persons of the opportunity of sending unpaid letters by the twopenny post, they will shortly be enabled to purchase envelopes which will carry them for one penny each."

This plan was in perfect accordance with the recommendation of the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry (Lord Duncannon, Mr. Labouchere, and Lord Seymour), as appears from the following extract from their ninth report, page 7.—"We, therefore, propose to your Lordships that the distinction in the rates and districts which now applies to letters delivered by the twopenny and threepenny post shall not in any way affect correspondence transmitted under stamped covers; and that any letter not exceeding an ounce in weight shall be conveyed free within the metropolis, and the districts to which the town and country deliveries now extend, if enclosed in an envelope bearing a penny stamp."

This plan, it appears is now abandoned. The reduction is to be made on the fourpenny postage, while in the department of the twopenny post, there is to be no reduction whatever; the only change being the granting to the public an option to pay their postage as at present, or to make use of stamped covers, charged according to the present rate, viz., twopence for the twopenny post, and threepence for the threepenny post.

The reduction of the fourpenny postage to twopence, which, however, does not appear to be universal, is no doubt a boon to the public, nor should it be quarrelled with because it is given where it was neither most required nor most called for. Again it is valuable as an experiment on the effect of reduction; but as the change is in reduction only, and is not accompanied by any increased facility, more frequent opportunity, simplification of arrangements (with consequent economy), nor, in short, by any other improvements, even its failure would furnish no argument against my plan, though its success would strongly support one of the principles for which I contend. My dependence, however, is on a number of principles brought into harmonious operation, each aiding and strengthening all the others. They are, reduction of postage, increasing facilities, and simplification, with consequent economy in the mechanism of the Post-office.

If a trial of these separately should terminate in disappointment, this would be no sound reason against the trial of all conjointly, though were an experiment made under such disadvantages, to terminate in success, it might well be considered as establishing the substantive potency of the principle tried.

That the contemplated experiment will produce a considerable increase in the number of letters within the range of its operation, there can be no doubt, nor am I without hope that the revenue may even derive benefit from the change; but should this hope be disappointed, such failure will furnish no inference against the soundness of my plan.

With respect to the intended trial of the stamped covers, I must confess that I am entirely at a loss to

conceive the scope of the experiment. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced, in the House of Commons, that it is the intention to try the stamped covers independently. Such an experiment, my Lord, must be futile: taken independently, stamped covers can be of little or no use, and will attract little or no attention from the public. I have already said that they are merely a means to an end.

To warrant so great a reduction of postage as I contemplate, there must be strict economy in the management of the Post-office. Strict economy requires extreme simplification, especially where the receipts are a vast number of small sums, and in the Post-office this extreme simplification requires payment in advance; but payment in advance cannot be exacted of the public without some compensation, and the Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry accordingly recommended in their report, when urging the partial adoption of my plan within the metropolitan district, that the stamped covers should be sold at the reduced price of one penny. And it ought carefully to be borne in mind that this lower charge is not an artificial contrivance for forcing stamped covers into use, but an equitable reduction consequent on the simple and economical arrangements to which their employment would lead.

As I have already said, my main security against loss to the Post-office revenue is on the increased number of letters. Still I am afraid that, were the postage in the metropolitan district to be reduced from 2d. to 1d., without the establishment of payment in advance, and that by means of stamped covers, or some arrangement equally simple, the revenue might suffer by the change. The practical question, therefore, is between stamped covers at 1d. each, and payment on delivery at 2d. At the price of 2d. stamped covers would not be bought; the payment of a penny on delivery would not sustain the revenue.

To conclude, the reduction in the fourpenny postage, which is not a partial but a garbled trial of my plan, though its failure will weaken no one of my positions may, by its success, demonstrate in the principle of reduction a potency beyond what I claim for it. Should the trial of stamped covers on the plan now unfortunately contemplated issue in success, the world will indeed see a paradox—an effect without a cause. Were such an experiment merely useless it might pass without comment; but its inevitable failure may produce no small mischief. An apparent trial of a plan may easily be misconstrued with a real one; and though I am sure nothing could be further from the intentions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, yet had the aim been to throw unfair discredit on the plan, it would have been difficult to devise a better mode of proceeding.

I have, &c.,

ROWLAND HILL.

### REMARKS ON VARIOUS MODES PROPOSED FOR FRANKING LETTERS, UNDER MR. ROWLAND HILL'S PLAN OF POST-OFFICE REFORM.

In suggesting any method of improvement, it is only reasonable to expect that what are supposed to be its advantages over any existing system, or in opposition to others that have been, or may be proposed, will be explicitly stated.

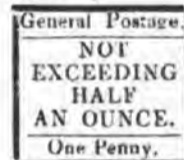
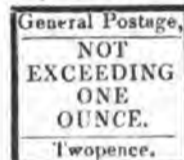
Therefore, if Mr. Hill's plan of a uniform rate of postage, —and that all postages are to be paid by those sending letters, before they are deposited in the respective Post-offices,—become the law of the land, I conceive that the most simple and economical mode of making such an arrangement would be by slips, prepared somewhat similar to the specimen herewith shewn.

With this view, and in the hope that Mr. Hill's plan may soon be carried into operation, I would suggest that sheets of stamped slips should be prepared at the Stamp-office (on a paper made expressly for the purpose), with a device on each from a die or cut resembling that on newspapers;

that the sheets so printed or stamped should then be rubbed over on the back with a strong solution of gum, or other adhesive substance, and (when thoroughly dry) issued by the Stamp-office to town and country distributors, to stationers and others, for sale in sheets or singly, under the same laws and restrictions now applicable to those selling bill or receipt stamps, so as to prevent, as far as practicable, any fraud on the revenue.

Merchants and others, whose correspondence is extensive, could purchase these slips in quantities; cut them singly, and affix one to a letter by means of wetting the back of the slip with a sponge or brush, just with as much facility as applying a wafer, for which, in many cases (for instance circulars), the slip might answer; while either a wafer or wax may also be applied at the option of the writer. Others, requiring only one or two slips at a time, could purchase them along with sheets of paper at stationers' shops. The weight only regulating the rate of postage in all cases, so as a stamp may be affixed according to the scale determined on.

Again to prevent the possibility of these being used a second time, it should be made imperative on postmasters to put the Post-office town stamp (as represented on one of the specimens) across the slip or postage stamp.



It appears to me that the advantages to be derived from this plan of slips, over envelopes or stamped sheets of paper, must be obvious. The writers of letters will not be confined to any length of letter, or mode of folding it, in which they must often be guided by circumstances,—the time requisite for affixing the slip will scarcely exceed that of inserting a wafer—and the weight of it little, if any thing more.

What appears to me to be objectionable to the use of envelopes—specimens of which we have seen exhibited in public places,—are, first, the expense which there must be in paper and printing, not less, in my opinion, than 25 per cent. on the proposed rate of postage—consequently an unnecessary sacrifice of the revenue; secondly, the various sizes requisite to suit all dimensions of paper and methods of folding letters; and lastly, the great increase of weight and bulk they would unavoidably occasion; for, if Mr. Hill's calculations should prove nearly correct, namely, that, by his proposed reduction of postage there would be, in consequence, an increase of letters to six times their present number, the result would therefore be, by using envelopes, to increase the size and weight of the daily correspondence to about nine times what it is just now.

Again, as to stamped sheets of paper, to answer for correspondence by post, such seems to me to be objectionable in so far as few writers of letters can calculate on perfecting or completing the letter on the sheet they first commence to write on; so that in numerous instances a sacrifice would unavoidably be made to the writer, both of the paper and stamp, should a second or third be required.

Taking all these disadvantages into consideration, the use of stamped slips is certainly the most preferable system; and, should others who take an interest in the proposed reform, view it in the same light as I do, it remains for them to petition Parliament to have such carried into operation.

JAMES CHALMERS.

4, Castle-street, Dundee,  
8th February, 1838.

[Mr. Hill's plan of obtaining payment in advance does not limit itself to the use of stamped covers. To meet every possible case, Mr. Hill proposes sheets or half-sheets, of various sizes and weights, stamped,—likewise the use of stamps which may be attached as Mr. Chalmers suggests, or when neither are to be procured, that the letter upon payment of its postage may be stamped at the Post-office. Mr. Chalmers' objection that one sheet may not hold all the writer wishes to say, might be removed by the writer's completing his letter on a separate piece of paper, and enclosing it in the sheet—taking care that the prescribed weight was not trespassed on.]

## CORRESPONDENCE.

[The following carries with it internal evidence of having been issued from the Post-office,—probably from a Bokenham. It might be desirable that the author, in his next, should employ an amanuensis who is able to spell. The present is printed *verbatim et literatim*. The passages which seem to betray its origin are printed in italics.]

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

Sir,—In the address of your first number you propose to enquire into the merits of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform Penny Postage, payable in advance, by collecting all facts strengthening or controverting Mr. H.'s plan, as such I trust you will allow me through the medium of your columns to offer a few remarks, in opposition to the plan proposed by Mr. H.

Mr. Hill proposes to abolish the present mode of charging letters according to distance and to substitute a uniform rate of one penny on all letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight.

Therefore a letter put into the General Post Office, to be delivered at the Bull and Mouth, Inn, on the opposite side of the Street, and to do which the Letter Carrier would scarce dirt his shoes, or be occupied in carrying more than three minutes, would be charged the same price as a letter to Thurso 783 miles and which requires 96 hours to convey it to its destination, where is the consistency of such a proposition? will Mr. Hill propose at the same time a uniform rate of Carriage on goods the same distances.

The rate of Postage I admit might be reduced, with safety to the Revenue, and advantage to the public, but it cannot be expected that the Government would convey Letters at a loss more than a Carrier would parcels, and I am confident Mr. Hill's penny would not cover the expence of Letters conveyed within the limits of the Two penny Post, much more by the General, Bye, and Cross Posts; of which it is my intention to speak of in a future letter.

Mr. Hill proposes payment in advance, this I consider would be a tax not much approved of, because it is not always Letters are sent or received by persons on business, in which they are actually concerned in, but who in that case would be obliged to pay the postage however small the amount, and the receiver who might oblige the applicant by an answer would not only have his time trespassed on but his pocket taxed.

Mr. Hill endeavours to shew the advantage it would be to the Public by transmitting invoices and letters of business, by Post, the majority of invoices are now and would still be sent if the postage was less by the carrier or inclosed in the goods and as far as regards Brokers, Auctioneers, Lawyers, and others, of that class as they would not reduce their fees or Commission if their postage was reduced, I consider they might as well assist the revenue as pocket the saving. It is also stated that an enormous increase would take place in Family or Domestic correspondence, that I admit might take place to a certain extent, but not so much as Mr. H. calculates, for I consider both Parents, and Children, are generally too much occupied by the care and toil of getting a living, to even collect their thoughts much more to spare the time to write oftener than necessary;

Mr. Hill states a non increase of the Post Office Revenue; is he aware of the establishment of the great number of Bye, and Cross Posts, within the last 20 years, which Posts has added to the expediture and at the same time lessen'd the income, by forwarding letters from one town to another, much quicker and at a less rate of postage, if Mr. H. will take the trouble to enquire he will be able to account for a great portion of his apparent deficiency;

The increase of Stage Coach duties will shew Mr. H. that Friends have travelled to see each other more frequent and therefore have not had occasion to write for they could communicate more in one visit to each other than they could in twenty letters,

Trade is also carried on different, to what it was years since, for Wholesale Houses who never sent out a Traveller, now find it necessary, and those who sent a traveller once in three months trusting in the interim to receive orders pr post, now find it necessary to send oftener, fearing another in the trade would procure the order they calculated on, and a Traveller now frequently sends to his employer in his letter the orders of twenty Tradesmen which years since would have produced as many letters,

As to the cost of conveying a single letter by Post I am not in possession of sufficient information at present, to shew Mr. Hill in error, but believe it has been proved that he has considerably underrated the expence,

Mr. Hill loudly complains of the expences of the Post Office, and states that a great portion of the expence is incurred for three classes of Servants viz.

1st. Superintendants, including Postmasters, and keepers of Receiving houses,

Superintendants, I presume would be required even by Mr. Hill and that to the same number as at present;

Mr. H. does not consider he should want Postmasters, I wonder what he would do without them even with his own plan, or the keepers of receiving houses, both of which are as necessary as the Letter Carrier,

2nd. Clerks and Messengers. With Mr. H.'s plan certainly there would be a saving, but as his plan if carried into effect "would be confusion worse confounded," I will leave this item for the present.

3rd. Letter Carriers To reduce this amount of expediture I presume Mr. Hill would have a Steam Postman, because it would not require either food or cloths, but only a feed of coke and pail of water, when at work, and they might be lodged cleaned oiled and set a going by contract, but if he presumes to employ Men as at present, he would find this item increase in expence for can he propose to give either the London or Country Letter Carriers less wages than they at present receive, especially when he intends to give them more deliveries, for what is the difference in the

labour if the Men under his plan where to go the distance of their walks in one fourth of the time or not, the fatigue would be the same if not more.

Mr. Hill protests against the waste of time as he calls it in Stamping, Taxing, and Sorting. With regard to Stamping, I consider it a most necessary measure, especially with a date Stamp now generally if not wholly used at all Post Towns, because it proves from where and when the letter was posted and if delayed or missorted at once affords the receiver an opportunity of knowing the delay and the party at fault, it also shews if the letter was posted the day purported, or said to be written for it not unfrequently happens that letters are entrusted to servants or others to post who either accidentally or intentionally delay them and even the writers have been known to date a letter a day or two back because they have neglected to answer an application especially if for money, and if again stamped in London is it not a check against any delay by the stamp shewing the time it arrived and when dispatched, to its destination, where the departure stamp is again another check against the Letter carrier who if in the event of no stamp might delay the delivery of the letter,

As regards taxing, even Mr. Hill's own plan of a rate of postage for each half ounce a letter might weigh would require as much if not more time than the present mode; at present if a single sheet does not weigh an ounce it passes as a single letter and if parties for fashion sake will put them in an envelope they know at the time it will be considered as a double letter, and I am confident that a person who is in the habit of taxing letters would tax 5 letters in less time than they could weigh 5. for even Mr. H.'s plan of charging by weight would require letters to be first weighed, and then stamped, or taxed accordingly. And next as for sorting, how is it possible to know where a letter is to be sent without sorting, which is in part done at the principal receiving houses or in the country by the Postmasters, Letters are there divided into three classes viz. 1st. London letters, including those going within the limits of the Two penny post, 2nd. Letters going beyond the Two penny post limits, and 3rd. Paid Letters which plan greatly assists the sorting when brought to the General Post Office, and in the country there is required another sorting, viz. Letters going by the Bye, and Cross Posts, for in many places the number of letters forwarded by Cross Posts, exceed those sent to London,

I fear I have trespassed too much on your time and space already, and will reserve my observations on other parts of Mr. Hill's pamphlet at a future period.

I am Sir yours &c.

Croydon March 1836.

J. T.

[The writer asks, "Where is the consistency" of charging the same postage on a letter to be sent from the General Post to the Bull and Mouth Inns as on a letter sent to Thurso?—He shall have an answer when he has explained why a PENNY is charged on a Newspaper "put into the General Post to be delivered at the Bull and Mouth Inn on the opposite side of the Street and to do which the Letter Carrier would scarce dirt his shoes or be occupied more than three minutes," whilst NOTHING is charged on a Newspaper sent to "Thurso 783 miles and which requires 96 hours to convey it."]

(To the Editor of the Post Circular)

Mancetter Vicarage, near Atherstone,

March 24, 1836.

Sir,

Atherstone is my post-town, and I sit down to give you some particulars of the unequal rates of our postage. From Atherstone to London, 108 miles, 9d.; to Leicester, 21 miles, 6d.; if the letter goes by Hinckley, the nearest way, 9d.; 3d. if it goes to Northampton, round by Market Harborough. If sent by Hinckley, a letter is two days; if by Northampton and Market Harborough, more than thrice the distance, one day. To Rugby, 20 miles, 3d.; to Birmingham, 20 miles, 7d.; to Measham, 10 miles, 1d.; to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, 3 miles further, 4d.; to Tamworth, 8 miles, reduced from 4d. to 2d.; to Hinckley, 8 miles, 4d., because the post-offices are distant 8 miles and a furlong, though the towns, from the end of one to the beginning of the other are little more than 7 miles apart. But this unreasonable tax may be escaped, by sending a letter under cover to a friend at Nuneaton, there being a penny post from Atherstone to Nuneaton, and another from thence to Hinckley, but it occasions trouble and a delay, which can only be submitted to when a letter is of no consequence. I wrote to the Post-office to have the postage to Hinckley reduced, but could not succeed, the distance being measured so nicely from one Post-office to another. I consider the high and very unequal rate of postage very oppressive, and injurious to the best interests of society, and that the Government is injured by it in its revenue. It is high time the whole system underwent a thorough reform, and I trust the time is not far distant.

I am, sir,

Yours respectfully,

B. RICHINGS.

[The "large" experimental reduction of fourpenny posts to twopenny is a little better than a great cheat. The fourpenny posts are not reduced to twopenny, except only on distances under eight miles. And we have reason to know that not the least pains have been taken to inform the public of the reduction. Let the village of Hinckley send a petition to Sir R. Peel for presentation, soliciting that the hon. bart. will ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for an explanation.]

## RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—FRIDAY, DEC. 15, 1837.

POSTAGES, &c.

Mr. HAWES.—Seeing the right honourable gentleman, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in his place, I beg to ask him whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government

to turn their attention to the recommendations contained in the ninth Report of the Post-office Commissioners, relating to foreign letters, and also respecting the reduction of postage in the metropolitan districts; and, moreover, whether it is his intention to issue and to allow the use of penny stamped covers?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—I am not prepared to give the honourable member for Lambeth an assurance that we shall carry into effect all the recommendations contained in that report. But some of its recommendations, I have no hesitation in saying, we shall adopt. I will try the experiment of stamped covers, for the purpose of seeing how far it will conduce to the convenience of the public. For my own part, I entertain doubts of its success; at any rate it is an experiment, our adoption of which is to be decided by the result. As to the reduction of postage in the metropolitan districts, I have to inform my honourable friend, that I contemplate a reduction in the lower rates of postage, but that I do not intend to confine it to the metropolitan districts only. I conceive that the amount of the lower rates of postage is too high. I particularly allude to the 4d. post. The amount is disproportioned to the service rendered, and it is even bad as a fiscal arrangement. A high rate of postage is put on the communications between places, which are so nearly contiguous, as to render private communication between them matters of daily occurrence. The Post-office is, therefore, defeated by the very means which it takes to augment its revenue. I propose to make a large experiment on the postages for shorter distances, by reducing them one half, keeping at the same time a strict account of the revenue which would have been derived from the fourpenny postages, and of that which will be actually derived from the twopenny postages. I will lay that account when made up on the table of the House of Commons as a test, which either will show that the public, is benefited by the increased facility given to communications by a reduction of postage, or will negative that inference altogether. The arrangements which I contemplate can be made by an order of the Treasury, in pursuance of an Act passed in the last session of Parliament. There is, therefore, no occasion for me to come to Parliament for fresh powers. Indeed, the plan is, at the present moment, to a certain extent in progress.

Mr. HALL.—I wish to know whether, in adopting this plan of penny stamped covers, it is intended to do away with the twopenny postage?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—Really, sir, the question which has been put to me involves two questions. I have already stated that I intend to adopt the principal of stamped covers, and to try it as an experiment by itself. I will not definitively alter the rate of the twopenny post until I see the result of the experiment of the stamped covers, for I cannot consent to try the stamped covers as a principle, unless the amount of revenue derived from the twopenny post be secured to me. The assertion now is, that the public will prefer the stamped covers to the payment of the postage, and that is the experiment to be tried.

Sir ROBERT PEEL.—I do hope, sir, that the right hon. gentleman will have the goodness, for the benefit of this side of the House, to explain what arrangement he proposed to make. Is the experiment of stamped covers for the twopenny post about to be tried?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—Yes.

Sir R. PEEL.—Is the right hon. gentleman about to try the experiment of reducing the postage on letters conveyed by the general post within a limited distance?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER.—I did not rise for the purpose of making a detailed statement of my intended plan; my object was merely to reply to a question put by the hon. member on a matter of great public interest, and I am far from thinking it necessary, now, to give a minute account of all the alterations that will be made. I can only repeat, that I am about to try the effect of extending the twopenny post to a certain distance. It is said that persons do not like sending covers, that there is a prejudice against them; but, if they are enabled to use stamped covers in sending their letters, I am satisfied there will be a much more extensive use of the twopenny post than there is at present. But that is a matter to be determined by experiment. With respect to the second point alluded to by the right hon. baronet, I am aware that expectations are entertained that a reduction of the postage charged on letters conveyed by the general post will have a very beneficial effect in increasing communication. I am about to make an experiment, with a view of ascertaining whether this will be the result, much more extensive than can be carried on within the limits of the twopenny post. Within certain limits, throughout the whole empire, the charge at present made for conveying a letter by post is 4d. This is an excessive charge, the amount of revenue it produces is but trifling, and the experiment of a reduction I think will not be attended with much risk. I propose to reduce the whole amount of this postage, throughout the empire, from 4d. to 2d., keeping an account of the exact number of letters conveyed by post at the charge of 4d., and the amount of revenue produced under that arrangement, as well as of the number of letters carried at the reduced rate of 2d., and the amount of revenue arising from them. I will lay the result of that experiment before the House, and it will hereafter be seen, as far as that goes, how far a very large reduction of postage will increase the amount of letters transmitted through the post. Thus, one of the questions so much discussed, may, as far as depends on that experiment, be considered as solved.

Sir R. PEEL.—I wish to ask the right hon. gentleman whether he considers that it will be possible to combine with the experiment of reducing the charge of 4d. to one-half, the introduction of the stamped covers? These, if I understand rightly, are to be used by the twopenny post; but may it not be possible to unite their use with a reduced rate of postage, especially in large towns?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER.—Sir, my answer will be one which I believe the right hon. gentleman will anticipate, and of which I hope he will approve. We propose to try the experiment, first, within moderate distances, and if it succeeds, there will be no difficulty in extending it; but it will be better at first to try it on a small scale. I do not wish to speak of it in a disparaging tone, but I am not very sanguine as to its success. The experience of a few months, however, will show whether we shall be justified in a further reduction.

Mr. HALL.—I hope that letters conveyed to persons residing in the district within which the postage is now fixed at 3d., will not in future be charged higher than letters carried a shorter distance by the twopenny post. For instance, I hope that persons residing in the Regent's Park will not have to pay more for letters than those who live at Windsor.—From the Mirror of Parliament.

**PETITIONS FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE,**  
(Continued from No. III.)

Presented during the present Session of Parliament.—The Number of Signatures is given.

- JAN. 29. Council of the Borough of Plymouth, in the county of Devon (Mr. Bewes), seal 1.
- Mayor, Aldermen, and Councillors of the borough of Kingston-upon-Hull (Lord Worsley), seal 1.
- Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of the city of Exeter (Mr. Divett), seal 1.
- FEB. 2. Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures of Greenock, incorporated by Royal Charter (Mr. Wallace), seal 1.
- Managers of the Royal burgh of Kilrenny, Scotland (Mr. Wallace), seal 3.
- FEB. 5. Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures of the city of Edinburgh, incorporated by Royal Charter (Mr. Wallace), seal 1.
- Council of the city and borough of Bath (Colonel Gore Langton), seal 1.
- FEB. 7. Mayor, Aldermen, and Council of the city of Bristol (Mr. Philip Miles), seal.
- Merchants, Traders, and Inhabitants of the town of Drogheda, seal 34.
- Clergy, Professional Men, Gentry, Merchants, Tradesmen, and other inhabitants of the town of Bedford (Captain Polhill), seal 77.
- FEB. 8. Magistrates, Town Council, and Inhabitants at large of the royal burgh of Annan, in public meeting duly assembled, Jenhouse Nelson, Esq., the provost, in the chair, signed by order, and in presence of the meeting, by Jenhouse Nelson, provost and chairman (General Sharpe), seal 1.

(To be continued.)

We entreat all readers of the *Post Circular* to exert themselves to obtain petitions to Parliament for a reduction of postage. Wherever half a dozen persons can be found who suffer from this impost, let them send their petitions to the Legislature. We are certain that every Christian minister throughout the kingdom will pray for a measure so advantageous to religion and sound morals, when the subject is placed before him.

**PETITIONS ON POSTAGE.**

It is highly desirable that no time should be lost in forwarding to members of Parliament those petitions which are ready for presentation. They may be transmitted through the Post-office directed to any member, if open at both ends. Several members of all shades of politics manifest an interest in this most important measure. Mr. Wallace, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Bannerman, Mr. C. P. Villiers, &c., have presented many petitions during the present session of Parliament.

**FORM OF A SHORT GENERAL PETITION FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.**

To the Right Honourable the [Lords, spiritual and temporal, or Commons, as the case may be] in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of \_\_\_\_\_ in the County of \_\_\_\_\_

SHewETH.—That the dearness of the present rates of postage is injurious to the industry of the people, and prevents much correspondence between relatives and friends at a distance from each other, and causes many letters to be illegally sent in parcels and by private hands.

That a great increase would take place in all sorts of correspondence if the rates of postage were reduced, and that the law would be obeyed and not broken.

That your petitioners pray your honourable House to give Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform penny postage for all letters payable in advance a fair trial. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

The members of the House of Commons who have kindly permitted general post letters under an ounce weight on the subject of postage to be addressed to them marked **POSTAGE**, are as follows.

- Letters from the counties of
- Hereford, Gloucester, Monmouth, Somerset, Cornwall, Devon, Wilts, Dorset, Worcester } Sir Charles Lemon, Bart., M.P., 46 Charles-street, Berkeley-square.
- Herts, Essex, Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Middlesex, Berks, Oxford, Stafford, Salop. } Charles P. Villiers, Esq., M.P., 11, Wilton-street.

- Durham, Cumberland, Westmoreland, Lancaster, York } R. M. Milnes, Esq., M.P., 26, Pall-mall.
- Rutland, Lincoln, Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Warwick, Bedford, Bucks, Huntingdon, Cambridge, Norfolk, and Suffolk } Charles Buller, jun., Esq., M.P., 1 Queen's Square Place, Westminster.
- IRELAND } The Hon. P. Butler, M.P., 24, York-road.
- SCOTLAND and WALES } Edward Ellice, jun Esq., M.P., 18 Arlington-street.

**NOTICE.**

The existence and object of the *Post Circular* has now been manifested throughout the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

Future numbers of the *Post Circular* will not be published weekly, but at such intervals and on such occasions as may appear to ensure the greatest amount of efficacy to its labours.

**The Post Circular.**

LONDON, APRIL 5, 1838.

ONE of the most cherished watchwords of our intelligent and prudent countrymen is the "Freedom of the Press." What is the Freedom of the Press but the freedom of communicating thought? A ready vehicle for the transmission of knowledge. Let a despot place a lock on every printing press in the country, and proclaim that not a sheet should be issued unless circulated by himself, according to his pleasure, well or ill—fast or slow—until a tax of 2, 3, and 400 per cent. had been paid for his monopoly. Would the grievance be endured for a single hour? What is letter-writing but the more ancient and the infinitely more universal organ for communication of thought than printing? Men wrote long before they printed, and great as are the blessings and the effects of the press, inconceivably greater have been those of written communication. The written Bible taught men the knowledge of God, and sowed the seeds of Christianity thousands of years before the printed Bible expanded that knowledge. Man is little better than a savage without a knowledge of written characters. The employment of printing is an after stage in his civilization. Communication by writing being at least equally as important as printing, how do the people suffer it to be dealt with by the government? Is it not encumbered with those oppressions, against which, if applied to printing, the people would revolt though they were supported by all the tyrannies in the world! Not only does the Government monopolize the transmission of written communication, but it lays on a tax so heavy and executes the work in a way, that almost amounts to a prohibition of correspondence. We blame no particular government for the present taxes on the transmission of thought, but we do indeed deplore that the expenses of the late war should have occasioned such fiscal encroachments on this—the most essential organ of civilization.

In 1765, the universal postage on letters, transmitted under fifteen miles was one penny; above fifteen and under thirty miles, two-pence; above thirty and under eighty miles, three-pence; and on all above eighty miles the postage was only four-pence. Be it remembered in 1765, there were no mail coaches (the cheapest mode of transmission), few direct roads, and those few inferior to the worst turnpike-road of the present time—small facilities for travelling—great insecurity—and a population not one half the amount of the present. In 1835, with all possible increased advantages of travel and transport, increased trade, progressive numbers and intelligence, the postage of one penny has become four-pence; of two-pence, six-pence; of three-pence, eight-pence; of four-pence, nine-pence, ten-pence, and eleven-pence, &c. In 1765, the true principle of postage, uniformity of rate, is carried out, probably as near as the Post-office expenses of that time would allow; and the charges were evidently regulated on the principle mentioned by Lord Lowther in his statesman-like report, that "the Post-office was to afford advantage to trade and commerce," and that "revenue was to be derived from the Post-office was not the primary consideration." Shall we not in this case at least revert to the "wisdom of our ancestors?"

Let us not stay to discuss the manifold advantages to trade and commerce, and money-getting, nor the impetus to education, nor even the still dearer increase of the blessings of religious and moral sentiments which a cheap postage would confer, but let the people raise their voices for the great principle of Freedom of Speech,—for letter-writing is but speaking at a distance,—and let them tell the minister in tones not to be mistaken, that their speech shall not be crippled by fiscal tyranny, let widowed mothers anxious to reclaim their children erring at a distance, lay the wishes of their hearts before their Queen, let meetings be held in every village and hamlet of the kingdom, and petitions prepared for the legislature, let deputations of science and commerce haunt the ministers, and let the whole people

shout for the principle of "Freedom of Speech—with the cheapest profitable postage, or no Government monopoly."

The following circular was issued last week by the Post-office:

**NOTICE.**

General Post-office  
26th March, 1838

As it does not appear to be generally known that the mere affixing a newspaper stamp on any new periodical publication will not entitle it, as a matter of course, to pass free by the post, it is recommended to those who may be about to publish, for the first time, any such paper, to submit a copy of it, in the first instance, to the Postmaster General, in order that it may be determined whether it is of that nature as will entitle it to pass free of postage.

Clause of the Act of 1st Victoria, cap. 34, Sec. 32.

"And be it further enacted, that in all cases in which a question shall arise, whether a printed paper is entitled to the privileges of a newspaper or other publication hereby privileged, so far as respects the transmission thereof by the post under the Post-office Acts, the question shall be referred to the determination of the Postmaster General, whose decision, with the concurrence of the Lords of the Treasury, shall be final."

By Command,

W. L. MADERLY,

Secretary.

It must be in every body's recollection that Mr. Spring Rice on all discussions upon the newspaper stamp duty, upheld the policy of retaining that duty on the ground that it enabled the light of the metropolitan mind to illumine the provincial darkness, by means of the Post-office. Now we have the Postmaster-General claiming by Act of Parliament, the right of administering the privilege of transmission by post. True he should have the concurrence of the Treasury, but the power is subject to be exercised certainly without that concurrence—as in the case of the first 600 numbers of the *Post Circular*, when it seems even without the sanction of the Postmaster-General. Interpreting the above clause in a general sense, it appears that a Postmaster-General may arrest the transmission of any newspaper by the post. Having the Treasury's consent, he may stop the *Times* if he pleases, and their joint decisions are final. The Postmaster would not venture on such a step for prudence sake, but with publications of lesser influence his decisions appear very arbitrary. We are informed for instance, that the musical world, though containing news was refused postage freedom. And Mr. Whiting, of Beaufort House, brought out a paper, the contents of which obliged him, under penalties of fine, imprisonment, and loss of types, &c., to have it stamped at the Stamp-office; yet the Postmaster refused it free transmission, having allowed the first number which would create a large amount of postage to pass unchanged. The examples of the *Literary Gazette* and *Athenæum*, which print partly on unstamped and partly on stamped paper—on stamped paper solely to get a free post—are instances of caprice in another way. In all cases, where the Stamp-office compels a paper to the usage of a stamp, it surely is something like tyranny to refuse it a free postage. By clause xxviii. of the act quoted above, "Newspapers may be sent free of postage." The legislature could never have purposed intrusting such a power of rendering this privilege nugatory, as appears to be carried by clause xxxii. If so the Postmaster might legally establish a monopoly for himself if he choose to start a paper, and charge postage on every other newspaper in the kingdom. At present we are content to leave the Postmaster-General to the care of Mr. Wallace in this matter.

**EFFECTS OF "THE POST CIRCULAR."**

REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.—We have received two publications devoted to this object, one; the first number of the *Post Circular*, a cheap stamped newspaper, which, in the words of its address, "proposes to carry out its object by impartially inquiring into Mr. Hill's plan of a uniform Penny Postage;" and the other—a pamphlet issued by the committee appointed to take the necessary measures in favour of the above plan, which gives a succinct and excellent view of the advantages offered by it, and solicits the information of such facts in furtherance of the plan, as parties engaged in trade, or in professions, may be enabled to give—for the purpose of being laid before the Parliamentary Committee now sitting. The first of these publications will, we think, be extremely useful, in keeping public attention awake to so desirable an object as the reduction of a heavy tax. We have already had occasion to remark that there is no tax more burdensome to the people at large than that of the present enormous rates of postage. Other taxes there certainly are which weigh heavily, but none is so indiscriminate, and so immediately felt, as the existing charge for the transmission from place to place by the public mail of a letter. If, therefore, the *Post Circular* continues to impress on the public, by means of facts, and in an impartial manner, the burdensome nature of the present postage charges, it will be extensively read, and extensively useful also. The other publication to which we have referred, viz., the pamphlet of the committee of management, is exceedingly valuable. It does that which is so desirable to persons who might object to a reduction of postage, on the grounds that it would injure the revenue, viz., it presents facts demonstrative of a conclusion quite the contrary.—*Western Luminary.*

— The *Aylesbury News* (March 31) republishes the form for petitioning.

— The *Bedford Mercury* (March 31) quotes the affecting letter showing how domestic correspondence is crippled, and several other notices, from the *Post Circular*.

— The *Scotsman* takes the *Post Circular's* news about the Select Committee without acknowledgment.

— The subject of Post-office reform is second to none which are now agitated; and it is gratifying to watch the zeal with which it is pursued by Mr. Wallace and other senators. The present is a time peculiarly favourable for efforts among the constituencies. We would remind our readers of a cheap and effective method of helping the cause;—let every burgh or town send to their representative an address, subscribed by even a few electors, calling on him to give Mr. Wallace his support. Let every man interested in the reduction of postage encourage the circulation of the *Post Circular*—a London paper, exclusively devoted to this measure. If a few zealous friends will only devote two pence-halfpenny, they may have the fullest information on the progress of inquiry, and the means of effecting a change. When we reflect on the many pence charged for postage so unnecessarily, can we expect that this outlay will be refused?—*The Scottish Pilot*.

— A clergyman writes, "I have seen the *Post Circular*, containing the address to the clergy (No. 1.); I regard the subject as deserving of the best support of every clergyman, as well as philanthropist, and if the ministry could but see it, they have the finest possible opportunity of putting the whole country in good humour with them—a more popular measure I cannot conceive, at once affecting the comfort and convenience of all classes."

— A merchant from Leith, writes, "If Mr. Hill's admirable plan is gone into—there should be no partial trial of it—it should be made universal, and ought to allow all kinds of documents to be sent by post—subject to weighing."

— The *Taunton Courier*, of March 28, reprints the form of petitioning, and Mr. Chaffey's letter from Keinton, No. 2.

— The *Hampshire Advertiser*, of March 26, notices the *Post Circular* (No. 2.), and makes long extracts from its columns.

— Our notices of the *Post Circular*, of which we have received a third number, are again unavoidably postponed.—*Preston Observer*.

The *Paisley Advertiser* quotes the suggestions of the Mercantile Committee from the *Post Circular*.

BEAUTIES OF POST-OFFICE MONOPOLY.

— A letter posted at Chelsea after 4 p.m., to pass to Brompton,  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile, occupies 22 hours in delivery, and travels nearly 8 miles.

(From a Correspondent, who gives name and address.)

— "From Ruthin, the central town of Denbighshire, to

	Miles.	Postage.
Denbigh . . . . .	8 . . . . .	2d.
Mold . . . . .	10 . . . . .	7d.
Corwen . . . . .	13 . . . . .	4d.
Llangollen . . . . .	15 . . . . .	6d.
Wrexham . . . . .	17 . . . . .	7d.
Chester . . . . .	22 . . . . .	7d.
Liverpool . . . . .	33 . . . . .	8d.
Manchester . . . . .	59 . . . . .	9d.

Whatever alteration may be contemplated I know not, but if the proposed one is ineligible, surely distance of place only should be the criterion, and not the mileage of carriage."

— The postage from Brompton to Loughton, 15 miles, 3d.; to Epping, 2 miles further on the same road, 17 miles, 7d.

— A letter directed to Epping, and posted at Loughton after 4 o'clock p.m., is delivered at Epping in 42 hours—the distance, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  miles—the postage, 7d. This letter remains at Loughton till the following morning, is brought to London, remains there till 8 the same night, arrives at Epping at 10, and is delivered at half-past 8 next morning, and travels 28 miles. The mail passes from Epping and through Loughton whilst the letter is lying at Loughton—besides not less than four coaches; but the Post-office prefers a costly Humphrey Clinker on a half-fed, lame, slow beast, to a cheap, speedy coach, for the carriage of letters!

— THE POST CIRCULAR.—We have received the first and second number of this newspaper, published as a weekly advocate for cheap, swift, and sure postage. It is written with ability and temper, and appears likely to disseminate, far and near, full and correct information upon the important question of a reduction of postage by Mr. R. Hill's plan. We hope that the *Post Circular* will also take up the subject of abuses in the Post-office. They are at once numerous and annoying.—*Preston Chronicle*.

— We have been favoured with the first and second numbers of the *Post Circular*—a paper evidently got up for the purpose of achieving a great public good—the reduction

of the present enormous rates of postage on letters. It shall have our best assistance in this laudable undertaking, and we wish it success.—*The Drogheda Argus*.

— The Vicar of — informs us that the *Post Circular*, No. 1, though at first charged with double postage, has been received post free. He says, "I regret I did not receive it sooner, so that I might have had an earlier opportunity of expressing my approval of the object, and my wish to assist in promoting it. I beg to contribute my share of the public thanks to the patrons of so important a national work, and with every wish that it may prosper in their hands."

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PRICES CURRENT OF MERCHANTS, PRICE LISTS, CIRCULARS AND PROSPECTUSES, are inserted in the POST CIRCULAR, and may therefore be sent POST FREE throughout the Kingdom. For terms apply to the Publishers.

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R. WORNUM,  
Manufacturer of Patent Double-Action Piano-fortes,

AT THE  
MUSIC HALL, STORE STREET, BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON.

DESCRIPTIONS AND PRICES.

PICCOLO.

NO.	Description	Price	GUINEAS.
1	Plain in Mahogany ... .. 6 Octaves	...	30
2	Best ditto ... .. 6 Ditto	...	34
3	Ditto, with Trusses ... .. 6 Ditto	...	38
4	Ditto, with Cylinder and Trusses ... .. 6 Ditto	...	42
5	Plain in Rosewood ... .. 6 Ditto	...	42
6	Elegant Ditto, with Trusses ... .. 6 Ditto	...	46
7	Ditto, with Cylinder and Trusses ... .. 6 Ditto	...	50

CABINET AND COTTAGE.

NO.	CABINET, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ Octaves.	GUINEAS.	COTTAGE, 6 Octaves.	GUINEAS.
8	Plain O. G. in Mahogany ... ..	55	Plain ... ..	42
9	Superior ditto, with Columns ... ..	60	O. G. Front ... ..	46
10	Ditto ditto, with Trusses ... ..	65	Ditto, with Trusses ... ..	50
11	Plain O. G. in Rosewood ... ..	65	Plain in Rosewood ... ..	50
12	Superior ditto, with Columns ... ..	70	O. G. Front ... ..	54
13	Ditto ditto, with Trusses ... ..	75	Ditto, with Trusses ... ..	58

POCKET GRAND HORIZONTAL.

14	Plain in Mahogany ... ..	6 Octaves	...	55
15	Ditto in Rosewood ... ..	6 Ditto	...	60
	Elegant ... ..			from 60 to 80

IMPERIAL GRAND HORIZONTAL.

16	Plain in Mahogany ... ..	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ Octaves	...	75
17	Extra length ... ..	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ Ditto	...	80
18	Plain in Rosewood ... ..	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ Ditto	...	80
19	Extra length ... ..	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ Ditto	...	85
	Elegant ... ..			from 85 to 105

All the above Instruments are manufactured on superior principles, and in the best manner. They are unrivalled in tone, touch, and appearance; are also all prepared for foreign climates by screws, equal tension, and other arrangements; one of which, their entire construction without iron, is important. Piccolos stand 3 feet 8 inches high; and Pocket Grands are only 5 feet 4 inches long.

Instruments not approved of, within 3 Months, may be exchanged on payment of the expenses of removal. Old instruments taken in exchange. Published April 10, 1837. A liberal allowance to exporters and Dealers.



2332. Have you ever known a single letter miscarry?—Never.

2333. Mr. Wood.—Is there a competition among these regular carriers going to the same town or village?—There is.

2334. Chairman.—Have you ever heard, in other towns of similar magnitude, of similar practices?—I have.

2335. And to anything like the same extent?—Yes, in the same proportion; I know it prevails in ——— to the same extent.

2336. Lord Louther.—In the correspondence between the town where you reside and London, are there many letters sent clandestinely?—Yes, as many as come by the mail-bags.

2337. Now, in the correspondence with other great towns in different parts of the kingdom, such as Liverpool and Glasgow, is it carried on?—In those places it prevails to a similar extent, but not in the smaller classes of towns in the kingdom.

2338. Do you think these people have a carrier-correspondence in those large towns?—Not a carrier-correspondence, but in a great many instances they have agents in Liverpool, Glasgow, and other towns. Letters are sent in parcels to those large places.

2339. Do you know at what hour the delivery of any letter sent privately from the town where you reside takes place in London?—I do not.

2340. Do you think, from what you have heard, it is as prompt as by the Post-office?—I never heard any complaint of them.

2341. Mr. Wood.—In the town in which you reside, does a large proportion of the letters you have described as so conveyed relate to matters of business of so small an amount, as that the postage would be a serious tax upon the commodities or manufactured articles to which the letter relates?—A very serious tax; I made a calculation some time ago, by inquiries from these poor manufacturers, and I found that one of them, when in full work will earn 40s. a week; and they would receive, upon an average, 30 orders at 4d. apiece, if they went through the Post-office, which would be a tax of 25 per cent. upon their earnings.

2342. Is that in a single week?—Yes; I made a calculation of that by inquiries among different persons. I asked, "How many letters do you receive in a week; whereabouts are your earnings?" and so on; and I found it was a taxation of 25 per cent. if their orders went through the Post-office; instead of which, in the way they are sent, it is only six and a quarter per cent.

2343. Then this correspondence consists of orders sent by the large manufacturers in your town to the smaller manufacturers in the neighbourhood?—Yes, orders and communications relating to the supply of goods.

2344. Chairman.—You have referred to the small manufacturers of goods of a particular kind in your neighbourhood; do you know of any town, having a different description of manufacture, where such a practice prevails?—I have mentioned one town in which the manufacture is similar; I do not think it does prevail to the same extent in other places.

2345. Is there any town in the immediate neighbourhood of that in which you reside, in which you have reason to believe that a similar practice exists?—In all of them.

2346. Is that in the return of the correspondence?—Yes.

2347. They send their answers in the same way?—Yes.

2348. Has there been any petition from the town you reside in, for the purpose of obtaining a reduction of postage?—I am not aware of my own knowledge that there has; I have heard there has been, but I do not know it.

2349. Have you heard it canvassed at all, or any reason stated why it has not been generally adopted?—I have.

2350. What reasons have you heard assigned?—That they were afraid Parliament would not make a sufficient reduction to meet the evil; that we were very well off as we were, and they did not wish to make complaints about it, unless they thought Parliament would make a sufficient reduction to make it worth their while.

2351. Lord Louther.—What is the postage from the place you live in to London by the carrier?—I do not know any carriers to London.

2352. But in the way in which a letter is sent from the town in which you reside to London, what is paid for it?—I do not know any other way of sending a letter from the town I reside in to London, except by parcel or through the post; and I sometimes receive letters containing orders to so small an amount, that I am obliged to forego the execution of them; I could not pay the postage both ways for the invoice and order.

2353. Chairman.—You have alluded to the inconvenience of a high rate of postage to the smaller manufacturers; can you adduce any particular instance of the effect of the present rates of postage upon them?—I can. I know of orders which have been entirely omitted to be executed in consequence of it. I may allude to one which I have in my mind now, dated the 2nd of January, which I have been waiting for an opportunity of sending. In that case the goods had been ordered from America; the persons so ordering them had occasion to write to another manufacturing town, and they enclosed it in the order for the town in which I reside, and it amounted to so small a sum that the order could not be executed without a loss to the manufacturer and the merchant.

2354. Then in point of fact, the order has not been forwarded at all?—It has not.

2355. On account of the rate of postage?—On account of the rate of postage.

2356. Mr. Wood.—If all the letters to which you refer as sent in this way could not be sent, except at the rate of 4d. a letter, would it put a stop to a great deal of the correspondence?—It would, entirely.

2357. And would putting a stop to that correspondence

interfere with the convenience and commercial operations of those who are engaged in it?—Decidedly so.

2358. Chairman.—Do you believe that were the postage to be reduced to a similar amount to that which the carriers convey letters for, the parties would prefer the regular Post-office conveyance?—They decidedly would.

2359. Do you believe that mode of conveying correspondence would cease, were the Post-office made the means of cheap conveyance of letters?—Yes, very greatly indeed; to a very great extent.

2360. Would the individual house of which you spoke, increase its correspondence beyond what it is?—Exceedingly.

2361. Large as its correspondence now is, your opinion is, that it would increase it greatly?—Yes; and all the houses at a greater distance than 20 miles, would increase their correspondence threefold.

2362. Is there a great desire existing, generally, among persons in trade, to receive more information through the Post-office, than they can now do at the present high rate of postage?—Very great indeed. It frequently occurs that an order will be sent to some large manufacturing town at a distance, and they will merely send to one manufacturer; whereas, if the postage were cheap, they would send inquiries to several as to the credits, prices, and discounts, and there would be the answers back to those.

2363. Supposing the rate of postage were similar to that which the carriers convey at, would the house of which you speak, be glad to receive prices-current through the post?—Very glad indeed; and to order them from every place where they could be got.

2364. That would be a benefit to you in the course of your trade?—Yes; in the course of my trade it would be a great benefit.

2365. Should you expect to increase your trade by that means?—I should.

2366. Lord Louther.—Are prices-current sent to you at present, clandestinely, by private conveyance?—There is no private conveyance from places at any distance except London, where there are agents existing, and the seaports.

2367. Mr. Wood.—Are you aware that, by a recent arrangement of the Post-office, prices-current may now be transmitted at a very small charge by the post?—I paid 9d. for one a very short time ago.

2368. Lord Louther.—What was the price-current of which you speak?—Of a variety of articles; potash and other things.

2369. Where was it from?—London.

2370. How was it folded?—Like a letter, precisely.

2371. Was there any name attached to it?—Yes.

2372. Chairman.—As you seem to be generally acquainted with the mode of conducting trade in the town and neighbourhood of which you speak; is it your opinion that a large or considerable reduction in the rate of postage would benefit all the trades with which you are acquainted?—I feel very confident indeed that it would.

2373. And that all traders would be likely to increase their correspondence?—I think they all would.

2374. Would they view it as a measure of relief, as well as of convenience?—They certainly would.

2375. Mr. Wood.—As a merchant largely engaged in business, is it your belief that if the postage between the town in which you reside and the metropolis were reduced to one-half, you would increase your correspondence with the metropolis so as to pay in the aggregate as large an amount to the Post-office as you now do?—Yes, I have no doubt of it.

2376. Mr. Parker.—But you are of opinion the revenue would suffer, if the reduction were so great as from the present postage to 1d.?—I have not taken that into calculation; it has not occupied my mind at all; but I presume, in that case the revenue would suffer.

2377. Mr. Wood.—Speaking of your own branch of business?—I think if it were reduced to 1d., the Post-office would receive more money from me than it does at present, taking long distances with short, because I send away a great many more letters than I receive.

2378. Mr. Parker.—That would include the abstraction of the small postage by the illicit conveyance you now use?—Yes.

2379. You would cease then to use the carriers?—Of course.

2380. Mr. Wood.—Do those parties you have described as engaged in conveying letters in this manner confine themselves solely to it as a means of livelihood?—Some do and some do not; some have common stage-carts and deliver goods as well; as soon as they have delivered their goods, they see to the delivery of their letters.

2381. How much per week do you suppose any individuals make in that way?—I have no means of ascertaining that exactly; if I were to inquire of them, they would conceal it in some measure.

2382. Mr. Parker.—You say you have turned your attention to this subject for some time; have you ever considered by what reduction in the present rate of postage the revenue would be most benefited?—No, I have not.

2383. Mr. Chalmers.—Supposing the Post-office to carry the 5,000 letters of which you spoke at 1d. each, and the carriers were to reduce their rate to a half penny, which would be preferred?—I for one would go to the Post-office in preference to going any where else.

2384. The difference would not be a sufficient inducement to you to send by the illegal conveyance?—It would not.

2385. Lord Louther.—What would you do if the Post-office charge were 2d. within a distance of ten miles?—That of course would throw a great number of letters into the Post-office which now go by the carriers. It would give the carriers only those of any small amount, and of any small consequence.

2386. Mr. Wood.—Then you think the Post-office is considered the safer mode of conveyance of the two?—I do not consider it safer myself, but I should prefer it now

if it were not for the injury that business would suffer from it.

2387. Chairman.—You would avoid all risk yourself?—I would.

THE FEASIBILITY AND ECONOMY OF USING STAMPS FOR COLLECTING THE POSTAGE—MEANS AND COST OF DISTRIBUTION—DIFFICULTIES OF FORGERY.

1 March, 1838.

JOHN WOOD, Esq., called in, and examined.

2112. Chairman.—You are Chairman of the Board of Stamps and Taxes?—I am.

2113. Is it a part of your duty to superintend the Stamp department in all its branches?—Yes, I am at the head of that department.

2114. Are you aware that it has been suggested to collect the postage on letters by means of a stamp duty?—I am.

2115.—Do you conceive the adoption of stamped letter-paper would be a cheap mode of collecting the revenue?—The revenue certainly would be collected at a cheap rate by means of stamped covers, because the payment instead of being made in detail at the Post-office on every letter that was put in, would be paid in gross by persons buying a large quantity of stamped covers from us.

2116. Could your department undertake the duty if it were to be imposed upon it?—We could undertake to stamp paper in any form which might be thought proper, and to distribute that paper over the country, so that the public might have a regular supply.

2117. Would the adoption of such a plan render it necessary to employ any officers at high salaries in your department?—Certainly not.

2118. Does it occur to you that any difficulty would arise in your department in supplying the country with stamped sheets of paper for letters?—Not the least.

2119. Or with stamped envelopes through your distributors and sub-distributors in the country?—Certainly not; I think the word "envelope" may lead to a misconception, and that the question had better be confined to stamped paper; it will be the duty of the stationers to make up the stamped paper into envelopes.

2120. You think that your department could undertake the distribution through its various ramifications of such stamped paper?—No doubt it could.

2121. Does the reply, now given, apply to issuing writing paper for the use of the whole kingdom?—We could, without any difficulty, issue writing paper for the use of the whole kingdom; but that, I take it, is not a necessary part of the plan; we can stamp any quantity of paper which is sent to us at a certain rate of expense, and we can distribute that quantity over the kingdom at a certain other rate of expense.

2122. Would such an increase of duty, as you have now adverted to, impose a large additional expense upon your department?—I calculate that sheets of paper might be stamped and delivered to the public in London at an expense not exceeding 1s. per thousand; in that I include what is called the telling out and the telling in, the counting the paper before it is stamped, the stamping it, the counting it out after it is stamped, and the packing and delivery of it in London.

2123. The Committee are to understand that you allude to the whole expense which would be incurred in sending it from your department in London for use?—Yes; I do not include in that, any commission which should be allowed to the vendors, or any expense of carriage into the country, or any expense of commission allowed to the distributors or sub-distributors.

2124. Are your distributors and sub-distributors of stamps in every town in England, Scotland, and Ireland?—There are, in most towns, distributors or sub-distributors; if there is not a sub-distributor, there is a licensed vendor, who, in fact, answers the same purpose. There is scarcely a market-town of any note in England without a sub-distributor; but, for the purpose of distribution, we could make the post-master of every post-office a distributor, for we might remit to him a certain number of covers, and take his stock from time to time as we take the stock of our distributors and sub-distributors.

2125. By employing distributors and sub-distributors, and adding to those the post-masters throughout the country, are you of opinion that your department could superintend the distribution of letter-paper for the use of the country at large?—Without the smallest difficulty.

2126. What description of paper would you recommend for the purpose of collecting postage in the manner now adverted to?—The danger to be guarded against is forgery; in my opinion, a peculiar paper would be one among other means of preventing it, and therefore I should be glad to see some peculiar paper used which should afford that protection.

2127. Would you superadd to the use of such peculiar paper the use of stamps?—Yes, certainly; because I believe that forgery is much more difficult of execution, if it require the combined talents of the engraver, the paper-maker, and the printer.

2129. Would you propose that all stamped letter-paper should be supplied by the Stamp department?—That is not essential to the plan; it might, or it might not, according as the public convenience, or the wishes of the public, might be best consulted; my own idea is, that a peculiar paper—I will take Dickinson's for example—a paper which has lines of thread or silk stretched through its substance, and apparent on each surface, is the best preventive of forgery I have seen; and I should propose that the public should have their option, either buying such paper stamped at the Stamp-office, or that they might send in their own paper to be stamped, there could then be no charge of monopoly made against the Government; but I think it very likely that the public would prefer the paper issued from the Stamp-office, and it certainly would be a convenience to the Post office if that were the case, because the risk of forgery being so much diminished by the use of such a paper as Dickinson's,



the duty of the inspector would be very much diminished, and I think all prospect of loss to the revenue from forgery would be at an end.

2135. *Chairman*.—What might be the probable expense of stamping writing-paper for the purpose?—I think 1s. each thousand would cover every expense, including both clerks and stampers, and packing the paper ready for delivery in London.

2136. That does not include the price of the paper?—No, the mere expense of affixing the stamp, including the clerks' expenses and the tellers. A great deal of time is employed in attaching the stamp to every half sheet of paper, because each half sheet has to be separated from the quire or bundle in which it is, and the stamp separately applied to it.

2137. What might be the probable expense of distributing paper in the country; the per centage to which you alluded?—I am of opinion that from one to three per cent. should be allowed to distributors and sub-distributors upon that portion sold by them, and not less than five per cent. upon that portion sold by the licensed vendors; and I will explain the reason why a larger per centage must be allowed to licensed vendors than to the distributors or sub-distributors: the licensed vendor must purchase his stock of stamped covers and pay for them in ready money; to a distributor and sub-distributor a stock is consigned on credit, not to be paid for by him until he has actually received the money from his customer; therefore, there is no advance of capital on the part of the distributor or sub-distributors.

2138. Would you propose that each class of whom you have now spoken should receive the same allowance, or would you propose that in smaller places there should be a different per centage?—I have stated that the distributors and sub-distributors would require a per centage varying from one to three per cent., and that variation in the rate of per centage depends very much upon the quantity of business they may be expected to do; as for instance, in the distribution of stamps in a large town like Manchester or Liverpool, having a very large sale of stamps, the distributor is content with a much smaller rate per cent. than the distributors of small districts, whose sales are proportionably less.

2143. *Mr. Thornely*.—Could the supply to the country be so managed as not to be considered monopoly by the paper-manufacturers?—I think it might be managed in this way, that the Government should give parties the option of either purchasing their stamped paper at Somerset-house, or of sending in their own paper to be stamped; if that plan were adopted, I should then recommend that the Government should use Dickinson's paper; and I think that the advantages of that paper would be so great, supposing we could sell it at the same price to the public at which other paper was sold, or at a very small difference, that the stationers themselves would very soon come to us for it, and that the imputation of monopoly would be completely avoided.

2150. *Chairman*.—From your knowledge of the means adopted for accomplishing forgery and also its prevention, would you expect the use of a peculiar paper to be favourable to the prevention and detection of forgery?—Undoubtedly.

2151. Have the goodness to state your reasons?—A paper may be made which it is so exceedingly difficult to manufacture, that a forger would scarcely be able to imitate it.

2152. Do you allude to the expense which would be necessary?—The expense of machinery, and the large capital to be employed, and the extent also of the machinery, which would prevent its being adopted without its being very visible.

2157. *Mr. Parker*.—Have you formed an estimate of the probable loss from forgery?—I think the loss from forgery, if proper precautions are taken, is so small, that it is an element not worth taking into the calculation.

2162. *Mr. Chalmers*.—Is it your plan, if you use Dickinson's paper for these stamped covers, to limit the sale by Mr. Dickinson of that paper to Government?—Certainly; because that in itself would constitute a very material obstacle to forgery.

2163. Would not that give rise to complaints of monopoly on the part of other paper-makers?—I think not; if the Government could enter into a contract with Mr. Dickinson to supply them with such paper as they might want, giving any stationer in the kingdom, or any individual, the privilege of bringing whatever paper he chose, of whatever quality or price, to be stamped, there could be no complaint, I should think, of monopoly.

2169. Do you propose to stamp whole sheets of Mr. Dickinson's paper, or to limit it to covers?—I take it, the duty of the Stamp-office would be to stamp pieces of papers of any size, whether half-sheets or whole sheets; it would be the province of the stationer to manufacture them into envelopes if the customers demanded them, and for which he would make whatever charge he could agree upon with his customers.

2179. *Mr. Parker*.—In order to this scheme being satisfactory to the country, it is necessary these stamps should penetrate into the remotest villages as well as towns?—I think the stamp being made compulsory, it is essential to the success of the scheme that every part of the country should be fully supplied.

2180. Do you apprehend that you have taken a correct view of the difficulty of inundating the country with them?—We should have no difficulty in supplying every part of the country; I have no fear of any difficulty either in doors or out of doors; we have machinery which appears to me so perfect, which works so regularly for the supply of the country, with all denominations of stamps at present, that I do not see that our machinery would fail if greater pressure were applied to it.

2181. What sort of villages does your machinery at present reach?—I do not recollect the population, but I can

sell the precise amount of per-centage which the sub-distributor has received within the last two or three years: I believe at one place the sub-distributor's poundage amounted to 10½d. for the year; that of course is an extreme case, but that perhaps is a sufficient answer to the question, inasmuch as it shows, that, where the sale is very limited indeed, still persons are willing to undertake the office of sub-distributors; it is not the mere profit made by the per-centage on the few stamps sold which is the inducement, but it gives, perhaps, some little character and consequence to a person to be a sub-distributor; it entices custom of other kinds to his shop. The case I have put is a very extreme case, but we have many sub-distributors who receive under 40s. a year.

2182. You are aware that the distributors and sub-distributors would have to keep a number of stamps for Mr. Hill's plan, extending to ten?—I am not aware of the details of the plan; but at present they have to keep a vast variety of stamps; as, for instance, for the different rates of receipt stamps, bills of exchange, deeds of various amount, and so on.

2184. Have you made any estimate of the carriage?—That depends very much upon the quantity, because we contract for the carriage of stamps; and if we send a great weight, and that regularly, for that is an essential element in our contract with the carriers, we can get it done at a comparatively low rate; the carrier will carry at a less rate for a customer whom he may depend on to send a certain stated weight, on certain days, than for a casual customer; and our contract is that we shall send parcels not exceeding such and such weight, on such and such days in the week.

2185. Can you make any estimate of the probable expense of this?—It depends so much upon the quantity to be sent, and the places also, that it is very difficult; there are certain parts of the kingdom to which vast quantities would be sent, to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Edinburgh, and Glasgow, and so on, at much less expense than they could be sent to places much nearer home, where the quantity sent was trifling; but I do not think the expense of transmission would be very formidable.

2194\*. Suppose it were to be so enacted that postage were to be taken by means of stamped paper, have you sufficient space at Somerset-house to undertake the additional duties?—Quite.

2195. Can you speak to the additional expense of manual labour you might require?—That is included in the 1s. a thousand.

2198. *Mr. Chalmers*.—Have you the same facilities for distribution in Ireland as in England?—Exactly.

2199. *Chairman*.—Do you think the revenue would be protected against forgery by the use of the paper and stamp you have alluded to?—Yes; I have no anxiety upon the subject.

2215. *Mr. Parker*.—Are you to be understood to express an unfavourable opinion of a separate stamp to be affixed as a label?—Yes, I think that would be found inconvenient, inasmuch as it would be very apt to rub off; but it has occurred to us that both might be used. For instance, if it were thought expedient that the kind of label which is now called a medicine label, and which is printed by machinery at Somerset-house, should be printed on Dickinson's paper, the cost of the paper itself would be very small, not an element worth taking into calculation; this sheet of paper (showing one) would hold at least one-third more stamps than it does now, consequently the expense of the paper would be nothing, and these might be used by pasting them on the outside cover of a letter. The difficulty of impressing a single stamp of this sort (the medicine stamp) on half-sheets of paper, is that we must damp all the paper, and it would require great space to do so, and it would injure it for writing on. It must be hot-pressed probably before it could be written upon, for the water would take out the size.

2216. Do you think it would be a convenience if these stamps were kept by distributors, so as to be supplied to the public in case of their not being able to get stamped covers?—I think that might be a convenience to the public.

*Charles Prestly, Esq.*, called in; and Examined.

2217. *Chairman*.—You are secretary to the Board of Stamps and Taxes?—I am.

2218. You have heard Mr. Wood's evidence; how far do you concur in that evidence, and is there any further information you wish to convey to the Committee upon the subject?—Generally speaking, I entirely concur in the evidence, except that I estimate the carriage, perhaps, at rather more than the chairman does; the carriage from the distributors to the sub-distributors. I am afraid the quantity and weight would entail upon us some expense for carriage.

2219. Will you give an outline of your view upon that point?—The stamped sheets of paper being to be conveyed from the office to the distributors, to the sub-distributors and to the postmasters, would entail some expense upon the department. I am not prepared to say what that expense would be, for I have no means of ascertaining the quantity that would be required.

*Joseph Timm, Esq.*, called in; and Examined.

2235. *Chairman*.—You are solicitor to the Board of Stamps and Taxes?—I am.

2236. You have heard the evidence given by the chairman, have the goodness to state whether you concur in that evidence, or how far you differ from it?—The evidence of Mr. Wood relates to a great many particulars on which I have not had the experience he has had, I have heard nothing from which I have any reason to differ, nor upon which I deem it necessary to offer any observation, except so far as relates to the forgery of stamps. I do not apprehend any very great loss from forgery in this case; for if reasonable vigilance be used, by occasional but frequent inspections by the Post-office, I am satisfied that no forgery can go to any great extent without its being brought home to the party who put it into circulation.

2242. Engaged professionally, as you are, in the prosecution of forgeries, you are still of opinion this plan might be adopted without more than usual danger to the revenue?—I am, and for this reason: forgeries of those stamps must come through the Government-office, and would be liable to the inspection which would there take place; whereas, in case of bill and receipt stamps, they merely pass between the parties, and are put away. In bill and receipt stamps they never pass into the hands of parties who feel it a duty to ascertain whether they are forged or genuine. It is merely by accident when we hear of forgeries, and when we do, it is generally from the offer made by parties to sell the stamps at a reduced rate.

2243. In point of fact, does it turn out to be a very inconvenient matter to accomplish the sale of forged stamps?—Under the present law it is; a few years ago the forged receipt stamps were put into pretty extensive circulation by persons who went about hawking them.

2244. That has been put an end to by the system now adopted?—Yes, by preventing the hawking of stamps.

2245. *Mr. Parker*.—You are understood to say, that you ground the comparative absence of the risk of forgery, in respect of those stamps, on the fact that the stamp would have to pass through the Post-office?—Yes.

2246. Supposing any quantity of forgeries to exist in the country, would not the fact of the parties having to submit to the inconvenience of having their letters detained and opened, in the event of the stamp being forged, or suspected to be forged, be a considerable impediment to the success of this scheme?—I do not think it would, for I do not apprehend that the forgeries would be frequent; I think that a forgery would be detected before it had gone to any great extent, and the party putting the forgery into circulation would be found out.

2248. Is not there a large demand for copper coin?—There is of course.

2249. Of the same denomination with the stamp?—Yes.

2250. Do you not believe there is a considerable quantity of forgery of the copper coin?—I do not; but I think there is this difference between the two cases; after the coin has passed through the hands of an individual he can no longer identify it, whereas a letter is always certain of identification.

(To be continued.)

#### PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.—RETROSPECTIVE REVIEW.

HOUSE OF LORDS.—MONDAY, DEC. 18, 1837.

POST-OFFICE.

LORD BROUGHAM.—I am sorry not to observe my noble friend the Postmaster-General in his place, particularly as I have given notice of the petitions I am now about to present. I am, however, under the necessity of presenting, at any rate, one of them without further delay; and that is a petition from that most respectable and important body, the corporation of the City of London in Common Council assembled; and they certainly are, of any class of her Majesty's subjects, the most likely persons, to be regarded as having a right to deal with the important subject of the Post-office. No persons have a deeper interest in the good regulation of that great establishment, than the citizens of this great city, whom the petitioners represent; and no part of her Majesty's dominions ought to demand greater attention to the opinion which is here entertained on this subject, than the city of London. The corporation of that city have deemed it their duty to take this matter into consideration, and after giving it their best attention they have adopted the present petition. They state that cheapness and celerity in the conveyance of letters, will tend in a very great degree to the advancement of the commerce, manufactures, and agriculture of this country, and are also highly important for the collection and diffusion of information, by which the education of the people will be greatly accelerated, as well as friendly intercourse forwarded. The mercantile classes of the city of London have turned their attention to this subject—they have gone very fully into the details—they have themselves very extensive experience on the question—they have the capacity beyond most men of examining the particulars and principles of any system which may be adopted for its improvement; therefore their opinion is entitled to operate by way of testimony in reference to any plan; and they give it in favour of Mr. Rowland Hill's. They do not specify that plan in particular in its details as the one to which they would give their approval, or which they call upon the legislature to adopt; but it is clearly to that plan they point, because they apply themselves to the ninth report of the commissioners upon the Post-office Inquiry, and pray particularly for the adoption of that recommendation which is to try the plan by the twopenny post.

I am very happy to observe that my noble friend (the Earl of Lichfield), is now in his place. Having stated so much, I need hardly remind your lordships that upon such a subject there is no authority so high as that of the trading community; and connected with this question there is perhaps, no person of higher authority among mercantile men than a noble friend of mine, and a member of your lordships' house (Lord Ashburton), who has more than once called your lordships' attention to this matter. Without precisely pledging himself to the whole of this measure, my noble friend has come to the opinion that the conveyance of letters is not of itself, and in itself, in its own nature, due regard being had to the convenience of the public, a proper subject of taxation for the purposes of the revenue. That, no doubt, the difficulty may be great of retracing our steps, after having for so long a period made it the subject of taxation, my noble friend does not deny, nor do I; but if it be a question whether a great mercantile country ought to make the postage or conveyance of letters a subject of revenue or matter of taxation—if such a proposition be made, I think the answer of my noble friend would be in the negative, as well as the answer which I myself would give

I venture to appeal to your lordships, who have heard this subject discussed in this place more than once. I will now take it that even after a larger revenue has grown up upon wrong principles by raising money for the public service by taxing the communications by post,—I will take it that even after so large a revenue as a million and a half has been collected and received, even if the alteration were attended with a very considerable present diminution of that income—even if it tended generally to lower that revenue—it would, in the end, not only compensate itself, and raise the revenue to its former pitch, but would even greatly increase that revenue. Such is the proposition, which as soon as the question comes before your lordships in a more fit shape to decide, I for one am prepared to maintain. I will not merely allude to the reduction of postage alone for the purpose of raising my arguments. I do not refer to the taking off of the 12½d., as some contend for,—the 9d. as others think will be necessary,—or the 6d. which others again make their calculations from;—I will go at once to the taking off the whole—of going at once to the one penny per ounce or half ounce, which is the proposition of Mr. Hill. I do not mean to assert that such a diminution of the postage would so largely increase the number of letters as to bring up the gross revenue to its present amount. I will go farther, I look forward to the great boon which it would confer upon the whole mercantile world in this country—the vast increase which it would give to the great trading interests of the country, by which the revenue in every branch must be greatly and wonderfully increased.

I re-joice at the presence of my noble friend the Postmaster-General, because I wish much to tell him that he has failed to satisfy my mind that the plan suggested by Mr. Hill is so totally impracticable as he has stated it to be. I conceive that the whole sum of my noble friend's calculations is founded upon a statement that the total number of letters now, is between 42,000,000 and 43,000,000. Now, any person hearing that statement made, would suppose that it was, in point of fact, founded upon positive data—that my noble friend had reasoned on such data, when he urged his opinion against what are called the speculative calculations and estimates of the author of the new plan. I did not rightly understand my noble friend, whether in his calculations he included the twopenny and threepenny post, or confined himself exclusively to the general post? Mr. Hill and the authorities of the Post-office are at direct issue. It is a matter of estimate and calculation upon both sides. That is the very point in dispute between the two parties. Mr. Hill calculates the letters going through the Post-office at seventy nine millions and a half—in round numbers eighty millions. Here they are at direct issue in their assumptions. I believe it is a fact beyond dispute, that twenty two millions and a half pass through the Post-office in London in one year. Ten millions of these go through the general post, while twelve millions and a half go through the twopenny or threepenny. In the calculations therefore, we are to deduct the ten millions from the twenty two millions and a half. My noble friend has taken those ten millions, and makes his calculation for the whole country. He finds these yield 460,000*l.*, and then he finds the whole of the general post letters for the United Kingdom yield about four times that sum. This proceeds on the assumption that the average value of the country letters to the revenue is precisely the same as the average value of the letters in the London district; the average of each letter in the London district is calculated at 1*s.* 0½*d.* Every one knows that the amount of postage in London is larger than in the country, because the London letters include large packages of foreign letters, which go to swell the amount of postage received, and to increase the average value of the letters, and may raise it to 1*s.* 0½*d.* in the London district. But in the country districts there are no such circumstances, because very few foreign packages are sent into the country. I happen to have the means of knowing what the amount is for one town, in a midland county, a quarter of a million of letters passing through that town in a year, and I believe the average value of those letters is not 1*s.* 0½*d.*, but 7½*d.* or 8*d.*—certainly not more than 9*d.* That makes a material difference. With regard to Mr. Hill's plan, it is not correct to state that it affords no provision for any increased expense in the Post-office department, in consequence of the increased number of letters, and the amount of business to be attended to; the reverse is the fact, because he allows 225,000*l.* for the additional expense of working his plan.

I will now state, as I have stated to a former Postmaster-General, that an ignorant and humble individual like myself, ought to be very careful how he comes into contact with the authorities of any department under government. No doubt, great weight is due to their opinions, and great authority is necessarily ascribed to their statements. Very ample drafts are made on, I cannot say the credulity, but credit of parliament, when nothing is said to impeach their authority, by statements that individuals know nothing of the matter,—that those who are beyond the walls of the establishment can have little information, and their alarms are expressed at any change in a department which yields a great proportion of the revenue. Great praise is bestowed on those who are connected with that department; and perhaps, it may be well earned by those who are acting under what I take to be a wrong system; but that is not their fault. I have been very much put to it to find out how it is all those praises of that establishment, which we have heard of late occasions, are bestowed,—and that those, I will not say vituperations, but somewhat contemptuous expressions, of all who are beyond it, have been indulged in.

The impracticability is another grand objection to this plan; there is nothing new in that objection. Indeed, the word has often been used in this house, and elsewhere, as establishing an insuperable objection to all systems for the improvement of the Post-office. I can refresh the memory

of your lordships, by referring to the places and occasions when this word has been used as reasonably, and quite as positively, as it is now employed. Your lordships will recollect that in the year 1734, a gentleman, named Palmer, recommended the adoption of a system of mail coach carriages, when, at that time, the mails were carried at the rate of three miles and a half an hour. Mr. Palmer was of opinion that they could be carried at the rate of seven miles an hour, if not more. Do not your lordships recollect the alarm which the announcement of this proposition spread through every department of the Post-office? Do you recollect the indignation, the absolute, the scornful contempt with which it was received by all the officials of the Post-office?—a contempt equalled only by the loud chorus of applause which they rung in the ears of Parliament in praise of every one man, every one rule, every one regulation in any way connected with any one department of that most perfect establishment, the Post-office of 1734, with its safe, sure, and steady mails of three miles and a half an hour!

The Committee of the House Commons, in its Report upon this subject, in 1797 declared, that "The more we consider the plans of Mr. Palmer, the more we are convinced of the insuperable difficulty in attempting to bring them into operation. The officers of the Post-office, whom we regard as the best judges of the question, have been examined before us, and are unanimously of opinion that the thing is totally impracticable." Another Committee reporting on the same subject, said, "We have examined the oldest and ablest officers of the Post-office"—(it is always the oldest and ablest, for the Committees considered the terms synonymous), "and the oldest and ablest have no confidence in the plan." Indeed, in looking over these Reports, I find that it was always the "oldest and ablest," who had the greatest contempt for improvement, and that the older an officer was, the greater contempt he had for the officer who was less old than himself. They were all, however, both young and old, positively of opinion that the plan of Mr. Palmer was not only impracticable, but dangerous to commerce and finance. It is frightful for your lordships to think of the dangers which the commerce and finance of the country have escaped since that period! They have been exposed not only to the dangers of the French war and the orders in council, but they have likewise escaped the danger of the melancholy and awful change of the speed of the mails from three and a half miles to seven miles an hour! But that is not all. The finances of the country have had an escape, possibly greater. When Mr. Palmer, in 1734, laid his reckless hand on the pace of the Post-office horses, the revenue in that department was 150,000*l.* a year, and it has since that time fallen to 1,500,000*l.*, notwithstanding all that had been done to accelerate its fall by increasing the speed of mails, and although the Bath mail, instead of taking eighteen hours on its journey, arrives now in thirteen or fourteen!

Then another able officer said "Why should letters go so much quicker than any other thing?" It was the tortoise they emulated an imitation of at the Post-office. Your lordships would suppose it to be a very simple proposition, that the passengers and property which went by the mail would be more safe from there being a guard to each coach. One would have thought that was next a truism. But not so; the old and able officers of the Post-office, however, thought differently. They contended that it was a most erroneous notion to suppose that, having a guard, they would increase the security. One of the objections they urged was, that in the case of a robbery where there was a guard, there would be resistance, and the result of that would be bloodshed. They maintained that the only way of preventing robbery was to cut the bank notes and send them by the mail. People must send one half, and wait till informed of its safe arrival before they send the other. Speaking, no doubt, from actual experience, they said that the strongest carts that could be made, lined and bound with iron, were not proof against the robbers of mails. I beg your lordships' pardon for giving you these specimens of the wisdom of our ancestors. Those persons, however, interrupted the progress of Mr. Palmer's plan in every possible way; they cast cold water on it for months and years; and yet, no sooner was it established, than all approved of it, and all felt the benefit of it, except the postmasters, who for eighteen months afterwards said it was dangerous and detrimental to the revenue. They all agreed that it was chimerical, visionary, and speculative; but all the chimera and speculiveness that existed in relation to the plan, were not in the plan itself, but in the objections raised by those who had nothing better than needless alarms to guide their easily pervertible minds. The present petition prays your lordships to put the plan in operation by way of trial, according to the ninth report of the Commissioners. Had I presented this petition as I proposed, a few nights ago, I should have asked my noble friend if it were intended to try the plan in the way recommended; but that question has now been answered, and, I am sorry to say, answered in a very unsatisfactory manner. Very sanguine expectations have been entertained; but contrary to those expectations, the hopes of myself, of many others, and amongst these, I believe, of my noble friend himself, have been greatly disappointed. Instead of carrying into execution the plan according to the ninth Report, another one was to be tried totally different in its nature, and which may fail over and over again without the possibility of even a Post-office speculator pretending that it is a failure of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan, because it is to be confined now to the twopenny postage. Mr. Hill's plan is not that the postage shall be reduced to twopenny—it is that the postage shall be reduced to a penny—the twopenny and threepenny postage to a penny for all letters, and to try the plan in the twopenny and threepenny post alone. Instead of this, the system proposed to be tried is not the reduction of the postage to a penny, but the reduction to twopenny, which, if it fails either in reference to revenue or in any

other respect, will be no kind of test whatever of the merits or goodness of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan, which is totally and entirely different from that which has been described elsewhere.

VISCOUNT DUNCANNON.—It has been found, after due consideration, inexpedient to try the experiment of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan to the full extent that has been proposed. In the ninth Report of the Commissioners, in which Mr. Hill's suggestions are embodied, it is recommended that stamp covers shall be issued by the Post-office at one penny, to carry letters under an ounce weight, not only for the short distance of three miles, but for twelve miles round the environs of London. The other part of the plan is, that there shall be a stamp cover for twopenny, to carry any weight not exceeding six ounces; and that suggestion is founded on the representations of the London publishers, who wish to have this means of transmitting pamphlets and other light publications to the country. My right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, does not intend to carry these suggestions into effect in the way proposed, but he intends to issue penny stamped covers for the short distances, and to reduce the fourpenny post to twopenny. I am aware that this is a deviation from Mr. Hill's plan, but I conceive that it is the more safe way of making the experiment.

The Earl of LICHFIELD.—I should certainly have been better prepared if the noble and learned lord had given notice of his intention to make such statements, to have met them by counterstatements. There are one or two points in the noble and learned lord's calculations which are in some degree incorrect, and which I could have set right, if I had brought down the returns which have been prepared on the subject. What I have stated was, that forty-two millions of chargeable letters pass through the General Post-office; and the way of ascertaining that fact is not according to the mode stated by my noble and learned friend, which is, in reality, Mr. Rowland Hill's plan. The way in which Mr. Hill calculates is, that about ten millions of letters pass, in each quarter, through the General Post, which being multiplied by four will amount to forty millions. He then takes twelve millions of twopenny post letters, which multiplied by four, gives forty-eight millions, thus forming an aggregate of eighty-eight million letters; but your lordships must be aware that there is no twopenny post throughout the country, and Mr. Hill has no right to multiply the twopenny post circulation four times. To bring his plan to a fair test, he has no right to join the twopenny and General Post-office together. They are distinct departments, and the revenue derived from the Post-office being so much, and the post letters being so many, the expense of transmission amounts to about one penny on the conveyance of each letter. Mr. Hill states that the expense of carriage is only a penny one sixteenth, and he calculates upon one hundred and thirty-six millions of newspapers and letters passing through the General Post-office. Take away the newspapers, and then the calculations of Mr. Hill come very near those of the Post-office. He has not provided for any increase in the establishment, which will be rendered absolutely necessary by the great increase in the bulk. The charge on the Post-office for transmission by the railways will be by weight, and there is no hope that the charge for transmission by that conveyance will be at all reduced. Mr. Hill has entirely omitted to provide for the greater bulk of additional letters in his plan. The transmission of letters now costs the Post-office 100,000*l.* That is about the amount for mail-coach contracts and horsing—that is for the conveyance of forty millions of chargeable letters. This is the fallacy of Mr. Hill's plan; the chargeable letters pay for the transmission of free correspondence.

I have seen a statement made by my noble and learned friend a few nights ago, in which it appears to have been triumphantly asked, as the newspapers are in such numbers now conveyed at the charge of one penny, why could not the whole correspondence of the country be conveyed at an equally cheap rate? My noble and learned friend, as well as Mr. Hill, appears to have forgotten that the forty millions of chargeable letters pay for the transmission of all franked letters and newspapers; and he has not calculated the great increase of expense which must take place in consequence of the great addition of bulk, and consequently of weight. The mails will have to carry twelve times as much in weight, and therefore the charge for transmission instead of 100,000*l.*, as now, must be twelve times that amount. There is no prospect of any possibility of reducing the clerk establishment of the Post-office. If it requires a certain number of clerks to sort the letters which come every night into the metropolitan Post-office between five and seven o'clock under the present system, how many will there be required when the number of letters is increased to the amount on which Mr. Hill forms his calculations? It is a heavy night when thirty thousand letters go out of town. The number of newspapers is frequently fifty or sixty thousand. Supposing that, with the reduced charge of one penny on each letter, it were found that ten times the present number were transmitted through the Post-office, how many sorters must they have to sort three hundred thousand letters in the same time in which they are sorted at present? The walls of the Post-office would burst, the whole area in which the building stands, would not be large enough to receive the clerks and the letters if the circulation were increased to anything like that amount. Still, though I cannot give my assent to the whole plan of Mr. Hill, or to anything like it, I have no hesitation in repeating, what I have always stated, that in my opinion a very considerable reduction might take place in the rates of postage without inflicting any injury upon the revenue. I agree with my noble friend that the experiment which is about to be made in the department of the Post-office is not an experiment upon the plan of Mr. Hill. There is to be no reduction of postage—there is only to be a substitute of a stamped cover, if parties choose to avail themselves of it;

for if they do not, they may put their letters into the post according to the present system. I am satisfied that the revenue would lose largely by the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan. Under the present financial arrangements of the country, it is a serious matter to try an experiment which would produce a large defalcation in the revenue. There can be no objection to the Post-office conveying and delivering letters for nothing, if the public please; but I am satisfied that the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan would be attended with very great expense, and a very large sacrifice of revenue.

The EARL OF RADNOR.—I quite agree with my noble and learned friend, that the experiment now about to be tried by the Post-office is not the plan of Mr. Hill. What I complain of, and what I think Mr. Hill has a right to complain of, is, that the Post-office have taken so much of his plan as will justify it in saying that it is his plan, and has left out just enough of his arrangements to ensure its signal failure. It is so difficult to get the public out of its old track, that I am afraid the system of stamped covers would not answer unless it were made compulsory. I have seen some of these envelopes, and their composition is extremely beautiful. I am therefore afraid that as they must be manufactured by intricate machinery, there would be a great outlay in their construction. The petition which I presented on Friday from the publishers of London, shows that if the taxation on letters sent by post were reduced, their correspondence would increase to the extent of twenty thousand or even fifty thousand letters a-year. The same result would be produced among the mercers, haberdashers, and other persons connected with other branches of trade. My noble friend the Postmaster General has told the house, that if any such increase of letters as Mr. Hill contemplates should occur, it would become necessary to break down the walls of the Post-office, and even to enlarge the area on which it stands, in order to find apartments for the sorting of letters. This may be true if it be determined to conduct the business of the Post-office for ever on its present system: but my noble friend seems to have forgotten that Mr. Hill's plan contains various suggestions for diminishing the total amount of labour in the Post-office by effecting a subdivision of it—for instance, he has pointed out a plan by which a great saving may be accomplished in the number of accountant clerks. In conclusion, I must protest against the slighting and disingenuous manner in which Mr. Hill's plan has been treated.

The DUKE OF WELLINGTON.—The impression on my mind is, that the government have pursued a very proper course upon this subject. No experiment can be more fatal than a great and sudden diminution of the rate of postage, and, consequently, revenue; particularly if the plan should afterwards be found to be impracticable. I have a great notion that it will be found absolutely impossible to reduce to a penny the rate of postage on letters sent by what is now called the twopenny post. If the profits on the twopenny post be only 60,000*l.*, and if the number of letters sent by it be only 14,000,000, as was stated on one night, 12,000,000 as stated on another, and 9,000,000 on a third, I am afraid that Mr. Hill will find, if he looks more closely into the subject, that 60,000*l.* will not give him the means of reducing the carriage of letters from 2*d.* to 1*d.*, the expense of carrying the letters remaining, as I conceive that it will remain, the same. Under these circumstances, I think that the government have acted with great prudence, in trying Mr. Hill's experiment by degrees. They are right in not being in too great a hurry to reduce the postage of letters, and in waiting until they see whether they can do so with propriety. No person, not even the noble and learned lord (Lord Brougham), pretends that there should be such a reduction as would render the profits insufficient, not only to carry on the Post-office department, but to administer all the duties, and pay all the expenses; that is the lowest point to which the reduction ought to be carried; but I am confident that the present proposal would carry it further.

LORD BROUGHAM.—I am anxious to disabuse the house on this subject. It is a mistake to suppose that the plan of the government is to be an experiment of Mr. Hill's plan. It has just enough of resemblance to it to make the public suppose that the plan has a trial; and in the event of a failure to enable the opponents of the system to say that it has failed. It is not even an experiment of degrees. In no one way can it be said, that it is a step towards carrying out the details of Mr. Hill's plan. It bears, to be sure, a resemblance to it; but I deny that it carries with it, its important features. I beg leave also to deny that Mr. Hill's plan includes general and twopenny post letters; and I am satisfied that inquiry would prove that his calculation of eighty millions is right. My noble friend, the Postmaster-General, has asserted, that the author of this plan makes no allowance for the additional expense which would be incurred, in consequence of the increased bulk, weight, and numbers of letters sent through the Post-office. Mr. Hill has allowed 230,000*l.* for that purpose; and has shown how more can be obtained if it be wanted, by an improved management of various departments in the Post-office. The arguments which have this night been employed in derogation of Mr. Hill's plan, are exactly the same which were formerly employed in derogation of that suggested by Mr. Palmer. In 1784 the argument was "Don't listen to Mr. Palmer. Everything in the Post-office is perfect, and improvement is impossible. The Post-office is well regulated, carefully attended to, and cannot be improved by any person not of or belonging to that department." Such was the language of the Post-office in 1784, and such is the language of the present day. I now beg leave to present a petition specifically in support of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan, from a large number of merchants, bankers, and others, of Wolverhampton. I have also another from the Commissioners of Police of the barony of Gorbals, in the county of Lanark.

Petitions ordered to lie on the table.—From the Mirror of Parliament.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.—APRIL 11, 1838.

Mr. HUME said, that when, on a former occasion, the hon. member for Greenock had stated that a practice existed in the Post-office at Glasgow of opening letters and taking money from them, he had been told that no such practice existed; within the last month, however, it had been found that great irregularities and malpractices took place with respect to money letters in that department, and he wished to know whether it was the intention of Government to institute any inquiry into the subject?

Mr. RICE said he had not received any report, and he did not know whether any report had yet reached the Treasury, of the particular transactions to which the hon. member referred. At the time the subject was last mentioned in the house, he had conveyed certain recommendations to the Post-office, which, or part of them at least, had he believed been carried into effect. One of these was the registry of letters, making the Post-office responsible for those registered letters; the other was, that the money-order-office should not be in private hands, but made a part of the Post-office. This he expected would prove of considerable benefit, by the increased certainty it would secure to the poorer classes of persons who had money to transmit and receive. These two measures had been taken by the Post-office.

NOTICES.

We entreat all readers of the *Post Circular* to exert themselves to obtain petitions to Parliament for a reduction of postage. Wherever half a dozen persons can be found who suffer from this impost, let them send their petitions to both branches of the Legislature. We are certain that every Christian minister throughout the kingdom will pray for a measure so advantageous to religion and sound morals, when the subject is placed before him.

Some idle rumours are abroad that the Select Committee purpose recommending an universal *twopenny* instead of a *penny* rate. We beg to contradict these rumours most positively, and on the plain ground that nothing can be known of the intentions of the Committee until their report is published.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

\* \* \* Though we receive about fifty provincial papers weekly, advocating the Reduction of Postage, many of our cotemporaries notice the subject and the *Post Circular* without favouring us with copies. If not sent gratuitously we would willingly pay the expense.

The length of the Post-office news from the *Connaught Ranger*, necessitates the postponement of its notice.

Will the *Star in the East* favour us with its papers containing *History of Protestantism*, No. 1, & 2?

A copy of the *Manchester Guardian* containing the letter of an Advocate for Mr. R. Hill's plan is requested.

We are particularly obliged to the Rev. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ of Southampton, for his communication which we shall use when our collection of similar data has increased.

Notices of Public Meetings at Southampton, Greenock (arrived this morning), and elsewhere, as well as the very excellent letter of a "Country Clergyman," Mr. Rowland Hill's 5th letter to Lord Lichfield, and other communications, are unavoidably postponed.

The Post Circular.

LONDON, APRIL 24, 1838.

THE evidence of the Select Committee on Postage was published this morning. Farewell to the shilling postages,—farewell to a decreasing revenue,—farewell to anomalies of charge,—farewell to tardiness,—farewell to the Contraband Postage Trade! Not long will they survive the disclosures made in the Evidence of the Select Committee. Already we have an uniform Penny rate,—no postage to pay on the receipt of a letter,—no fears for the security of money letters, no delays, but deliveries worthy of the name of "Post-haste." So confident are we of these results,—so completely has their feasibility been demonstrated, beyond our most sanguine expectations, that a few months only can elapse before these important ameliorations will have been accomplished. No Minister, with the fact of a stationary, if not decreasing revenue on Postage disturbing his peace of mind, can hesitate to secure the certainty of improved finances, and at the same time confer a most welcome benefit on the people. Let any minister proclaim, in the teeth of this evidence, which demonstrates perfect security to the revenue, as compatible with a penny postage, that the religious and moral sentiments of the poor shall continue to be suppressed,—that trade shall be annihilated, unless its correspondence be conducted through a systematic violation of the law,—that the reverence for the law, so strong and habitual in our countrymen, shall be perverted by a frightful and universal contraband postage,—that the post monopoly and the post smuggler shall flourish together, and be the minister who he may, we trust the people will hoot him from her Majesty's councils. No minister can dare to avow his scepticism of the unanimous and uncontradicted testimony of the witnesses whose evidence is now submitted to the public. We find a difficulty in pointing to one portion of the evidence as more valuable than another—all are equally so; and it is only because the public are familiar with the following names that we single them out. There is evidence of Messrs. Knight, Whittaker, Parker, three

of the most extensive publishers in the world,—of Messrs. Dillon and Brankston, belonging to the largest warehouses in the world,—of Messrs. Christie and Moffatt, each most eminent in his respective business,—of Messrs. F. de Porquet, the school agent; of J. Wright, partner of Warren's blacking warehouse; of B. Sharpe, the medicine vender,—each first-rate witnesses about advertisements; of Dr. Lardner, R. Taylor, the printer and publisher; J. Desborough, secretary to the Atlas Insurance; L. Murray, chairman of the National Loan Society; J. Webster, secretary to the Civil Engineers; Capt. J. Bentham, &c.—proving, incontestably, the systematic evasion of postage in all their respective departments, developing the evils of the present system to morals, trade, science, and literature,—the acceptability of Mr. Hill's plan, in its features of reduction, uniformity, and payment in advance,—the indisputable certainty that an increase of letters consequent upon a reduction to a penny would suffice to sustain the revenue—and a perfect willingness of all to enter into contracts to secure the revenue from loss.

And what have the authorities opposed to all this? Absolutely nothing, but timorous apprehensions of change, except the barefaced direct assertions of some subordinate—a Mr. Bokenham, there is nothing in the evidence given by the Post-office officials in opposition, which does not strengthen Mr. Hill's calculations and conclusions. The returns and data, and especially those produced by Lord Lichfield, are useful beyond measure. And we shall take great pains to show their utility: there is very much evidence, particularly from the solicitor to the Post-office, the assistant secretary, and the country postmasters, which is directly of the most favourable character. That we are indulging in no exaggerations, we shall enable the public to judge fully by the extracts from the evidence itself. And we here court communications, pointing out the apparent force of any evidence of the Post-office against the proposed changes.

GOOD NEWS OF THE POST-OFFICE.—It is a far pleasanter task to give praise than censure. We rejoice to spread the intelligence (announced in an official advertisement) that the experiment of carrying letters by the omnibuses and coaches to the suburbs of the metropolis is about to be tried. A suggestion to this effect was officially made years ago. And though the adoption of it has been tardy, we are glad to congratulate Lord Lichfield on deserving the credit of making the experiment. Whilst omnibuses are passing every five minutes through Kensington with punctuality, it certainly did appear a great forgetfulness of the public convenience not to employ them, and a gratuitous waste of expense, to send the letters twice or thrice a day by a gig, the most costly means of carrying letters. We are certain that the cost of this gig would amply cover the expenses of sending the letters twelve times a day by an omnibus. Let Lord Lichfield summon courage to couple this experiment with a reduction to a penny instead of twopenny, and we are certain that he will have no reason to complain of its result.

MISREPRESENTATION.

We endeavour to conduct our controversy with the Post-office authorities with good feeling and temper. The truth neither of Mr. Hill's proposals nor of the opposition to them will be advanced by bitterness. We will not taunt the Post-office with wilful misrepresentation, and, if possible, not with ignorance of Mr. Hill's plan; but we really feel it a duty to remonstrate with Col. Maberly on his putting calculations into Mr. Hill's mouth which Mr. Hill never uttered. Mr. Hill makes the following statement in his pamphlet, p. 13, in which Mr. Louis, the superintendent of the mails, "cannot point out the slightest error." (Ev. 1813.)

"The total cost of conveying the mail once from London to Edinburgh, including the mails of all intermediate places, is .....	£	s.	d.
Average weight of the mail conveyed by the London and Edinburgh mail-coach, say about .....			8 cwt.
Deduct for the weight of bags, say .....			2
Average weight of letters, newspapers, &c. ....			6

The cost of conveyance is therefore per cwt. 16*s.* 8*d.* Per ounce and a half, the average weight of a newspaper, about one-sixth of a penny.

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

If any doubt is entertained of the accuracy of this result, it may be tested thus: Suppose one thousand letters to be made up into a parcel and despatched from London to Edinburgh by coach: at THE ESTIMATE ABOVE GIVEN, the weight of the parcel would be about 16*lbs.*, and the charge for its carriage about 2*s.* 4*d.*; a rate of charge which, upon a contract for nearly half a ton per day, would, I imagine, furnish an adequate remuneration to the coach-master."

In other words, if 1 cwt. per mail cost 16*s.* 8*d.* 16*lbs.* per mail will cost 2*s.* 4*d.*

This estimate Col. Maberly represents thus (2885) "If I wished to send a parcel of letters weighing 16*lbs.*"



containing 1000 letters, which Mr. Hill takes into his calculation, *via* coach, I can send them, not for 2s. 6d., as he says, but for the price of 7s. 10d."

Mr. Hill never said he could send 1000 letters per coach for 2s. 6d. or for 2s. 4d.—but that the mail carried a hundred weight for 16s. 8d., and that, according to this estimate, it carried 16lbs. (the weight of 1000 letters) for 2s. 4d. When Col. Maberly speaks of Mr. Hill's plan, we venture to suggest his using Mr. Hill's own words. We reserve the correction of other misrepresentations for another occasion.

We have in our present number brought up considerable arrears of retrospective matter. We direct particular attention to the very interesting debate in the House of Lords, and to Lord Brougham's remarks on Post-office infallibility. In Mr. Rowland Hill's letter, the reader will find Lord Lichfield's speech fully answered.

It is right the public should be made acquainted with the division which took place on the question of publishing the evidence of the Select Committee:—

For Publication.	Against Publication.
Lord Lowther	Lord Seymour
Mr. Raikes Currie	Mr. Parker
Mr. Thornely	Mr. G. Wood
Mr. C. P. Villiers	Sir T. Fremantle
Mr. Warburton.	

The impartial and intelligent conduct of Lord Seymour during the inquiry, which is seen in his mode of questioning, makes his opposition to publication appear unaccountable. Mr. Parker questions witnesses very disingenuously, and shows too plainly that his notions of duty to the Treasury are much stronger than to his constituents, or to impartial investigation. Mr. G. Wood asks questions alternately favourable and hostile. He would be a Government advocate. If the commercialists of Sheffield and Kendal are interested in cheap postage, they should take care to inform these gentlemen of their feelings in a way not to be mistaken. Lord Lowther's vote is just what might be expected from his experienced judgment in Post-office matters; and we should not wonder if, among other accidents, the people should owe an universal penny postage—not to a Lichfield, but a Lowther. Mr. Poulett Thomson was present at the Committee, but does not appear to have voted.

#### MR. ROWLAND HILL'S LETTERS TO LORD LITCHFIELD.

##### LETTER IV.—PROBABILITY OF A SUFFICIENT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF LETTERS.

MY LORD—In treating of the objections raised against my plan, I turn first to that founded on the presumed improbability of such an increase in the number of letters as will secure the Post-office revenue from serious diminution; for I must again remark that, though the opposite has been taken for granted, I have all along allowed for some diminution, as probable.

With respect to the absolute number of letters required to sustain the Post-office revenue under the proposed reduction, supposing that were indispensable, your Lordship confirms my estimate, which fixes it at about five hundred millions per annum (that is five hundred millions of single letters), but, as we form very different estimates as to the present number of letters, we are widely disagreed as to the necessary rate of increase; your Lordship stating it at twelve-fold, while I maintain that it is only six-fold. In my pamphlet I estimate the present number of letters at about eighty-eight millions per annum, and the average postage at sixpence farthing per letter. In your Lordship's speech in the House of Lords on the 30th of November, the number of letters is stated at forty-two or forty-three millions per annum, and the average postage at one shilling. Your Lordship's observations, as reported by the newspapers, led, I am sorry to say, to two misconceptions. First, that these statements were, to their full extent, opposed to the corresponding positions of my pamphlet; and, second, that they were founded not on mere calculations, but on ascertained facts. By a subsequent speech, it appeared that your Lordship's statements, for what reason I know not, wholly excluded the letters transmitted by the twopenny and threepenny posts of the metropolis, and the seventeen hundred penny posts attached to different country towns. But as there is no doubt the arrangements I have proposed will increase this class of letters, and as such increase will, of course, tend to augment the revenue, any calculation in which they are excluded must be absolutely futile. Above all, your Lordship will admit that my calculations, which expressly include these letters, could not be justly impugned by one in which such important data were omitted without a distinct statement of the exception. If such exclusion were justifiable, it should at least be clearly understood, and constantly remembered, and the danger of thus changing the data, and of looking at one point of the account only, is shown by a misconception into which even your Lordship has been led, apparently by this mode of proceeding.

Finding that the average charge on General Post letters delivered in London is one shilling, your Lordship has inferred that the same rule holds good elsewhere, and it is evidently on calculations founded on this assumption

that your Lordship estimates the number of General Post letters at forty-two or forty-three millions. But your Lordship will be satisfied on re-consideration that London, as the metropolis and principal sea-port, receives an unusually large proportion of high-priced letters (from foreign countries and distant parts of the empire), and (excluding as your Lordship has done, not only the twopenny but the threepenny post, the latter of which has a range of many miles round London), an unusually small proportion of low-priced letters, so that its average general postage must necessarily be much above that of the provinces. Proceeding on the above erroneous inference, your Lordship charges me with what would be a gross blunder, viz., swelling my total by reckoning the letters of the twopenny post department four times over; the fact being, that, having assumed that the average rate of postage throughout the country is the same as that for the London district, which, including all kinds of letters, I found to be about sixpence farthing; and knowing that the total receipts for the country at large are four times as great as those for the London district alone, I proceeded to calculate the number of letters for the whole country by multiplying the ascertained number of letters for the London district by four, and your Lordship cannot fail to see that whatever error there may be in the data, there can be none in the mode of calculation; that, supposing I was right in taking the average rate of postage in the London district as correct for the whole country, all the rest necessarily follows.

I would here observe, however, that the average of sixpence farthing for the London district, which was deduced from the best data in existence at the time the calculation was made, I have found, from more accurate data subsequently supplied, to be one farthing too low; and information yet more recently obtained, has led me to suppose that the average postage for the provinces may be somewhat higher still. In fine, I apprehend it will appear that the real number of letters is about eighty millions per annum, instead of eighty-eight, as I had previously calculated. In explanation of this discrepancy I must remark, that I have never spoken of the original estimate as other than an approximation to truth, and that the error is much more than balanced as respects the only practical question; viz., the required rate of increase, by my having calculated the future postage at one penny per packet, that is to say, at the *minimum* instead of the *average* rate. As I have said, the assumed equality in the rates of postage may, to a slight extent, be open to question, though I feel confident that it involves no serious error. At all events, your Lordship will admit that this is the only point open to attack. Also, that whatever doubt exists is attributable to the unfortunate negligence of the Post-office, in omitting to ascertain so important a fact as the number of letters it distributes.

To act for a moment on your Lordship's extraordinary plan, of excluding all letters rated at less than fourpence, I calculate that the total number of the remaining letters (that is, of General Post letters) is about fifty-three millions per annum. Your Lordship states that it is forty-two or forty-three millions. Again, I estimate the average charge on General Post letters at about 10d. per letter. Your Lordship states it at 1s. As an investigation is going forward before a committee of the House of Commons, which will decide the question of numbers, I do not now trespass on your Lordship's valuable time with any further remarks on this head, but confidently wait the result.

In conclusion, however, I must again protest against the arbitrary exclusion which your Lordship has thought proper to adopt. As my plan will in its operation affect all post letters of whatever kind, and as its success depends on a general and not a particular increase in the number of letters, it is essential that, in estimating its results, all letters, of whatever kind, be brought into the calculation. If it is correct to exclude the local circulation, I see no reason why the law of exclusion should not be extended to any other class of letters, as those from Scotland or Ireland. The distinction appears to me to be purely capricious.

I have, &c.,  
ROWLAND HILL.

GOUDHURST.—Petitions are in the course of signature by the vicar, curate, churchwardens, and other inhabitants of this parish, to be presented to both houses of parliament, praying for an uniform penny postage throughout the kingdom. It appears that there are four hundred families in this parish too poor to receive letters at the present rate of postage, but who would, if the postage were reduced to one penny, avail themselves of the opportunity, probably more frequently, to write and receive letters in reply.—*The Sussex Express*.

POST-OFFICE REFORM.—CHEAP POSTAGE.—GLASGOW.—Our English neighbours have taken up this subject with great zeal, and at present there appears to be a strong probability that a very extensive measure of improvement will be the result. A weekly newspaper, termed the *Post Circular*, has been established, and through its columns, at an amazingly small cost, is disseminated all the information that can be given on such an interesting subject.—*The Scotch Times*.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

##### "POST HASTE" BETWEEN BUNGAY AND SCOLE INN.

To the Editor of the *Post Circular*.

Bungay, March, 1838.

Sir,—Success attend your labours. May you triumph in doing that which has never yet, as I believe, been done—render monopolists reasonable in their charges, and active, useful, and diligent in their business.

Who that reflects that this little country has become the counting-house of the world, owing to the freedom of her commerce, but must feel astonished that we should have cherished a monopoly so long, and that monopoly one which restricts the operations of trade in all directions. It would not exist for a month, if it were not that Government inflicts the kindness of doing that dearly and badly for us, which we could do cheaper and better for ourselves.

The mail is ordered to be despatched from this town at five o'clock in the afternoon, when it is conveyed to Scole Inn, a distance of 15 miles, where the letters are taken up to be conveyed to London at ten minutes past nine, thus giving four hours for 15 miles, and compelling the whole town to post their letters two hours, at the least, earlier than is needful, and shutting them out from advantages which, in matters of trade, are of the greatest moment—the power of communicating with their correspondents to the last practicable minute before the departure of the mail.

Twice within the last month the mail was despatched from hence ten minutes sooner even than the time I have mentioned, the consequence has been that tradesmen have been obliged to send messengers on foot, who, starting after the mail cart had departed, reached Scole long before the mail arrived which would receive the bags from the cart.

Thus, you see, between Bungay and Scole Inn "post haste" means a snail's gallop, and the accommodation of the Post-office is converted into a monopoly in its worst form, namely, heavy charges for the business done, and that done badly.

VERITAS.

To the Editor of the *Post Circular*.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 5th of 1st Month, 1838.

Having observed by the newspapers the very praiseworthy exertions of Mr. Wallace to improve our Post-office regulations, I trust I shall not be deemed intrusive, if I shortly state a case strongly corroborative of the necessity of the reform so ably demanded.

I have just returned from a visit with a Scotch friend to the neighbouring towns of Shields. Whilst there, I had occasion to send to Sunderland a letter, which it was important should reach that town on the following forenoon. At seven o'clock in the evening, I applied at the Post-office to know when the letter (which I held in my hand), would be delivered at Sunderland; the reply was "at four o'clock to-morrow afternoon;" that is to say, twenty-one hours after.

The distance between the two towns is seven miles; the total population is eighty thousand; and omnibuses are running hourly every day, besides other conveyances.

These facts speak for themselves; but a gentleman of Shields, to whom I mentioned the circumstance, coolly remarked, "Oh, our letters are often two days in coming from Sunderland to Shields," and he added, "there is no dependence on the post."—I remain, very respectfully,

EDWARD RICHARDSON.

To the Editor of the *Post Circular*.

Sir,—As it may be some time ere the Government is induced to give a full and fair trial of any system founded on Mr. Hill's valuable suggestions, I presume you will have no objection to receive any communications on those particular evils of which some districts of the county have to complain, and there is none more loudly complained of in this quarter than the charges on circuitous routes.

In many, indeed, most instances mails are sent by circuitous routes for the convenience of the Post-office, and to save the expense of establishing direct mails; but what can be more preposterous than to deprive any district of the advantage of a direct mail, and at the same time tax that district by a heavy addition to their rates of postage, calculating not by the mean distance between the places, but by the circuitous route which is taken for the convenience of the Post-office.

In the county of Fife these charges are peculiarly oppressive; some of these have of late been removed by the establishment of a direct mail, though under the existing law, this direct mail has created new instances of oppression. As for instance, letters put into Dundee Post-office between nine in the morning and ten at night, are sent by Kinross, a distance of nearly sixty miles, and charged 8½d.; while, if put in at any other hour, they are sent by the direct mail a distance of thirteen miles, and charged only 4½d. In the same day, a letter from Ferry-Port on Craig, only eleven miles from Cupar, very generally costs 9½d., and the same complaint exists in many other places.

I have made frequent application to the authorities on this subject suggesting the propriety of using the powers conferred by the act of Parliament, whereby the Postmaster-General and the Lords of the Treasury have authority to alter the rates of postage; but it seems great things are expected from the result of the experimental reduction now going on, an experiment which I shall endeavour to show in another communication to be as weak a one as could well have been made.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant.

X. Y. Z.

We noticed in our last, that in consequence of systematized theft, from money letters, having been discovered, a number of individuals belonging to our (Glasgow) Post-office establishment had been suspended. We now learn that one of these individuals, a clerk, has since been committed to prison, further disclosures having implicated him more specifically.—*Scottish Times*.

## PUBLIC MEETING ON POSTAGE.

A meeting of the merchants, tradesmen, and inhabitants of the town and neighbouring district of Neath, in the county of Glamorgan, was convened at the Town-hall, Neath, on Tuesday, the 3d of April, 1836, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning Parliament to adopt the plan of an universal Penny Postage, as recommended by Mr. Rowland Hill. Mr. Rowland, Mayor, in the chair.

The meeting was most respectfully attended. The Mayor, in opening the business of the meeting, read extracts from the proceedings of the Committee of the House of Commons, now sitting on the subject, and from Mr. Hill's pamphlet. After which, Capt. Warde, R.N., in moving the first resolution, made the following observations:—

"Our object in meeting this day is to petition Parliament for an extensive alteration in the present rate of postage. It has been found by experience that a reduction of taxation on articles of commerce has had the effect of increasing their consumption, to such an extent as to increase the revenue to a greater amount than was received before the reduction took place; and I think any person who attentively reads Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, must come to the conclusion that the same results would attend the Post-office revenue, if the tax were reduced to a uniform charge of one penny for each letter. Mr. Hill clearly shows that the actual cost to the Post-office of conveying a letter from London to Edinburgh is one-third of a penny only; the postage charged to the public is thirteen pence. This would seem as though letter-writing were an evil desirable to discourage by heavy taxation; and in fact it has that effect. By the official returns it appears that, notwithstanding the increase of commercial intercourse, the great increase of population, and in the face also of the very great increase of intellectual cultivation, the revenue from the Post-office was less in 1835 than in 1815. Every one knows how materially communication by letter is restricted by the charge for postage. Persons do not willingly pay postage themselves, or put their correspondents to the expense for communications that do not press; many communications calculated to increase commercial confidence and private friendship are thus neglected. There are many present at this meeting who are more competent than I am to state the probable increase of mercantile correspondence. I will briefly remark, that in a moral point of view, the change sought for is of the most importance. The temptation to fraud, which the mode adopted for the examination of letters at the Post-office offers, will be removed, neither will the temptation exist to evade postage by unlawfully transmitting letters. The law instead of being broken, as at present is too much the case, will be obeyed. To the humbler classes in society, who are from necessity much separated from each other, the reduction of postage to a uniform standard of one penny will be the greatest boon. How many of that class are denied the comfort of hearing of their parents and families for years, for want of the means of paying the heavy postage for letters? How frequently do the anxious feelings of a father or mother in humble life follow their children into the danger to which they are exposed in seeking their livelihood, and how gladly would they from time to time, avail themselves of a cheap mode of communication to remind them of their duty and hear of their welfare, while at present they are debarred the indulgence of their parental feelings by the knowledge that neither themselves nor their children have the means of paying for the letter by which information could be conveyed. I should be sorry to press upon the legislature the adoption of any measure which would tend to embarrass their financial arrangements. I feel, however, convinced that no such result can follow the adoption of the plan recommended by Mr. Rowland Hill. Every difficulty is so ably and satisfactorily met by him that I unite most cordially in the object of this meeting."

The resolutions were as follows:

On the motion of Capt. Warde, R.N., and seconded by Mr. Michael Allen—That a Reduction in the Rates of Postage would be highly beneficial to all classes of her Majesty's subjects.

Moved by Mr. W. H. Buckland, and seconded by Mr. W. W. Young—That the plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill appears to this Meeting to combine the advantages of economy and despatch.

Moved by Mr. Nathaniel Tregelles, and seconded by Mr. David Arthur—That the Petition now read in support thereof be adopted, and that Mr. Vivian be requested to present the same, and to give its prayer his support.

Moved by Mr. Michael Allen, and seconded by Mr. Jonathan Rees—That the proceedings of this Meeting be advertised in the *Cambrian* and the *Merthyr Guardian*.

JOHN ROWLAND, Chairman.

Moved by Capt. Warde, R.N., and seconded by Mr. Allen—That the thanks of the Meeting are due to the Mayor for his conduct in the Chair.—(*From the Cambrian*.)

## EFFECTS OF "THE POST CIRCULAR."

REFORM IN THE POST-OFFICE SYSTEM.—We have before us three numbers of the Post Circular, a neat little publication, established for bringing about a reform, most "devoutly to be wished" in the system of Post-office charges—and which advocates, especially, the plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill, which has already excited much interest and discussion in Parliament. We shall recur to the subject, in connexion with an extra charge of postage in our own town to parties residing beyond certain very limited boundaries defined by the ancient market bars or chains.—*Preston Observer*.

—With pleasure we call the attention of our readers to a petition to the House of Commons, in favour of Mr. Rowland Hill's proposal for an uniform charge of one penny on all post letters; the advantages of this plan, in every point of view, are obvious to a commercial and literary community. Another petition, on behalf of national education, is worthy of the attention of our fellow-citizens; both are lying at our office for signatures, and as they have commenced under the sanction of influential names, we doubt not but they will be numerous and respectably signed.—*Hereford Times*.

REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.—We have received two numbers of a new paper entitled "The Post Circular," the object of which is to aid in securing that highly desirable medium, "a cheap, swift, and sure postage." It is wholly devoted to information on this one subject, and ought to command, as it is well deserving, the attention of every man and woman, without exception, possessed of the "writing qualification."—*Leeds Times*.

—The *Essex Standard* says, after some extracts from the *Post Circular*, "That a very extensive alteration in the rate of postage is necessary is evident. The principle of uniformity of charge which Mr. Hill's plan is consonant with, appears to us to be perfectly reasonable: the want of that uniformity in the present system is obvious. We will mention a case,—the postage of a letter from Colchester to Sudbury—sixteen miles, is sevenpence; the postage from Colchester to Walton—eighteen miles, is one penny!"

POST-OFFICE REFORM.—Matters of local interest have prevented us from recurring, as we had intended to do, to the all-important topic of a cheap and uniform postage, which, it will be remembered, we were among the earliest to make known to our readers and to advocate when it was first announced by its author, Mr. R. Hill, and long before it had attracted public attention. Since that time the admirable scheme has received so much support, that there is a hope of its being carried, provided the people take up the matter and exert themselves to procure the promised relief. A very powerful engine towards the attainment of this great object will be found in a small stamped paper, published weekly, and devoted to the single object of Post-office Reform, entitled *The Post Circular*. We shall often make interesting extracts from this useful publication, and we shall take the earliest opportunity of directing the attention of our readers to Mr. Hill's plan for a cheap postage, in the hope that they may be induced to aid it by meetings and petitions. Meanwhile we heartily recommend the *Post Circular* to all of the community interested in cheap postage—that is, every man and woman in the three kingdoms. No reform would benefit so great a number of persons as this. No relief would be so suddenly and universally felt. There is no measure for which so many persons would be grateful to a Government. It would be the easiest and surest path to popularity—and the most honourable and deserving one. Why do not Ministers then seize the opportunity which their opponents will not fail to use when their time comes?—*Somerset County Gazette*.

CHEAP POSTAGE.—We do not know a subject more fitting the attention of the people of Scotland, at the present

juncture, than a decided expression of their opinion upon Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of Post-office reform. All our towns, and especially our commercial communities, such as Leith, Dundee, Greenock, Aberdeen, &c., could not employ the recess to better purpose than laying their convictions and demands upon this subject before the Legislature, and thereby lead places of inferior note to follow their example. The Ministry have shown an inclination to go some length in the carrying out of Mr. Hill's admirable plan; and this is no small encouragement. We have been informed that numerous towns in the country are contemplating a simultaneous movement in this matter, and they are only waiting for the more vigorous agitation of the large towns.—*Scottish Pilot*.

—We have received several numbers of a new publication designated the "*Post Circular*," the object of which is to collect such information as may enforce on the Government the necessity of reducing the present rate of postages on letters, &c. The publication is well adapted to the contemplated object, and is efficiently and usefully conducted. With the opinions entertained by the *Circular* respecting the Post-office regulations and postages we fully concur, and we shall in our next lay before the conductors such a mass of facts, relative to the details of the system of the Post-office in this country, and its grievous operation on the transmission of letters and papers, as cannot fail to astonish the gentlemen of the *Circular* as well as the public.—*Connaught Telegraph*.

[Very numerous similar notices postponed.]

RATES OF POSTAGE—THE BUDGET.—The Chancellor of the Exchequer is to propose his financial statement, commonly called "The Budget," on the 5th of April. One of the chief points of it, we have reason to know, will be a proposed change in the rating of postage on all letters inland.—*Literary Gazette*. [Fudge! We have better knowledge of Mr. Spring Rice to believe he would propose any thing so wise.]

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Actuary—Peter Hardy, Esq.

Extract from a Report of the Directors to a General Court of the Mutual Life Assurance Society, held on the 17th of January, 1838:—

"This society has already realized, beyond expectation, the excellent intentions of its founders, and holds out the fairest prospect of becoming, at no distant period, an object of national importance."

The success which has happily attended the establishment of this society, is attested by the progress it has made in public estimation, by its rapidly accumulating capital, and by the considerable sums which it has already been enabled to add by way of bonus to the policies of the assurers.

The sources of this prosperity are obvious. The society has neither a proprietary to support, nor any outlay of interest upon a borrowed capital, so that the entire profits are annually and unreservedly divided among the members.

In addition to the security of an ample accumulated capital, the Directors beg leave to draw the public attention to the following advantages, many of which are peculiar to this society; viz.:

Rates of premium as moderate as is consistent with the security of the assured, and with the objects of mutual assurance.  
 Immediate participation in the profits of the society.

Liberality in the management, and in all matters of detail, which are under the entire control of the members at large; the smallest policy (£50) giving qualification for a vote in the general courts.

Extensive limits of voyage and permission to reside any where within Europe.

At the last investigation of the society's affairs, the funds were found to be so considerable in proportion to the existing liabilities, that the general court was enabled to declare a bonus exceeding on an average of all the policies *two and a half per cent. upon the sums assured*, so that a policy effected for one thousand pounds, and upon which at least two premiums had been paid, would have an actual addition made thereunto of about £25 in case of its dropping between the 31st day of December, 1837, and the 31st of December, 1838, when a new division will take place.

TABLE I.

Showing the ANNUAL PREMIUMS required for the Assurance of £100 on a Single Life for the whole duration.

Age	Annual Premium.	Age	Annual Premium.	Age	Annual Premium.	Age	Annual Premium.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
15	1 15 7	26½	2 6 2	38	3 3 3	49½	4 10 8
15½	1 16 1	27	2 6 9	38½	3 4 4	50	4 12 7
16	1 16 6	27½	2 7 3	39	3 5 4	50½	4 14 10
16½	1 17 0	28	2 7 10	39½	3 6 5	51	4 17 1
17	1 17 5	28½	2 8 4	40	3 7 6	51½	4 19 1
17½	1 17 10	29	2 8 11	40½	3 8 8	52	5 0 0
18	1 18 3	29½	2 9 6	41	3 9 9	52½	5 2 7
18½	1 18 8	30	2 10 2	41½	3 10 9	53	5 5 3
19	1 19 1	30½	2 10 9	42	3 11 8	53½	5 7 5
19½	1 19 6	31	2 11 4	42½	3 12 8	54	5 9 7
20	1 19 11	31½	2 12 0	43	3 13 8	54½	5 12 0
20½	2 0 5	32	2 12 7	43½	3 14 9	55	5 14 4
21	2 0 10	32½	2 13 4	44	3 15 9	55½	5 16 9
21½	2 1 3	33	2 14 0	44½	3 16 10	56	5 19 2
22	2 1 8	33½	2 14 10	45	3 17 11	56½	6 1 10
22½	2 2 2	34	2 15 8	45½	3 19 1	57	6 4 6
23	2 2 7	34½	2 16 7	46	4 0 2	57½	6 7 3
23½	2 3 1	35	2 17 5	46½	4 1 5	58	6 10 1
24	2 3 6	35½	2 18 4	47	4 2 7	58½	6 13 4
24½	2 4 1	36	2 19 4	47½	4 3 10	59	6 16 1
25	2 4 7	36½	3 0 3	48	4 5 1	59½	6 19 1
25½	2 5 1	37	3 1 2	48½	4 6 11	60	7 2 0
26	2 5 7	37½	3 2 3	49	4 8 9		

**ON THE DUTY AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE ASSURANCE.**

The many benefits arising out of the rapidly increasing practice of Life Assurance, are already beginning to be both felt and acknowledged. It is indeed a subject which deserves and calls for the serious consideration of a very large portion of the community. To the middling and higher classes of society it affords many of those advantages which the legislature has extended to the lower orders by the establishment of Benefit Societies and Savings Banks. But, notwithstanding the gradually spreading intelligence on this and other subjects, it is still greatly to be feared that there are to be found many whose peculiar circumstances ought to have led them to adopt such laudable means of providing for their families, but who, nevertheless, shut their eyes to the consequences of their deaths, and neglect, until it is too late, to remedy evils—for which their only consolation is, that they do not live to witness them. Every newspaper teems with appeals to the generosity of the Christian public, in behalf of widows and orphans left destitute by the sudden removal of a husband or parent on whose exertions depended their support. Let every father of a family bear in mind that he is imperatively called on, by every principle of Christianity as well as common humanity, to make at once, in the spring time of his life, the most ample provision that his circumstances will admit of, for those helpless beings whom it is his duty to support while he is alive, and *no man knows when or at what hour he may be called away.*

How very trifling a sum deducted from the ordinary expenses, nay, perhaps from the superfluities, of a family would serve to procure the desired provision,† and how much peace of mind and security might be purchased with a few pounds! Procrastination in this case as in many others is often ruinous—we put off from day to day this needful duty until some sudden calamity overwhelms us or some rapid change in the state of our health debars us from the benefits of a Life Assurance.

Put not then that off until the morrow which may be done to-day, for death cometh like a thief in the night, and a good man leaveth an inheritance unto his children's children.

\* As the addition is in reality computed on the amount of the premiums paid, the gross sum given by way of bonus will vary a little in proportion to the age of the insured from the above average. It will in some cases be rather more, and in others rather less, than two and a half per cent.

† At the age of 30, a yearly payment of about £25 would secure the family of the Assurer in the event of his death, at the least £1000; and if he lived long enough to partake largely of the profits of the society perhaps as much more.



No Entrance Fee, nor charge for the Policy beyond the Stamp.  
 Premiums may be paid yearly or half-yearly at the option of the Assurer.

PETER HARDY, Esq.,

Actuary,

(Mutual Life Assurance Office,)

37, Old Jewry,

LONDON.

Name and Profession of the Life to be assured  
 Place and date of Birth  
 Present Residence  
 Age, Sum to be assured £, Term  
 Reference for state of health to be made—  
 to a Private friend  
 to a Medical friend

By whom the Assurance is to be made  
 Has insurer had—  
 Smallpox—Cowpox—Gout—Rupture—or other Disease?  
 Parties desirous of effecting Assurances with this Society are requested to fill up, according to the printed directions, the accompanying form of proposal; and in order to save trouble and double postage, to tear off the same, and to transmit according to direction.  
 Parties are requested to fold it so that the address may fall outside.

The next distribution of Profits will be on the 31st of December, 1838.

# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 6.

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 1838.

Price 2½d.

The House of Commons now sitting is appointed—  
 "To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill."

The plan proposed by Mr. Hill is:—  
 That all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, be charged one penny for each half-ounce, to be paid in advance through the medium of stamped covers, or stamps or that letters should be stamped when delivered at the Post-offices.

This system would introduce uniformity and simplicity.—  
 An easy and cheap collection of the Revenue.—  
 Avoid a multiplicity of accounts kept at the Post-office.—  
 Save time in charging by pen and ink a varying rate on each letter, and in the delivery.  
 Avoid candle scrutiny into each letter to ascertain whether single or double as at present and consequent temptation to fraud.

The English Post-office Revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly diminished.  
 The French Post-office Revenue has increased more than half since 1821.  
 The United States Post-office Revenue has more than tripled during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.  
 The vast extent to which the trade of the country has increased within the last twenty years,

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

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

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

The average cost of its actual carriage to any post town is about one tenth of a penny.  
 The penny posts of large towns are very profitable, even though these pence have to be collected from house to house.

The average cost of managing the twopenny-post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only 34 per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

The chargeable letters do not weigh more than about one-fourth of the whole mail.  
 These facts are stated that it may be seen upon what grounds the question of the reduction of postage is urged upon public attention,—but for a full view of this important subject, Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, on Post-office reform, should be read, which is published by Charles Knight and Co., 22, Ludgate-street, London.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS ON POSTAGE.

### GREAT MEETING AT LIVERPOOL.

On the 27th ult. a public meeting took place in the Sessions-house, Chapel-street, for the purpose of expressing the feeling of the inhabitants of Liverpool with regard to a diminution of the present heavy rates of postage. Among the company we witnessed many of the leading merchants and most influential inhabitants. A few minutes after two o'clock, his worship the Mayor entered, accompanied by the Town-clerk and other gentlemen.

The Town-clerk having read the requisition, the Mayor briefly explained the object of the meeting; and the object, he said, fully accorded with his own feelings. A reduction of postage, to the lowest possible extent, was imperatively called for—and it was a matter of great importance, whether considered with reference to its commercial, intellectual, or moral influence. To the poor, especially, it was of paramount consequence; it would prove to them a real luxury, and, unlike most of their luxuries, be attended with the best results.

S. S. Gair, Esq., in moving the first resolution, expressive of the pleasure entertained by the meeting on learning that government seriously entertains the question of a practical reduction of postage, stated that he would not detain the meeting by any lengthened remarks of his own, as he saw around him many gentlemen, whose habits of public speaking would enable them to place the question in a stronger point of view than he (Mr. Gair) could do. He fully agreed with the resolution in his hand, and trusted that the object of it would be speedily carried into effect.—(Hear, hear.)

The motion was seconded by Stanley Percival, Esq., and carried unanimously.

Wm. Earle, Esq. proposed the second resolution, to the effect that a low rate of postage would greatly multiply correspondence, without reducing the revenue; and that the Post-office ought not to be regarded as a source of revenue so much as a powerful engine for exchanging opinions, concentrating the greatest despatch with the least expense; and in doing so, observed that, like the gentleman who preceded him, he did not intend making a speech, because it was a subject with which they were all well acquainted, and the evils of which they all experienced. He would therefore simply content himself with moving the resolution, in the spirit of which he fully concurred.

William Brown, Esq. seconded the resolution. There might be said to be two clauses in the indictment; the first setting forth that a greatly increased amount of correspondence would pass through the Post-office, by which the revenue would experience little if any diminution. Those who had read Mr. Rowland Hill's admirable pamphlet on Post-office Reform, were aware that it was therein shown, that if six times the present amount of letters passed through the Post-office, the revenue would suffer no diminution. It did not perhaps follow that the increase would be six times its present extent; but it was indisputable that all letters now sent through illicit channels would be forwarded through the Post-office; the other point was, that the Post-office ought not to be regarded as a source of revenue so much as a cheap and expeditious communication, to stimulate industry and promote commerce. If commerce were unincumbered with the shackles which that establishment now throws around it, there was no question but it would receive a new impetus, and a greater amount of revenue, the result of such a change, would be derived from other sources. The moral and intellectual effects he need hardly dilate upon, for they were apparent to every one; but he begged to read an extract from a recent number of the *Post Circular*, which placed this part of the subject in a very prominent light. (The extract referred to the progress made by the press, and the corresponding advancement of public opinion by the freedom which that great moral machine had attained of late years.) Mr. Brown concluded by stating that such were his views and feelings, and he trusted they were those entertained by the meeting. (Cheers.)

Adam Hodgson, Esq., proposed the third resolution, to the effect that an immense number of letters, and other documents, would be sent by a quick mail at a low charge, which are now sent by other means; that the result would stimulate the lower classes to qualify themselves to correspond with their friends; and that the moral effect of removing all tempt-

ation to send letters, except by a legalised conveyance, would be great. Most of them came there with the belief that no long speeches were necessary to elucidate this subject, and such being the feeling he would not detain them long. The first part of the resolution which he had the honour to move, referred to the immense number of additional communications that would be sent by a cheap conveyance. The prevailing illicit mode of sending communications, in order to save the exorbitant rates of postage, had been carried to an extent that few of them could imagine. A person from Glasgow, recently examined before a committee of the House of Commons, was asked how many letters he thought were sent daily from Glasgow to the neighbouring towns, between which towns and that city a mail communication four times a day existed; and he gave it as his opinion that 500 were smuggled daily. Another witness declared that at least 1,000 letters were forwarded daily to more distant places from Glasgow by other conveyances than the mail. One house was known to send twenty, thirty, and even fifty letters daily in this way; the average number of letters received by the same house, by post, was 1 to 1½ daily—by illicit channels twenty! Sending by mail was the exception—by private channels the rule. Persons in various parts of the country were employed to carry letters in this illicit manner, and they exchanged their letters on the road with all imaginable regularity. It is evident, that, if the rates of postage were diminished, immense numbers of letters would find their way to the Post-office, and the revenue would yield as great an amount at a penny, as it does at present—to say nothing of the probability of extended communication. The second part of the resolution was of more importance than the first, because it did not treat the question as one of commerce; it regarded it as a social question—one affecting the communication of the poor with their friends. The average cost of the conveyance of letters by the mail, is only about the thirty-sixth part of a penny, the heavy salaries and great expenditure of the Post-office causing the difference. Was it right then, or humane, seeing that the transit of the poor man's letters cost the country only the thirty-sixth part of a penny, that we should make him pay the amount of a day's wages for a single communication to or from his children. (Cheers.) When a child leaves the home of its parents, there was a natural anxiety on both sides for an interchange of sentiment; but a heavy rate of postage had a tendency to dry up the affections, which expired from the want of a cheap channel of communication. (Hear, hear.) The third part of the resolution referred to the moral effect produced by habitually evading the law. Now, he need not say that if there was one feeling more than another which ought to be encouraged, it was that of being amenable to the law: but, by the existing system, there is a positive premium held out to evade the law; it is as much evaded by the common mode of sending letters in parcels as by any other species of smuggling. (Hear, hear.) Nothing can be more injurious to the moral feeling and respectability of the country than this habitual violation of the law. (Hear and cheers.)

Robert Semple, Esq., seconded the resolution, which was carried unanimously.

The Mayor said he might observe that, notwithstanding the frequent and speedy communication between Liverpool and Manchester, the Post-office was the slowest and dearest channel between the two towns. If any gentleman wants an immediate answer from the latter town, he sends a parcel, and pays a shilling. Between Liverpool and Manchester the great bulk of the letters are sent in parcels, and although some gentlemen who were shareholders or directors in the railway might not wish for a change, as the parcels yielded them a handsome revenue—(cheers and laughter)—yet a cheap and speedy postage would put an end to the system.

Thomas Todd, Esq., moved the fourth resolution, expressive of the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Rowland Hill for his able pamphlet, and suggested a subscription to defray the expense of carrying out the object of the preceding resolutions. In moving this resolution he felt the force of the place in which he stood—for he was very like a person on his trial, and must appeal to them (the meeting) for his acquittal. The resolution committed to his charge was formed both of sweets and bitters. The first part, expressive of their thanks to Mr. Rowland Hill, was an unalloyed sweet; the other recommending a subscription,

might be deemed rather bitter by some. To Mr. Rowland Hill the gratitude of the country was due. That abuses existed in the Post-office were known before he stirred in the affair; but to him not only belongs the merit of exposing the abuses of the system and laying it bare, but also of providing a remedy. There were many facts in Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet which could not be too generally known. The most remarkable fact was, that while the revenue in every other branch had advanced, and in some instances doubled itself, the revenue of the Post office had not merely not advanced, but had actually retrograded. Mr. Hill incontrovertibly proved that, had the revenue of the Post-office kept pace with the other branches of the revenue, and the general prosperity of the country, the amount would now have exceeded three millions sterling. Mr. Hill had proved, on the contrary, that the Post-office revenue of France, during a period of fourteen years, had advanced fifty-four per cent. A high rate of postage was always attended with this result—the evasion of the law to an incalculable extent. Mr. Hill deserved well of his country for the labour and attention which he had bestowed upon the subject. (Cheers.)

GEORGE CROSSFIELD, Esq., (who spoke from the witness' box,) in coming forward to second the resolution, said, that the gentleman who preceded him had told them that he felt like a prisoner put upon his trial. Now he (Mr. Crossfield) would not be considered out of place in the evidence box, while he gave testimony to some of the evils of the present system. (Cheers and laughter.) He knew, from personal experience, that the plan pursued in Glasgow and elsewhere, of forwarding letters in parcels, was in constant operation in this town and neighbourhood. Every one present knew the great number of letters constantly sent by private hands. It was a common occurrence when a person was visiting another town, for people to say—"Take these letters for me, and drop them in the Post-office." This was constantly done, although he believed that by so doing the people subjected themselves to a penalty of 50*l.*—Mr. Rowland Hill was well entitled to their thanks, for drawing the attention of the country to this subject. Those who had not read his admirable pamphlet, ought immediately to do so. Was it not strange, that while England was retrograding in its Post-office revenue, France had increased to the extent of fifty-four per cent? This could only be the result of a bad system, and the national feeling ought, he thought, to revolt at it. (Cheers.)

The Mayor said that soldiers, he believed, were not the most moral or the best educated portion of society; and yet it was an ascertained fact that the correspondence of soldiers was more extensive than that of any other class of men in the same condition of life. Why was this?—because the soldier only paid a penny for his letter.—(Great cheering.) The Mayor congratulated the meeting on the unanimity by which it had been distinguished. It gratified him to see in his native town so numerous and respectable a meeting called together, on a subject unconnected with party feeling.

J. Cropper, Esq., proposed a vote of thanks to the Mayor; his Worship returned thanks, and the meeting dispersed.—*Liverpool Chronicle.*

### GREENOCK.

On Tuesday the 17th ult. a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, in reference to the above subject. On the motion of Baillie Muir, the Provost was called to the chair.

The Provost stated that himself and his colleagues had deemed it proper to call the meeting, although no requisition had been presented to them to do so. The importance of the subject, he thought, fully warranted them in so doing, more particularly as they would have the benefit of the presence and advice of their indefatigable member, who had come down to enjoy the benefit of his native air during the short recess of the Legislature. As a proof of the estimation in which Mr. Wallace was held elsewhere, he (the Provost) would read a communication which he had recently received from Edinburgh. He then read a letter from the Edinburgh Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers, containing a vote of thanks to Mr. Wallace for his services in regard to the Post-office. The Provost resumed his seat by stating that Mr. Wallace would address the meeting.

Mr. Wallace then rose, and stated that he was not aware, on coming down, that such a meeting was in contemplation, and it was only by accident that he found himself able to at-

tend, and deliver his views upon the subject. As Chairman of the Committee of the House of Commons appointed to investigate into the propriety of effecting a reduction in the rates of postage, he would not have been allowed in ordinary circumstances to tell what had taken place during the investigation, but, before rising, the House had agreed that the evidence already taken should be printed, and therefore there was no impropriety in his informing them in regard to what had taken place. Mr. Wallace then proceeded to relate the most remarkable parts of the evidence, and the proceedings of the London Mercantile Committee. The Chambers of Commerce, too, he said, of all the large towns were meeting, or had already met, to petition Parliament for the introduction of an uniform rate of postage, and all of them which had concurred upon a specific sum, with the exception of that of Edinburgh, had fixed upon Mr. Hill's rate of one penny. He saw, moreover, by a newspaper which had been sent to him, that the reason why the Edinburgh Chamber had fixed the sum at twopence, was a conviction on their part that the Committee would not adopt a lower sum as the standard. Now, he (Mr. Wallace) could state, the Committee had not arrived at any conclusion in regard to the rate of postage to be recommended, but were willing to hear facts and suggestions from all quarters, and the Edinburgh Chamber had no good grounds for the supposition they had formed. In reference to the framing of petitions to Parliament upon the subject, he would remark that the Committee was bound by the term of its appointment to have a regard to the revenue, and therefore petitioners might make their wishes known without any fear of that being injured. There were in the Committee two Lords of the Treasury, viz., Lord Seymour and Mr. Parker, two most able and excellent business men, who were most regular in their attendance, and assiduous in the discharge of their duties. The first mentioned gentleman was one of the Post-office Commissioners, and had a great deal of knowledge of the subject gained prior to the present enquiry. He might mention in passing, that the commission of which Lord Seymour was a member had issued various excellent reports, containing much valuable information, and many highly important recommendations, some of which had already been adopted by Government, and others were in course of being brought into operation. Now these Lords of the Treasury were there to keep a special eye to the effect of every proposed change upon the public revenue. They were not, however, to suppose in reading the evidence, that because these gentlemen put questions of a tendency to elicit answers unfavourable to a reduction, they were thereby opposed to such a measure. They were merely performing their duty, and eliciting the information requisite to the formation of a correct opinion regarding the effect of any proposed change in a financial point of view. He was most happy to bear his public testimony to the merits of these excellent individuals, one of whom, although still but young, was of great promise, and at the death of his father, the Duke of Somerset, would become an important member of the House of Lords, to qualify him for which he had received much useful training in the House of Commons. Mr. Wallace then exhibited various copies of pamphlets issued by the commercial committee sitting in London on the subject of the Post-office, together with several numbers of the *Post Circular*, and which were afterwards distributed to the meeting. The question, he said, would not be allowed to sleep. The committee of which he was chairman, was the first ever granted to enquire into taxation, and some of the old stagers were quite surprised when he succeeded in getting it agreed to. However, he told them that he had got it, and was determined to use the power it conferred to sift the question to the bottom. (Cheers.) Mr. Wallace then adverted to the question of a second mail to Scotland daily. Mr. Wallace next spoke of the losses sustained by individuals from money being abstracted from letters passing through the Post-office. He was receiving letters every day complaining of such occurrences. The only mode of preventing this crime was by having a system of registration for money letters. He (Mr. Wallace) had given notice of his intention to bring in a bill for registering money letters, upon which the Chancellor of the Exchequer said he would bring in such a measure, but from that day to this he had heard no more of it. The only remedy he saw was a cheap rate of postage, and the registration of money letters. The hon. gentleman resumed his seat amid much applause.

William Macfie, Esq. (late Provost), moved a series of resolutions. He had great pleasure in proposing them to their acceptance, and he trusted they would be carried unanimously. Of no fact was he more certain than this, that the present system stopped much intercourse between man and man, and was the cause of estrangement between friends at a distance. Were it improved in the way Mr. Wallace proposed, it would put a stop to smuggling in letters, which they were all bound to condemn, although they were all tempted to practice. Were the poor enabled to correspond with their friends and relatives at a cheap rate, much kindly feeling which, in consequence of the price of communication, was allowed to languish and die, would be preserved and cherished.

John Ker, Esq., Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, seconded the resolutions. Mr. Wallace said that the Chamber of Commerce in other towns had petitioned for a reduction of the rate of postage, and he might add that that of Greenock had not been an exception; and he thought he might say in name of the other members, that if Mr. Wallace believed a petition in favour of the registration of money letters would do good, the Chamber here would send him one.

The resolutions were then put from the chair, and carried unanimously.

Baillie Scott moved the thanks of the meeting to Mr. Wallace, which motion was seconded by Baillie Muir, and carried by acclamation.

Mr. Wallace briefly acknowledged the compliment paid him, and after thanks to the Provost for his conduct in the chair, the meeting broke up.—*Greenock Advertiser*.

—GATESHEAD TOWN COUNCIL, MARCH 28, 1838.—Mr. Brockett then said that he had another subject to submit to the notice of the council, and upon which he trusted that they would be unanimous. They all knew that there was at present great exertions made to effect a trial of the experiment of Mr. Rowland Hill for a reduction of postage, and with respect to that gentleman, he (Mr. B.) must say, that as far as he could judge, Mr. Hill had paid particular attention to the subject, and was, from his great attainments in every respect well qualified to form a correct opinion upon it. There certainly had been great objections raised against this measure, but they were only such as had always been made against every kind of improvement, and which might be classed under the usual phrases of being dangerous, impolitic, and uncertain as to the effects likely to be produced by it. Now if they looked to these objections with respect to the present subject, they would uniformly find that a reduction in taxation on matters of such public importance, would not injure but rather improve the revenue; and a heavy taxation upon postage he considered one of the most odious and oppressive laws that could be framed. He hoped they would see the necessity of forcing this experiment of Mr. Hill's on the notice of government and the legislature; and he would beg leave to move, "That it is the opinion of the council that an excessive rate of postage was a public injury, and that Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of an uniform rate would greatly increase all sorts of correspondence, and contribute materially to the happiness of the poor, &c.; and that a petition be got up, and signed by the council, praying for its adoption."

The motion was seconded by Mr. William Hymers, and after a few words from Mr. Rowntree and Mr. Price, it was put and carried.—*Tyne Mercury*.

#### EDINBURGH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND MANUFACTURES.

A quarterly meeting of the Directors was held yesterday; Duncan Cowan, Esq. in the chair.

After the usual routine business had been disposed of, the Committee on Mr. Rowland Hill's plan for an uniform rate of postage reported, that in conformity with the instructions of the Chamber, a petition had been presented to the House of Commons, praying that no experiment on Mr. Hill's plan should be sanctioned by the House which was not based on its main principles. This petition had been entrusted to Mr. Wallace, who presented it on the 5th of February, when it was ordered to be printed; and on the 8th Mr. Wallace called the attention of the House to its prayer, when a short but interesting discussion took place, and it was understood that the object had been completely attained, and that the whole matter was still under the consideration of a Committee of the House, before whom much and very important information had already been laid, tending to show the practicability of the plan.

Mr. Cadell then stated, that from communications he had recently received, he felt quite satisfied that the information laid before the Committee of the House was so full and important as to leave little doubt that Government would be satisfied of the propriety of adopting the plan to a considerable extent, both as to the uniformity of the rate of postage and the reduction of the charge. He did not consider it possible to obtain the concurrence of Government to the reduction to the extent recommended by Mr. Hill, from fears respecting the revenue, but in all likelihood it might be obtained to a reduction to one uniform rate of twopence; and as he conceived this to be a boon of great consequence to the commercial interests of the country, he moved that resolutions embodying the sentiments of the Chamber in support of this reduction should be prepared and widely circulated among the Members of Parliament, &c. &c. Mr. W. Brown seconded this proposal. Sir James Spittal expressed himself in favour of it, but doubtful how far it would be safe for the revenue to reduce to one penny. After some further discussion, in which the opinion was strongly stated that nothing would pay so well as one penny, from the certainty of every other means of conveying letters being thereby completely superseded, and the idea of returning to the rates of 1764, when 3d., 4d., and 6d. were charged, according to the distance, scouted on all hands as most ridiculous and absurd, Mr. Cadell's motion was unanimously agreed to.—*Caledonian Mercury*, April 5.

[It is to be regretted that Mr. Cadell should have been misled by the communications he received, and to be hoped that he will in future regard with caution all others from the same quarter.]

#### EXTRACTS FROM EVIDENCE OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POSTAGE.

OPPRESSION OF POSTAGE ON FRUGENESS:—INCREASED REVENUE CERTAIN FROM REDUCTION.

T. Lamie Murray, Esq., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.—You are chairman of the National Loan Fund Life Assurance Company?—I am.

Is it your belief that companies of an extensive and respectable nature, with which you are connected, make it their study to avoid postage as far as they can?—In every way; it is, in fact, a matter of importance to every person to know how he can avoid the postage. In large institutions the expense of parcels is enormous; and in order to mitigate that, they endeavour to include as much correspondence as they can; I do not wish to mention any particular institution with which I am connected, but I am speaking from my knowledge generally.

Looking to the institutions with which you are connected, and also those with which you are acquainted, would a large reduction of postage be the means of inducing the sending through the Post-office of a great proportion of the letters

which are sent otherwise than through the Post-office?—In the institution I am at present establishing, the National Loan Fund Life Insurance, the effect of a reduction in postage would be to increase it, perhaps, an hundredfold; I can scarcely say how much it would increase it; for instance, I hold in my hand a prospectus, which is a kind of pamphlet, that by means of the Post-office might be transmitted; it is too heavy for a frank; I dare say, in the course of six months, we should despatch to different parts of the kingdom at least 100,000, and which would lead to much correspondence; that would be a very small portion of what we should ultimately send, looking to a continuance of years.

Should you continue to send circulars of that description in other years, as well as the first?—In every year; the object of this institution is to include the middle and lower classes in insurance, and as population sprung up in each year that would bring with it a fresh distribution of those prospectuses.

Are the Committee to understand that the present rate of postage prohibits your sending them through the Post-office?—Decidedly.

Can you state to what number of persons you probably should address such applications?—I should think the number would be at least half a million.

You have paid considerable attention, and devoted your time to the study of political economy in former years, have you not?—I have paid considerable attention to subjects connected with political economy, and to the interests of the mass.

Applying the principles of political economy to your practical observations, those remarks you have now submitted to this Committee are given as arising from your knowledge both practically and theoretically?—Certainly; I speak positively as to the practice being that I have stated; what the effect of a reduction of postage, speaking theoretically, would be, it is impossible to say; I have no doubt it would be much greater than any estimate I have seen upon the subject.

Should you consider the rate of postage, that would be most favourable, to be one penny, as being the lowest rate you contemplate?—Yes, I think that if it were even lower—the cheaper postage is made the greater the communication, if the reduction is compatible with the population. I think the population should be taken into consideration; supposing the population only 10 millions, I think it should increase accordingly; but as the population increased, I think that you might establish even a lower sum than a penny, and that it would increase in the ratio of reduction.

Have you formed any calculation of the population as connected with the subject of a reduction of the rate of postage?—I have not been able to turn much of my attention to this subject; but I have looked this morning into some general heads. I assume the population to be 25,600,000, according to the statement in Mr. Hill's pamphlet, or an abstract of it which I have read; then I assume there are 6,410,000 heads of families, that is, taking four to each family; then I assume that if each head of a family would write a letter, that would create an answer, which would give 12,000,000 of letters in the course of a year; (I am speaking now entirely of domestic correspondence, not as referring to matters of business: my object was to ascertain what increase of domestic correspondence would be required to give the present revenue to the Post-office): that would be 53,000*l.* a year. It would then require 36 letters to be written by each head of a family per annum in order to make up the 2,000,000*l.*, which I assume to be equal to the gross revenue of the Post-office, including the charges. Now, assuming that the present postage and the number of letters paid upon are 88,000,000, it would require that each head of a family should write three letters a year, and answer three letters a year, and to make up the present amount it should be six times increased; so instead of writing and answering three letters in the year, it would be required to write and answer 18 letters in the year, which would be one letter in 20 days, or three letters in two months. This would be the calculation upon the assumption of heads of families in the first instance. I think it is but fair to assume that 18 letters would be written and answered by each head of a family, taking one with another, in the United Kingdom, and that would be without reference to the returns made from commerce, merely looking at how much social correspondence would return the present revenue according to the present calculation at a penny a letter; it would also have a great influence on education, because if facilities were given to writing it would be a disgrace for any person not to be able to address a letter. In a great measure, by the mass of the population, writing is in fact scarcely ever used, or at all events is not often used; but if a man could correspond with a distant relative, with the thousand feelings of affection that actuate him, he would of course desire to make that communication when he could do so cheaply. The present rate of postage is totally incompatible, as regards the mass, with the rate of wages. The postage of a letter, particularly from a distant part, bears so large a proportion to the pecuniary resources of the labouring classes, that of course it cannot be an object to them to encourage the writing of letters, therefore they are precluded from those enjoyments which are common to us all. I know one instance in Ireland where some roads were made, during the Marquis of Anglesea's administration, into districts into which no roads had been previously made, and, as can be shown, the revenue increased in all those districts.

Has the evidence you have given just now also pointed to a uniform rate as well as the rate of 1*d.*?—The evidence I am now giving is, that any equal rate would be better than any graduated rate of postage; and the evidence I have given before is, that it should be a low rate.

You consider a uniform preferable to a graduated rate?—Decidedly.

Is there anything further you can state on this subject?—All that I know is, that written communications of joint-



stock companies would be considerably increased, and if you take the narrowest views of the value of a Post-office, that is, to obtain a revenue, which is a very narrow view of the subject, I think if I were called upon to farm, as they do in France, those large establishments, I would reduce the rate. If I had to pay two millions a year to government, I should prefer charging but a penny for each communication under a certain weight, in order to increase my revenue; first, I would prefer a uniform rate of postage for all letters, as exciting a greater quantity of correspondence; 6d., 5d., 2d., or whatever it might be; my opinion is, that the lower the rate, the greater will be the ratio of increase than the reduction in price; that has been proved every day in the transactions of business. If you take Waterloo Bridge, you scarcely see anybody passing over it; if that bridge were thrown open to the public, there would be thousands of passengers upon it; again, if the government charged nothing for correspondence, there would be an immense increase; then the next to nothing is a penny.

Do you think that the labouring classes would write in the proportion in which you have estimated their correspondence to increase?—I think they would write more. When I speak of the labouring classes, I do not mean the mere artisan and labourer; but I mean the middle classes generally. I know our own clerks (we employ Scotch clerks), and I know those persons, though they have great labour in the course of the day, working nine and twelve and fifteen hours, at intervals have been continually writing letters to their friends, communicating of course by the facility open in such institutions to communicate without the post. I have seen them put their letters under their blotters, and resume their business when it called for their attention.

You think that the indirect beneficial effect upon the revenue of the country would make up for the loss in the direct revenue of the Post-office?—I do.

You would recommend a uniform rate as the most productive the Post-office could impose?—It appears to me a self-evident proposition, that if you increase the charge by distance, that must diminish the communication of distant parts; there are fewer letters every 50 miles from London brought, excluding the large manufacturing districts, which must naturally flow towards a particular market; but looking to the total correspondence, the correspondence with regard to social transactions, which must be entirely annihilated through the post: every 50 miles the mail goes from London, it must diminish the correspondence of that particular district; Bristol and Liverpool, and the manufacturing towns of course must communicate with London; but all the social communication must of course be diminished.

OPPRESSION ON SCIENCE.

Thomas Webster, Esq., called in; and Examined.

Chairman.—You are secretary to the Institution of Civil Engineers?—I am.

Your office is in Cannon-row, Westminster?—Yes.

Have you given your attention to the present rates of postage as relating to the institution you are connected with?—I have.

Have they tended to repress or restrain, and to what degree, the communications of your society?—The rates of postage have, I conceive, tended most materially to repress correspondence generally; on considering the peculiar nature of the institution, and the nature of the meetings, the Committee will see that great correspondence might arise if it were not restrained by the excess of postage. The character of the meetings is of this nature; papers on scientific subjects are discussed, and upon those subjects questions arise, information on which can be procured only by writing to a great number of parties.

To what particular subjects do you allude?—I would refer to a brief abstract of the minutes of the proceedings which took place last year, and I would just quote from the marginal notes some of the subjects which were discussed during the last session. The subject of cements was discussed; the manufacture of artificial cements and the manufacture of natural cements. It was of great importance to ascertain the nature of the cements in different parts of the country; how they were compounded, what were their relative ingredients. Information could not be obtained upon these points without writing to a great number of parties; consequently, it would have been desirable to prepare a great number of questions, to have had them printed in a circular letter, and to have sent a large number of them to individuals who could furnish that information. That subject of cements occupied the institution several evenings. Another subject, which would have admitted of a great number of questions of a similar nature, was the wear of locomotives, and the wear of railways. All the data and facts respecting the wear of railways, the different speeds of engines, and the general details on that subject, would have given rise to another large class of questions, which the institution I have no doubt would have ordered to be printed in circular letters. Another subject which attracted their attention, was the strength of materials for buildings, as public institutions, houses, &c.; the strength of iron beams and wooden beams; these likewise would have given rise to a series of questions. The question in general was, as to observed deflexions for given weights; that was a very general question, and as great difference of opinion existed as to the amount of deflexions, and as to the manner in which they ought to be observed, it would have been exceedingly desirable to have had a number of questions printed and circulated to that effect. I will select only the general questions of inquiry which were brought forward. Another class of questions was, respecting the generation of steam; as to the quantity of steam which could be produced by a certain quantity of coals; as to the elastic force when steam was expanded; and a certain series of questions would have been raised and circulated on that subject. Another class of questions would have been on the duty of engines, especially of the Cornish engines; that is, the work done by a certain quan-

tity of fuel; that involves a greater number of details, and which details have never been properly investigated, and which can only be investigated by a number of questions to which answers might be got from different parts of the kingdom. Another class of questions would have been upon the subject of blasting rocks; as to the quantity of gunpowder that was required to loosen and blast a certain quantity of stone, and as to the quantity for different stones; that would have given rise to a series of questions which would have been sent to different parts of England and Ireland.

That would include coal and slate also?—Certainly. Another subject was the friction of air and gas in pipes; it would have been exceedingly desirable to have sent a series of questions to the large iron masters, as to the pressure and friction of the air driven through the pipes to blow the blast furnaces; and it likewise would have been desirable to have sent to the different gas-works for answers to particular questions as to facts which must have been observed; those are the more important general questions that occupied the institution during the last year. There are a great many others of minor detail, on which probably it would not have been worth while to classify questions, and to request answers; but on those I have mentioned it would have been thought worth while; and it would be thought worth while in most cases to classify and send out questions on subjects brought forward for the purpose of obtaining general information.

Chairman.—Are the Committee to understand that, in consequence of the high rates of postage, those questions which you think it would have been desirable to have put upon those various subjects were not framed, and consequently not sent?—I wish the Committee to understand, that if it were not for the high rate of postage the institution would constantly frame questions upon the subjects brought before them and send them out, and would do it a great number of times during the session.

How would they send them out?—By the post.

Provided there was a low rate of postage?—Yes; the Committee should understand that the institution has a great number of non-resident members. The efficacy of the institution depends entirely upon its correspondence with those non-resident members. The members in London, or the residents, have, few of them, means of giving us information; the manufacturers here are very few; but the non-residents are the leading men of the great manufactories throughout the country; they have the means of giving us information, and they would give it when addressed by queries in a letter.

Have you any specimens of the sort of communications which you allude to?—I have; my connection with the institution has been only about one year, but I find in the institution papers containing lists of subjects proposed for investigation. These bear the dates of 1833 and 1834; they were sent every week to resident members only. They are arranged in this manner: "List of subjects proposed. Gas: what improvements have been made of late years in the economy and facility of producing and using it? Steam-boats: the forms suitable for sea and inland navigation. Paddle-wheels, wheels: the comparative advantages of iron and wooden wheels for carriages. Materials for wharfs: the comparative merits of wood and cast-iron for piling, in wharfs, foundations, piers, &c. considered with regard to cost, durability, method of driving, form, and any other particulars." Then there is a question on steam-engine boilers; on old London bridge. At that time such engineering questions were sent out. I do not know why they were discontinued, but I conceive they were discontinued because the residents generally had not sufficient means of answering them; they might have been discontinued in consequence of the expense of postage; but I am perfectly satisfied those questions would be resumed if the non-resident members had the advantage of a low rate of postage.

The specimens you have shown appear to be contained on half-sheets of paper?—They are.

Half-sheets or sheets of paper would be quite sufficient to send to each member?—Yes, for they would be sent weekly, as the subject arose for discussion.

None of those are now sent?—No, it would not be worth the institution's while to send those simply to residents, because the residents have not, generally, the means of answering them.

You say they would be sent once a week, at a low rate of postage?—Yes.

To what rate of postage do you allude?—A penny; the present twopenny postage is a serious objection; the twopenny is an objection to sending them to residents.

Do you adopt any other mode than that of the twopenny-post?—Yes, by hand.

Viscount Louth.—Have you made an estimate of the number of letters you should send out, and to which you should obtain replies, at a low rate of postage?—I have; I will confine myself to the non-residents, and I would state, that it has generally been the practice to send by the post to each non-resident once a year; we have about 200 non-residents, they have generally been sent to once a year by the post; those non-residents would be sent to, I believe, thirty times a year at a penny postage. I will give the reasons for assigning that number; we have about twenty meetings in the year; at each of those meetings questions for discussion arise, and I believe the institution would direct circular letters to be sent to the non-residents on those subjects; that is to say, they would direct a series of questions to be framed for every meeting, the minutes would be likewise sent out; last year they amounted to six half-sheets; they will be published, I conceive, about once a fortnight; there would be about eight of them; I conceive they would be sent eight times a year. I conceive the other communications by letter would be about two, making the communications in general to non-residents thirty times a year instead of only once. I have not included the residents in

that calculation; they are generally sent to now by hand, but they would be sent to generally by the penny-post.

Chairman.—Provided there were a reduction of postage, do you believe the resident members would be sent to by the penny-post?—Yes, there would be one hundred residents sent to thirty times a year by the penny-post, with the exception of those living in the neighbourhood, who probably would be sent to still by hand.

Mr. Wood.—Thirty letters a year to each member would be a tax of 2s. 6d. on each, do you not think they would consider that an unnecessary tax?—That would lie upon the institution; I think the institution would not consider that postage at all.

Mr. Wood.—Is the scientific information which your society is anxious to obtain of a character that would have an important effect on the useful arts?—It is entirely directed to the manufactures, and to the general subjects of engineering.

Would it be likely to promote the knowledge among artisans of the principles on which their respective arts depend?—I conceive it would.

Would it be serviceable to the progress of those arts, and the comfort of mankind?—Certainly; the publication and circulation of those questions and those minutes would show the artisans throughout the country what was wanted. The great difficulty which every person who is pursuing any investigation now has to contend with, is to know what is wanted; and sending out a set of queries from an institution like this would be the means of calling public attention, and the attention of individuals, to the particular facts on which information is required.

Chairman.—Should you expect a low rate of postage, and easy communication in consequence, to be a likely means of increasing the usefulness of your society?—Very much. I consider that the society is crippled for want of ability to communicate with the non-residents generally.

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

You have spoken of the suppression of correspondence in consequence of the rate of postage as connected with the institution, have you reason to believe it has a similar effect upon social intercourse?—Certainly.

Do you find that so yourself?—I should write several notes on most days; I should write, on the average of the week, certainly at least a note a day which I now do not write.

Is that the general feeling in the class of society in which you move?—I should say so, generally speaking, as one of a large family; I am certain that it operates on every one, that every member of it would write many letters at a lower rate of postage; I now receive packets of letters by private land.

Lord Seymour.—You state that the correspondence of your institution is prohibited by the high rates of postage?—Yes.

That you wish to send out queries in the shape of printed letters to your correspondents, but that they have not time to write treatises, but they would answer your queries by marginal notes, if they could be sent to them?—They would.

You state that the twopenny-post is too high?—Yes.

You think a general rate of 2d. would be too high?—Certainly; that it would be useless.

To the country generally?—I would not say absolutely useless, but it will not produce the full effect; I believe a penny would not be thought of. I think the institution would spend 40l. or 50l. at a penny postage; I am sure it would not spend 100l. at a twopenny postage; last year it spent only 8l.

(To be continued.)

ANCIENT RATES OF POSTAGE.—When the carriage of letters first became a national concern, in the reign of Charles the Second, the rates of postage were fixed as follows:—

Letter not exceeding 1 sheet, to or from any	MILES.	
place not exceeding . . . . .	80	2d.
— 2 sheets ————	80	4d.
— 1 sheet ———— above	80	3d.
— 2 sheets ————	80	6d.
— 1 sheet from London to		
Berwick . . . . .		3s.
— from London to		
Dublin . . . . .		6d.

By the 9th Anne, c. 11, a penny was added to several of the rates previously established; a letter from London to Edinburgh was charged sixpence. But still by this statute letters were to be delivered within ten miles of London, Westminster, and Southwark for one penny.—London and Westminster Review, just published.

POSTAGE AND COMMERCE.—"A case occurs to me," (says Mr. Dillon, Evidence 3535,) "which will show the oppressive nature of the postage between London and Edinburgh: for example—I have a bill here upon Edinburgh for 25l., and if that were our only transaction, or if it were the transaction of a small tradesman, having no other, he must send that bill to a banker in Edinburgh, which would be a double postage; he would receive another bill upon London in exchange, which would be another double postage, and he is bound, by the course of business, to send a letter of advice; that would be five postages of 1s. 1½d. each, incurred upon a two-months' bill of 25l. In all probability there would be a sixth postage, in acknowledgment to the banker. This amounts to more upon a two-months' bill of 25l. than the discount of the bill for the time."

PETITIONS ON POSTAGE.

We entreat all readers of the *Post Circular* to exert themselves to obtain petitions to Parliament for a reduction of postage. Wherever half a dozen persons can be found who suffer from this impost, let them send their petitions to both branches of the Legislature. We are certain that every Christian minister throughout the kingdom will pray for a measure so advantageous to religion and sound morals, when the subject is placed before him.

It is highly desirable that no time should be lost in forwarding to members of Parliament those petitions which are ready for presentation. Petitions may be written on paper of any size or shape. Care should be taken that the sheet on which the petition is written be signed by one or more names. They may be transmitted through the Post-office directed to any member, if open at both ends. It will be seen that many members of all shades of politics have presented petitions during the present session of Parliament.

Presented by	No. of Petitions.
Mr. Wallace . . . . .	11
Sir Robert Peel . . . . .	4
Mr. Villiers . . . . .	2
Mr. Edward Ellice . . . . .	3
Lord William Bentinck . . . . .	2
Mr. Loch . . . . .	2
Sir R. Ferguson . . . . .	2

And others by Mr. Chalmers, Lord Worsley, Mr. Divett, Col. Langton, Mr. Philip Miles, Capt. Polhill, General Sharpe, Mr. Strutt, Mr. Lister, Mr. Pendarves, Mr. Cresswell, Mr. Thornely, Sir J. Hobhouse, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Freshfield, Lord Sandon, &c. &c.

FORM OF A SHORT GENERAL PETITION FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

To the Right Honourable the [Lords, spiritual and temporal, or Commons, as the case may be] in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of \_\_\_\_\_ in the County of \_\_\_\_\_

SHEWETH,—That the dearness of the present rates of postage is injurious to the industry of the people, and prevents much correspondence between relatives and friends at a distance from each other, and causes many letters to be illegally sent in parcels and by private hands.

That a great increase would take place in all sorts of correspondence if the rates of postage were reduced, and that the law would be obeyed and not broken.

That your petitioners pray your honourable House to give Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of an uniform penny postage for all letters payable in advance a fair trial. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITIONS PRESENTED DURING THE PRESENT SESSION. Praying for a Reduction and Uniformity in the Rates of Postage. The number of signatures is given. Continued from No. 4.

FEB. 8. Members and subscribers of the Mechanics Institute of Bradford, in the West Riding of the county of York (Mr. Lister), 276.

FEB. 9. Merchants, traders, and inhabitants of the city of Cork, and its vicinity, 77.

FEB. 12. Merchants, bankers, traders, and other inhabitants of the borough and port of Truro, in the county of Cornwall (Mr. Edward Turner), 195.

— Mine adventurers, mine agents, tradesmen, and other inhabitants of the parish of St. Agnes, in the county of Cornwall (Mr. Pendarves), 100.

FEB. 13. Bankers, merchants, manufacturers, traders, and others residing in the borough of Sheffield, 610.

— Provost, magistrates, and town council of the royal burgh of Dingwall (Mr. Loch), seal 1.

— Inhabitants of the burgh of Kirkwall (Mr. Loch), 273.

FEB. 14. Mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Derby in the council assembled (Mr. Strutt), seal 1.

— General meeting of the commissioners of supply for the county of Fife, held at Cupar on the 23rd November, 1837, signed at the desire and in name, and by appointment of the said meeting by J. Oswald, P. Comr. Supply, co. Fife (Captain Wemyss), 1.

— Mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the town of Nottingham, in council assembled (Sir Ronald Ferguson), seal 1.

— Liverpool East India Association, on behalf of the East India Association, Mr. Nicol chairman (Mr. Cresswell), 1.

— American Chamber of Commerce of Liverpool, on behalf of the American Chamber of Commerce, John D. Thornely president, 1.

FEB. 16. Mayor, alderman, and burgesses of the city of Coventry, in council assembled, seal 1.

FEB. 20. Inhabitants of Quendon Essex (Sir R. Peel), 11.

— President, vice-president, and directors of the Chamber of Commerce in Nottingham signed in behalf of the Chamber of Commerce in Nottingham, W. Felkin vice-president, John Hutchinson, secretary (Sir John Hobhouse), 2.

FEB. 21. Chamber of Commerce at the port of Plymouth, Morley chairman of Chamber of Commerce of Plymouth (Mr. Collier), 1.

FEB. 22. Inhabitants of Hitchin, in the county of Hertford, and its vicinity, 63.

— Inhabitants of the borough of Plymouth, in the county of Devon (Mr. Bewes), 256.

FEB. 22. Inhabitants of Rickling, Essex (Sir Robert Peel), 10. (To be continued.)

To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled,

The humble petition of the Rev. William Carus Wilson, of Casterton Hall, in the county of Westmoreland.

Sheweth—That your petitioner is duly sensible of the advantages enjoyed by the nation from the Post-office system as at present existing, as well as of the promptitude and courtesy with which the officers of that department attend at all times to any application for redress or improvement.

But that your petitioner is of opinion that material alterations might be made (and that without endangering the revenue), which, to say nothing of other great advantages, would have an important moral influence on the country.

1. That the taxing of letters, not by weight, but by the number of enclosures, and the consequent necessity for minutely examining the contents, presents a temptation to fraud which it would be highly expedient to prevent.

2. That it is equally expedient to prevent the strong inducement which frequently presents itself, to violate the existing laws of the country by the illegal transfer of letters.

3. That your petitioner is strongly impressed with a sense of the expediency of granting to the poorer classes of the community every facility of correspondence, not only as a great privilege which would be highly valued and is easily granted, but which, in a moral point of view, would have the happiest tendency on the charities of social life, and be the means of keeping alive the interests of family connexions.

It is impossible to contemplate a more gratifying reflection than that the poorest families in the realm have ceased to suffer one serious aggravation of their lot, as consisting in a long and hopeless severance from those most dear to them, and are now, in common with all ranks of the community, blest with every facility of intercourse.

4. That, with reference to the moral view of the question, your petitioner suggests that a powerful and legitimate stimulus would hereby be given to education.

That for the accomplishment of these important objects, your petitioner strongly recommends the principle, at least, of Mr. Rowland Hill's system: the enclosure of letters in taxed covers, the charge by weight, and the reduction of postage.

That if danger to the revenue be apprehended (though when the immense increase of letters is considered, and that all would be sent by the post, it is humbly suggested there could be none), your petitioner is of opinion that the postage might be fixed at twopence, including the whole expense of cover, instead of one penny, as proposed by Mr. Hill.

That the advantages of such a measure to trade, literature, and science, are obvious; but that your petitioner's chief object is to entreat your Honourable House to take into its serious consideration the moral advantages which it will confer on all classes of the community.

And your petitioner will ever pray.

NOTICES.

The selfishness of the impertinent meddler who represented his own wishes as the decision of the Parliamentary Committee had best be kept within the bounds of fact and discretion, or his supposed interest will be easily exploded and his knuckles rapped for recent misdemeanours not unobserved.

Mr. Wallace's name did not appear in the division upon reporting the evidence, because it is not customary for the chairman to give any but a casting vote. The merit of suggesting the publication of the evidence is due to Mr. Wallace, and the success in carrying the resolution to his perseverance.—We shall notice hereafter the attendance of the members of the Committee.

\* \* \* Much Correspondence postponed.

The Post Circular.

LONDON, MAY 4, 1838.

LONDON AND WESTMINSTER REVIEW ON UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.

THE last number of this review (just published) contains an article on postage, in which our readers will find a temperate discussion of the present Post-office management, and a comprehensive digest of the parliamentary evidence. Those who cannot afford time to wade through the large folio, will do well to consult the review, which on the present occasion supplies us with the following:

The post is justly regarded as one of the signs of civilization which especially present unequivocal and striking proofs of the mechanical, co-operative and moral progress of mankind. Mr. Williams, the missionary, in his very interesting book on the South Sea Islands, mentions that he one day wanted, when engaged in some carpenter's work, a particular tool, the name of which he wrote with a piece of chalk on a chip, and then sent a native with it to his wife. When the simple islander found that the chip communicated the want and the required tool was given him, he thought the chip miraculous, held it up in his hands while he proclaimed its magic powers to his friends, and for many days wore it round his neck suspended by a string. Another savage once said that sending a letter was a good thing, because if a messenger was sent with a verbal communication he was sure to forget one half and tell the other. From the state indicated by these anecdotes to the state of matters in our improved post—the stride is so great that the latter

seems perfection; a letter can be put into a small log-house, called a post-office in the backwoods of America, with almost moral certainty that it will be delivered safely and speedily where it is directed, to a humble peasant in the most remote village in Germany; and it is a daily occurrence for a sister in the remotest islands of Orkney to put a letter, the kind impulse of a morning, into the post, and it speeds away without hindrance or obstacle, borne night and day, for a few shillings, ceaselessly, until it is opened by her brother in the interior of India. These effects of civilization are so great and wonderful and recent, the regularity and safety, the convenience and dispatch, of the Post-office are so universally felt, that most people's minds are at first unprepared for the surprising improvements of which it is capable, and by which the letters from America to Germany, and from Orkney to India, may be carried with equal certainty and swiftness, while the cost of their carriage is reduced from shillings to farthings. Yet the fact is easily proved.

The present rates of postage are legacies of the late war as a means of meeting the expenses of which they were imposed. The great profits in every branch of trade during the war made the public indifferent to the amount of the exactions—at least that part of the public who can make their complaints effectually heard—but since the reductions of profits there have been growing up, without any open declarations of hostility to the post, silently and universally, innumerable plans of evading it systematically. There existed, therefore, a public sympathy with the object of Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, which, the moment he appealed to it, displayed itself. Last session, just before which the pamphlet appeared, five petitions were presented to Parliament in favour of Post-office Reform, and during only part of the present session ninety-nine petitions with 7016 signatures, have been presented chiefly from the most intelligent classes of the community: and of this number a large proportion are petitions from corporate bodies or public meetings to which the single signature of the president or chairman is attached.

The rates of postage suppress the correspondence of all classes, except the very highest, who are exempt from them, and where not exempted, alleviated by means of franking; but they press heaviest, where the means of exemption and alleviation are least, on the poorest classes. Here they positively amount to all but complete suppression. The average of weekly wages among the agricultural population is no more than from six to ten shillings. To a man who has a hundred pounds a-week, ten pounds for the postage of a letter would only be as much as a shilling is to an agricultural labourer. Let Mr. Spring Rice, or any other of the ministry, imagine they had, instead of an unlimited power of franking, that is, of sending letters at the expense of the poorer classes, to pay ten pounds for every letter they received; and often could not for less, learn whether their nearest relative, father, mother, son, or daughter, was dead or alive, and they will perceive how powerfully the rates of postage act in suppressing the interchange of kind feelings among the poor, and consequently as a bar to the formation of the feelings themselves.

The extent to which smuggling is carried in letters no one, we venture to say, has ever yet dreamt of; smuggling which, in a free country, and where the laws profess to be the embodied and established will of the people themselves, is the mode in which the people express generally the injustice of their own enactments, and by so doing condemn and disgrace alike themselves, their legislators, and their rulers. This vice—one of the most anarchical of all the social vices, and one of which bad laws and bad rule are sufficiently productive—is carried on to illimitable and incalculable extent, by men whose characters receive not the slightest stain from it; and avowed by them well knowing that there perhaps does not exist a single man in the whole realm entitled to blame them for it, by being himself guiltless. However the unisality of the practice and the badness of existing laws may excuse it, our legislators and governors should bear it in mind that this vice, for the existence of which the supporters of the bad laws make themselves responsible, bears the aspect each of them fraught with measureless evil—it is an universal contemning of authority—it is a habitual violation of law, and it is an education in fraud which spreads like a leprosy through every rank and to every member of the community. The laws ought to educate the people to order and obedience; the Post-office laws educate every man, woman, and child, to evasion and disobedience.

Colonel Maberly, the secretary to the Post-office, admits the existence of evasion, but announces a very novel opinion connected with it. He says, "there always must be evasion, inasmuch as the smuggler must always beat the Post-office, whatever rate of postage is imposed."\* "For the postage cannot be reduced to that price that the smuggler will not compete with us, and at an immense profit."† There is

\* Ev. 2883.

† Ev. 2942.

doubtless truth in this, for there always will be a considerable number of letters which can be delivered for nothing, and also some which may be delivered for less than a penny. The fact is unanswerable against a reduction which shall stop at less than a penny; but the superiority of the Post-office lies in stability, regularity, security, and must also be extended to speed; and if, with a superiority in all these things, when the contest of cheapness is reduced to farthings and fractions the Post-office does not beat the smuggler, so as to annihilate his trade as a trade, it will be extraordinary indeed. Besides, Colonel Maberly's argument only goes to show that the price ought to be less than a penny if necessary to defeat the smuggler. We have called his opinion a novel one, because it assumes that in letter-carrying that will hold which holds in nothing else—that a large capital doing business on a large scale cannot compete with a small capital working on a limited scale.

It was inevitable that a law which every body violates must be defeated of its object; that a tax which every body evades when he can, and can evade so easily, must be unproductive to the revenue. Rude and coarse as are the standards by which financiers judge of a tax, easy as their consciences usually are to its oppressiveness, it is yet a maxim with them that a tax which does not increase with the increase of wealth and of population, requires to be lowered. The Post-office revenue has remained nearly stationary for the last twenty years.\* The last twenty years! What words are those! It is within those twenty years that the persons capable of writing a letter, or of reading one, have swelled from a small minority to a great majority of our still increasing population: it is those twenty years that have seen, on the one hand, an increase of wandering over the earth, and of every thing which tends to separate locally those who have occasion constantly to communicate, and, on the other hand, an extension and multiplication of commercial transactions which hardly took place before in a century, and the whole of which turns upon correspondence as its very pivot and fulcrum.

We conclude with one word to Mr. Spring Rice and the ministry on their conduct in this matter. This is not a party question, it is not even a political one unless they make it so; and while we can easily imagine the difficulties which stand in their way when a reform proposed in a department of fiscal administration, is opposed by the man they have themselves put at the head of it, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that if they continue ill-affected, or indifferent or inactive, on Post-office Reform, they will afford the conservatives an opportunity of acquiring a popularity preserving all ranks, and interest among the poorest, and they will give Mr. Croker one grain of truth to be put into his next catalogue of good deeds done by the Tories and left undone by the Whigs. We beg them to remember that no reduction short of what Mr. Hill proposes can effect the desired end; a twopenny postage will not try the principle of his plan, because it will not defeat the smuggler, and an union of payment in advance with any rate of postage higher than a penny would probably not call forth the increase of correspondence necessary to compensate the revenue. Any such half measure, if it failed, would be considered as the failure of Mr. Hill's plan, and the imperfect experiment would disgust and outrage the views of the whole of the men most active and energetic in pursuing this reform, because they would consider it, though professedly a trial, really a betrayal of the principle they support. Even if ministers regard merely the revenue itself (and no supposition could on a question like this be more degrading to them, nor further from the real feelings of some of their number), they will look at the revenue after a very narrow and contracted fashion indeed, they will consider a small part, and not the whole, if they do not see that the reductions in the expenses in the Post-office, the increase of correspondence, the additional consumption of paper, and the stimulus imparted to trade of all kinds, will amply enable them to meet the dreaded defalcation. But this is not a matter to be argued solely on such grounds; ministers profess themselves, and have represented the Queen, as having much at heart the education of the people.—an uniform penny postage will give motives, strong as the best affections of the human breast, to the poor for the acquisition of elementary instruction; it will waft to the ears of tempted youth the persuasive whispers of parental love and goodness; it will circulate thought, knowledge, friendship, virtue, and by bringing thinkers and friends nearer to each other, promote very greatly the formation of a noble and beautiful civilization among all the people.

#### PROGRESS OF FRENCH POSTAGE.

(From *La France*, Feb. 8, 1838.)

We find in the "Annuaire des Postes," published by the Post-office administration in France, some statistics given respecting this service. We at first remark the progression of its receipts. In 1821 they were 23,892,698 fr. In 1830, 33,727,649 fr. In 1831, 33,240,319 fr. In 1832, 34,164,604 fr. In 1833, 35,361,599 fr. In 1834, 36,171,362 fr. In 1835, 36,036,468 fr. And lastly, in 1837, 37,405,510 fr.

The number of letters circulated by the post was, in 1821, 45,382,151. In 1830, this number rose to 63,817,260, and it increased, from year to year, to 78,970,561, which is that of 1836. This, for this last year, gave an average of 216,358 letters daily. In this number of 78,970,561, 19,223,915 letters must be reckoned; as rated or franked at Paris, 54,966,416; in the departments, 5,073,230, the circulation of which has been restricted within the rural arrondissement of each bureau.

The number of dead letters (*lettres tombées en rebut*) has not followed the general progression. Since 1830, this number varied from 1,475,900 to 1,945,183; it was only 1,581,698 in 1836.

The letters of the authorities, distributed freely, are not comprised in these results; they form about a third of the total number of letters which pass through the Post-office; and yet, notwithstanding the considerable mass of administrative despatches, the expedition of these affairs does not appear more active in the bureaux.

The conveyance of journals and the printed matter by the post has not always followed a progressive advance since 1830. That same year it was 39,947,875, of which 32,354,280 were despatched from Paris. It rose yearly till 1834, when it was 50,853,351, of which 39,255,875 were despatched from Paris; since, it had fallen to 49,236,000 in 1834; it kept a little above that in 1835; and at length again descended, in 1836, to 46,250,030. The average daily being 126,712. In this quantity, 37,871,190 were sent from Paris. The diminution for 1836 overbalances the journals of departments, which, from 11,137,000 in 1834, have fallen to 7,844,000 in 1836.

The number of dépôts d'argent in the bureaux had been, in 1836, 699,378, amounting to a sum of 15,436,797 fr. 76 c. In 1832 much higher, having been 866,104, giving a sum of 18,264,298.

These figures may give some idea of the extent of the service of the post to letters in France, and of the manifold activity which the progress of commerce has impressed on it during fifteen years.

#### EFFECTS OF THE POST CIRCULAR.

—**MERTHYR.**—REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.—The inhabitants of Merthyr owe it to themselves to make some little exertion following the example of Neath, to obtain a reduction in the charges for postage. A public meeting ought at once to be convened, and a petition adopted. This being no matter of party politics, but an object of general good, every one would of course be ready to render their assistance, and to add their signatures.

In recommending a petition to the tradesmen and other inhabitants of the town, we shall for the present conclude with one remark. If it be doubted that Mr. Rowland Hill's plan be feasible, and that a penny postage would be insufficient to meet the expenses, then we ask, how is it that the penny stamp on newspapers is found sufficient? Their weight in proportion to letters being about six to one.—*Merthyr Guardian*.

—**THE POST CIRCULAR**, or rather the objects it has in view, is the interest, not of an individual, not of a class, but of the community.—*Cheltenham Free Press*.

—They say Mr. Spring Rice is about to vault into the peerage;—if he would leave one memorial of his capacity for the chancellorship of the exchequer, and atone for a thousand financial blunders, let him introduce a penny postage before he go!—*Scottish Guardian*.

—The subject of a cheap postage has become as general a theme as its importance would warrant. To Mr. Hill and Mr. Wallace be awarded the highest praise. Those gentlemen have assiduously laboured till the advantages that would follow the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan of Post-office Reform are no longer viewed as speculative. An admirable auxiliary advocate has appeared in the "Post Circular," a publication which has for its express object to expedite a reform in the Post-office. We trust that the simplicity of the process recommended will be appreciated. Arguments in support of Mr. Hill's plan are certainly not wanting to combat the miserable defences of the present system, and its incongruities and anomalies must have been practically illustrated too frequently to every man of business to need recital here. This is, we repeat, a great public question; and the public, we apprehend, have only to identify themselves with the potent agencies existent to ensure success.—*Bedford Beacon*.

—**POST-OFFICE REFORM.**—We understand that the committee appointed in pursuance of the resolution passed at the late special general meeting of the members of the Chamber of Commerce are at present actively engaged in investigating the probable effects of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of Post-office reform upon the correspondence of this town and neighbourhood, and that some very valuable information upon the subject has already been obtained. It is desirable that those parties who can furnish any facts, either for or against Mr. Hill's plan, should do so without delay.—*Manchester Guardian*.

—**POST OFFICE.**—The subject of Post-office reform, says the *Post Circular*, is second to none which is now agitated; and it is gratifying to watch the zeal with which it is pursued by Mr. Wallace and other senators. The present is a time peculiarly favourable for efforts among the constituencies. We would remind our readers of a cheap and effective method of helping the cause;—let every burgh or town send to their representative an address, sub-

scribed by even a few electors, calling on him to give Mr. Wallace his support.—*Wrexham Independent*.

—Among the postponed editorials in our first page will be found some remarks upon this subject not unworthy of notice. We resume the subject here, for the purpose of announcing that the committee of Merchants in London, associated for the purpose of promoting Post-office reform, write that it is desirable to ascertain the bearing of the present system upon the poor and labouring classes. Investigation will show that the Post-office, as at present regulated is merely a luxury for the rich (and a pretty expensive luxury too): the high rate of postage, which is only an inconvenience to the few, is a prohibition of friendly intercourse by epistolary correspondence to the many. The following list of queries has been prepared, in order to obtain from various quarters such explicit answers as may show how far there is truth in the statement that the labouring poor are the greatest sufferers by the existing exorbitant rate of postage. Answers to the following questions ought to be obtained from as many workers, male and female, as possible. To insure perfect frankness, assurance ought to be given that there will be no exposure of names.

Query 1. Can you write easily?

2. Do you sometimes write letters?

3. Do you ever feel the present rate of postage so high that they keep you from writing, even on matters which may appear important to yourself or your friends?

4. Would you write oftener, and how much oftener, if every letter were charged only one penny?

5. Do you think you would receive letters oftener, and how much oftener?

6. Of those letters you send or receive how many go or come by post, and how many otherwise?

7. What plans are fallen upon to evade postage?

8. Do you consider the present rates of postage so high as justly to be considered oppressive to the poor and labouring classes?

9. Do you think there would be less or more money paid by you in postages if reduced to a penny each letter?—*Glasgow Argus*.

—We have been favoured with four numbers of "The Post Circular," an "advocate for a cheap, sure, and swift postage." It is a work entirely devoid of political bias, and seems to have no other object in view than the ekeing out that most desirable and necessary one—a complete Post-office reform in the rates of postage and method of transmission of letters. The several numbers have contained temperate, well timed, and well written articles, in which truths are stated that must come home to the common-sense feelings of every rational person. There are few, we believe, who will be hardy enough to assert that the present rates of postage are not enormous, and that they are such as require an immense reduction to encourage a free commercial correspondence, or insure the revenue of the country from being defrauded. In our own neighbourhood there are crying abuses—not the fault of the local agent certainly—but such as are consequent upon the present system pursued by the General Post-office: for instance, in one direction we pay 1d. for twenty miles, whilst in another we pay 5d. for eleven, and before we can get an answer from the latter, a space of twenty-two hours must intervene. We have not space at present to enter more minutely into the subject, but next week by making quotations from our useful contemporary and gathering facts of our own, we will endeavour to show what a sweeping alteration is necessary in this department of the revenue. A petition to Parliament, already numerous signed, is now lying in our office for further signatures; its prayer is to give Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of an universal penny postage, payable in advance, a fair trial. The *Post Circular* may safely count upon the warm co-operation of the *Fermanagh Reporter*.

—**REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.**—We have seen a small pamphlet circulated by a committee of merchants in London, from which we intend to publish various extracts in our next, that seems to us to prove that it is quite reasonable to expect that the rate of postage may be reduced to a penny for each letter, and yet that the revenue would not suffer. The calculations and tables in this pamphlet warrant us in assuming, that the number of letters would increase six or seven-fold, while the expense of the Post-office would be exceedingly diminished. Now, supposing the number of chargeable letters to increase six-fold, the benefit to the Exchequer would be practically the same as at present; and supposing it to increase seven-fold, that benefit would be augmented by about 280,000l. per annum; while, on the most unfavourable supposition, one indeed which can never be verified, viz., that the enormous reduction in postage should produce no increase whatever in the number of letters, the Exchequer would sustain scarcely any injury beyond the loss of its present revenue. In other words, while every individual in the country would receive his letters at an almost nominal expense, the whole management of the Post-office would bring upon the state a charge of only 24,000l. per annum; and, as this would also cover the gratuitous distribution of franks and newspapers, it may fairly be considered as a mere deduction from the produce of the newspaper stamps.—*From the Scots Times, Saturday, March 17, 1838.*

—**MR. HILL'S REFORM IN POSTAGES.**—We are surprised and regret extremely that this great reform has not been taken up by the mercantile community of this city; but, indeed, it seems to have excited little interest anywhere in Ireland; and yet it is a reform which, as respects the interest of trade, as well as in its moral results, is inferior in importance to none that has been proposed in modern times. Though we formerly gave an outline of Mr. Hill's plan, we beg leave to repeat that its principle is to reduce the postage of all letters not above a certain weight, despatched from and to any part of the three kingdoms, to the uniform rate of one penny; the practicability of which plan, without loss to the revenue, he has now, we think, all but demonstrated. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, with that peddling spirit which

\* The state of the revenue lately published give the net receipts of the year ending, 5th April 1838, at 1,517,743l. being 70,352l. less than that of 1814-15. We have added the rate per cent. of the charges of collection, because, by showing that it has not increased, we dispose of the allegation of the Post-office authorities, that the non-increase of net revenue is to be attributed to the increased charges incurred for the public accommodation.

distinguishes him—receding from the terms and spirit of the recommendation of the Committee, and as if to give Mr. Hill's plan the least fair trial that is possible—intends, it seems, to do no more than reduce the fourpenny postage to twopence, and that but partially. In Ireland, we may say, that nothing is to be gained by the commercial public from the proposed boon; for here there are few towns of consequence within fifteen English miles of each other—the distance to which the fourpenny postage applies. We do trust that our fellow-citizens will bostir themselves in this matter; and, in the mean time, we would fix their attention on the following, which we extract from the *Post Circular* of Thursday.—*The Loudonderry Journal*.

—The praiseworthy efforts of Mr. Hill, and Mr. Wallace, M.P. for Greenock, to obtain a reduction of Postage, and a beneficial change in the general management of the Post-office department, are now ably seconded by *The Post Circular*. This Paper has been established for the sole purposes of advocating a cheap rate of postage, exposing the abuses in the Post-office, and endeavouring to have them done away with. Both objects are good and laudable. The subject of a reduction of postage is one which cannot fail to interest every individual member of the community. The exorbitant rates charged on letters, cause a grievous tax on all, but especially upon every mercantile establishment, and every professional man. For our own part, we can testify that, although our Subscribers and Advertising friends are put to great expense by the tax thus imposed, we ourselves are, by postages, mulcted of a sum from year to year, which would defray the salary of one of our clerks. We feel pretty certain that were our superficial-inclined Chancellor of the Exchequer to give way to the unanswered because unanswerable arguments which the Parliamentary advocates of a cheap postage have advanced, he would find the national purse nothing the worse, if it were not much the better. But unfortunately Mr. Spring Rice is unwilling to be convinced of the wisdom of the proposed experiment. His prolific fancy has pictured certain sad results which would follow the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan, and looking at these imaginary evils he resists any change. We have no doubt but Mr. Rice can see just as far through a millstone as any other person, but we, and not without good reason, question his far-sightedness in financial matters. The man who will coolly reflect on the vast increase of letter-writing which would assuredly take place if the postages were reduced, cannot fail to be of Mr. Hill's opinion that the revenue would be thereby much increased. Suppose only a penny were charged for the transmission of any letter not weighing more than half an-ounce, and twopence for one not exceeding an ounce, who would, as is now an habitual practice, trouble a friend to carry a letter, or get letters smuggled in an underhand way, for the sake of saving a penny or twopence? We would earnestly urge upon our townsmen the propriety of getting up a petition on the subject forthwith.—*Nevry Telegraph*.

#### MR. ROWLAND HILL'S LETTERS.

LETTER V.—COST OF TRANSMISSION—INCREASE OF MAIL COACHES.

MY LORD—In your lordship's speech of December 18th, it is asserted that an increase in the number of letters (meaning chargeable letters) will require a corresponding increase in the number of mail coaches. Speaking of the cost of management under the proposed arrangements, you say, "he (Mr. Hill) had not calculated the great increase which must take place in consequence of the great increase of bulk, and consequently of weight, they would have to carry twelve times as much in weight, and therefore the charge for transmission, instead of 100,000*l.*, as now, must be twelve times that amount."

It is manifest that this statement is founded on the supposition that every mail coach in the kingdom is at present, as respects its mail, loaded to the full—a supposition which the least inquiry will satisfy your lordship is altogether erroneous. Your lordship will find that the only mail coaches so circumstanced are a few of the evening mail coaches from London. Again, your lordship has fallen into the error of supposing that in twelve-folding the number of letters, we shall twelve-fold the bulk of the whole mail. Of this error the refutation is supplied by another part of your lordship's speech, where it is stated that, while the average number of letters despatched by the evening mails is below thirty thousand, the average number of newspapers by the same conveyance is nearly sixty thousand. Now, as the average weight of a newspaper is about six times that of a letter, and the average number of newspapers double that of letters, it follows that the total weight of the newspapers is twelve times that of the letters; consequently that a twelve-fold increase in the number of letters (even if such an increase were necessary to sustain the revenue), would only make the weight of letters equal to that of newspapers, and therefore would only double the present load; so that even were all the evening mail coaches at present loaded to the full (and your lordship will find that the average is not nearly half a load), a double number of these coaches would be sufficient.

The fact is, that while no additional coaches whatever would be necessary, on any other roads than those centering in London, it is only on a few of these that any increase would be required; and even on those few, one additional coach is all that would be needful, and that but to a limited distance; these again being the very roads on which, from the large number of well-regulated stage-coaches already established, the change on them could be most easily made.

Your lordship may place this truth almost in a startling light by directing the actual weight of the chargeable letters to be ascertained; when it will be found that, if a package were to be made of all such as are now divided among the four-and-twenty mail coaches which leave London every night, it might, without displacing a single passenger, easily be forwarded by a single coach.

But your lordship goes on to observe that, for this increased expense I have not made sufficient provision, at the same time stating the present cost of conveying the mails throughout the kingdom at 100,000*l.* per annum. Now, in calculating the expenses of the Post-office in my plan, I have put down the cost of conveyance at 310,000*l.* per annum, making, as your lordship must admit, an allowance not merely sufficient, not merely liberal, but extravagantly large; inasmuch, that if I am not secured from attack on this point, liberality gives no security at all.

There is one remaining objection which, as it can scarcely have been made seriously, needs but little remark. Your lordship objects that, on the required increase in the amount of correspondence, "the whole area on which the Post-office stands would not be large enough to receive the clerks and the letters." Without adverting to the means which I have distinctly pointed out for obviating any such inconvenience, I am sure that your lordship will not have much hesitation in deciding whether, in this great and commercial country, the size of the Post-office is to be regulated by the amount of correspondence, or the amount of correspondence by the size of the Post-office.

In concluding for the present this series of letters, allow me to call your lordship's attention to the increased and increasing interest manifested on the subject of Post-office Reform. Eighteen months ago Lord Ashburton, in an admirable speech on the moral and commercial evils of restrictions on correspondence, expressed his surprise that those evils had produced no petitions. The first petition on this subject was presented by Lord Ashburton himself on the 30th of May last, and was shortly followed by a few others; but the number of petitions presented in the Commons since the opening of the present Parliament in November is about thirty—being a larger number, I believe, than has been presented in the same time on any other subject.

Let me then entreat your lordship to give the matter a careful and candid consideration. Let me again turn your attention to the startling fact, that while, for the sake of the revenue, the correspondence of the country is loaded with an enormous tax, the revenue thus obtained has remained for more than twenty years practically stationary. If my positions are as strong as they are to the present time unshaken, your lordship has the opportunity of conferring an immense boon on the public, at little, perhaps no sacrifice of the revenue. It is in your lordship's power to do much towards advancing the commerce, promoting the education, and even improving the morals of the country. It is indeed the opinion of many persons conversant in public affairs, that the justice of the cause will secure its eventual, not to say speedy, success. Delay, however, is an evil, and it is perhaps scarcely a less evil that improvement, instead of being spontaneously, or at least voluntarily, made by the Government, should be enforced by public demand.

I have, &c.,  
2, Burton-crescent, Jan. 1838. ROWLAND HILL.

#### CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the *Post Circular*.

Sir,—In reply to your address to the clergy in your first number, inviting communications on the subject to which your labours are devoted, I beg leave to offer you a few hints, of which you may make any use you please: either publishing them as they are, or availing yourself of any portion of them, as you may think best.

Glad as I should be to see a great reduction of postage effected on my own account, (being put to an expense of some pounds every year for letters, received or sent, having relation to public objects, or written more for others than myself,) I hail such a proposition with yet heartier good will for the sake of the poorer classes, the extent of whose correspondence with their friends I know is curtailed most seriously by the amount of the present tax on letters. When the younger members of a family have gone to a distance from their homes, either as servants or apprentices, communication by letter is very little carried on, solely because the sum required for postage is one which a common labouring man can very ill spare. It is necessary to have much personal intercourse with the poor before one learns what is the value to them of every sixpence, and how exceedingly inconvenient is any unexpected call of that amount or more, when their weekly earnings are regularly expended as they are received upon the actual necessities of life; and it is only by an effort that any sum is laid by to supply clothing, or provide for the quarter's rent, or meet any extraordinary demand upon their resources. That the limited measure of intercourse does not arise from decay of affection and want of interest, is quite evident from the terms in which the absent members are talked of, from the value set upon a letter when it comes, (which the minister, or other friend who visits the poor at their homes, has frequently brought before him, from the circumstance of their frequently producing the last precious sheet, and begging he will read it,) and yet more from the eagerness to write which the offer to convey a letter

gratuitously calls forth whenever it is made. Living, as I do, in a provincial town a day's journey from London, I have been the means of settling the daughters of some of my parishioners with friends in or near London. One is a housemaid in my father's house, another in my brother's. When I was in town the other day I had packets intrusted to me for both of these, as also from a third living with a friend, to bring to their parents; but many a week, or month probably will elapse, unless a similar opportunity should occur, before another letter is sent. In the same manner, when I am going to London, or my town friends are returning thither, a letter from the parents is almost sure to be forthcoming. I find, too, the practice prevails most extensively of getting any body who is going to town, friend or stranger, if he be but a neighbour, to call and see the absentee, and take or bring a letter. In fact, they seem on the look-out for means of communication free of expense; whereas, in a common way, it is only upon some emergency, when information of importance has to be conveyed without loss of time, that they have recourse to the Post-office. Of course, intercourse that is thus carried on must be very precarious; and must be quite another thing from that which prevails among near relations when there is nothing to prevent their writing as often as they please. The moral advantages of frequent communication by letter, under such circumstances, I rate very highly; as one of the best securities for good conduct, where young people have been well brought up, is the preservation of home feelings in all their freshness, and the nurturing and cherishing of all the pure and wholesome influences that belong to the family relations. Give me a girl who left the parent's roof pure, and as long as she writes freely to her mother, I shall scarcely fear for her virtue. Give me a youth who finds a pleasure in devoting a spare half-hour in the evening to the sister whom he has left behind him, and though he be a hundred miles off, there is a chain upon him, which, if it does not hold him back from evil, will check him in the pursuit of it. Now when one considers the field to which these observations refer, the immense scale upon which the enormous tax upon letters is working mischief, in separating the nearest friends, and insulating, during the most critical period of life, those who want every help to strengthen them against temptation, I really feel that the economical part of the question is quite superseded by the moral part; and even if the million and a half of revenue were sacrificed, the gain would be immense. Nobody hates more than I do the common outcry against taxation. As a nation, we do not pay dearly for our social comforts and blessings; on the contrary, they would be cheaply purchased if we had much more to pay for them. But it is unwise, nay, I must say it is unchristian, for a legislature to say to a whole people, "You shall speak to your friends, or hear from them, only through the state-trumpet," and at the same time to take for every message it conveys a sum immensely greater than the cost of transmission.

This brings me to another part of the question; namely, the extent to which the law is evaded, or rather violated, by sending letters through other channels than the Post-office. It so happens I can speak from my own experience on that point likewise. I live in a place which is situated thirteen miles from the county-town. There is very much of intercourse between the two places, as a number of working manufacturers who live here are employed by masters residing there. The postage is eightpence, the same as it would be if the distance were seventy-nine miles, or more than five times the actual distance. On two days in every week three carriers go and return, who will convey a letter done up in a bit of brown paper for twopence. You may guess how many letters go through the Post-office. I do not know what the proportion is, but I should be very much surprised to find that it was one in ten. I believe I am more scrupulous than many as to a strict compliance with the law, but I must confess I have frequently employed the carriers to convey letters. I have to correspond with persons on business relating to charities, to transmit money to the treasurers of religious societies, or to send an order for books from the central depot; and it is very difficult to bring oneself to pay, or charge a charitable institution, eightpence for every such communication, when the carrier will take it for a quarter of the sum, and get the order punctually executed. No wise government, I think, will make the temptation to a breach of any law so strong, that very few of those who are amongst the best subjects in other things, are found to resist it. In such cases they cannot carry public feeling with them in enforcing their own rule, and evasions, that can only be detected by a very numerous and watchful police, are sure to be practised by wholesale. Besides, if persons are tempted to one such breach of the law, though it be the smallest and most venial of all (which, all things considered, I esteem this to be), in some cases the way may be paved for others; and when this evil does not result, the man who allows himself in this, can less easily protest in society against others. I have had my mouth stopped, when I have been protesting strongly against more serious evasions of the revenue laws as disgraceful to those who practised them, by the question, "Pray, do you never send letters otherwise than through the Post-office?"

Have you considered enough the question of a twopenny stamp, instead of a penny one, in the first instance? Almost every body to whom I have mentioned the subject has been of opinion, that if an effort was made for the smaller reduction, it would be much more likely to succeed, and would get rid of all contraband carrying, as nobody reckons to have a letter carried any where for less than twopence, and every one would prefer the mail in itself.

I am Sir, yours,  
A COUNTRY CLERGYMAN.

#### INSECURITY OF THE POST.

COPY LETTER FROM MR. SIMPSON TO SIR EDWARD LEES.  
Paisley, 17th March, 1838.

Sir,—On the 2nd of February last, I sent a letter containing either two 5*l.* notes or one 10*l.* note, I forget which, through

the Post-office here, addressed to "Miss Miller, Glencairn Cottage, Bridge of Earn." Thinking that the letter would have been acknowledged before this time, but having received no answer from Miss Miller, I requested one of my daughters, who was writing to her at any rate, a few days ago, to inquire whether she had received my remittance in safety; and this morning I have heard from Miss Miller that my letter and its enclosure never came to hand. I therefore take the liberty of inquiring whether the letter addressed to Miss Miller, as above mentioned, has by any mistake or otherwise arrived at the General Post-office in Edinburgh, or if you can give me any information which may possibly lead to its discovery.

I beg to take this opportunity of stating that I have very often felt the inconvenience of not having it in my power to book parcels by the mail from Paisley to Edinburgh or elsewhere. It is certainly very extraordinary that in so large a town as Paisley we should have no such accommodation as this. The postmaster, indeed, is willing enough to take parcels and send them by the mail-gig along with money for the purpose of booking them in Glasgow; but, in the event of their being lost, we have no record of any kind in Paisley to refer to in proof of their having been either booked or paid for. About three months ago I had occasion to send a small parcel to Edinburgh, which was banded in to the Post-office here with 2d. as the sum charged for booking it: but in the course of a few days afterwards it was brought to my office by an acquaintance, who recognised the handwriting of the address as that of one of my clerks, and who told me that it had been found by a carter lying upon the public road between this and Glasgow. I instantly complained to the postmaster; but all he could say was, that the parcel had been given to the driver of the mail-gig, who in his turn, when spoken to by me upon the subject, endeavoured to relieve himself of all blame by affirming that he had never received the parcel at all. Fortunately the parcel was not one of any consequence; but it might have been otherwise: and, chiefly in consequence of this being the case, I gave up all idea of making any complaint upon the subject, and only notice it now because I happen to be addressing you on another topic.

I have the honour to be, &c. &c.  
Sir Edward Lees, (Signed) A. H. SIMPSON,  
General Post-office, Edinburgh.

General Post-office, Edinburgh, March 19, 1838.  
Sir,—All possible inquiry shall be made for the missing letter directed to Miss Miller, Glencairn Cottage, Bridge of Earn, and it will afford me pleasure should I be successful in tracing it. However much I may regret any inconvenience sustained by the inhabitants of Paisley from their being unable to transmit safely parcels to go by the mail coach, I regret that it is not in my power to place matters on a better footing—I am sir, your obedient servant,

Edward Lees, Secretary.  
A. H. Simpson, Esq., Paisley.

General Post-office, Edinburgh, April 3, 1838.  
Sir,—In reply to your letter of the 17th ult., I beg to acquaint you that having made every inquiry, I have been unable to make any discovery of the missing letter directed to Miss Miller, Glencairn Cottage, Bridge of Earn, posted by you on the 2d February, and containing 10l.,  
I am sir, your obedient servant,  
Edward Lees, Secretary.

A. H. Simpson, Esq., Paisley.

JUSTICE AND POLICY OF PAYMENT IN ADVANCE.

We have been favoured with the following correspondence which proves the necessity of Mr. Hill's proposal of Payment in Advance.—We have ourselves been frequently troubled with Hamburgh Lottery prospectuses. The present system makes every body defenceless against the Doctors Eady and Morrison, who may please to issue their advertisements by post.

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

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

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

I am, sir, your obedient humble servant,  
(Signed) R. A. MACFIE.

The Secretary of  
General Post-office.

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

(COPY OF ANSWER TO THE ABOVE.)

4th April, 1838.

SIR,—Having submitted to London the question of returning the postage upon the enclosed, I beg to inform you, that as such letters are not sent for the purpose of annoy-

ance or of maliciously subjecting the parties to expense, they do not come within the limited discretionary power granted by the Treasury to the Postmaster General, in regard to the return of postage on letters, which have been delivered to and opened by the parties to whom they are addressed.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,  
(Signed) ALEXANDER J. REAVES.  
R. A. Macfie, Esq.

POST-OFFICE — NEW CENSORSHIP OF THE PRESS — GLASGOW ARGUS — UNDUE PRESURE OF TAXATION.

The Post Circular, a weekly publication, advocating with great ability Post-office reform, and the *Achill Missionary Herald*, an Irish Orange publication, attacking with more zeal than discretion the Church of Rome, although duly registered and stamped as newspapers, have been in many instances charged full postage. The complaints necessarily consequent on this Post-office restriction of the rights of the press, have elicited declarations from ministers in the House of Commons, and from "W. L. Maberley," in the form of an advertisement (quoted in our last).

So in the first Parliament of Victoria the First, her liberal ministry have smuggled through an unnoticed clause, in a nameless Act, which places every new political newspaper at the mercy of the Postmaster-General and the Lords of the Treasury. The Post Circular is much more unequivocally a newspaper than Cobbett's Register; but Cobbett's Register was luckily published before the office of Censor of the Press was added to that of Postmaster-General. The Post Circular is as much a newspaper as the Railway Times; but the Railway Times does not attack a jobbing and oppressive Government-office. We have not seen the other proscribed publication, but it is an ugly circumstance that it advocates views opposed to those of the party in power.

Not long ago we were driven, by the malversations in the General Post-office (not in the Glasgow one) to make a complaint at head-quarters. We proved that copies of the *Argus* had been taken from their covers and other newspapers substituted. We were coolly told by Sir Edward Lees that the papers were taken out to see that no illegal marks or writing were upon them, and that accidents would happen in replacing them. It strikes us that, when Government officials play the spy, they are bound to act their dirty part in a way that shall occasion no inconvenience to the parties insulted. If Government would adopt Mr. Rowland Hill's plan, they would afford no temptation to the marking of newspapers; and if, instead of exacting a stamp duty from every newspaper, by selling stamped newspaper covers, the same as stamped letter covers, they would thus free the newspaper press from the exaction of paying for more service than it gets. Government is not afraid that the receipts under Mr. Hill's plan would be inadequate to defray the legitimate expenses of the Post-office; it only fears for the unmerited pensions upon the Post-office revenue drawn by some noble families.—*Glasgow Argus*.

—The town of Wisbech pays three thousand pounds per annum for postage of letters! It appears that the actual cost to the government of the country in conveying those letters from the various places whence they are received, is about fifty pounds; so that here is fifty pounds for carrying the letters, and twenty-nine hundred and fifty pounds for tax! Talk of taxes on knowledge. Is not this a tax on knowledge, and one the most injurious in its effects? It is not certainly a tax upon thinking, but it is a tax upon thought. No one shall communicate his thoughts to his friend at a distance, without incurring a tax of six hundred per cent. Well may the people be semi-barbarous, when such regulations exist. A publication called the *Post Circular* has taken up the subject very spiritedly, with a view to further the plan which has been recommended by Mr. Rowland Hill, for reducing the rate of postage to one penny, to be paid by the persons sending letters, instead of those who receive them. Mr. Hill's plan appears to us an admirable one, and a wise and spirited government would at once cheerfully adopt it without waiting to be petitioned on the subject. What if it should make some difference in the revenue, the money would not be lost, it would remain with the people, who would, in consequence, be better able to pay the impost in some less obnoxious and less injurious way. But we have strong doubts if it would diminish the revenue. The increased number of letters sent would be prodigious, and would probably make up for the altered postage. But, whether this would be the case or not, Mr. Hill's plan is one which ought to be adopted. Petitions to both houses of Parliament, to carry into effect the proposed reduction will be ready for signature on Monday, and will remain at the shop of Mr. Walker and the other booksellers during the week, previously to their being sent up for presentation. All who feel interested in the subject, (and who is there that is not interested in it?) are invited to sign them.—*Star in the East*.

—The propriety of greatly reducing the rates of postage is daily exciting more attention throughout the kingdom; and, ever since Mr. Rowland Hill published his plan of charging an uniform rate of one penny upon all letters under a certain weight without regard to the distances which they may be carried, a strong desire has been evinced that his scheme, if practicable without a great loss of revenue, should be adopted. To further this object a new periodical, named *The Post Circular*, has been started by a committee of commercial gentlemen in London. It is wholly devoted to the discussion of this important question, and to the exposure of abuses in the management of the Post-office. With this view it has republished several of the highly instructive speeches of our Representative, whose name is so honourably connected with the reform of Post-office delinquencies. It has also thrown its columns open to communications for and against Mr. Hill's plan, and we observe that that gen-

tleman makes it a medium for the circulation of his views upon what is stated in the frequent incidental conversations regarding it, which take place in either House of Parliament. It cannot be doubted that much good will result from keeping this very important, and, we fear, but little understood question, so constantly before the public. We understand it is in contemplation to have a public meeting without delay upon the subject in this town, and as Mr. Wallace has returned for the Easter recess, we may expect his attendance on this occasion, when in all probability he will furnish his constituents with an account of the state and prospects of a question, to which he has the merit of having first called the attention of Parliament. It is not uncommon to refer to the "wisdom of our ancestors" in support of a favourite position; and to quiet the fears of those who oppose the scheme of Mr. Hill, because it is a change from the existing system, the *Post Circular*, in its leading article of the 5th instant, takes the trouble to demonstrate that, instead of a startling innovation, the proposed scheme is little else than a return to the practice of our simple forefathers of 1765, who revelled in the indulgence of letters carried eighty miles for threepence, and all beyond that distance for a penny more, though the conveyance of them was a prodigiously oporose business compared with what it is at present.—*Greenock Advertiser*.

PENNY POSTS.—No less than 1973 towns in the United Kingdom have their penny posts, which convey letters, in some places, to the distance of thirty-eight miles; London, too, had once its penny-post, but that day is gone by, and what is done where there are but few letters at the cost of a penny on each, costs twopence and threepence in London, where the number is immense, and the expenses upon each consequently insignificant.—*London and Westminster Review*, just published.

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# The Mutual Life Assurance Society,

INSTITUTED FOR

## ASSURANCES

ON

### LIVES AND SURVIVORSHIPS.

**OFFICE, 37, OLD JEWRY.**

"Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse."—*Proverbs, chap. i. v. 14.*

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Extract from a Report of the Directors to a General Court of the Mutual Life Assurance Society, held on the 17th of January, 1838:—

"This society has already realized, beyond expectation, the excellent intentions of its founders, and holds out the fairest prospect of becoming, at no distant period, an object of national importance."

The success which has happily attended the establishment of this society, is attested by the progress it has made in public estimation, by its rapidly accumulating capital, and by the considerable sums which it has already been enabled to add by way of bonus to the policies of the assurers.

The sources of this prosperity are obvious. The society has neither a proprietary to support, nor any outlay of interest upon a borrowed capital, so that the entire profits are annually and unreservedly divided among the members.

In addition to the security of an ample accumulated capital, the Directors beg leave to draw the public attention to the following advantages, many of which are peculiar to this society: viz.:

Rates of premium as moderate as is consistent with the security of the assured, and with the objects of mutual assurance.

Immediate participation in the profits of the society.

Liberality in the management, and in all matters of detail, which are under the entire control of the members at large; the smallest policy (£50) giving qualification for a vote in the general courts.

Extensive limits of voyage and permission to reside any where within Europe.

At the last investigation of the society's affairs, the funds were found to be so considerable in proportion to the existing liabilities, that the general court was enabled to declare a bonus exceeding on an average of all the policies *two and a half per cent. upon the sums assured*, so that a policy effected for one thousand pounds,\* and upon which at least two premiums had been paid, would have an actual addition made thereunto of about £25 in case of its dropping between the 31st day of December, 1837, and the 31st of December, 1838, when a new division will take place.

TABLE I.

Showing the ANNUAL PREMIUMS required for the Assurance of £100 on a Single Life for the whole duration.

Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
15	1 15 7	26	2 6 2	38	3 3 3	49	4 10 8
15½	1 16 1	27	2 6 9	38½	3 4 4	50	4 12 7
16	1 16 6	27½	2 7 3	39	3 5 4	50½	4 14 10
16½	1 17 0	28	2 7 10	39½	3 6 5	51	4 17 1
17	1 17 5	28½	2 8 4	40	3 7 6	51½	4 19 1
17½	1 17 10	29	2 8 11	40½	3 8 8	52	5 0 0
18	1 18 3	29½	2 9 6	41	3 9 9	52½	5 2 7
18½	1 18 8	30	2 10 2	41½	3 10 9	53	5 5 3
19	1 19 1	30½	2 10 9	42	3 11 8	53½	5 7 5
19½	1 19 6	31	2 11 4	42½	3 12 8	54	5 9 7
20	1 19 11	31½	2 12 0	43	3 13 8	54½	5 12 0
20½	2 0 5	32	2 12 7	43½	3 14 9	55	5 14 4
21	2 0 10	32½	2 13 4	44	3 15 9	55½	5 16 9
21½	2 1 3	33	2 14 0	44½	3 16 10	56	5 19 2
22	2 1 8	33½	2 14 10	45	3 17 11	56½	6 1 10
22½	2 2 2	34	2 15 8	45½	3 19 1	57	6 4 6
23	2 2 7	34½	2 16 7	46	4 0 2	57½	6 7 3
23½	2 3 1	35	2 17 5	46½	4 1 5	58	6 10 1
24	2 3 6	35½	2 18 4	47	4 2 7	58½	6 13 4
24½	2 4 1	36	2 19 4	47½	4 3 10	59	6 16 1
25	2 4 7	36½	3 0 3	48	4 5 1	59½	6 19 1
25½	2 5 1	37	3 1 2	48½	4 6 11	60	7 2 0
26	2 5 7	37½	3 2 3	49	4 8 9		

**ON THE DUTY AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE ASSURANCE.**

The many benefits arising out of the rapidly increasing practice of Life Assurance, are already beginning to be both felt and acknowledged. It is indeed a subject which deserves and calls for the serious consideration of a very large portion of the community. To the middling and higher classes of society it affords many of those advantages which the legislature has extended to the lower orders by the establishment of Benefit Societies and Savings Banks. But, notwithstanding the gradually spreading intelligence on this and other subjects, it is still greatly to be feared that there are to be found many whose peculiar circumstances ought to have led them to adopt such laudable means of providing for their families, but who, nevertheless shut their eyes to the consequences of their deaths, and neglect, until it is too late, to remedy evils—for which their only consolation is, that they do not live to witness them. Every newspaper teems with appeals to the generosity of the Christian public, in behalf of widows and orphans left destitute by the sudden removal of a husband or parent on whose exertions depended their support. Let every father of a family bear in mind that he is imperatively called on, by every principle of Christianity as well as common humanity, to make at once, in the spring time of his life, the most ample provision that his circumstances will admit of, for those helpless beings whom it is his duty to support while he is alive, and no man knows when or at what hour he may be called away.

How very trifling a sum deducted from the ordinary expenses, nay, perhaps from the superfluities, of a family would serve to procure the desired provision, and how much peace of mind and security might be purchased with a few pounds! Procrastination in this case as in many others is often ruinous—we put off from day to day this needful duty until some sudden calamity overwhelms us or some rapid change in the state of our health debars us from the benefits of a Life Assurance.

Put not then that off until the morrow which may be done today, for death cometh like a thief in the night, and a good man leaveth an inheritance unto his children's children.

\* As the addition is in reality computed on the amount of the premiums paid, the gross sum given by way of bonus will vary a little in proportion to the age of the insured from the above average. It will in some cases be rather more, and in others rather less, than two and a half per cent.

† At the age of 30, a yearly payment of about £25 would secure the family of the Assurer in the event of his death, at the least £1000; and if he lived long enough to partake largely of the profits of the society perhaps as much more.



No Entrance Fee, nor charge for the Policy beyond the Stamp.  
 Premiums may be paid yearly or half-yearly at the option of the Assurer.

Name and Profession of the Life to be assured  
 Place and date of Birth  
 Present Residence  
 Age, Sum to be assured £, Term  
 Reference for state of health to be made—  
 to a Private friend  
 to a Medical friend

*PETER HARDY, Esq.,*  
*Actuary,*  
*(Mutual Life Assurance Office,)*  
*37, Old Jewry,*

LONDON.

By whom the Assurance is to be made  
 Has insurer had—  
 Smallpox—Cowpox—Gout—Rupture—or other Disease?  
 Parties desirous of effecting Assurances with this Society are requested to fill up, according to the printed directions, the accompanying form of proposal; and in order to save trouble and double postage, to tear off the same, and to transmit according to direction.  
 Parties are requested to fold it so that the address may fall outside.

The next distribution of Profits will be on the 31st of December, 1838.

# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 7.

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 1838.

Price 2½d.

The House of Commons now sitting is appointed—  
“To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill.”

The plan proposed by Mr. Hill is—  
That all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, be charged one penny for each half-ounce, to be paid in advance through the medium of stamped covers, or stamps or that letters should be stamped when delivered at the Post-offices.

This system would introduce uniformity and simplicity.—  
An easy and cheap collection of the Revenue.—  
Avoid a multiplicity of accounts kept at the Post-office.—  
Save time in charging by pen and ink a varying rate on each letter, and in the delivery.  
Avoid candle scrutiny into each letter to ascertain whether single or double as at present and consequent temptation to fraud.

The English Post-office Revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly diminished.  
The French Post-office Revenue has increased more than half since 1821.  
The United States Post-office Revenue has more than tripled during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.  
The vast extent to which the trade of the country has increased within the last twenty years,

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

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

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

The average cost of its actual carriage to any post town is about one tenth of a penny.  
The penny posts of large towns are very profitable, even though these pence have to be collected from house to house.

The average cost of managing the twopenny-post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only 34 per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

The chargeable letters do not weigh more than about one fourth of the whole mail.

These facts are stated that it may be seen upon what grounds the question of the reduction of postage is urged upon public attention,—but for a full view of this important subject, Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, on Post office reform, should be read, which is published by Charles Knight and Co., 22, Ludgate-street, London.

## EXTRACTS FROM THE EVIDENCE TAKEN BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON POSTAGE.

INCREASE FROM REDUCTION.

Mr. George Moffatt, examined.

Chairman.—You generally send your invoices by post, in preference to sending them by parcel along with the goods?—We do.

Do you issue circulars connected with your business?—We do.

Are those sent by post or by parcel?—The larger part of those circulated through the country are not sent through the post.

Is the charge of the postage one of the causes, or the chief cause, for their not being circulated through the Post-office?—The only cause.

Can you state, when they arrive at their destination in the country, whether they are then put into the Post-office of the places they are sent to, or whether they are delivered by hand?—In the larger towns, I believe they are put into the Post-office; in the smaller, that they are delivered by hand.

Provided there was a considerable reduction of postage, would that be an inducement to you to send your circulars and invoices generally through the Post-office?—The whole of them, with no exception.

Would you add to those descriptions of letters referred to in your former answer, letters of inquiry of explanations, and supplying omissions in orders which had been furnished?—Yes, and those would be increased to a very large extent; continually now, we have letters not giving instructions so clearly as we think they should; to those frequently we give no reply, but pass them by unheeded, where we should gladly, if the postage would not be objected to by our correspondents, write to know what was their real meaning, or frequently for fresh instructions.

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

You do send to them information respecting the variations in the market?—But rarely, unless the fluctuations are very extensive; the slight fluctuations we do not advise them of; we send one letter advising of fluctuations now where we should probably send 100.

A little time ago you alluded to the payment of postage in advance; as this subject has been very much canvassed abroad, are you of opinion that payment in advance would be objected to, or that it would be acquiesced in generally by the commercial world?—The question is, payment in advance on what rate of postage.

The question supposes a very low rate of postage?—At 1d. there would be very few objectors, but I think it would be very impolitic to make the payment in advance compulsory: the people of England do not like compulsion, and I would earnestly advise their having the option; those who do not wish to pay in advance should be able to send their letters at the rates which now exist, there would be no compulsion in that.

By the term, “the rate now existing,” what do you refer to?—The rates from 5d. up to 1s. 5d.; those who do not like to pay in advance might continue to pay the old rates.

FRANKS.

Mr. G. Moffatt.—In so far as you have any means of observing, are Parliamentary franks much sought after by commercial men?—Yes, they are very much sought after by parties in the city. It is frequently deemed a matter of advantage to have the power of commanding those franks. I may instance an eminent banker in the city, with whom I was talking about a fortnight ago on this plan, and requesting him to join a committee for effecting this object, but he said, “No, I will not join in it; we have the advantage over our neighbours, for we get all our letters by franks.” I have myself frequently dispatched 14, 16, 18 letters per day through franks, which of course I should not have done if the rate of postage had been low.

In seeking those franks you are understood to admit voluntarily the object was to save the postage?—Most undoubtedly.

Referring to bankers using them, there can be no higher class of mercantile men than bankers?—Certainly not.

Therefore the Committee may infer that the highest class of commercial men do seek the advantage of franks for their business?—Yes, both in having letters addressed to them

and in the transmission of letters, both in the inward and outward letters.

Mr. John Wright, called in, and examined.

Chairman.—You are a partner in the house of Warren, Russell and Wright, of the Strand, manufacturers of blacking?—I am.

Can you state to the Committee how many invoices you send weekly by post?—At the present time we do not send above one in the course of a week, because the postage is prohibitory; if the postage were reduced, we should then send about 400: we should send all, indeed per post.

How many do you send now by parcel?—We send above that number of 400 weekly, which we now enclose in the casks; but we should send them by the post if the postage were reduced.

Have you any particular sum you point to when you speak of the postage being reduced?—The sum I alluded to was one penny.

In the event of the largest reduction of postage, that is to say, the penny postage, would that increase the number of letters to and from your travellers?—Our travellers are now instructed to write twice a week, but some of them write only three times a fortnight; but we should in that case instruct them to write every night, and should see that they did so.

Your seven travellers would send seven daily letters?—Yes, the six travellers, and one of the partners.

The present rate of postage you find injurious and prejudicial in carrying on your business?—Decidedly.

Would your correspondence, with your customers, increase, if there were a lower rate of postage?—Certainly, we should send circulars to every person that we had an account with; that would be 700 per week, as nearly as I can make a calculation; in addition to which, we should send circulars to old customers who have dealt with us, but have closed their accounts, informing them that our traveller will call upon them on a certain day; they would call on from sixty to 100 persons each day. I have prepared a statement of these facts, the particulars of which I will state.

Invoices at present, per week, say one, which is more than the reality, all being enclosed in the packages under 10l. Invoices per week, at the reduced postage, all being sent, say 400, that would be under the mark. I have no hesitation in saying circulars to persons with whom we have accounts, none being advised unless the amount be large, of which there are few, 20 or 30 per week, say 25. Circulars to persons with whom we have accounts per week, 700; we should advise them all, great or small, at the reduced postage; at present we advise none of our customers unless we have accounts with them; but if the postage were to be reduced, we should send circulars to old customers with closed accounts, dealing in our article, informing the parties that they would be waited upon on a certain day. Six travellers and two partners, the former always, and latter occasionally out, equal to seven travellers, who would call upon 60 to 100 persons each daily, all of whom, at the reduced postage, it would be advisable to write, say at least 500 per day, say 3,000 per week. Incidental correspondence, many of the letters being allowed to remain for a future explanation, say per week 50; incidental correspondence, and that resulting from letters representing errors, &c., from 30 to 50 per day, say 30, 180, at the reduced rate. Orders per post, five to ten daily; these would be greatly increased by the proposed plan, especially with small orders, which now will not admit of postage—say average seven per day, 42. Orders per post, 10 to 20 per day, say average 15, 90, at reduced rate. The travellers now write only twice a week, 14. Travellers' letters would be, on the proposed plan, seven per day, as they would be instructed to write every evening, 42. The aggregate on the one side is 130 and on the other side, 4,412.

The larger number being dependent on a large reduction of postage?—Yes.

In that you point to a penny postage?—Yes.

Are the Committee to understand that the increase in your correspondence would consist of invoices, letters of advice to your customers, letters of advice to your own travellers, and intimations on whom they are to call?—Chiefly upon those subjects.

Independent of the other communications which you have stated you would make with former customers and others?—Yes.

Are the Committee to understand you would send 4,000 and odd letters through the Post-office, including circulars, in contradistinction to 130 which pass now?—Yes, at a reduced postage we should.

Would you, generally speaking, send your invoices by the post, or any part by parcel?—We should send them all by post, provided the postage were at 1d.

Do you believe the number of letters to your establishment would be very much increased?—Yes, I apprehend that our letters would be multiplied in point of number thirty-five fold.

Mr. F. de Parquet (bookseller), examined.

With regard to letters of inquiry and explanation, and letters of that description, would those be much multiplied if the postage was reduced?—I am afraid I may be believed to be rather over the mark, or over-anxious, in stating that I am perfectly assured that instead of receiving 50 letters of inquiries in a month, in my way of business, as an agent, I should receive 500, if I were able to receive them at a lower rate than what is charged at present.

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

[SOLDIERS' LETTERS ILLUSTRATE THE PRINCIPAL OF AN UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE AND PAYMENT IN ADVANCE—THE ELEMENTAL FEATURES OF MR. HILL'S PLAN, AND THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF CHEAP POSTAGE.]

Captain John Bentham, called in: and Examined.

Chairman. You are a captain in the 52d regiment?—I am.

Be so good as to state the mode in which soldiers' letters are despatched?—It is provided by Act of Parliament that soldiers shall correspond at the rate of 1d. a single letter; the penny is put in on posting the letter, and it must be franked by the commanding officer, or officer commanding the detachment; and a letter written to a soldier must have 1d. put in with it, consequently there is no payment on the delivery of the letter.

It is a pre-payment on posting the letter in all cases?—Precisely so.

Letters which soldiers send must be franked by the commanding officer, unless they be addressed to another soldier, in which case they do not require franking?—Just so.

Is the principle on which soldiers have the privilege one which you can recommend from your observation of it?—Certainly.

Have you observed the importance of correspondence to soldiers in the course of your service?—I have observed that they take very great advantage of it, and they appear to derive great gratification from it, and it benefits them in a variety of ways.

A soldier must make a pre-payment of a penny along with his letter?—Yes.

What is the consequence if he does not?—Then the parties will be liable to the full rate of postage; the regular rates are then charged.

Is there any other charge on a soldier's letter but a penny, generally speaking?—No other legal charge; it is the custom of the regiment to employ a trustworthy person to collect the letters, to take them to the post-office, and to bring them from the post office, and the soldier pays him one penny for the letter on delivery; that is an arrangement in the regiment.

You say you have made a calculation to show the extent to which soldiers avail themselves of the advantages of cheap postage, will you have the goodness to state it?—I conceive that the soldiers, on an average, send seven letters and a half yearly each, by which, in a regiment, the com-

mailing officer would have to frank about sixteen daily. Then I make some allowance for regiments abroad, where the posts are not so frequent, and the amount of correspondence not quite so great. I take the average strength of the army at about 90,000, exclusive of regiments serving in India; each soldier sending about seven and a half, receives about as many; 15 multiplied by 90,000 gives 5,625, the revenue arising from the correspondence of soldiers.

Does your calculation show the number of letters?—The product of 15 by 90,000 is 1,350,000 letters. I wish to be understood that the calculation is rather a rough one, but I am pretty confident I have understated it. The commanding officer in a regiment which is strong, say 750, will frank more than 16 letters daily, but there is some difference between the troops serving at home and those serving abroad, where the mail-letters are less frequent.

Mr. Chalmers.—Are your calculations founded on the correspondence of one regiment or more?—Of one regiment.

Chairman.—Do you observe how soldiers appear to appreciate this privilege?—Most highly; that would appear from the amount of their correspondence; I believe that many of them learn to write expressly for the purpose of writing their own letters.

Do you mean that, after they have joined their regiments, they acquire the art of writing?—Yes, in many instances; there are other reasons which dispose them to improve themselves; they learn to write in the prospect of promotion, but I am very well aware that it is considered by them a matter of importance to be able to write their own letters, on account of the privacy and credit of it.

Have you observed what effect the acquiring of writing and engaging in correspondence has upon the habits of the soldiers?—It makes them much more valuable members of the regiment, and those are the people who are generally selected for promotion.

Have you observed what number in a regiment can write generally?—I should think about two-thirds of most regiments can write sufficiently well to sign their own names, to sign the books.

What proportion may be able to write their own letters?—Probably one-fourth, not more than one-fourth.

Does an anxiety to be able to write their own letters induce them to attend the regimental school?—Zealously.

It conduces to their respectability and good conduct as soldiers to acquire the art of writing?—Certainly.

And they use it in correspondence?—Yes.

Have you any means of judging of the nature of the correspondence soldiers have?—I have not from observation, but it is generally the correspondence between themselves and their friends, and giving accounts of the quarters and changes and circumstances that interest them, and a description of places probably.

Does the correspondence take place chiefly with those whom they have lately left or with friends and relations who live at a distance?—I think a very large proportion of the correspondence is with their own friends; we see that by the address, the soldier's name is put upon the top, "From John Thompson, private soldier in such a regiment;" then it probably addressed to some of his kindred by name; the correspondence is almost entirely or principally at all events with their own relations.

Have soldiers good opportunities for writing?—No, they have very few conveniences; a barrack-room is not well adapted for such a purpose.

Still they do anxiously avail themselves of the opportunity to the extent you have stated?—Yes; indeed, I have understated it.

Has it ever occurred to you to suppose what the extent of their correspondence would be if they were subject to the present rates of postage?—I think it would almost entirely destroy it; I do not think that one letter in 30 would be written, certainly not one in 20.

You have stated that the payment is made in advance on soldiers' letters, do you know any thing as to the safety of those letters; are they as safely delivered as those which are paid on delivery?—I have every reason to suppose that they are; in the intimate relation we are with the soldiers on a variety of matters, I do not think I ever heard of such a thing as a letter miscarrying, such a circumstance never came under my observation.

WORCESTER TOWN COUNCIL, APRIL 19th, 1838. (From the Worcesterhire Chronicle of April 26.)

POST OFFICE REFORM.—Councillor Deighton, in pursuance of the notice he had given at the last meeting, then rose to propose a motion on the above important subject. He said that the impost of postage to commercial men, as it at present existed, was so very heavy, that he believed there would be little difference of opinion in that Council with regard to the propriety of its reduction. It was a matter of notoriety that the heavy rates of postage led to many attempts at defrauding the revenue. The subject had been very ably handled by Mr. Rowland Hill; and Mr. Deighton then read that gentleman's plan for accomplishing this object, which proposed to reduce the postage upon all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, to one penny for each half ounce. Mr. Deighton begged to observe that, looking at the extensive and rapidly increasing commercial enterprise of the country, a most desirable object was the cheap, swift, and sure conveyance of letters, all of which characteristics certainly did not apply to the present system. He considered that a reduction in the rates of postage would not be followed by a reduction in the revenue; on the contrary he considered that by preventing the illegal conveyance of letters, and by facilitating to a vast extent, the communication of mind from one end of the country to the other by epistolary correspondence it would considerably augment the receipts of the public treasury. If a plan similar to that suggested by Mr. Hill were enforced, viz., rating by weight, the system of Post-office clerks prying into letters to know whether they were

double or single, and which frequently led to robberies, would be abolished. He said he had not alluded to the exact amount of reduction to be made in the rates as he thought that might be more properly left to the consideration of the government. Mr. Deighton concluded by moving the adoption of the following petition:—

"That the present heavy tax upon letters is highly injurious to the industry of the people, is a great check to commercial intercourse, prevents much correspondence between persons situated at a distance from each other, and induces many individuals to adopt illegal means for the conveyance of letters.—That your petitioners are of opinion that a considerable reduction in the rates of postage would not only prevent the illegal practices which are now resorted to, but also be the means of very considerably increasing correspondence among all classes in every part of the kingdom, and that the revenue would not suffer thereby.—That your petitioners pray your Honourable House to take this question into your early consideration, and your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray."

Councillor Lea seconded the motion. The whole Council appeared of one mind on this question and the motion was carried without a division.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. WALLACE, M.P.'S ANSWER TO HIS CORRESPONDENTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE POST CIRCULAR.

LONDON, MAY 7th, 1838.

Previous to the Easter recess, I had received a vast number of letters (which I could not possibly find time to answer) relative to the high rates of postage, and the innumerable inconveniences and hardships imposed by the present mode of managing the Post-office department. During the recess, the number has accumulated enormously, in spite of any endeavour to prevent this; and I see it to be hopeless to find franks to enclose replies in, had I time to write them.

In these circumstances it has occurred to me, that through the medium of the Post Circular, I may succeed in carrying to many of my correspondents, the true cause of my apparent neglect, and at the same time, apologize to all—which I beg thus to do, and to assure them of my having given the utmost attention to their communications.

To my correspondents of the softer sex, I can say in sincerity, that their wishes shall be particularly remembered—and that nothing on my part shall be wanting, in so far as my public duty will permit, to enable them, whether matrons or maidens, housewives or those who may be so, or authorises in Poetry and Prose, to communicate freely with those they love, adore or instruct, as it is the inherent right and privilege of the freeborn to do, at the very smallest possible charge for postage—and this too, without caring for the thunders of the Post-office, or such anathemas as the public press are on this very day teeming with, from that department, against those who now, in once free and merry England, exercise their birthright of untaxed and unaxable freedom of speech, which thoughts impressed on paper most assuredly are.

Your obedient servant, ROBERT WALLACE.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

SIR.—Nothing can better shew the absurdity of the trial of a reduction of the rates of postage, which is at present being made, than a statement of how it operates in some parts of Scotland.

From the official announcement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, we were led to believe that the fourpenny rate of postage was to be reduced to twopence all over the country. Instead of this being the case however, which would have been a relief on all distances not exceeding 15 miles, the only reduction yet granted is on distances not exceeding eight miles, and even on this distance where the mail is carried by a vehicle having more than two wheels as in Scotland, are unlike England and Ireland, charged an additional halfpenny in name of toll duty, so that the reduced rate with us is in these instances 2½d. in place of 2d.

I live in the county usually called the "Kingdom of Fife," and to show you how this boasted boon operates here, I may mention that in Coupar, our county town, and though this county is more thickly inhabited and contains more burgh towns and villages than any other in Scotland, the only place within the prescribed limit of 8 miles where the postage has been reduced, is a small village called Kettle, having a population, not in the mere village which is principally inhabited by weavers; but over a pretty wide parish of only 2071, and of so little increasing importance that for the 10 years prior to last census, it had only increased by 25 souls—very little direct communication exists between it and the county town which is not carried on personally on market days, Coupar being the market town.

The ancient city of St. Andrews again, where there are three cottages, has not a single town or village within the 8 miles so as to derive advantage from the reduction now trying. Kirkcaldy a place of great trade and shipping, has only two trifling towns where the 2½d. rate applies, and with two other towns Le-lie and Markinch where penny posts existed before this "reduction," the establishment of a direct mail has actually raised their postages from 1d. to 2½d., the result being that very few letters now pass between these towns.

Had the reduction applied generally to all fourpenny postages so as to cover a limit of fifteen miles the trial would have been very different, and as an instance, our county town would have embraced within the limit the populous town of Dundee, St. Andrews, and nearly a dozen of the populous towns and villages in this county.

At Dundee matters are even worse, there being no town within the limit, and entitled to the reduction. Aberdeen I

believe to be in the same situation. At Perth there are none excepting Bridge of Carn which is reduced from 4½d. to 2½d. In short, looking over the whole of Scotland, for Edinburgh and Glasgow have always been thickly surrounded with penny post towns, there is hardly a town of any importance where this limited and absurd trial of reduction of postage is of the least practical benefit to the public. It is a mere mockery, and any report founded on the result of such a trial can be no criterion of the effect of a reduction of postage generally on the revenue of the country.

Trusting therefore that you will receive and give publicity to this and similar communications from other places as the best means of exposing this delusive experiment, I am your most obedient servant,

X. Y. Z.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

SIR.—You are entitled to our thanks for your exertions in the great cause of "Reduction." That the Chancellor of the Exchequer possesses financial courage enough to "go the whole hog" in this matter, I do not expect. The partial trial he is about to make of it is, as Lord Brougham says, "just enough resembling it, to make the people suppose it has a trial; and in the event of a failure, to enable the opponents of the system to say it has failed."

Now for a case of local injustice and inequality of charge. The letters from Lynn to Stoke Ferry (not quite fifteen miles), are charged 9d. On asking the reason of this advance (it used to be but 5d.), I was told it was owing to the distance the letters had to be carried, viz., from Stoke to Brandon, Newmarket, Cambridge, and so to Lynn.

Laterly the Downham letters, which used to be 7d. or 8d., has been lowered to 2d. "How is this?" I asked. "Because Downham is within eight miles of Stoke," was the reply. Yet the Downham letters travel the same route as the Lynn letters. Why, if the straight distance only is charged in one case, should it not also be charged in the other? We have to pay 9d. because the Lynn letters are carried round by Cambridge. We have only 2d. to pay for Downham letters, and yet they travel the same route as the Lynn! Is there any thing like equity in this?

Yours truly, A FRIEND TO POST OFFICE REFORM.

PETITIONS ON POSTAGE.

We entreat all readers of the Post Circular to exert themselves to obtain petitions to Parliament for a reduction of postage. Wherever half a dozen persons can be found who suffer from this impost, let them send their petitions to both branches of the Legislature. We are certain that every Christian minister throughout the kingdom will pray for a measure so advantageous to religion and sound morals, when the subject is placed before him.

It is highly desirable that no time should be lost in forwarding to members of Parliament those petitions which are ready for presentation. Petitions may be written on paper of any size or shape. Care should be taken that the sheet on which the petition is written be signed by one or more names. They may be transmitted through the Post-office directed to any member, if open at both ends. It will be seen that many members of all shades of politics have presented petitions during the present session of Parliament.

Table with 2 columns: Presented by, No. of Petitions. Includes Mr. Wallace (11), Sir Robert Peel (4), Mr. Villiers (2), Mr. Edward Ellice (3), Lord William Bentinck (2), Mr. Loch (2), Sir R. Ferguson (2).

And others by Mr. Chalmers, Lord Worsley, Mr. Divett, Col. Langton, Mr. Philip Miles, Capt. Polhill, General Sharpe, Mr. Strutt, Mr. Lister, Mr. Pendarves, Mr. Cresswell, Mr. Thornely, Sir J. Hobhouse, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Litchfield, Lord Sandon, &c. &c.

FORM OF A SHORT GENERAL PETITION FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

To the Right Honourable the [Lords, spiritual and temporal, or Commons, as the case may be] in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of [ ] in the County of [ ]

SHewETH,—That the dearthness of the present rates of postage is injurious to the industry of the people, and prevents much correspondence between relatives and friends at a distance from each other, and causes many letters to be illegally sent in parcels and by private hands.

That a great increase would take place in all sorts of correspondence if the rates of postage were reduced, and that the law would be obeyed and not broken.

That your petitioners pray your honourable House to give Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform penny postage for all letters payable in advance a fair trial. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITIONS PRESENTED DURING THE PRESENT SESSION, Praying for a Reduction and Uniformity in the Rates of Postage. The number of signatures is given.

Continued from No. 6.

- FEB. 28. Inhabitants of Liverpool (Mr. Thornely), 6. MAR. 1. Inhabitants of Notting Hill, Bayswater, &c. (Sir Robert Peel), 28. — Provost, magistrates, and Town Council of the royal burgh of Haddington (Mr. Robert Stewart), seal 1.





THE POST CIRCULAR.

— Merchants, bankers, and other inhabitants of Cork (Mr. O'Connell), 36.
— Attorneys, solicitors, and proctors of the cities of London and Westminster (Mr. Freshfield), [App. 158], 233.
MAR. 2. Inhabitants of the parish and post-town of Dawlish, in the county of Devon (Mr. Wallace), 52.
— Inhabitants of the town of Holt, in the county of Norfolk (Mr. Wallace), 22.
— Readers of the Mechanics' and Apprentices' Library, Liverpool, (Mr. Wallace), 10.
— Mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the city and borough of Oxford, in Council assembled (Mr. Wallace), seal 1.
— Inhabitants of the post town of Teignmouth, in the county of Devon (Mr. Wallace), 224.
MAR. 5. Merchants, bankers, and other inhabitants of the borough of Barnstaple in the county of Devon (Mr. Frederick Hodgson), 260.
— Council of the borough of Liverpool (Lord Viscount Sandon), seal 2.
MAR. 6. Magistrates and town councillors of the burgh of Hawick, North Britain, 22.
MAR. 14. Chamber of Commerce of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, signed on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce, Joseph Lamb vice-president (Mr. Ord), 1.
— Mayor, aldermen, and councillors of Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Mr. Ord), 1.
MAR. 19. Inhabitants of the town of Wootton-under-Edge, in the county of Gloucester and its vicinity (Mr. Grantley Berkeley), 80.
— Bankers, merchants, farmers, tradesmen, and other inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Halesworth in the county of Suffolk, 182.
MAR. 21. Merchants, bankers, traders, and other inhabitants of the parish of St. Austell, Cornwall, 105.
MAR. 26. The Rev. William Carns Wilson, of Casterton Hall, in the county of Westmoreland (Mr. Greene), 1.
— Mayor, magistrates, merchants, shipowner, bankers, tradesmen, and inhabitants of the borough of Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, 168.
MAR. 28. Inhabitants of St. John's Westminster (Mr. Wallace), 53.
— Inhabitants of the town of Epping and its vicinity, (Mr. Wallace), 43.
— Merchants, bankers, traders, and other inhabitants of St. Columb Major, Cornwall (Mr. Edmund Turner), 92.
— Mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of the borough of Sunderland, (Mr. Andrew White), seal 1.
(To be continued.)

NOTICES.

1500 of the Post Circular are distributed weekly to clergy men, principally of the established church, because we find great difficulty in obtaining the addresses of the dissenting ministry. We desire that a copy of the Post Circular should reach the hands of every Christian minister throughout the kingdom. The addresses of all the clergy of the Established Church we possess. We should feel honoured if any dissenting minister would apply to us for any number of copies, which he would trouble himself to address to his brethren.

We thank 'Clericus Hertfordiensis.' We are most desirous of learning the names of any persons interested in the Reduction of Postage, and to whom we will willingly forward a copy of the Post Circular.

The Post Circular.

LONDON, MAY 11, 1838.

The Post office is lavishing upon the ministerial papers a great deal of money in advertising throughout the kingdom the illegality of sending letters otherwise than through the post. No fears of penalties will frighten the smuggler, most simple Colonel Maberly! partly because he has no ability to pay any if you catch him, and partly because he knows very well you cannot catch him, and that he can laugh at your threats. The habit has become too settled and necessary to trade to be scared out of existence by 50l penalties. No, no, instead of throwing away any part of your decreasing revenue, listen to the advice of your intelligent solicitor, Mr. Peacock, and fairly beat the smuggler out of the field, by performing the work cheaper and better than he can do it. Employ all your clerks to examine newspapers, and tell us, good colonel, how you will detect the telegraphic system exposed in the last London and Westminster Review, which the Post Circular prints for your instruction and the benefit of the people.

EVASION BY NEWSPAPERS.

Newspapers are an obvious means of evasion. They are written on, pricked, dotted, invisible inks are used, systems of cypher employed, marks are agreed upon, and since the reduction of the duty on them, the number sent by post has been nearly doubled, that is, the means of evasion have been lessened one half, and the means of evasion made twice as numerous. An estimate or rather a guess may be made on the extent of this evasion from the extent of detection, which of course is not a tythe of it.

The amount of postage charged in Dublin alone, from 6th July, 1836, to 5th January, 1838, on newspapers, containing writing or enclosures, amounted to a total of 2,828l. 15s., and in the Irish country offices the amount charged on newspapers in the year 1836,

2,122l. 9s. 11d., and in 1837, it amounted to 3,196l. 16s. 11d.

Most of our readers will remember advertisements in the newspapers, which are really letters; advertisements in which all the letters of the alphabet appear animated by all the passions of man. Factors address their correspondents by means of circulars in newspapers. "No. 17, You have a remittance this post;" "No. 20, 84 sacks at 18s. are sold;" "No. 27, Yours not yet received;" "No. 60, Nothing as yet done in yours." But the most ingenious of these evasions is the telegraph system of addressing newspapers, of which we have been favoured with a key, which shows how, having once agreed on a system of signals, Mr. Brown of London may correspond with Mr. Smith of Edinburgh.

Mr. John Smith, Grocer, Tea-dealer, 1, High-street, Edinburgh.

Six changes in the mode of the personal address indicate the DATES OF THE NEWS to be transmitted—eg.

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

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

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

- EVENTS OF THE MARKETS—
Tea-dealer alone . . Prices of Teas rising.
Grocer . . . falling.
Grocer and Tea-dealer . . Sugars rising.
Grocer, Tea-dealer, &c. . falling.
Grocer, &c . . Markets dull and stationary.

Other information is conveyed by Tea-dealer, &c., Tea-dealer and Grocer, Tea-dealer, Grocer, &c.—eg. Suppose sugars rise on Monday—the address is Mr. Smith, Grocer and Tea-dealer, 1 High street, Edinburgh.

EVENTS IN MONEY MATTERS indicated by the changes in the mode of writing the locality

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

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

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

A correspondent informs us that he ordered the Post Circular some time ago, but that the news agent in London answered that it could not be furnished through the News Agents. This is not true. The Post Circular is sold at a commission of 20 per cent. to any retailer; but as 20 per cent. is only a halfpenny, and as the craft of London news agents have conspired to sell the paper which does not yield them a penny at least, the Post Circular is probably excluded from the business of these monopolists. Newspapers would be published generally at 2d. but for these monopolists, who have the power to burke any newly-established paper. The penny stamp props them up in their demands. Abolish this, and impose a penny postage stamp—the public in London and the country would have a penny newspaper, as they have the Penny Magazine, &c., and those who wished for an early delivery through the post would have newspapers for 2d. instead of 4d. and upwards. The penny stamp on newspapers is virtually a tax of 300 per cent., besides enhancing the postage of letters, which is high, according to Lord Lichfield, in order that newspapers may be carried for nothing.

Our readers are aware Mr. Hill suggests as a convenient means of effecting payment in advance, the issue of stamps impressed on sheets of paper, or on envelopes, or on very small pieces of paper, which having a solution of glue at their back, may be fastened to any sheets of paper whatever. These stamps to be purchasable of all stationers and Post offices. By these arrangements, no emergencies can arise in which a stamp may not be procured before the letter is posted, as instead of being called upon to pay a dozen postage on as many different occasions, persons may economise their time and trouble, by this mode of collecting the revenue which appears to have been frequently brought to the notice of the Post-office. Mr. Hill says he owes the idea to Mr. Charles Knight. Mr. Lewis says (Ev. 1829),

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

that a Mr. St-ad made a similar suggestion many years ago. We know not to whom the invention is due, but the exertions of Mr. Charles Whiting, of Beaufort House, in 1830, to induce the government to adopt the principle, should not pass unrecorded. He even offered to pay certain expences connected with the experiment. Mr. Whiting argued that if the government could carry a double sheet of the Atlas, weighing four ounces, for fourpence, it might certainly carry half ounces and ounces of printed matter for twopenny, and make a large profit, and be proved that stamped envelopes, which he called "Go-frees," should be purchasable for twopenny. Mr. Whiting's plan was printed, and freely circulated, but the then Chancellor of the Exchequer refused this opportunity of creating a popular source of revenue.

We may here notice another proposal for collecting the postage revenue in advance, in a pamphlet, commencing with a "Fifth Edition," by the Baron de Baringer. The baron proposes that the government shall be the monopolists of all the paper for correspondence, and that letters, by virtue of being written on this paper, shall pass free through the post. We need not discuss the obvious objections to this suggestion. In all other respects, the baron's plan is a mere plagiarism both of the substance and of the title of Mr. Hill's pamphlet, "Post-office Reform." The first sentence of his production commences thus:—"The only feature which has been copied into this plan, and avowedly from Mr. Rowland Hill's, is the aim, by a very considerable reduction in the charges for postage (and perhaps by equality also, to cherish a sufficiently productive increase of correspondence." Mr. Hill's plan consists of reduction of charge, uniformity of rate, and payment in advance by means of stamps. The baron's, of reduction of charge, equality and payment in advance, by means of a government monopoly of paper.

Mr. Wallace has resumed his duties as Chairman of the Select Committee. On Friday the 4th ult. the witnesses examined, were Mr. Brown, the great American merchant, and Mr. Maury, both of Liverpool and deputed by its chamber of commerce; and Mr. John Mussion Aablin, of Mark lane. On Monday the 7th. Messrs. Cobden, of Manchester; Felkin of Nottingham; and Coates, Secretary of the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge Society, were examined.

We (Ulster Times), wish most sincerely that the indefatigable and well-informed contemporary whom we quote, would devote a brief notice to the intolerable grievance under which the north of Ireland now labours from the denial of a Post-office communication between this port and Liverpool. This scandalous abuse calls for instant remedy, without regard to any disputed questions of further reform. [The Post Circular will insert any communication on this subject.]

BLENHEIM STREET SCHOOL OF MEDICINE.

A COURSE OF LECTURES ON SURGERY will be delivered in the ensuing Summer Session, at this School, by T. King, M.D. It will include a detailed account of the Diseases of the Skin, and of the Eye, illustrated by cases in the Dispensary which is attached to the School. Apply before twelve o'clock at No. 6, —dox-street. This course is recognised by the Royal College of Surgeons.

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London: 11, Tavistock-street, Covent Garden, and may be had of all booksellers. These works being stereotyped are always on sale.
The method M. FENWICK DE PORQUET has adopted in the teaching of languages is borne out by the first metaphysical minds, and the first of scholastic authorities, from John Locke or Roger Ascham, downwards; and a more important though less popular personage than either of these in school establishments, viz. Common Sense. We think it a duty to the public, and to the author of the Fenwickian System, thus to state our opinion of its merits and advantages in the work of instruction."—Educational Magazine.

# The Mutual Life Assurance Society,

INSTITUTED FOR

## ASSURANCES

ON

### LIVES AND SURVIVORSHIPS.

OFFICE, 37, OLD JEWRY.

"Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse."—Proverbs, chap. i. v. 14.

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Extract from a Report of the Directors to a General Court of the Mutual Life Assurance Society, held on the 17th of January, 1838:—

"This society has already realized, beyond expectation, the excellent intentions of its founders, and holds out the fairest prospect of becoming, at no distant period, an object of national importance."

The success which has happily attended the establishment of this society, is attested by the progress it has made in public estimation, by its rapidly accumulating capital, and by the considerable sum which it has already been enabled to add by way of bonus to the policies of the assurers.

The sources of this prosperity are obvious. The society has neither a proprietary to support, nor any outlay of interest upon a borrowed capital, so that the entire profits are annually and unreservedly divided among the members.

In addition to the security of an ample accumulated capital, the Directors beg leave to draw the public attention to the following advantages, many of which are peculiar to this society; viz.:

Rates of premium as moderate as is consistent with the security of the assured, and with the objects of mutual assurance.

Immediate participation in the profits of the society.

Liberality in the management, and in all matters of detail, which are under the entire control of the members at large; the smallest policy (£50) giving qualification for a vote in the general courts.

Extensive limits of voyage and permission to reside any where within Europe.

At the last investigation of the society's affairs, the funds were found to be so considerable in proportion to the existing liabilities, that the general court was enabled to declare a bonus exceeding on an average of all the policies *two and a half per cent upon the sums assured*, so that a policy effected for one thousand pounds, and upon which at least two premiums had been paid, would have an actual addition made thereunto of about £25 in case of its dropping between the 31st day of December, 1837, and the 31st of December, 1838, when a new division will take place.

TABLE I.

Showing the ANNUAL PREMIUMS required for the Assurance of £100 on a Single Life for the whole duration.

Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
15	1 15 7	26½	2 6 2	38	3 3 3	49½	4 10 8
15½	1 16 1	27	2 6 9	38½	3 4 4	50	4 12 7
16	1 16 6	27½	2 7 3	39	3 5 4	50½	4 14 10
16½	1 17 0	28	2 7 10	39½	3 6 5	51	4 17 1
17	1 17 5	28½	2 8 4	40	3 7 6	51½	4 19 1
17½	1 17 10	29	2 8 11	40½	3 8 8	52	5 0 0
18	1 18 3	29½	2 9 6	41	3 9 9	52½	5 2 7
18½	1 18 8	30	2 10 2	41½	3 10 9	53	5 5 3
19	1 19 1	30½	2 10 9	42	3 11 8	53½	5 7 5
19½	1 19 6	31	2 11 4	42½	3 12 8	54	5 9 7
20	1 19 11	31½	2 12 0	43	3 13 8	54½	5 12 0
20½	2 0 5	32	2 12 7	43½	3 14 9	55	5 14 4
21	2 0 10	32½	2 13 4	44	3 15 9	55½	5 16 9
21½	2 1 3	33	2 14 0	44½	3 16 10	56	5 19 2
22	2 1 8	33½	2 14 10	45	3 17 11	56½	6 1 10
22½	2 2 2	34	2 15 8	45½	3 19 1	57	6 4 6
23	2 2 7	34½	2 16 7	46	4 0 2	57½	6 7 3
23½	2 3 1	35	2 17 5	46½	4 1 5	58	6 10 1
24	2 3 6	35½	2 18 4	47	4 2 7	58½	6 13 4
24½	2 4 1	36	2 19 4	47½	4 3 10	59	6 16 1
25	2 4 7	36½	3 0 3	48	4 5 1	59½	6 19 1
25½	2 5 1	37	3 1 2	48½	4 6 11	60	7 2 0
26	2 5 7	37½	3 2 3	49	4 8 9		

**ON THE DUTY AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE ASSURANCE.**

The many benefits arising out of the rapidly increasing practice of Life Assurance, are already beginning to be both felt and acknowledged. It is indeed a subject which deserves and calls for the serious consideration of a very large portion of the community. To the middling and higher classes of society it affords many of those advantages which the legislature has extended to the lower orders by the establishment of Benefit Societies and Savings Banks. But, notwithstanding the gradually spreading intelligence on this and other subjects, it is still greatly to be feared that there are to be found many whose peculiar circumstances ought to have led them to adopt such laudable means of providing for their families, but who, nevertheless shut their eyes to the consequences of their deaths, and neglect, until it is too late, to remedy evils—for which their only consolation is, that they do not live to witness them. Every newspaper teems with appeals to the generosity of the Christian public, in behalf of widows and orphans left destitute by the sudden removal of a husband or parent on whose exertions depended their support. Let every father of a family bear in mind that he is imperatively called on, by every principle of Christianity as well as common humanity, to make at once, in the spring time of his life, the most ample provision that his circumstances will admit of, for those helpless beings whom it is his duty to support while he is alive, and no man know when or at what hour he may be called away.

How very trifling a sum deducted from the ordinary expenses, nay, perhaps from the superfluities, of a family would serve to procure the desired provision, and how much peace of mind and security might be purchased with a few pounds! Procrastination in this case as in many others is often ruinous—we put off from day to day this needful duty until some sudden calamity overwhelms us or some rapid change in the state of our health debars us from the benefits of a Life Assurance.

Put not then that off until the morrow which may be done today for death cometh like a thief in the night, and a good man leaveth an inheritance unto his children's children.

\* As the addition is in reality computed on the amount of the premiums paid, the gross sum given by way of bonus will vary a little in proportion to the age of the insured from the above average. It will in some cases be rather more, and in others rather less, than two and a half per cent.

† At the age of 30, a yearly payment of about £25 would secure the family of the Assurer in the event of his death, at the least £1000; and if he lived long enough to partake largely of the profits of the society perhaps as much more.



No Entrance Fee, nor charge for the Policy beyond the Stamp. Premiums may be paid yearly or half-yearly at the option of the Assurer.

Name and Profession of the Life to be assured  
 Place and date of Birth  
 Present Residence  
 Age, Sum to be assured £, Term  
 Reference for state of health to be made—  
 to a Private friend  
 to a Medical friend

**PETER HARDY, Esq.,**  
 Actuary,  
 (Mutual Life Assurance Office,)  
 37, Old Jewry,

LONDON.

By whom the Assurance is to be made  
 Has insurer had —  
 Smallpox — Cowpox — Gout — Rupture — or other Disease?  
 Parties desirous of effecting Assurances with this Society are requested to fill up, according to the printed directions, the accompanying form of proposal; and in order to save trouble and double postage, to tear off the same, and to transmit according to direction.  
 Parties are requested to fold it so that the address may fall outside.

The next distribution of Profits will be on the 31st of December, 1838.

# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 8.

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1838.

Price 2½d

The House of Commons now sitting is appointed—  
“To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr. Rowland Hill.”

The plan proposed by Mr. Hill is—  
That all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, be charged one penny for each half-ounce, to be paid in advance through the medium of stamped covers, or stamps or that letters should be stamped when delivered at the Post-offices.

This system would introduce uniformity and simplicity.—  
An easy and cheap collection of the Revenue.—  
Avoid a multiplicity of accounts kept at the Post-office.—  
Save time in charging by pen and ink a varying rate on each letter, and in the delivery.

Avoid candle scrutiny into each letter to ascertain whether single or double as at present and consequent temptation to fraud.  
The English Post-office Revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly diminished.  
The French Post-office Revenue has increased more than half since 1821.

The United States Post-office Revenue has more than tripled during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.

The vast extent to which the trade of the country has increased within the last twenty years,

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

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

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

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

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

The average cost of managing the twopenny-post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only 34 per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

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

These facts are stated that it may be seen upon what grounds the question of the reduction of postage is urged upon public attention,—but for a full view of this important subject, Mr. Rowland Hill's pamphlet, on Post-office reform, should be read, which is published by Charles Knight and Co., 22, Ludgate-street, London.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

Wednesday morning (May 23), half-past 9.

Sir,—We are yet without our letters by the early delivery. This is now the third morning in which they have been delayed considerably beyond their proper time. The cause, we are told, is the arrival of ship letters consequent on the change of wind.

Ought this to be?  
With the enormous establishment now existing, and paying the enormous sums for postage which we pay, ought the inland post to be delayed, day after day, in order to wait for foreign letters, thus sacrificing the interests of the many to the few?  
Yours, &c.

A MERCHANT.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

Keinton, May 1, 1838.

Sir,—Allow me to state to you a few more facts, some of which may probably be new, for, as the subject of the reduction and equalization of postage is now being mooted throughout the length and breadth of the land, the slightest circumstance throwing light on the evils of the present system, becomes of importance. I have for years been in the practice of folding my double letters in such a way, as to defy the scrutiny of the most careful inspector. At first I made it a point to request my correspondents to advise me, when they wrote, if such letters were charged single, and the answer was invariably, yes. During the last week I received two double letters from the country, and one from London, all charged as single, and all folded so badly as almost to detect themselves; whilst on the contrary, single letters are often charged double; in which case the directed half (which it often happens is written on) must be sent back to the post town for the inspection of the postmaster, who then sends a printed form to be filled up; on his receipt of which, the overcharge is returned; thus giving a great deal of trouble to all parties in the country, and, necessarily leading to explanations, and accounts with that part of the General Post-office, which may be fitly styled the “overcharged postage examining and returning money department.” If so many errors are made with one little establishment in a small village, how many thousands must there be throughout the empire?

Last week I paid (and singularly enough), by one post, 12d. for postage of a single letter, from Leeds, 210 miles.

11d. “ “ Ilminster, 20 “

8d. “ “ Lyme, 35 “

And it happens that Ilminster, charged 11d., is fifteen miles nearer us on the direct line of road from Lyme, charged only 8d. Are you aware of the practice of enclosing as many letters as will weigh under the ounce, to one party, under cover to an M. P. I could easily write twelve that should weigh under the ounce: viz., one each to A B C D and E, &c., which would again be enclosed to F; so that twelve letters would appear as one to the M. P. This is of common occurrence. Why should I be enabled to send twelve letters, all a distance of 120 miles, at no charge, and the clergyman here, or my next door neighbour, not be able to send a single one without payment of 10d? Many professional men with whom I have recently conversed have at once admitted the fact that they are prevented writing to their friends, at college, and elsewhere, because they are scrupulous of doing so without paying the postage, which alternative, justice to their family prevented.

Thus:  
Friendship, the mysterious cement of the soul,  
“Sweet’ner of life, and solder of society.”

Which was sown in childhood, nurtured in youth, and ripened on to manhood fades and dies for want of nourishment, and the heart often sickens under supposed neglect. Our clergyman has just informed me that he is certain if Mr. Hill's plan is adopted, he shall post fifty letters to his present one. Do not these facts alone, but when coupled with the monstrous incongruities of the present system still more, cry aloud first, for a uniformity of charge, whether single or double letters, and next, as to the distance they travel? Nothing that has been mooted for many years has been or can be, either politically, morally, or commercially, of more importance than this subject, and the result of the

change must be so immense, as at once to convince those who think at all, that the point must be conceded.

Yours, &c. R. T. CHAFFEY.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

Sir,—In this town the revenue is defrauded to a considerable extent, by merchants, tradesmen, and others, sending their letters, accounts, &c. every three, six, or twelve months, by regular weekly carriers, to the neighbouring towns and villages. Besides this, have we not the everyday practice of forwarding letters of all descriptions by our friends to distant places, where they will be in the course of the very next day—perhaps as soon, if not sooner, than the mail can reach the same place. Such a course, though punishable by fine or imprisonment, is of daily occurrence, and most clearly and pointedly shows that public opinion is strongly in favour of the proposed measures to remove the present existing system, which cannot but be deemed an act of flagrant injustice to all parties. What can be the good of the orders issued to every postmaster in the United Kingdom from the Postmaster-general, to enforce penalties in all cases where this is detected? Why is it done openly, in the very face of day; in the precincts of the Post-office itself; and by those, too, who are, to a certain degree, bound to do otherwise. It is a system of fraud, which would be speedily done away with were a remedial change to be effected.

I remain your obedient servant,

Sidbury, Worcester.

N. B. S.

(To the Editor of the Post Circular.)

Edinburgh, April, 1838.

Sir,—I beg leave to congratulate you on the good effects which your Post Circular is likely to produce, and as I am deeply interested in the success of the measure you so ably advocate, I take the liberty of requesting that you will solve a difficulty which I have never seen properly met. I mean this:—If the postages are all paid in advance, what check do you propose to have over the letter-carrier? How do you make it his interest to take the trouble of delivering the letters at all, instead of tossing them into the fire?—By furnishing an answer to these queries you will much oblige a number of readers of the Post Circular, and among others,

Your obedient servant,

A Friend to Cheap Postage.

[“I propose,” says Mr. Hill, in his pamphlet, p. 61, “that every person desiring a receipt should, on taking the letter to the receiving-house, present a copy of the superscription, on which the receiver should stamp a receipt, with the date, and his own address. Precisely such a stamp as is placed on the letter would suffice.

I propose that the charge for such receipt should be a halfpenny, and that, as a means of collecting the same, it should be required that the copy of the superscription should be made on a printed form, to be provided by the Post-office, and to be sold to the public at the rate of a halfpenny each, by the receiver, either singly or in books, as might be required; a certain profit on their sale being allowed by the Post-office, as a remuneration to the receiver.

These receipts would, I imagine, constitute good legal evidence of delivery; and as they might be made to form a cheap register of all letters despatched by post, many persons would probably adopt the practice of taking them for that reason alone.

As a large number of persons would probably avail themselves of this arrangement, no small benefit might thus accrue to the revenue.

I am informed that precisely such receipts as are here described, except that a printed form is not employed, are given gratuitously in the Presidency of Madras.”

In many instances such a plan would be the means of tracing lost letters: oftentimes it would protect the Post-office from needless applications and unfounded complaints; and it would oppose an effectual bar to the fraudulent conduct of servants, who, under the present arrangements, are known in many instances, to have destroyed letters, in order to pocket the postage.

“I am ready to admit (says Mr. Hill, Ev. 908), that the probability is there would be some slight degree of insecurity in consequence of payment in advance.” Mr. Hill therefore proposes the abovementioned plan of receipts,

because the postman, when he received the letters at the Post-office for delivery, would not know which had been posted with a receipt given, and which had been posted without a receipt, and that the check on the postman would arise from his ignorance. Unable to tell which letters could be traced, he would be careful of all.—Ed. P. C.]

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

Carlton, May 18, 1838.

Sir,—I was much gratified at hearing of the establishment of your useful little journal, and am now much more so, at finding that the grand object of its formation is so likely to be attained.

I beg leave to transmit you a sketch of the unequal rates of postage on a single letter from this to other towns. The postage to

Dublin . . .	39 miles, is 6d., 1 day in transmitting.
Wicklow . . .	36 “ 9d., 2 days “
Marlborough . . .	18 “ 4d., “ “
Leighlin Bridge . . .	7 “ 2d., 1 day “
Bagenalstown . . .	7 “ 3d., “ “

Instances of a similar nature could be multiplied, if any person would only take the trouble of collecting them.

I cannot by any means conceive how persons can be so blind as not to see the many and great advantages that would arise to the community in general—but more especially to the working classes, from the adoption of Mr. R. Hill's admirable plan, and I am fully convinced that if such persons only gave the subject a calm and impartial consideration, they would be led to believe this to be the case, as well as that the Post-office revenue would be, by this means increased manifold.

On a rough calculation I can state with a considerable degree of accuracy, that of every TEN letters written in this town, at least NINE are forwarded to their destination in other ways than through the Post-office. I take the present opportunity of mentioning a common mode of defrauding the Post-office, which has been, to my knowledge very much practised—I mean writing on newspapers. I have myself not only seen lines or words written on newspapers with sympathetic inks, but what may appear to some incredible, entire letters, folded, sealed, and transmitted through the Post-office inside of newspapers. Trusting you may deem the above hasty remarks worthy of a place in your columns, I remain,  
Yours, &c. R. M.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

Atherstone, Warwickshire, May 12, 1838.

Sir,—Instead of our rates of postage being reduced, they have lately been advanced, so that a letter from Lutterworth 18 miles, is now 7d., and a penny has likewise been added to the postage of each letter from Welford and Rugeley—and the postage to Tamworth, which was for a short time reduced from fourpence to twopence, has been again advanced to fourpence, though the distance does not exceed 8 miles from Atherstone.

The postage of a letter from Atherstone to Burton-on-Trent is 6d., and though but 20 miles, a letter is just as long on the road as one sent from here to Dover. In my former letter, I stated that the postage of a letter from hence to Measham, 10 miles, is but a penny, while the postage of a letter to Coleshill, the same distance is 6d. I have now another charge to mention, which proves the necessity there is for an immediate and general reform in the Post-office department. From London to Atherstone, 108 miles, we are charged 9d.; from Castle Donnington, 22 miles, the postage is 10d.!! which is the regular charge for a letter any distance above 120 and not exceeding 170 miles. It is not unusual for letters to make a circuit of nearly 100 miles, in order to arrive at a town not 20 miles distant from the Post-office, to which they were consigned.

Besides the reduction in the rates of postage which would increase the revenue, the whole system improved, as it has been from time to time, is still capable of greater improvements; and we cannot but hope that Government will meet the wishes of the public, now so generally expressed, and adopt some plan which will give satisfaction to the country, by reducing the postage of letters without diminishing the revenue.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

B. RICHMOND.



of additional business was opened by the increase of a new town, with which he was in communication, that he would immediately adapt himself and his business arrangements, to the hours, the wants, and wishes of his customers; and it would have been impossible that the communication between this great and important manufactory, would have thus been left without the convenience of an hourly communication.]

## PUBLIC MEETINGS.—GLASGOW.

## UNIFORM RATE OF POSTAGE.

In compliance with a requisition numerously and respectfully signed, the Lord Provost convened a public meeting of the bankers, merchants, manufacturers, and other inhabitants of the city, in the Town Hall, on Friday afternoon, at three o'clock, for the purpose of considering what measures ought to be adopted regarding Mr. Hill's plan of having a reduced and uniform rate of postage.

The Lord Provost having been called to the chair, stated the object of the meeting, and

Mr. Robert Finlay rose to move the first resolution. He was unwilling to enter into details of any particular plan for reducing the rates of postage, but had no hesitation in giving his opinion generally in favour of such a plan as that proposed by Mr. Hill. An uniform rate of postage at reduced charges would be felt as a very great boon to the manufacturing and mercantile interests, as well as to the labouring population and the men of science and literature in and around the city. The present arrangement had long and justly been a subject of complaint, and he was glad of the opportunity now afforded him of supporting a change for the better. He had to propose for their adoption a resolution, which

Mr. Alexander McEwan seconded

Mr. Thomas Davidson moved the second resolution and supported it by a variety of statements founded on comparisons with other countries, on Parliamentary evidence, and on the testimony of experienced merchants and manufacturers with whom he held intercourse in ordinary business. All with whom he had conversed disapproved of the present oppressive, injudicious and injurious taxation. By any change which might be adopted they did not wish to diminish, but to increase, the revenue of the Post office, a result which no one could doubt would follow a reduction of the rates. He showed, from a comparison of the rates of postage from the year 1816, that while trade and commerce have advanced and population increased, the revenues of the Post-office, which ought likewise to have increased, have fallen off. During the same period in which the revenues of the Post-office in this country had diminished, those of France and America had increased under a better arrangement and lower charges. According to Mr. Hill's plan, all postages were to be reduced to one penny. The terms of the requisition precluded his entering upon the abstract question as to the character of a tax upon internal communication, but this he would say, that it was one of the worst taxes that could be imposed. Into the elucidation of that subject, however, he was prevented by the terms of the resolution, from entering. He was satisfied, and his conviction was strengthened by every individual capable of forming an opinion with whom he had met, that, with an uniform and reduced rate of postage, intercourse would be increased six-fold. With the present intercourse, under Mr. Hill's plan, the expense of the Post-office would be decreased one-half, because a half of the labour of the Post-office consisted in checking and sorting, and delivering letters. All this would be at an end, and the Post-office would be what it ought to be. Mr. D. denounced the practice of evading the law by means of surreptitious conveyances, by sending letters with carriers and private individuals. But, he said, they were forced to it. Smuggling was an ugly word, but conveying letters surreptitiously was as much smuggling as concealing a piece of silk or a cask of brandy. And yet the practice of which he complained prevailed to such an extent that it might be said the rule was the evasion of the law, and the observance of it the rare exception—(laughter and cheers.) As often as they met the mail-gig they came in contact with travellers who assumed the character of rival postmen. Wherever they went thousands of individuals were to be met with charged with rival messages to different parts of the country—(laughter and cheers.) It was impossible that such a state of things should continue. Moral feeling was disregarded, or rather every individual was so accustomed to evade this law, that it never occurred to him that he was committing a violation of any law.—Mr. Davidson then pointed out the advantages of cheap postage to literary and scientific institutions, and to individuals in the pursuit of literary and scientific knowledge. He concluded by adverting to the injurious nature of the heavy tax to the industrious classes, respecting whom he observed that their enjoyment would be increased, and their condition in many respects much improved, by facilities of correspondence by letter.

Mr. Gilmour seconded the resolution. The subject had been fully discussed by Mr. Davidson, but that gentleman's concluding observations had the greatest weight with him; for, setting aside the consideration of a tax upon mercantile intercourse, it was of the greatest consequence that an interchange of feeling should take place among the working classes. The science of writing was taught at our parochial schools at the rate of 1s. per quarter, and it was also taught at a low rate in other schools, but although acquired in childhood it was forgot when the children grew up; the high rates of postage precluding in a great measure correspondence with friends. They had no opportunity for interchange of sentiment which they might otherwise have much to their advantage. He supported the statements of Mr. Davidson as to the reduction of the rates of postage increasing the revenue, and as to the difficulties entailed upon commerce and manufacturers by the present system.

Mr. John May said, Mr. Finlay, in proposing the first

resolution, and Mr. Davidson, in proposing the second resolution, by their clear and lucid details had completely brushed away the cob-webs from the subject; and he had simply to move the next resolution. The resolution having been read,

Baillie Campbell rose to second the motion that it be adopted. He believed that when the plan of an uniform postage at the rate of 1d. was first submitted every one was startled by it. He confessed he considered it at first sight impracticable, but after due consideration, in which he was guided by his own experience, by the experience of others in and around Glasgow, and by the evidence before parliament, he became satisfied that there could be no loss to the revenue from the adoption of such a plan. He was well aware that this was not the time to propose anything which would reduce the revenue, but he considered that the present arrangements of the Post-office made it an establishment which did not answer the object for which it was intended—that it was a barrier to the proper conducting of business. They all knew the difficulties which they had to encounter with respect to their country business, and he need not detail them. He would only say that if there had been no such thing as a government establishment, they might have had conveyances as expeditious and as cheap as the present, upon private speculation.

Mr. Wm. Craig suggested an alteration. He thought if Mr. Hill's plan were adopted, and it should be proposed that the stamped covers be, instead of 1d., 2d. or 3d., it would not have a fair chance. He should therefore suggest that the resolution should approve of Mr. Hill's plan, instead of such a plan as that of Mr. Hill.

The alteration was agreed to.

Mr. Tennant, in the absence of Baillie Johnston, had been requested to move the next resolution. After the interesting discussion which had taken place he would not trouble the meeting with remarks. He was happy that the citizens had taken up the subject. The rich were chiefly benefited by the Post-office. Nineteen-twentieths of the tax complained of fell upon the productive classes of the country.

Mr. Wyngate moved a vote of thanks to the Lord Provost for his conduct in the chair, and the meeting separated.—*Glasgow Chronicle.*

—TOWN COUNCIL, KILMARNOCK.—Two letters, addressed to the Provost, were then read—one from the Chamber of Commerce, Edinburgh, and another from Baillie Campbell, Glasgow—relative to the reduction in the rates of postage, and suggesting that the simultaneous movement making throughout the country for the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan should be followed up in Kilmarnock. The latter of these letters was accompanied with a statement of the many instances in which the post was evaded, and the reasonable prospect that on Mr. Hill's plan being adopted, the great increase of letters transmitted by post would prevent any diminution to the revenue. After a short discussion, it was agreed to petition in favour of the alteration—the petition to the Lords to be transmitted to the Marquis of Bute, and that to the Commons to Mr. Colquhoun.—*Kilmarnock Journal.*

## LORD LICHFIELD REFUTED.

The observations we were about to prepare on Lord Lichfield's evidence, we find anticipated in the last number of the London and Westminster Review.

No plan, writes the Review, in the least degree approaching Mr. Hill's for completeness or practicability, has yet appeared. It has had to contend against a very strong prejudice, that which it raises up against itself by its own excellence: its news seems "too good to be true." Aware that this was what he had to dread, Mr. Hill, in the proportion in which he has been splendid in his promises, has been cautious and accurate in his proofs: and his official adversaries have been always beaten by him when they have condescended to particulars.\* We express our conscientious belief that the plan would be perfectly successful in all that he anticipates

\* A curious instance is that of his conjectural estimate (for conjecture was all that was possible) of the annual number of chargeable letters transmitted through the Post office. Mr. Hill, at first, estimated the number at 88,000,000—afterwards at 80,000,000. This estimate was ridiculed by the Post-office authorities; but as no less than four estimates have since been given by those authorities, each successively advancing on the numbers of its predecessor, and approximating nearer to Mr. Hill's, we may expect in time a fifth even surpassing Mr. Hill's. On the 30th November, 1837, Lord Lichfield stated their number to be 42 or 43,000,000. But this estimate overlooked the twopenny post. In a Post-office return dated 7th December, 1837, the number is estimated at 54,634,920: here twopenny post letters are included, but no sooner was the return made than it was discovered that the penny letters had been omitted. Another return, dated 9th December, was therefore given, whereby the number is augmented to 58,224,840. Lastly, we have an account of the number of letters actually posted during a week commencing 15th January, 1838, which amounts to 1,313,933, and this, multiplied by 52, gives 68,324,516. All commercial men concur in opinion that this week gives a very low average for the year. The first and last weeks of the month are usually the most busy; and Mr. George Moffat (4361) says, "January is ordinarily a slack month in correspondence. In the last January the inclemency of the weather had broken up all the inland water communications. The canals were all ice-bound and the river blocked for several weeks—there was comparatively little correspondence—trade was completely at a standstill, as will appear from the amount received by the customs and excise." Since then the highest of the four estimates must be much too low, the truth cannot be far from Mr. Hill's conjecture.

from it. That the public would obtain by it almost total relief from postage, and that the revenue, as soon as the change was in full operation, would be as productive, and probably much more productive than at present. It is not necessary for us to go into the details of a plan for which the whole country is simultaneously petitioning; we will rather show what the new evidence before us has afforded in confirmation of Mr. Hill's principal positions. Much surprise has been excited by Mr. Hill's demonstration of the exceedingly small proportion which the cost of carriage, the only element of expense that depends on distance, bears not only to the postage but to what each letter actually costs to the Post-office, between the moment of receiving and that of delivering. Upon this circumstance rests the justice of having but one rate for all distances, and Mr. Dillon, in the following passage, places it in a strong light:—

"The charging postage in proportion to the distance may be fair and proper, or otherwise, according to the circumstance of the case; looking to all the circumstances of the Post-office in this country, I submit that the charge with a view to distance is not fair or desirable. If the question were as to the transit of two letters, each sent by hand, then it would be fair that a letter sent to Edinburgh should be charged more than a letter sent to York, because the expense of the man travelling to the one place would be greater than that of the man travelling to the other. If the same man had given to him a thousand letters for York, and a thousand letters for Edinburgh, the case would be the same: but if he had given to him two thousand letters indiscriminately, which he had to take to his house and sort, and to divide between York and Edinburgh, it would no longer be true, to the same extent, that he should charge in proportion to the distance; it becomes yet more different if all the letters to all the towns in the kingdom are first to be sorted on one spot, say in London, and dispatched in different directions; and if, when they arrived at their destination, they are again to be distributed and delivered. The case is again further altered if the tax, as a source of revenue, is to be laid on each letter. The cost of transit which, in the case of a single letter, was everything, becomes in a more complicated case little or nothing: it may form so small a part of the whole as not to deserve notice as an element in apportioning the price of postage. The charges of which postage is made up are; first, the charge for providing receiving houses held by respectable parties; secondly, for sorting, arranging, and dispatching the bags; thirdly, for the transit of letters; fourthly, for providing houses or offices, with responsible officers, where the letters may be again received; fifthly, for sorting the letters for delivery; sixthly, for the actual delivery, by competent parties, at stated times; seventhly, a tax for the purpose of revenue, which may be considered as a profit on the transaction. Now it is evident that of those seven elements, one only, the transit, is affected by the distance which the letter has to be carried: and that the least intellectual and least responsible as it is the one the most affected in the way of reduction by number and by improvement in the way of arrangement and of science. If the bags of letters were propelled, as it was at one time proposed, through a pipe or tube, still the cost of transit would be little or nothing, and the improvements in the modes of conveyance, and the contracts for the conveyance of the bags by mails, and other circumstances, have almost approximated to that state of things so that the cost of transit has become so small as scarcely to be taken into the account. There are many analogous cases in which the mere transit of goods adds little or nothing to their price or value in the market. A book published in London is sold at the same price in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. Articles of wearing apparel, in the large cities where the means of transport are many and cheap, are sold at the same prices in all the different parts of the kingdom. To show how little the cost of transit sometimes enters into the price of goods, I may mention to the committee, in the way of example, that we buy goods in Manchester, they are conveyed to London, we sell them in London, very often, to dealers resident in Manchester, who carry them back to the place from whence they came, and after the cost of two transits, they will have bought them of us cheaper than they themselves could buy them in Manchester; and in this instance, the cost of transit, as an element of price, has become absolutely destroyed by the force of capital and other arrangements."

Not only is the sole portion of the expense, which varies with the distance, comparatively trifling—(from London to Edinburgh, as Mr. Hill shows, it is only about one thirty-sixth part of a penny)—but even for the same distance it varies from day to day, as much as for different distances. The expense of the mail is the same whatever number of letters it carries: one day that expense may be shared among twenty letters, and each may cost sixpence, another day among two thousand, when the cost would be but a hundredth part of the sum. To a less distant place, if it be a place which receives fewer letters, the cost of carriage per letter may be higher than to a more remote one; and so, therefore, on the Post office principle, ought the postage. The Postmaster-General himself has taken the trouble to illustrate this by his comparison (made to controvert Mr. Hill) between Edinburgh and Louth.\*

The same statement, made with so deep a design of confuting Mr. Hill, supplies invaluable confirmation to some of Mr. Hill's main points. Lord Lichfield, in the House of

\* He shows (2785) that the carriage of the letters from London to Louth, 148 miles, costs nearly twice as much per letter as the letters to Edinburgh, 400 miles. The carriage to Louth costs 1l. 17s. 7d.—that to Edinburgh, 5l.—but there are few letters to divide the 1l. 17s. 7d., and many to divide the 5l. If cost of carriage, therefore, were to be the criterion of charge, the postage to Louth, at only half the distance, should be double that to Edinburgh. The rule of charging according to distance does not even proportion the demand to one item of the expense.

Lords, pointed out as the great oversight in Mr. Hill's calculations, the omission to take account of the increased number of mails that would be required to carry so great an amount of letters as his scheme required.

Table with 4 columns: Weight of the sacks and bags, 2226 newspapers, 2 stamp parcels, 484 franks, 1555 chargeable letters. Total weight: 4 cwt, 2 qrs, 23 lbs, 13 oz.

Of the Louth mail—

Table with 4 columns: Weight of sacks and bags, 366 newspapers, 365 chargeable letters, 108 franks. Total: 1 cwt, 1 qr, 27 lbs, 12 oz.

Observe how small a portion of the weight of either mail consisted of chargeable letters and how many times the number of these might be multiplied, without any very formidable addition to the entire weight.

PETITIONS ON POSTAGE.

We entreat all readers of the Post Circular to exert themselves to obtain petitions to Parliament for a reduction of postage.

It is highly desirable that no time should be lost in forwarding to members of Parliament those petitions which are ready for presentation.

Table with 2 columns: Presented by, No. of Petitions. Lists names like Mr. Wallace, Sir Robert Peel, etc.

And others by Mr. Chalmers, Lord Worsley, Mr. Divett, Col. Langton, Mr. Philip Miles, Capt. Polhill, General Sharpe, Mr. Strutt, Mr. Lister, Mr. Pendarves, Mr. Cresswell, Mr. Thornely, Sir J. Hobhouse, Mr. O'Connell, Mr. Litchfield, Lord Sandon, &c.

FORM OF A SHORT GENERAL PETITION FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

To the Right Honourable the [Lords, spiritual and temporal, or Commons, as the case may be] in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the undersigned inhabitants of [County of ...]

SHWETH,—That the dearth of the present rates of postage is injurious to the industry of the people, and prevents much correspondence between relatives and friends at a distance from each other, and causes many letters to be illegally sent in parcels and by private hands.

That a great increase would take place in all sorts of correspondence if the rates of postage were reduced, and that the law would be obeyed and not broken.

That your petitioners pray your honourable House to give Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform penny postage for all letters payable in advance a fair trial. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

PETITIONS PRESENTED DURING THE PRESENT SESSION, Praying for a Reduction and Uniformity in the Rates of Postage. The number of signatures is given. Continued from No. 7.

MAR. 30. Inhabitants of the royal burgh of Kintore (Mr. Fox Maule), 66.

APR. 3. Magistrates and Council of the Royal burgh of Auchtermuchty, in Fife (Capt. Wemyss), seal 2.

—Inhabitants of the borough of Liskeard (Mr. C. Buller), 64.

—Mayor, Alderman, Council, Bankers, Merchants, and other inhabitants of Kidderminster (Mr. Henry Winnington), 60.

APR. 4. Merchants, Traders, and others, of the town of Upton-upon-Severn and its vicinity, in the county of Worcester (General Lygon), 98.

—Inhabitants of the parish of Tavistock and neighbourhood, in the county of Devon, 164.

—Procurators practising before the Stewart Court of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright (Mr. Cutlar Fergusson), 10.

APR. 6. Proprietor, Compositors, Pressmen, &c., of the Printing Office, 14, 15, 16, Little Pulteney Street, St. James's (Mr. Hume), 32.

APR. 9. Magistrates and Town Council of the royal burgh of Pittenweem (Mr. Edward Ellice), seal 1.

APR. 11. Bristol Chamber of Commerce, Trade, and Manufactures, by the Board, Edward Harley, president (Mr. Henry Berkeley), 1.

NEWSPAPERS AND POSTAGE.—The following petition has been presented by the Hon. J. C. Dundas, M. P. for York: To the Honourable the House of Commons of Great Britain and Ireland.

The humble petition of Robert Rouiere Pearce of the city of York, Editor of the "Yorkshireman" newspaper.

Sheweth.—That the petitioner is deeply impressed with the conviction that a Reform in the Post-office system is loudly called for; for while he is ready to acknowledge the zeal and activity of the respective officers employed in that department of the public service, he is persuaded that the country suffers to a very great extent under the existing Post-office arrangements.

That your petitioner, as the conductor of a public journal, feels the present rate of postage to be a grievance of the most magistral nature, acting prejudicially against the interests of all newspaper property, by placing a bar to the communication of opinions, and presenting difficulties to the circulation of newspapers, of which few can form a correct estimate.

That your petitioner believes that many parties living at a distance from the city of York frequently abstain from ordering copies of his paper, on the consideration that the postage would amount to double the price of the article wanted.

That your petitioner is deterred, by the excessive demands of the Post-office, from forwarding prospectuses, circulars, and letters, soliciting advertisements; the extensive circulation of which he conceives to be essential to the prosperity of property similar to that under his management.

That your petitioner believes that the practice of transmitting letters, &c. in a contraband manner—created by exorbitant charges of postage—prevails to an immense extent in the city of York, and throughout the North and East-Ridings of Yorkshire.

That instances have come to your petitioner's knowledge where widows, in indigent circumstances, living in the said city, have been compelled, by the greatness of the charge, to return, unopened to the postman, letters sent to them from their children at a distance.

That your petitioner, impressed with these facts, regards the present Post-office system as inimical to trade and commerce, and oppressive and cruel to the poor and middle classes of society in the United Kingdom.

That your petitioner is of opinion that the adoption of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE would afford a remedy for the evils enumerated; and that while a splendid boon would be afforded to the country, the public revenue would not be materially diminished, as the number of letters sent through the Post-office would, in his opinion, be increased ten-fold.

That your petitioner therefore prays your honourable House forthwith to take the measure of Post-office Reform into serious consideration.

And your petitioner, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

[The editor of every provincial paper who is careful of his interests will follow this good example.]

The Post Circular.

LONDON, MAY 25, 1838.

IT is now confidently expected that the Parliamentary Committee will pass resolutions and a report submitted upon the voluminous report which has been submitted to them before the present session terminates.

Petitions are flowing in abundantly from all parts of the kingdom, and not a night passes, without the presentation of several. Up to the 11th of May, the numbers amounted to 148, with upwards of 11,000 signatures. Since this time a great increase is daily taking place.

Our columns this week give some partial evidences of

the amount of correspondence with which we are favoured from all quarters of the kingdom. In the cases produced, the authenticity of the statements has been guaranteed by the writer's name and address.

The Parliamentary Committee has taken very valuable and varied evidence of the following witnesses, since our last publication—On 9th ultimo, Mr. William Vickers, member of the Chamber of Commerce at Sheffield; Mr. D. Deacon, the extensive carrier of Cripplegate; Mr. Duncan McLaren, treasurer, of Edinburgh. On 14th ultimo, Mr. E. G. Flight, solicitor, at Bridport; Mr. Francis Wilson Ellis, auditor of Poor Law Unions, in Suffolk; Mr. David McKewan, superintendent of the Custom-house and Wool Quays, under Mr. Hall; Mr. Thomas Griffin, wharfinger; Mr. Alfred Davidson, pin-factor, of Gracechurch-street; Mr. Joseph Bourne, managing clerk of Messrs. Swaine and Co., distillers; Mr. Edmund Baker, commercial traveller. On Wednesday, 16th ultimo, Colonel Colby, superintendent of the Ordnance Survey; Mr. M. Clark, agent in the wine and spirit trade; Mr. P. Iliffe Brewin, seed merchant, of Cirencester; Dr. Birkbeck; Mr. John Dunlop, of Greenock. On Friday, 18th ultimo, Lord Ashburton; Mr. Alfred Austin, retired attorney; Mr. William Banning, deputy-postmaster, of Liverpool. On Monday, 21st ultimo, Augustus Godby, Esq., secretary of the Post-office of Ireland; and Mr. Thos. Davidson, of Glasgow.

"In the main we (the Sun) approve of the views of the Reviewer (London and Westminster) with respect to the efficacy of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan; but we do not go so far as to contend that no reduction short of a penny postage will carry out the principle of that plan, so as to be crowned with complete success.

Our cotemporary must have very little knowledge of the feelings of the mercantile public, to say that it would prefer paying three pence, or two pence, one penny, especially as the habit of paying only one penny has already been contracted. If the postage were twopenny, and no smuggling existed, it is very probable that the moral feeling of the public would restrain it from encouraging smuggling for the sake of a penny.

The Smuggler clearly does not appreciate the great economical advantages of payment in advance. A twopenny or threepenny postage, payable in advance, would be offensive to the people most surely—not payable in advance, would be attendant with all the present expensive processes of taxing, account keeping, slow delivery, &c. To secure the complete failure of Mr. Hill's plan, the Government should follow the advice of the Sun. The result would be, a reduction of the revenue, a very little increase of correspondence, the obligation of keeping all the present needless machinery of the Post-office, and continued defiance by the smugglers.

We have just been favoured with a sight of a parcel containing ninety-nine circulars, addressed to Mr. Wallace, M. P., which was brought from Edinburgh, and delivered at the Editor Wallace's residence in London for 1s. 3d. by the Edinburgh and London Parcel Company. The carriage being therefore something beyond half a farthing for each circular. The Post-office authorities would tell us, that with all its resources, the carriage could not be performed for less than a penny.—With this fact, will the public believe them?

MR. HILL'S ACCURACY CONFIRMED BY THE POST-OFFICE AUTHORITIES.

Table comparing Mr. Hill's average postage estimates with Post-office Authorities' data for various locations like Bath, Leeds, Manchester, etc.

Table comparing Mr. Hill's number of chargeable letters (79 1/2 millions) with Post-office Authorities' estimates for the year ending 30th Nov 1837.

are included, but the penny letters omitted. Thirdly, another return, dated 9th December, is given, the number is augmented to 58,224,840. Fourthly, an account of the number of letters actually posted during a week, commencing 13th January, 1838, amounts to 1,313,933, and this, multiplied by 52, gives 68,324,516. But all commercial men concur in opinion that this week gives a very low average for the year. See Evidence of Mr. Christie also Mr. Moffatt and others. The first and last weeks of the month are usually the most busy.

COST OF TRANSIT.

Mr. Hill, at p. 12 of his pamphlet, states the cost of conveyance of a letter from Edinburgh to Edinburgh, to be one-36th of a penny.

Mr. Hill says the present cost of conveying the mails is 100,000*l.* per annum: and in calculating the Post-office expenses in his plan, he has put down the cost of conveyance at 310,000*l.* per annum.

Mr. Louis, the superintendent of the mails is asked (Ev. 1813), Can you point out any error in Mr. Hill's calculation of the amount of the conveyance to Edinburgh?—Not the slightest.

Lord Lichfield says (Ev. 2786), "Mr. Hill calculates the cost of one trip of the Edinburgh mail, 5*l.*, he is right in that calculation, it does cost 5*l.*"

Lord Lichfield asserted in the House of Lords, 18th Dec. last, that "Mr. Hill had not calculated the great increase which must take place in consequence of the great increase of bulk, and consequently of weight, and therefore the charge for transmission instead of 100,000*l.*, now must be twelve times that amount. Before the Parliamentary Committee the following facts were produced.

The contents of the Edinburgh mail, for one night, as given by Lord Lichfield, were (Ev. 2786),

Weight of the sacks and bags	c. q. lb. oz.	lbs.
2996 news-papers	1 0 9 8	283
2 stamp parcels	2 2 3 8	
484 franks	0 1 12 0	40
1555 chargeable letters	0 1 19 15	47
	0 1 6 14	34
Total weight	4 2 23 13	404
Of the Louth mail:		
Weight of sacks and bags	0 0 25 0	126
866 news-paper	1 0 14 0	
365 chargeable letters	0 0 8 8	8
108 franks	0 0 8 12	8
Total	1 1 27 1	143

In the instances produced by the Postmaster-General, the Edinburgh mail carried only 4 cwt. 2 qrs. 23 lbs. 13 oz.; having still room for 3 cwt. 1 qr. 4 lbs. 3 oz. The Louth mail carried still less—1 cwt. 1 qr. 27 lbs. 12 oz.—having unemployed capabilities of carrying an additional 6 cwt. 2 qrs. 4 oz. Eleven fold the number of chargeable letters might have been conveyed by the Edinburgh mail that day, and eighty times the number of letters by the Louth mail, without requiring additional mails, or occasional expense for carriage.

ABUSES OF FRANKING.

The abuses of franking have been noticed by ministers themselves in parliament. To have a member of parliament in a large firm in London is often a saving of two pounds sterling a day, or seven hundred and thirty pounds a year. A member receives fifteen and sends out ten double or treble letters each day, which, as the franks will always be used for the most distant letters, and more than two shillings on an average each double letter, gives a result nearer a thousand a year than the sum we have mentioned, and, as they will often cover bills of exchange, each of which would be a double letter, the estimate is not exaggerated. Many bankers, it is said, hire a member's privilege to frank their letter. The following fact we have on good authority:—Application was made before noon one day at a banking establishment for the payment

of a money order. The bankers, without assigning a reason, hesitated, and asked for a delay of an hour. The applicant, inferring that the house was about to stop payment, insisted on immediate compliance with his demand, which compelled the bankers to admit that they had not yet received their letters from the West end, which contained their instructions. A frank may be redirected several times, and thus save several postages. Several of the clerks and functionaries of the government offices have powers of franking unlimited either by weight or bulk, and haunches of venison have been known to be franked, and one of these, we call him the Hon. Franklin Gofree, franked a grand pianoforte to one of his fair cousins.—*London and Westminster Review.*

— OVERLAND COMMUNICATION WITH INDIA.—A correspondent informs us that a letter written by him, January 5th last, has been acknowledged as received in Calcutta, March 9th. The reply, dated March 15th, was received in London last Saturday, May 19th—thus reducing the course of post from London to Calcutta and back to little more than four months. In this great increase in expedition we are chiefly indebted to the efforts of a private individual, Mr. Waghorn; a striking example of how much more is effected for the public by competition and individual exertion than is ever effected by governments.

SMUGGLING ANOMALIES—SUPPRESSION.

The open and flagrant breach of any law of the land is a serious evil. So soon as the government is unable to enforce its laws, it gradually becomes disrespected. This is notoriously the case with the executive of this country in relation to the Post-office. A prudent government like a cautious employer, or a wise parent, would not make laws which could not be obeyed; yet it is notorious that the Post-office regulations could not be obeyed in this country, unless the nation can be thrown a century back in the career of improvement. Proclamation after proclamation is issued, in name of her Majesty, demanding obedience to statutes, which the bill sticker, who pastes them to the walls, despises; and which, from the apprentice boy to the parish clergyman—from the tradesman to the peer are set at naught with impunity. Does this add to the respectful and obedient feelings with which a good government should be regarded by the community? Does it add to the attachment to royalty? Does it confer esteem upon national authority? The very reverse is true; and a few more such laws, as the Post-office law, would bring the Government of the land into disrespect and contempt—render disobedience to its orders a hallowed thing—and transfer the respect which ought to be given to constituted authority to the man who bearded its mandates. It is self-evident that the requirements of the Post-office cannot be obeyed. The distance betwixt Montrose and Brechin is eight miles—the one a seaport, the other an inland town—their joint population 23 to 24,000—the correspondence is therefore considerable; but if a letter is sent through the Post-office from the one time to the other, an answer cannot be received in less than twenty-four hours! Arbroath is thirteen miles from Montrose—their joint population 28 to 29,000; and a question and reply cannot be quicker managed than in twenty-four hours through the Post-office. We can obtain an answer to a letter transmitted to Edingburgh (a distance of seventy-five miles) equally soon as from Arbroath; indeed, when the contemplated changes in the Post-office are carried into effect, thirty or thirty-two hours will elapse from the time of transmitting a letter to Arbroath from Montrose, ere the answer could be received. Forfar and Kirmuir are inland towns, distant nearly five miles from each other; betwixt Montrose and Forfar the distance, on the direct road, is twenty-three miles—on the course travelled by the mail, forty-four miles; these three towns contain about 31 000 inhabitants; and the district by the direct line betwixt Forfar and Montrose has a very large population; yet the mail is sent by a road double the necessary distance. From Montrose to Aberdeen is thirty-eight miles—through the Post-office, a question can be asked, and an answer received, in twenty-one hours; and in this case the practice is not so very bad; but the expense is 1*s.* 3*d.*, while the real cost of receiving, transmitting, and delivering the two letters is 1*d.*—the tax being 1*s.* 2*d.* This is the state of the Post-office in this particular district; and it is visible to the dullest, that the law requiring all letters to be sent through the Post office is not and cannot be obeyed. There is a proposal to reduce the charges for postage 50 per cent., or one half. The proposal is very absurd; the revenue would be injured, and the precise amount of benefit to individuals would not be felt. A small parcel may be sent from Edingburgh to London at the present moment for 1*s.* 3*d.* Such a parcel may contain one hundred circulars—we have been parties to the transmission of a larger number in this way—if the postage was reduced to 6*d.*, they would cost 2*l.* 10*s.*; but as, by the illegal mode the cost is only 1*s.* 3*d.* for conveyance, and 1*d.* each for delivery in London, making in all 2*s.* 7*d.*, it is evident people would still smuggle. Reduce the postage to 1*d.*, and the illicit traffic is destroyed. The average postage of letters is said to be 6½*d.*; suppose it 8*d.*, we have then, in order to obtain the same revenue, to procure an increase to eight times the present amount. In our own case, for one letter received by post, we receive twelve by other means; and if the postage were reduced to 1*d.*, we are perfectly certain our number of letters would be multiplied by eight or twenty. The reason is obvious; instead of writing one very long, we should write two or three short letters; and write often on subjects, and to individuals, neglected entirely simply on account of the postage. In the case of individuals removed from their families, letters are only sent when opportunities occur, or perhaps once in two or three months. With a penny postage, letters, though perhaps of only a few

lines, would be transmitted weekly. Nothing is more common, than for young people removed to a considerable distance, entirely to neglect their parents, although the latter may be in comparative want. Provide a medium for transmitting a few shillings cheaply, and the vice would not be engendered. It is because this can only be accomplished with considerable trouble that the parties wait until they have something worth transmitting, and become hardened to the neglect of their duty, and it is ultimately neglected. We often receive letters, without any envelope or concealment, from Edinburgh, marked 2*d.*—the money is paid, a saving of 6½*d.* is effected, but a breach of good morals is committed. Nobody thinks this sinful; yet an act of smuggling, an immoral act, has been effected; and people look on the subject with an approving conscience; and, having once brought themselves to cheat the revenue in one way, they are more easily led into the practice in another. Policy, justice, humanity, and morality, require a radical change in the Post-office. It is evident the Government will thwart or muffle the alteration, if it can; but the people could gain it. They once sought "the bill, the whole bill, and nothing but the bill;" they might have made a more sweeping demand; they should now adopt a truly useful motto—"a penny postage, a general penny postage, and nothing but a penny postage, unless a cheaper one;" we are always anxious for a saving clause. This question is exciting universal interest: a periodical, an excellent one—the *Post Circular*—has been instituted for the sole purpose of advocating the change. It is with the desire to render the grounds of the required alteration more generally understood, that we have proceeded with the abridgement of the evidence before the Parliamentary Committee, which will be found in another column.—*Montrose Review.*

SLOW MOVEMENTS OF THE POST.

Amongst the instances of the slow movements of the Post the *London and Westminster Review* quotes this case:—

Then follows the *Bungay case* printed in the *Post Circular*.

We happen to be acquainted with a still stronger case of the same kind, where it might least be expected. The latest time for putting letters into the post at Sheerness (a distance of about 40 miles from London) is five o'clock, the Sheerness letters going to London at the rate of three miles an hour, but the traveller or voyager who goes on to Ramsgate, 70 miles from London, will be in time to post his letters at nine o'clock. We speak from experience. The writer being on his way to Ramsgate by water, and, having to prepare and send up a paper by post, inquired at Sheerness, at about half-past four, what the latest time would be for the post; the answer was five o'clock, which did not allow time for what he had to do: he went on board a little sailing vessel, wrote what he had to write, and arrived in Ramsgate in good time for the post, Ramsgate being 30 miles further from London than Sheerness, but the post closing four hours later at the place more distant by 30 miles. It is right to add that the people of Sheerness seemed to find no fault with the arrangement, and wondered that it appeared defective. They perhaps think, with some reason certainly, that nothing can leave their town too soon.

[We hail with pleasure the co-operation of the *Examiner* in this question, and having it we do not care for the silence of the other portions of the London press, which an imagined self-interest has imposed on them.]

\* RETURNS OF THE PENNY POSTS FOR 1836.

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

Parliamentary Evidence.

\* It must be remembered that many of these posts had been established so recently as even the very year of the return.

— On Friday last, we forwarded the petition, which has been lying in our office, upon this subject, with 623 signatures attached, amongst which were those of many of the magistracy, gentry, clergy, merchants, and traders of the county, to our excellent, efficient, and trustworthy representative, LORD COLLE, for presentation in the House of Commons. Would others follow our example and forward petitions to Parliament, we have no doubt but the nature of the evidence which we have referred to, and the opinion of the people expressed in their petitions, would form such a bond of co-operation as could not fail of working out the desired effect. Our excellent little cotemporary the *Post Circular*, is going on spiritedly and doing "yeoman's service" to the cause.—*Fermanagh's Farmer's Journal.*

— Several Town-Councils throughout England have agreed to petition in favour of the reduction of the postage on letters. Why does no member of the York City Council take a matter so deeply affecting the interests of the citizens at large in hand? The question of Post-office reform is no party one.—*Yorkshireman.*

**POST-OFFICE REFORM.**—The public meeting in the Sessions' House at Liverpool will strengthen the popular movement in favour of a cheap and speedy rate of postage. The speakers were all men of business—practical men, who felt the force of the truths which they so briefly but emphatically illustrated. The present system is bad—nothing can be worse. As it exists, the revenue is defrauded, discontent engendered, the power of commerce crippled, and a monstrous social evil perpetuated, without a single corresponding equivalent. The wholesale smuggling at present carried on in the illicit transmission of letters, to evade the existing exorbitant rates of postage, is a moral pestilence, inasmuch as it habituates a respectable class of society to daily, nay hourly, violation of the law; but worse than this, the poor man, unacquainted with the philosophy of scheming, is shut out, by reason of his poverty, from any one of the most endearing refinements of life—the gratification of hearing from his friends and relatives, whom distance, accident, or necessity, place in a remote locality. The Post-office puts an extinguisher on all his social sensibilities—debars him from tasting the sweetest draught in the cup of existence—hearing from his friends and kindred—without a pecuniary sacrifice too great for his means to encounter. We trust that the present liberal government will listen to the remonstrances addressed to them on this subject from every corner of the empire. In asking the boon of cheap postage, it has been demonstrated by a species of eloquence of all others the most convincing to a minister—the persuasive and irresistible eloquence of arithmetic—that in a merely financial point of view, the change recommended cannot be for the worse. This has been clearly, and actively, and, above all, practically established. We believe that nothing would tend to raise the ministry of Lord Melbourne so high in the opinion of the people as conceding this point—which may be conceded, too, with so little risk. If ever the Tories come in, they will bid high for popularity, and we are grievously mistaken if a cheap and uniform postage be not the first panacea they will offer. It is a practical subject—one which finds its way to every man's feelings; and it will be received with thankfulness, no matter from what hand it may come.—*Liverpool Chronicle*.

After a long article explaining the objects of the Post-office reform, the *Stirling Observer* says:—"In order to accomplish this desirable object of informing the public mind, a newspaper, printed upon a stamp, has been fixed upon as the most obvious and effective medium. This paper is called the *Post Circular* or advocate for a cheap, swift, and sure postage. It has already reached to four numbers, all of which we have seen, and is well calculated, in our opinion, to accomplish the object it has in view, and for which it was brought into existence. This is the true business-like way of accomplishing an object of adapting means to an end. The great national importance of the object, together with the simplicity of the plan offered as a remedy; the clearness of the view brought to bear upon the subject, the respectful, yet firm and decided tone in which the *Circular* speaks, will ensure for it a ready reception by all men of business."

We cannot avoid noticing the very praise-worthy exertions and object of a new publication, which under the denomination of the *Post Circular*, applies itself to the investigation of Post-office abuses, and the best means of procuring an equalized and judicious rate of postage throughout the kingdom. The abuses are not, we believe, so much the result of corrupt practices in the Post-office department, as a want of due consideration for the convenience of the various localities, where the importance of a prompt, safe, and cheap conveyance of letters, is especially felt. In many great commercial towns there will be found the utmost practical absurdity both in the rate of Post-office charges, and in the means adopted for the conveyance and distribution of letters. But in places of lesser consequence this absurdity frequently amounts to a most oppressive and injurious system. On this subject we publish a very useful summary of the Post-office abuses immediately in our neighbourhood, contained in a letter addressed to the *Post Circular*. The anomalies it exposes in a single and limited district are amply sufficient to convince the public of the urgent necessity of such reforms as may render the rate of the Post-office what it ought to be—equalized and cheap.—*Leicester Journal*.

—We rejoice to observe that the public mind is becoming daily more alive to the propriety of a large reduction in the rates of postage. It is not long since a passing remark in a newspaper was all the notice which the subject called forth, whereas now it not only forms a standard topic of discussion with all the brethren of the broad sheet, but even the highest order of periodicals, the "influential Quarterlies," deem it worthy of forming the theme of their elaborate disquisitions.—*Greenock Advertiser*.

**POSTAGE AND POVERTY.**—"I had an instance the other day, in conversation with our postman, which was quite spontaneous on his part, without being asked the question, and had no reference to my appearance before this committee: my wife was paying for a letter, and she made a remark as to the cost; his reply was, 'Yes, it is a good thing you can afford to pay it, for I assure you my heart bleeds when I take letters to the poor. When I take letters to them, I have known them go and pawn their goods to pay for the postage of a letter, when they have wished to have it; that is a matter which has frequently occurred.' Then, another mode by which the poor are separated is under the provisions of the Poor Law Act, which promotes emigration from the agricultural to manufacturing districts; this applies to them peculiarly; they must necessarily be anxious to communicate with their friends; then the increased education among the poor, of course, produces a greater desire to communicate their thoughts by letter correspondence. (4249). The committee are to understand that, in consequence of your intimate knowledge of the habits of the labouring classes in your own trade, and the town

you speak of, they find that the present rates of postage are not only inconvenient, but nearly a bar to keeping up a correspondence with members of their own families?—I can speak to that, for I associate a good deal with the intelligent portion of the working classes, and I know that is the case; I have a man in my employ, a native of Glasgow (our workmen are in better circumstances than those in other trades), he has frequent letters, which are all brought to me, because he has not the money, and I deduct the postage from his wages; his letters are always 1s. 1½d., an amount which would supply him with a dinner."—*Parliamentary Evidence*.

—A most favourable season and occasion for discussing the propriety of a cheap postage, and making an effort to attain it, is now at hand, for our country gentlemen and leading members of our county communities. The COMMISSIONERS OF SUPPLY for our several counties would confer a boon on their constituents and neighbours were they to embrace the opportunity of their earliest meetings to prepare and send forward petitions to the legislature for this object. They could not exert their influence on a more legitimate or a less partisan effort, for here Whig and Tory may and do agree. Lords Lowther and Ashburton plead as fervently as Messrs. Rowland Hill and Robert Wallace do for a cheap postage. Men of all creeds would derive equal benefit, and our common country would enjoy the fruit of it. Had not church politics so absorbed ecclesiastical bodies, we should have made our appeal to Presbyteries, Synods, Assemblies, and Congregational Unions. And why should they require to be urged to this good work? Let every minister look into his flock, and contemplate the advantages of epistolatory intercourse among the members of his congregation, and how this enjoyment is prevented by the expense of postage. It would be exceedingly useful were our clerical friends, in their intercourse during the approaching May meetings in Edinburgh and London, to consult on this matter, and take steps for accomplishing a simultaneous and well-regulated demonstration of popular feeling on behalf of a cheap and frequent postage. So far from diminishing the revenue, or curtailing the national resources, it is proved that a universal penny postage would increase the revenue, and, with stamped covers, lessen the expenditure in the Post-office department.—*Scottish Pilot*.

—The parishioners of Monkquhitter have shown a good example to the people of this district, by petitioning in favour of Mr. Rowland Hill's cheap postage plan. We trust it will be extensively followed.—*Aberdeen Herald*.

**ANCIENT RATES OF POSTAGE.**—When the carriage of letters first became a national concern, in the reign of Charles the Second, the rates of postage were fixed as follows:—

Letter not exceeding 1 sheet, to or from any place not exceeding	MILES.	
80	2d.	
80	4d.	
80	3d.	
80	6d.	
Berwick		3d.
Dublin		6d.

By the 9th Anne, c. 11, a penny was added to several of the rates previously established; a letter from London to Edinburgh was charged sixpence. But still by this statute letters were to be delivered within ten miles of London, Westminster, and Southwark for one penny.—*London and Westminster Review*, just published.

**REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.**—A petition, containing 61 feet of signatures, was forwarded from this town on Thursday to Mr. Wallace, the Member for Greenock, for presentation to the House of Commons, praying for the adoption of an uniform penny postage.—*Reading Mercury*.

—That Ministers will neglect the opportunity of granting this splendid boon to the people over whom they are placed in authority we can as little doubt, as that a penny postage would be one of the very first acts of a Tory Government. Every city, town, or hamlet, should petition Parliament in its favour, in order that Ministers may adopt the plan. It is a matter of general surprise that the town council of Lancaster have not followed the example set them by other corporate bodies, of petitioning Parliament in its behalf. The measure will be carried in a couple of years at the outside, and thereupon the question will arise—"What reward shall be given to the inventor and propounder of a penny postage?" To which we reply, a statue or a pillar of marble or of bronze in every town, it may be—a bust in every literary institution, mechanic's institute, merchant's counting house, and tradesman's parlour in the country, perhaps. But this certainly—that every man, woman, and child in the kingdom should demonstrate the acceptableness of the reform which he has achieved, by sending Mr. Rowland Hill, on the first possible occasion, one of his penny stamps. Those who can write, and can spare the time, may relate to him the instances in which so cheap a correspondence will be pleasing and profitable to them—those who cannot write may just get a friend to direct their letter, and then deposit it in the letter box. We shall, of course, take care at the proper time to apprise our readers of Mr. Hill's pace of abode.—*Lancaster Guardian*.

—We had, in our simplicity, imagined that nothing could be added to the facts and reasonings already adduced in illustration of the anomalies and absurdities inherent in the existing system of Post-office charges. But we were mistaken, we find that "in the lowest depth there is a deeper still," affording proof indubitable of the profundity of that wisdom which has so long directed the most powerful instrument of civilization and commerce. We have received two letters; one consisting of an enormous sheet of paper, measuring thirty five inches by twenty-three inches, and weighing an ounce; the other consisting of a most diminutive sheet, not exceeding four inches by two and a half inches, in a cover of similar size, weighing together but seven grains, or under the sixtieth part of an ounce. A greater disparity in size and weight could scarcely be pro-

duced; and some considerable disparity, if not a proportionate one, should doubtless exist in the respective postage charges for conveying the letters thus made up. There is this considerable disparity in charge, the one being fixed at twice the amount of the other. But on which side do our readers suppose the advantage lies? All not initiated in Post-office mysteries will, doubtless, answer, with one accord—that the advantage is in favour of the Liliputian letter. But in this they would be much mistaken. The seven grains are charged as a double letter, while the ounce weight is charged as a single one! The latter comes from Newcastle to London at the charge of a shilling, while the former will not be transmitted from the same place under the cost of two! Surely, the force of folly could no further go! Yet, England is the only country in which such an absurdity is permitted to exist!—*Shipping Gazette*, May 10, 1838.

**POST-OFFICE REFORM.**—We rejoice to observe the active means taken by all the leading towns to accomplish this most valuable object. It is one that will progress and ripen public education, the improvements in science and all the useful arts, the extension and diffusion of knowledge, and give energy and effect to the present state of competition in excellence, which now so singularly pervades the civilized world. From the public investigations now going on, the development of its advantages to all classes is sufficiently proved, and that without any proportionate sacrifice to the revenue. No measure has ever yet been proposed by the reformed Parliament so highly beneficial as this, and it is to be hoped that the ministers will feel themselves bound to yield to the imperative desires of the entire British people. Even from our insular community a respectful petition to Parliament to forward this salutary measure would be most desirable. Small as our community is, and limited in influence, yet power is made up of particles, and it would therefore aid the general stream flowing from the whole British population. London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and every influential town and society in the kingdom have come, or are coming forward on the occasion, and the ministry must either yield, or lose the trifling majority they now possess. No one act of theirs would so promote their stability as that of adopting Mr. Hill's plan of Post-office reform.—*Manchester Sun*.

—The evidence generally laid before the committee, by the Post-office officials, is not of a nature very creditable to these gentlemen. It shows a narrow illiberal spirit. They are men, for the most part, who have been trained up from their youth under the present system, and who abhor the name of change, however clearly it may be proved to be a change for the better. Objections of a similar character were brought forward when Mr. Palmer proposed to the Post-office authorities of his day the introduction of mail-coaches. It was not desirable, they said, that the mail should be carried faster than the old jog-trot pace of some five miles an hour—it would lay a burden upon them that they could not bear—it was, in fact, quite impracticable; and, had the evidence of these gentlemen been listened to, instead of possessing our present much-improved mode of mail communication, things might have remained as at the period when Mr. Palmer agitated the question. Although the opinions of the officials are totally opposed to the alteration now proposed, it has happened, in numerous instances, that the facts disclosed by them in evidence tell strongly in its favour. Mr. Hill will thus be enabled to fortify his position by the statements of the very individuals who are his most formidable opponents. The evidence, for example, of Lord Lichfield, as to the weight carried by the Edinburgh mail, enables us to show, on authority that cannot be questioned, the perfect practicability of carrying far beyond the present number of letters without any addition to the expense, and so on in various other matters. Now that the public are awakening to the importance of the subject, we are satisfied that they will not permit their just demands to be stifled by the sophistries of the officials. Let every man examine the question for himself, and we have no doubt as to the result.—*Glasgow Argus*.

**EXCESSIVE CHARGES OF POSTAGE.**—The abuses, absurdities, and inconveniences of the present Post-office system are now the subject of general attention, and the number of those who demand its reform daily increases. There is no question which the public regard with deeper interest at the present moment,—and with justice they view it with concern; because it is no chimerical project, no idle speculation,—we have a substantial, palpable grievance, that all ranks of society are sensible of—pressing with a cruel and unequal weight upon the middle and lower classes of the people, interfering with the social relations of the country, with the charities of our nature, and crippling and hindering commerce and education. We deem it, therefore, to be our duty to state the case fairly to our readers, and communicate to them all the information on the point within our reach. It is of importance to mention, that Post-office Reform is no party question; all classes in the country are equally interested in its success; and the efforts of the whole community should be directed to accomplish an object worthy of the greatness of this empire, rendered necessary by the advance of civilization, which will open to the poor springs of pleasure now hermetically sealed, give new impulses to the people in the acquisition of the elements of knowledge, and impart fresh vigour to the commercial relations of Great Britain and Ireland with their dependencies.—*Yorkshireman*. [Extract from one of the ablest articles that has yet appeared on the subject.]

—GREAT YARMOUTH (Norfolk), is stirring usefully. The City of London, Norwich Common Council, and Liverpool Common Council petitions have been reprinted all together for distribution.

The *Bedford Mercury* has not only printed Mr. Hill's letters to Lord Lichfield, but reprinted them for distribution as a pamphlet. Such zeal should be imitated all over the country.



**EFFECTS OF THE POST CIRCULAR.**—Since our last we have received copies of the *Preston Observer*, *Cheshire Reformer*, *Salisbury and Wilts Herald*, *Star in the East*, *The Silurian* (Wales), *Kilmarnock Journal*, *Paisley Advertiser*, *Ulster Times*, as containing quotations from the *Post Circular*. And original articles on postage appear in the *Fife Herald*,—in the *Reading Mercury*,—in the *Kilmarnock Journal*,—in the *Scots Times*,—*Paisley Advertiser*,—*Wolverhampton Chronicle*,—*Glasgow Argus*,—*Fermanagh Reporter*,—*Montrose Review*,—*Enniskillen Journal*,—*Manx Sun*,—*Preston Observer*.

—The *Tyne Mercury* concludes an article on postage thus: "We shall assist the *Post Circular* and the cause in general to the utmost of our power, not only because reduction would be a public convenience, but one of the most rapid and certain means of civilization."

—Every town in England, says the *Reading Mercury*, in a long and very able article, should petition on the subject; and we feel confident that our townsmen, when they see the real nature of the question, will not be remiss in doing their duty, and that the petition which appears in another column will receive the sanction and support of all parties.

**POSTAGE AND COMMERCE.**—"A case occurs to me," (says Mr. Dillon, Evidence 3535,) "which will show the oppressive nature of the postage between London and Edinburgh: for example—I have a bill here upon Edinburgh for 25*l.*, and if that were our only transaction, or if it were the transaction of a small tradesman, having no other, he must send that bill to a banker in Edinburgh, which would be a double postage; he would receive another bill upon London in exchange, which would be another double postage, and he is bound, by the course of business, to send a letter of advice; that would be five postages of 1*s.* 1*d.* each, incurred upon a two-months' bill of 25*l.* In all probability there would be a sixth postage, in acknowledgment to the banker. This amounts to more upon a two-months' bill of 25*l.* than the discount of the bill for the time."

**PENNY POSTS.**—No less than 1973 towns in the United Kingdom have their penny posts, which convey letters, in some places, to the distance of thirty-eight miles; London, too, had once its penny-post, but that day is gone by, and what is done where there are but few letters at the cost of a penny on each, costs twopence and threepence in London, where the number is immense, and the expenses upon each consequently insignificant.—*London and Westminster Review*, just published.

**POSTAGE AND LITERATURE.**—A learned polyglottist writes to the Mercantile Committee:—"Should a work be printed in Hebrew, Sanscrit, or other learned language, and the author or editor reside at Oxford, a proof sheet, with its cover, is double postage, the author cuts open the sheet to read it, it is returned,—treble postage,—a revise, with the first sheet, is sent down and again returned. Thus far on each sheet the expense is heavy, and it admits a remedy by parcels, but another grievous inconvenience is created, the printer or bookseller is induced not to send a revise, and trusts to an inferior editor or reader on the spot, whereby errors are made which would have been avoided, had not the weight of postage charges made a barrier. The talents and industry and accuracy of the English scholar are not inferior to a German; and with light postage England would take its proper station in Europe as a literary nation. Let us not be contented with our commercial pre-eminence, for

should your endeavours be successful English books, now admitted to be the most beautiful, would then have the merit of being the most accurate."

—**REDUCTION AND CONSUMPTION.**—It has always (says Mr. Dillon, Ev. 3565), been found that a reduction in the price of an article has caused an increase in its consumption, and generally speaking, an increase in a greater ratio than the decrease in its price. It has been found so with regard to conveyance; for instance the omnibusses of London have increased in number and passengers very greatly above the old coaches: the rail-roads have carried a greater number of passengers by far than the old roads. I was told the other day that the rail-road from Antwerp to Brussels had, in the course of the last year carried fourteen times the number of passengers than had been calculated travelled the road by the old diligences the year before. It is extremely difficult to apply reasoning of this kind to the Post-office, but my belief is, that an enormous increase of letters would take place on a reduction of the postage to so low a sum as a penny.

**LAVATER AND POSTAGE.**—Milner subsequently endeavoured to reclaim Lavater from his mystical notions by a Latin letter, in the composition of which he took vast pains. "I am a poor man," Lavater briefly replied, "and the postage of long letters is inconvenient to me."—*Note to the life of Wilberforce*.

**BIGGLESWADE.**—*Post-office Reform.*—The petition in favour of Post-office reform was signed by 149 inhabitants of the town, and forwarded to Lord C. J. F. Russell, and the Marquis of Bute, to be presented in the respective Houses of Parliament to which those noblemen belong.

A petition for the same purpose is also in the course of signature by the inhabitants of Shefford.—*Bedford Mercury*.

**POST-OFFICE REFORM.**—We are glad to find that the desire for this good work, accompanied by corresponding exertions, is progressing with astonishing rapidity. The agitation is not now confined to large towns, but is extending with no ordinary celerity to the provincial districts. Amongst other places, the subject has been taken up with great zeal by some of the public-spirited citizens in the towns of Peebles, Galashiels, Selkirk, and Jedburgh, from whence petitions in favour of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of reform will, we doubt not, soon emanate.—*Scottish Pilot*.

—The columns of that excellent periodical, the *Post Circular*, bear testimony to the increasing interest felt in Mr. Hill's plan in England; and the evidence in its favour brought before the Committee of the House of Commons, establishes a case which no ministry can long resist.—*The Scottish Guardian*.

**DEVONPORT TOWN COUNCIL.**—On the motion of Mr. Rees, which he prefaced with a long and explanatory speech, resolutions were passed unanimously in favour of petitioning for Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of a uniform penny postage.

—Petitions in preparation, or already prepared at *Wishbeach*, *Guildry of Fife*, *Reading*, *Neath*, *Southampton*, *Stafford*.

**NEWSPAPERS.**—Since the reduction of the duty, the annual consumption of stamps has risen in London from 19,000,000 (to speak in round numbers), to 29,000,000; in the English provincial towns from 8,000,000, to 14,000,000; in Scotland from 2,500,000 to 4,000,000, and in Ireland only from 5,100,000 to 5,200,000.

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*Hind or Royal Guard's Boot*—Parcels weighing 1 oz. One Shilling and Sixpence.

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# The Mutual Life Assurance Society,

INSTITUTED FOR

## ASSURANCES

ON

### LIVES AND SURVIVORSHIPS.

**OFFICE, 37, OLD JEWRY.**

"Cast in thy lot among us; let us all have one purse."—Proverbs, chap. i. v. 14.

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Extract from a Report of the Directors to a General Court of the Mutual Life Assurance Society, held on the 17th of January, 1838:—

"This society has already realized, beyond expectation, the excellent intentions of its founders, and holds out the fairest prospect of becoming, at no distant period, an object of national importance."

The success which has happily attended the establishment of this society, is attested by the progress it has made in public estimation, by its rapidly accumulating capital, and by the considerable sums which it has already been enabled to add by way of bonus to the policies of the assurers.

The sources of this prosperity are obvious. The society has neither a proprietary to support, nor any outlay of interest upon a borrowed capital, so that the entire profits are annually and unreservedly divided among the members.

In addition to the security of an ample accumulated capital, the Directors beg leave to draw the public attention to the following advantages, many of which are peculiar to this society; viz.:

Rates of premium as moderate as is consistent with the security of the assured, and with the objects of mutual assurance.

Immediate participation in the profits of the society.

Liberality in the management, and in all matters of detail, which are under the entire control of the members at large; the smallest policy (£50) giving qualification for a vote in the general courts.

Extensive limits of voyage and permission to reside any where within Europe.

At the last investigation of the society's affairs, the funds were found to be so considerable in proportion to the existing liabilities, that the general court was enabled to declare a bonus exceeding on an average of all the policies *two and a half per cent. upon the sums assured*, so that a policy effected for one thousand pounds,\* and upon which at least two premiums had been paid, would have an actual addition made thereunto of about £25 in case of its dropping between the 31st day of December, 1837, and the 31st of December, 1838, when a new division will take place.

TABLE I.

Showing the ANNUAL PREMIUMS required for the Assurance of £100 on a Single Life for the whole duration.

Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.	Age.	Annual Premium.
£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
15	1 15 7	26	2 6 2	38	3 3 3	49	4 10 8
15½	1 16 1	27	2 6 9	38½	3 4 4	50	4 12 7
16	1 16 6	27½	2 7 3	39	3 5 4	50½	4 14 10
16½	1 17 0	28	2 7 10	39½	3 6 5	51	4 17 1
17	1 17 5	28½	2 8 4	40	3 7 6	51½	4 19 1
17½	1 17 10	29	2 8 11	40½	3 8 8	52	5 0 0
18	1 18 3	29½	2 9 6	41	3 9 9	52½	5 2 7
18½	1 18 8	30	2 10 2	41½	3 10 9	53	5 5 3
19	1 19 1	30½	2 10 9	42	3 11 8	53½	5 7 5
19½	1 19 6	31	2 11 4	42½	3 12 8	54	5 9 7
20	1 19 11	31½	2 12 0	43	3 13 8	54½	5 12 0
20½	2 0 5	32	2 12 7	43½	3 14 9	55	5 14 4
21	2 0 10	32½	2 13 4	44	3 15 9	55½	5 16 9
21½	2 1 3	33	2 14 0	44½	3 16 10	56	5 19 2
22	2 1 8	33½	2 14 10	45	3 17 11	56½	6 1 10
22½	2 2 2	34	2 15 8	45½	3 19 1	57	6 4 6
23	2 2 7	34½	2 16 7	46	4 0 2	57½	6 7 3
23½	2 3 1	35	2 17 5	46½	4 1 5	58	6 10 1
24	2 3 6	35½	2 18 4	47	4 2 7	58½	6 13 4
24½	2 4 1	36	2 19 4	47½	4 3 10	59	6 16 1
25	2 4 7	36½	3 0 3	48	4 5 1	59½	6 19 1
25½	2 5 1	37	3 1 2	48½	4 6 11	60	7 2 0
26	2 5 7	37½	3 2 3	49	4 8 9		

**ON THE DUTY AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE ASSURANCE.**

The many benefits arising out of the rapidly increasing practice of Life Assurance, are already beginning to be both felt and acknowledged. It is indeed a subject which deserves and calls for the serious consideration of a very large portion of the community. To the middling and higher classes of society it affords many of those advantages which the legislature has extended to the lower orders by the establishment of Benefit Societies and Savings Banks. But, notwithstanding the gradually spreading intelligence on this and other subjects, it is still greatly to be feared that there are to be found many whose peculiar circumstances ought to have led them to adopt such laudable means of providing for their families, but who, nevertheless shut their eyes to the consequences of their deaths, and neglect, until it is too late, to remedy evils—for which their only consolation is, that they do not live to witness them. Every newspaper teems with appeals to the generosity of the Christian public, in behalf of widows and orphans left destitute by the sudden removal of a husband or parent on whose exertions depended their support. Let every father of a family bear in mind that he is imperatively called on, by every principle of Christianity as well as common humanity, to make at once, in the spring time of his life, the most ample provision that his circumstances will admit of, for those helpless beings whom it is his duty to support while he is alive, and no man knows when or at what hour he may be called away.

How very trifling a sum deducted from the ordinary expenses, nay, perhaps from the superfluities, of a family would serve to procure the desired provision, and how much peace of mind and security might be purchased with a few pounds! Procrastination in this case as in many others is often ruinous—we put off from day to day this needful duty until some sudden calamity overwhelms us or some rapid change in the state of our health debars us from the benefits of a Life Assurance.

Put not then that off until the morrow which may be done to-day, for death cometh like a thief in the night, and a good man leaveth an inheritance unto his children's children.

\* As the addition is in reality computed on the amount of the premiums paid, the gross sum given by way of bonus will vary a little in proportion to the age of the insured from the above average. It will in some cases be rather more, and in others rather less, than two and a half per cent.

† At the age of 30, a yearly payment of about £25 would secure the family of the Assurer in the event of his death, at the least £1000; and if he lived long enough to partake largely of the profits of the society perhaps as much more.



No Entrance Fee, nor charge for the Policy beyond the Stamp.  
Premiums may be paid yearly or half-yearly at the option of the Assurer.

Name and Profession of the Life to be assured  
Place and date of Birth  
Present Residence  
Age, Sum to be assured £, Term  
Reference for state of health to be made—to a Private friend to a Medical friend

**PETER HARDY, Esq.,**  
Actuary,  
(Mutual Life Assurance Office,)  
37, Old Jewry,

LONDON.

By whom the Assurance is to be made  
Has insurer had—  
Smallpox—Cowpox—Gout—Rupture—or other Disease?  
Parties desirous of effecting Assurances with this Society are requested to fill up, according to the printed directions, the accompanying form of proposal; and in order to save trouble and double postage, to tear off the same, and to transmit according to direction.  
Parties are requested to fold it so that the address may fall outside.

The next distribution of Profits will be on the 31st of December, 1838.

# The Post Circular,

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 9.]

THURSDAY, JULY 5.

[PRICE 6d.]

The House of Commons now sitting is appointed—  
“To inquire into the present rates and mode of charging postage, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made WITHOUT INJURY TO THE REVENUE; and for this purpose to examine specially into the mode recommended for charging and collecting postage, in a pamphlet published by Mr Rowland Hill.”

The plan proposed by Mr Hill is:—  
That all letters passing from one post town in the United Kingdom to another, be charged one penny or each half-ounce, to be paid in advance through the medium of stamped covers, or stamps, or that letters should be stamped when delivered at the Post-offices.

This system would introduce uniformity and simplicity.—

An easy and cheap collection of the Revenue.—  
Avoid a multiplicity of accounts kept at the Post-office.—

Save time in charging by pen and ink a varying rate on each letter, and in the delivery.

Avoid candle scrutiny into each letter to ascertain whether single or double, as at present, and consequent temptation to fraud.

The English Post-office Revenue has, during the last twenty years, slightly diminished.

The French Post-office Revenue has increased more than half since 1821.

The United States Post-office Revenue has more than tripled during the twenty years that ours has been nearly stationary.

The vast extent to which the trade of the country has increased within the last twenty years, must have

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

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

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

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

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

The average cost of managing the twopenny-post of London, notwithstanding the large allowance of weight, and the expensive manner in which the establishment is conducted, is only 34 per cent. on the receipts, or about two-thirds of a penny per letter.

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

These facts are stated that it may be seen upon what grounds the question of the reduction of postage is urged upon public attention,—but for a full view of this important subject, Mr Rowland Hill's pamphlet on Post-office reform should be read, which is published by Charles Knight and Co., 22 Ludgate street, London.

## NOTICE.

The Proprietors of the *London and Westminster Review* having kindly given leave to reprint the entire article on Postage which lately appeared in that periodical, the *Post Circular* changes its size for this number, in order to obtain the shape of a pamphlet, which is more convenient for binding and preservation. The friends of the cause of Postage are hereby enabled to circulate freely through the Post, a comprehensive statement of the question.—Copies for distribution may be purchased for 4s. the dozen. A still more detailed account of the evidence, prepared with great ability and in a manner both instructive and amusing, by Mr W. H. Ashurst, the Parliamentary Agent to the Mercantile Committee on Postage, has been published by Mr Hooper, and though filling nearly a hundred pages of small print, may be purchased for a shilling.

[Reprinted from the *London and Westminster Review*, No. LX, for April 1838.]

ART. VIII.—1. *First Report from the Select Committee on Postage, together with the Minutes of Evidence and Appendix.* Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 4th April, 1838.

2. *Post Office Reform.* By Rowland Hill. Third Edition.

THE post is justly regarded as one of the signs of civilization which especially present unequivocal and striking proofs of the mechanical co-operative, and moral progress of mankind. Mr Williams, the missionary, in his very interesting book on the South Sea Islands, mentions that he one day wanted, when engaged in some carpenter's work, a particular tool, the name of which he wrote with a piece of chalk on a chip, and then sent a native with it to his wife. When the simple islander found that the chip communicated the want and the required tool was given him, he thought the chip miraculous, held it up in his hands while he proclaimed its magic powers to his friends, and for many days wore it round his neck suspended by a string. Another savage once said that sending a letter was a good thing, because if a messenger was sent with a verbal communication he was sure to forget one half and tell the other. From the state indicated by these anecdotes to the state of matters in our improved post—the stride is so great that the latter seems perfection; a letter can be put into a small log-house, called a post-office in the backwoods of America, with almost moral certainty that it will be delivered safely and speedily where it is directed, to a humble peasant in the most remote village in Germany; and it is a daily occurrence for a sister in the remotest islands of Orkney to put a letter, the kind impulse of a morning, into the post, and it speeds away without hinderance or obstacle, borne night and day, for a few shillings, ceaselessly, until it is opened by her brother in the interior of India. These effects of civilization are so great and wonderful and recent, the regularity and safety, the convenience and dispatch, of the Post Office are so universally felt, that most people's minds are at first unprepared for the surprising improvements of which it is capable, and by which the letters from America to Germany, and from Orkney to India, may be carried with equal certainty and swiftness, while the cost of their carriage is reduced from shillings to farthings. Yet the fact is easily proved.

The present rates of postage are legacies of the late war as a means of meeting the expenses of which they were imposed. The great profits in every branch of trade during the war made

the public indifferent to the amount of the exactions—at least that part of the public who can make their complaints effectually heard—but since the reductions of profits there have been growing up, without any open declarations of hostility to the post, silently and universally, innumerable plans of evading it systematically. There existed, therefore, a public sympathy with the object of Mr Rowland Hill's pamphlet, which, the moment he appealed to it, displayed itself. Last session, just before which the pamphlet appeared, five petitions were presented to Parliament in favour of Post Office Reform, and during only part of the present session ninety-nine petitions, with 7,016 signatures, have been presented chiefly from the most intelligent classes of the community: and of this number a large proportion are petitions from corporate bodies or public meetings to which the *single* signature of the president or chairman is attached. The unwearied champion of Post Office Reform has been for a long time Mr Wallace, the Member for Greenock. That gentleman is, in many respects, a model of what a liberal Member of Parliament should be: and were there many such, the general estimation of the popular party would be far indeed from what it has sunk to. He has preferred to do a few things thoroughly rather than to fritter away his activity in trifling with many. Attempting no more than he could hope to succeed in, he has selected subjects which, from their novelty or unattractiveness, were not likely to be undertaken by others—chiefly the Post Office and the Reform of the Scotch Law—and with those he has gone forward, careless who opposed him, or whether anybody assisted him. To the Post Office officials he has made himself an object of unbounded abhorrence; to successive administrations, of sullen resistance: few in Parliament have given him aid or countenance, and the public long regarded his exertions with comparative indifference. As little effect was produced by the exposures and recommendations of persons invested with an official character. During the third part of a century commissions have been almost without intermission prosecuting investigations into the management of the Post Office.

Some petty improvements have been, indeed, made at the suggestion of the commissioners, but they have been good deeds of secrecy, one of the Post Office functionaries having actually said before the Parliamentary Committee that they would be very sorry if the public were informed about them.\*

This session the motion for a committee to inquire into the

\* Ev. 1586.

subject, which Mr Wallace had been induced to put off last session, received the sanction of Mr Spring Rice. We are too much accustomed to the efficacy of committees of the House of Commons as means of evasion and delay, not to fear some consequences of that sort in the present instance; but we believe that they will be prevented, and that the proceedings of the committee will be the fatal stroke to the present system of management of the Post Office monopoly. Immediately on its appointment a subscription was formed, in which the most eminent merchants of London, the Rothschilds, the Palmers, the Morrisons, without regard to politics, united for the purpose of submitting to the Parliamentary Committee evidence of the necessity for the desired changes in the Post Office system. They opened an extensive correspondence throughout the country, and the Post Office has been made helpful to its own reform by circulating a small newspaper entitled 'The Post Circular, or Advocate for a cheap, swift, and sure Post.' From these sources the information we present to our readers is derived, namely, from the 'Post Circular,' from the correspondence addressed to the Mercantile Committee, and from the Parliamentary evidence just printed.

The period is not very remote when the regulations of the Post Office, at least in respect to the rates of postage, were far more rational than at present.

When the carriage of letters first became a national concern, in the reign of Charles the Second, the rates of postage were fixed as follows:—

	Miles.	
Letter not exceeding 1 sheet, to or from any place not exceeding	80	- 2d.
_____ 2 sheets _____	80	- 4d.
_____ 1 sheet _____ above	80	- 3d.
_____ 2 sheets _____	80	- 6d.
_____ 1 sheet from London to Berwick		- 3d.
_____ from London to Dublin*		- 6d.

By the 9th Anne, c. 11, a penny was added to several of the rates previously established: a letter from London to Edinburgh was charged sixpence. But still by this statute letters were to be delivered within ten miles of London, Westminster, and Southwark for one penny. The additions subsequently made to the rates of postage appear in the following table of the rates in England, to which those of Scotland and Ireland are similar:—

\* Statutes of the Realm, vol. 5.

A TABLE, showing the SCALE of DISTANCES according to which the POSTAGE of GREAT BRITAIN is now charged, with the Rates levied for those Distances in the Years 1710, 1765, 1784, 1797, 1801, 1805, and 1812.

SCALE OF DISTANCES.	1710.	1765.	1784.	1797.	1801.	1805.	1812.	
ENGLAND.	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>	.	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>	
From any Post Office in England or Wales to any place not exceeding 15 miles from such office - -	3	1	2	3	3	4	4	
For any distance above 15 miles, and not exceeding 20 miles - - - - -	3	2	3	4	4	5	5	
Above 20 miles, and not exceeding 30 miles - -	3	2	3	4	4	5	6	
— 30 - - - - 50 — - -	3	3	4	5 <i>d.</i> between 30 and 60 miles. 6 <i>d.</i> between 60 and 100 miles. 7 <i>d.</i> between 100 and 150 miles. 8 <i>d.</i> above 150 miles.	5	6	7	
— 50 - - - - 80 — - -	3	3	4		6	7	8	
— 80 - - - - 120 — - -	4	4	5		7	8	9	
— 120 - - - - 170 — - -	4	4	5 <i>d.</i> under 150 m. 6 <i>d.</i> above 150 m.		8	8	9	10
— 170 - - - - 230 — - -	4	4	6		9	10	11	
— 230 - - - - 300 — - -	4	4	6	8	10	11	12	
— 300 - - - - 400 — - -	4	4	6	8	11	12	13	
— 400 - - - - 500 — - -	4	4	6	8	12	13	14	
And so on in proportion, the postage increasing progressively 1 <i>d.</i> for a single letter for every like excess of distance of 100 miles.								

We have no population tables so early as 1765, but we may safely assume that since that period the population of Great Britain has more than doubled, while her commerce, her industry, and the diffusion of elementary education (the circumstances which lead to increase of correspondence) have increased in a still greater proportion. If the postage rates of 1765 had continued, the revenue of the Post Office would naturally have more than doubled what it is; but after the rates had been increased 100, 200, and even 300 per cent., the revenue, instead of increasing, has fallen off.

The Post Office professes to charge every letter in proportion to the distance: under such a rule, postages, however extravagant in amount, must, one would think, be equal for equal distances, and could not possibly be higher between contiguous places than between distant ones. But the distance to which postage is proportioned is not reckoned, as in all other countries of Europe, in a direct line between the two places, but in any route, however circuitous, by which the mail carries the letter. These circuitous routes being very frequent, the anomalies produced are endless. To increase them come the penny-posts, and most perversely carry letters for 1*d.* from almost every post-town in the kingdom, distances for which the great establishment would charge four-times as much on the smallest letter—forty-times as much for some which the penny-posts will carry. According to a petition presented to the House of Commons from Renfrew, a letter of three ounces weight is carried from Renfrew to Lochwinnoch, a distance of fourteen miles, for 1*d.*, while a letter of the same weight carried from Paisley, or Renfrew, only half the distance, or seven miles, to Pollockshaws, would cost *four shillings!*

“At Aylesbury,” says a provincial paper,\* “we are called upon to pay 7*d.*, and sometimes 1*s.* 1*d.*, for the carriage of half-a-sheet of paper ten miles, while for eight miles we are charged but 2*d.*; in either case a carrier would carry the same for 1*d.*” The village of Brill, in Buckinghamshire, appears from the same paper to be an almost unique instance of extravagant postage: a letter from Oxford, twelve miles, is charged 11*d.*; from Aylesbury, fourteen miles, 1*s.* 1*d.*; from London, three times the distance, it is no more.

There is a cross-post from Wolverhampton through Dudley, Stourbridge, and other places; between Dudley and Stour-

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\* *Aylesbury News*.—“This place,” says the journalist, “with the vilages connected with it, contains a population of nearly 7,000, and the delivery of its correspondence is entrusted to an old man and woman, the latter actually incapable of reading the addresses.”



bridge this post passes through the village of Brierly Hill: the postage of a letter from Wolverhampton to Dudley is *4d.* (Mr Hill's pamphlet); but from Wolverhampton to Brierly Hill, some miles further on, it is only *1d.* From Atherstone to Measham, ten miles, postage *1d.*; from Atherstone to Coleshill, also ten miles, postage *6d.* Almost every intermediate anomaly between these extremes may be exemplified from the same neighbourhood, and Mr Richings, the clergyman of a neighbouring parish, has done it. From Atherstone to London, 108 miles, postage *9d.*; to Rugby, only twenty miles, it is *8d.*; to Birmingham, twenty miles, *7d.*; to Leicester, twenty-one miles, *6d.*, if the letter goes by Hinckley, the nearest way, it takes two days; but if expedition is required it must be sent by Northampton and Market Harborough, more than thrice the distance, for *8d.*, in one day; from Atherstone to Hinckley, eight miles, the postage is *4d.*, because the post offices are distant eight miles and a furlong, though the towns, from the end of one to the beginning of the other, are little more than seven miles apart. But this unreasonable tax may be escaped, by sending a letter under cover to a friend at Nuneaton, there being a penny-post from Atherstone to Nuneaton, and another from thence to Hinckley, but it occasions trouble and a delay, which can only be submitted to when a letter is of no consequence. "I wrote," says Mr Richings, "to the Post Office to have the postage to Hinckley reduced, but could not succeed, the distance being measured so nicely from one Post Office to another."

According to Mr Chaffey, a large manufacturer at Keinton, near Somerton, that neighbourhood is not behind Leicestershire in its singularities. From Keinton to Lovington, a distance of three miles, the postage is *10d.*, and the arduous journey requires two days; Butleigh to Keinton, also three miles, postage only *9d.*, time, two days, as before; Glastonbury to Keinton, same postage, same time, but the distance eight miles, which is a considerable acceleration; from Langport, nine miles, *7d.*; from Yeovil, twelve miles, *6d.*, or *9d.*, according to the route; Keinton to Cadbery, seven miles, *6d.*, *8d.*, or *10d.*; Weymouth to Cadbery, according to the same authority, thirty-three miles, postage *11d.*, "more than it would cost from London, 120 miles." Mr Chaffey adds—

"A poor cobbler, to whom I have just stated the matter, saw it in its right light in a moment, and replied, 'Why, sir, it seems to me, if they choose to take the letter you put in the Post Office for me, living only seven miles away, a long roundabout way of a hundred miles to suit their convenience, and be two days in the delivery of it, when your boy could run over with it in two hours, why I think

I ought to charge them with loss o' time, and not they make me pay four-times over and above what I ought."

From Ruthin, the central town of Denbighshire, to Denbigh, eight miles, 2*d.*; to Mold, only two miles further, 7*d.*; to Corwen, thirteen miles, the postage drops to 4*d.*; Llangollen, fifteen miles, 6*d.*; Wrexham, seventeen miles, 7*d.*; it is but 8*d.* to Liverpool, thirty-three miles, and but 9*d.* to Manchester, fifty-nine.

All these instances are selected from complaints made within the last few weeks. On the 15th of June, last year, the Post-Master-General promised, in the House of Lords, that "where letters are sent by a circuitous route there will be no extra charge." His Lordship has hitherto put off taking any steps to fulfil his promise. Colonel Maberly, eight months afterwards, estimates the cost of abolishing these circuitous routes at 100,000*l.* a year.

No less than 1973 towns in the United Kingdom have their penny-posts, which convey letters, in some places, to the distance of thirty-eight miles; London, too, had once its penny-post, but that day is gone by, and what is done where there are but few letters at the cost of a penny on each, costs twopence and threepence in London, where the number is immense, and the expenses upon each consequently insignificant.

The delays of the post are a no less copious subject of complaint, and have been mentioned before the Committee as a cause of the smuggling of letters even within the penny-posts. "The carriers (who are the smugglers) leave six times a day, whereas the penny-post leaves but once."\*

"I have a letter," says another witness†, "in my pocket, received this morning, written on Sunday at Glasgow; I had it an hour and a half sooner than I could have had it by the general post, and it cost me only twopence. I know the means by which it came."

"The mail," writes a correspondent from Bungay, "is ordered to be dispatched from this town at five o'clock in the afternoon, when it is conveyed to Scole Inn, a distance of 15 miles, where the letters are taken up to be conveyed to London at ten minutes past nine, thus giving four hours for 15 miles, and compelling the whole town to post their letters two hours, at the least, earlier than is needful, and shutting them out from advantages which, in matters of trade, are of the greatest moment—the power of communicating with their correspondents to the last practicable minute before the departure of the mail.

"Twice within the last month the mail was dispatched from hence

\* Ev. 5746.

† Mr John Reid,—Evidence, 5224.

ten minutes sooner even than the time I have mentioned, the consequence has been that tradesmen have been *obliged to send messengers on foot, who, starting after the mail cart had departed*, reached Scole long before the mail arrived which would receive the bags from the cart.

“Thus, you see, between Bungay and Scole Inn ‘post haste’ means a snail’s gallop, and the accommodation of the Post Office is converted into a monopoly in its worst form, namely, heavy charges for the business done, and that done badly.”

At Leeds, a resident within five minutes’ walk of the Post Office complains, that letters which arrive at two in the afternoon are never delivered before seven, and those which arrive at five not till late the next morning. The delays of the threepenny post are notorious. A letter posted at Chelsea after 4 p.m. to pass to Brompton, three quarters of a mile, occupies 22 hours in delivery, and travels nearly 8 miles. A letter written at Uxbridge after the close of the Post Office on Friday night, would not be delivered at Gravesend, a distance of less than 40 miles, earlier than Tuesday morning. “If two letters,” says Mr Hill, “were put into the proper district receiving-houses in London, between five and six o’clock in the evening, one addressed to Highgate, the other to Wolverhampton (which lies 120 miles further along the same road), the Wolverhampton letter would be delivered first.” Dr Lardner shows\* that under some circumstances it takes longer to convey a letter from Hammersmith to London than from London to Bristol or Birmingham: the one, unless put in before four in the afternoon, will not be delivered till noon the next day: the other, put in at a quarter before seven, will be delivered at nine or ten. Dr Lardner demands that the twopenny-post should be delivered hourly instead of every two hours, and the threepenny in proportion.

The negligence of the Post Office in availing itself of the accelerated modes of conveyance may be seen in the evidence of one of the officials, the Surveyor for the Home District.†

“When I was at Margate the postmaster made an observation to me, that he was surprised that, in the season when the population was so much increased, the postage did not increase in proportion, and he seemed to think that it was in consequence of some illegal means of conveyance by the steam-packets.

“Do you avail yourselves of the steam-packets between Margate and London for the conveyance of letters?—No. *The Post Office does not avail itself of the steam-packets in the Thames only for the conveyance of the foreign mails.*

“How long is the steam-packet passing between London and Margate?—*I think about seven hours.*

\* Ev. 5520.

† Ev. 4708.

“How long are the letters by mail coming from London to Margate?—*Ten hours.*”

The letters from London to Stokeferry, in Norfolk, are brought by the Lynn mail, which formerly passed through that place, and gave its inhabitants, at the cost of *5d.* postage, a daily communication with Lynn; but the route of the Lynn mail having been changed, and the Stokeferry letters which it still brings as far as Newmarket, being carried from thence to Stokeferry in a cart which goes no further, the communication from Stokeferry to Lynn, fourteen miles distant, is almost cut off. Instead of going and returning within the day, as formerly, a letter cannot now leave Stokeferry before the evening, goes round by Newmarket and Cambridge, and arrives in Lynn next morning. The answer cannot be obtained before the following morning, that is to say, in 36 instead of 12 hours, and the postage is no longer *5d.* but *9d.*, the postage of a letter from London. Stokeferry, though a small place, is a market town, having a navigable river to Lynn, and several large malting and other establishments in the neighbourhood requiring a constant communication with their nearest shipping port: this would naturally, and did formerly, produce an extensive correspondence between the two places, until the change to a slow and dear post drove it into illegal channels.

Examples might be multiplied almost without limit; but we pass to another topic.

It appears from a Parliamentary paper\* that, between the years 1830 and 1837, inclosures in letters to the value of 9329*l.* 8*s.* 5*d.* “had been secreted or purloined by persons in the employment of the Post Office department.” But this is a trifle to the real amount: the same return also shows, that from 1829 to 1837, 10,293 applications were made to the Post Office for letters undelivered, said to contain property to the amount of 618,950*l.*, besides 696 cases in which the amount was not stated.

Lord Lichfield admitted, in the House of Lords,† that upwards of 400,000*l.* of the 618,950*l.* had been returned, a fact which proves that, to that extent at least, the applications were well founded. Whilst we are writing, the solicitors of the London and Edinburgh Post Offices are prosecuting investigations into a system of theft in the Post Office at Glasgow, only now found out, though long suspected and hitherto stoutly denied.

\* No. 497, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, 10th July, 1837.

† Nov. 30th, 1837.

Six clerks and stampers have been suspended, and one, it is said, committed to prison.\*

For these thefts the Post Office is not legally responsible. The person whose property is abstracted has no remedy. The Glasgow discoveries seem, however, to have, on this one point, awakened the Government from their inactivity, and on the 11th of April Mr Spring Rice announced that the Post Office was about to be made responsible for registered letters. We trust Mr Wallace will hold him to his word.

But these grievances, considerable as they are in themselves, sink into insignificance when compared with the master-grievance, the inordinately high rates of postage. The manner in which this evil spreads its fibres through all the most important national interests; the extraordinary amount of its mischievous influence on the morals of the country, on literature and science, on commerce, and on the revenue itself, are little dreamt of by politicians, or the public in general, and could never have been known until arrangements on a large scale were set on foot for collecting evidence of it. On these points it is that the results of the Parliamentary investigation have been the most unlooked for, and the most instructive; and we need do no more than repeat the plain unvarnished tale which has been delivered before the committee.

First, as to the effect on public morals—especially the morals of the most numerous class, which is everywhere the poorest.

The rates of postage suppress the correspondence of all classes, except the very highest, who are exempted from them, and where not exempted, alleviated by means of franks; but they press heaviest, where the means of exemption and alleviation are least, on the poorest classes. Here they positively amount to all but complete suppression. The average of weekly wages among the agricultural population is not more than from six to ten shillings. To a man who has a hundred pounds a-week ten

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\* A local paper publishes the following details of the occurrences which led to the discovery:—"About ten days ago a letter, inclosing a 10*l.* note of the Bank of England, arrived at our Post Office from Greenock. The letter reached its destination, but the money was gone. About the same period a letter was put into the Post Office here for Dumbarton, inclosing a 10*l.* note of the Royal Bank, and a 6*l.* note, but of what bank we cannot tell. This letter also reached its destination; but subsequent inquiry has brought out the fact, that the 10*l.* had been abstracted, and the English Bank note, taken from the Greenock letter, formerly mentioned, placed in its stead. This circumstance proved at once that both letters must have been opened in the Glasgow Post Office; and the operation of the Bank of England note in room of the note belonging to the Royal Bank is easily explained, when we consider that the possession of the former was more likely to have led to detection than the latter."

pounds for the postage of a letter would only be as much as a shilling is to an agricultural labourer. Let Mr Spring Rice, or any other of the ministry, imagine they had, instead of an unlimited power of franking, that is, of sending letters at the expense of the poorer classes, to pay ten pounds for every letter they received; and often could not for less learn whether their nearest relative, father, mother, son, or daughter, was dead or alive, and they will perceive how powerfully the rates of postage act in suppressing the interchange of kind feelings among the poor, and consequently as a bar to the formation of the feelings themselves.

“I have had conversation,” says a tradesman (4247) “with some of our poor labouring classes; the families are more separated now than they used to be, and it is utterly impossible for them to correspond. I had an instance the other day, in conversation with our postman, which was quite spontaneous on his part, without being asked the question, and had no reference to my appearance before this committee: my wife was paying for a letter, and she made a remark as to the cost: his reply was, Yes, it is a good thing you can afford to pay it, for I assure you my heart bleeds when I take letters to the poor. When I take letters to them, I have known them go and pawn their goods to pay for the postage of a letter, when they have wished to have it; that is a matter which has frequently occurred. Then, another mode by which the poor are separated is under the provisions of the Poor Law Act, which promotes emigration from the agricultural to manufacturing districts; this applies to them peculiarly; they must necessarily be anxious to communicate with their friends; then the increased education among the poor, of course, produces a greater desire to communicate their thoughts by letter correspondence.

“(4249). The committee are to understand that, in consequence of your intimate knowledge of the habits of the labouring classes in your own trade, and the town you speak of, they find that the present rates of postage are not only inconvenient, but nearly a bar to keeping up a correspondence with members of their own families?—I can speak to that, for I associate a good deal with the intelligent portion of the working classes, and I know that is the case; I have a man in my own employ, a native of Glasgow (our workmen are in better circumstances than those in other trades), he has frequent letters, which are all brought to me, because he has not the money, and I deduct the postage from his wages; his letters are always 1s. 1½d., an amount which would supply him with a dinner, two, three, or four!

A merchant from Manchester corroborates this statement. “Before the late act of labour some time since, we imported (the first experiment of the kind) a number of labourers from Bledlow,



Bucks. One of them naturally and properly wrote to his father, announcing his arrival and comfortable establishment. His father replied that he was happy to hear of his well doing, *but that his letter had cost a shilling*, and that he must be aware that this was a sum he could not pay *twice*. To a man earning 6s. or 7s. weekly the present rate of postage is prohibitory, and also *cruel*, because, but for Government meddling, it seems that the poor, that is, the great bulk of the population, might enjoy the pleasure, convenience, and consolation of communicating with absent relatives, as readily as the rich now do."

"I am of opinion," says a resident at Liverpool, "that there exist large classes of the inhabitants of this borough who are totally precluded from correspondence in consequence of the high rate of postage; and I beg to mention in particular 50,000 emigrants from Ireland, who are living here, but whose wages are so low that they are almost entirely precluded from communication by letter with their early friends and relations."

"I have," says Mr R. Pearson (5443) "about 200 sailors in my own employment, belonging to my own vessels, and I know that they never think of writing to their friends. I do not believe one sailor out of twenty ever thinks of writing to his friends; and I know very well they would be glad to do it, but they cannot afford it. The expense of a single letter to the north is very nearly equal to the wages of a full seaman, and exceeds the wages of an apprentice. The only way in which they can communicate with their friends is by desiring their friends to call on the ship-owner or agent; and they have to travel several miles to do that sometimes."

The following communication, which we have been obliged unwillingly to abridge, is from a benevolent member of that most useful order of society—the working clergy:—

"Glad as I should be to see a great reduction of postage effected on my own account, I hail such a proposition with yet heartier good-will *for the sake of the poorer classes*, the extent of whose correspondence with their friends I know is curtailed most seriously by the amount of the present tax on letters. When the younger members of a family have gone to a distance from their homes, either as servants or apprentices, communication by letter is very little carried on, solely because the sum required for postage is one which a common labouring man can very ill spare. It is necessary to have much personal intercourse with the poor before one learns what is the value to them of every sixpence, and how exceedingly inconvenient is any unexpected call of that amount or more, when their weekly earnings are regularly expended as they are received upon the actual necessities of life; and it is only by an effort that any sum is laid by to supply clothing, or provide for the quarter's rent, or meet any extraordinary demand upon their resources. That the

limited measure of intercourse does not arise from decay of affection and want of interest, is quite evident from the terms in which the absent members are talked of, from the value set upon a letter when it comes (which the minister, or other friend who visits the poor at their homes, has frequently brought before him, from the circumstance of their frequently producing the last precious sheet, and begging he will read it), and yet more from the eagerness to write which the offer to convey a letter gratuitously calls forth whenever it is made. Living as I do, in a provincial town a day's journey from London, I have been the means of settling the daughters of some of my parishioners with friends in or near London. One is a housemaid in my father's house, another in my brother's. When I was in town the other day I had packets entrusted to me for both of these, as also from a third living with a friend, to bring to their parents; but many a week, or month probably will elapse, unless a similar opportunity should occur, before another letter is sent. In the same manner, when I am going to London, or my town friends are returning thither, a letter from the parents is almost sure to be forthcoming. I find, too, the practice prevails most extensively of getting anybody who is going to town, friend or stranger, if he be but a neighbour, to call and see the absentee, and take or bring a letter. In fact, they seem on the look-out for means of communication free of expense; whereas, in a common way, it is only upon some emergency, when information of importance has to be conveyed without loss of time, that they have recourse to the Post Office. Of course, intercourse that is thus carried on must be very precarious; and must be quite another thing from that which prevails among near relations when there is nothing to prevent their writing as often as they please. The moral advantages of frequent communication by letter, under such circumstances, I rate very highly; as one of the best securities for good conduct, where young people have been well brought up, is the preservation of home feelings in all their freshness, and the nurturing and cherishing of all the pure and wholesome influences that belong to the family relations. Give me a girl who left the parent's roof pure, and as long as she writes freely to her mother, I shall scarcely fear for her virtue. Give me a youth who finds a pleasure in devoting a spare half-hour in the evening to the sister whom he has left behind him, and though he be a hundred miles off, there is a chain upon him, which, if it does not hold him back from evil, will check him in the pursuit of it. Now when one considers the field to which these observations refer, the immense scale upon which the enormous tax upon letters is working mischief, in separating the nearest friends, and insulating, during the most critical period of life, those who want every help to strengthen them against temptation, I really feel that the *economical* part of the question is quite superseded by the *moral* part; and even if the million and a half of revenue were sacrificed, the



gain would be immense. Nobody hates more than I do the common outcry against taxation. As a nation, we do not pay dearly for our social comforts and blessings; on the contrary, they would be cheaply purchased if we had much more to pay for them. But it is unwise, nay, I must say it is unchristian, for a legislature to say to a whole people, 'You shall speak to your friends, or hear from them, only through the state-trumpet,' and at the same time to take for every message it conveys a sum immensely greater than the cost of transmission."

"It appears," says a late number of the 'Sussex Express,' "that there are 400 families in the parish of Goudhurst too poor to receive letters at the present rate of postage."

Mr Thornely, M.P. for Wolverhampton, says—"I was surprised to learn at the Wolverhampton Post Office how many letters are detained for poor people until they can raise the amount of postage. The letter-carriers offer them in the first instance, and then they remain in the Post Office, perhaps two or three weeks, till the postage can be raised."

The class several degrees above the lowest, of shopkeepers' apprentices, warehousemen, clerks, and the like, peculiarly exhibit the effects of correspondence on morals. The superintendent of a large establishment in the city of London, which has 140 persons of this class in it, declared before the committee\* that all of these were in habits of frequent correspondence with their friends, transmitting the letters in the parcels which are sent out by the establishment. Another witness has often seen his clerks, who have to work for twelve or fifteen hours a day, snatching a few moments of leisure to write a little, and returning to their task leaving the unfinished letter covered, to be advanced somewhat further at the next opportunity. Persons of this class, who have not the means of sending their letters gratuitously, are often heard to lament the privation; a young man, an usher, who had not received a letter from his friends above once in six months, though he had seven or eight brothers and sisters, was asked how often he would receive one if the postage were reduced to a penny,—“He said he would be happy to receive and would send off one a week.”† A letter to a member of the Mercantile Committee states the case of one of that most useful class of the community, the dissenting ministers, whose family of ten children is scattered over all parts of the kingdom.

“For instance, his eldest son resides at a town from whence the postage each way is one shilling, *that is two shillings!* He has a daughter in another county, from whence the single postage is *nine pence* (and observe those letters are sent for the convenience of the

\* Ev. 4153.

† Ev. 3963.

Post Office a number of miles *round the country*, and the Post Office charges for the distance it *affects* to carry them). He has a son and daughter at —, the county town, at the distance of thirty-nine miles (from whence the postage is seven pence). You, my dear friend, who know Mr —, are aware that this family have been trained up from their childhood to give instruction to the children of the poor wherever they are placed; and in all places where they are located, they are cheerfully and intelligently employed in giving Sunday school and religious instruction to the children of the poor families in their neighbourhoods. Suppose these children had a power to communicate a slight thought, originating in a changed aspect, or some other circumstance, of some one who had hitherto been wayward, whose habits had been changed—who had turned from sullenness to cheerfulness, and fierce defiance to placid and beautiful obedience. These are scenes which, I can assure you, frequently come under our observation in these towns, arising, we hope and believe, from the example and precepts of those young people who undertake the gratuitous task of instructing them. You must try and imagine what that result would be if this family of children were thus permitted to communicate; no one can do it so well as yourself, you know that a simple and humble thought has often led to the most great and powerful results. The Post Office tax entirely shuts out the communication of mind between this amiable and affectionate family, and whenever they do write to their parents, or one another, they sit down under the idea that they must write a *letter* that their father may think *worth the postage*. The short line expressed from the heart, at the moment, would be worth twenty such letters! The government by such a course is taking the most effectual step to estrange from each other the very best members of the community.

“With regard to my own family—of my nine children, one son is engaged in business in London, another is studying at the London University, and another is at school in Worcestershire, and I will not insult the understanding of the committee by supposing they do not feel the immense importance of the rapid, quiet, and cheap communication of a father with his children.”

Those who have opportunities of judging of the moral progress of young persons of this class know well that when the son becomes indifferent to correspondence with his family, when his letters are short and seldom, and when the daughter, absent to earn her livelihood, ceases to be regular and long in her letters to her mother—the moral destruction of the child is likely if not near, and society, which has the ready treadmill for the dishonest clerk and universal infamy for the fallen girl, owes it to itself and to justice to remove every barrier between the mind of the boy and the father, the heart of the daughter and the moral precepts of her mother.

It is not only by the suppression of correspondence among the poor that the cause of moral improvement suffers from high postage; but also by the effect in crippling the operations of religious and philanthropic societies. Few have any conception of this evil, except those who, from their situation as officers and active friends, have painfully witnessed it. Upon this subject, one of the officers of an important institution thus writes in answer to a communication from the Mercantile Committee on postage:—

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

Wherever, in fact, numbers of persons, scattered in various places, co-operate or would be willing to co-operate for any beneficial purpose, high postage meets them, and adds so to the expensiveness of the operation as always to set limits to it, and often to thwart it entirely. All scientific societies feel this. Mr Thomas Webster, Secretary to the Institution of Civil Engineers, forcibly illustrates the influence of high postage on the progress of science. Subjects are constantly discussed in his society; accurate information on which can be procured only by writing to a great number of persons.

“For instance, during the last year the subject of cements was discussed; the manufacture of artificial cements and the manufacture of natural cements. It was of great importance to ascertain the nature of the cements in different parts of the country; how they were compounded, what were their relative ingredients. Another subject was the wear of locomotives and the wear of railways. All the data and facts respecting the wear of railways, the different speeds of engines, and general details on the subject. Other subjects were, the strength of materials for buildings—respecting the generation of steam, as to the quantity of steam which could be produced by a certain quantity of coals, as to the elastic force when steam was expanded—the duty of Cornish engines, that is, the work done by a certain quantity of fuel—the blasting of rocks, and many others. On each of these subjects the society would have circulated questions to all parts of the kingdom had not the postage prevented.”

Mr Richard Taylor, the printer and editor of the 'Philosophical Magazine,' shows\* the effect of postage upon scientific journals. The Post Office charges are often a large portion of the expenses of such publications. The contributions to them are numerous and short, coming from persons scattered over all parts of the United Kingdom and even of the world, and every one of these communications pays a large sum to the Post Office, for the correspondence previous to it, for itself and its enclosures, sometimes subjecting it to treble and quadruple postage, for discussions by letter with the editor, and for the transmission of proof sheets and revises. The present rates of postage are, in the opinion of the same witness, a serious impediment to the interchange of thought among scientific men, many of whom are in very humble circumstances. With cheap postage "men of science would communicate by post as freely as they converse together when they have the means of meeting;" and would be "anxious to communicate to the public, at the instant, whatever they discover, or to enter into the discussion of any new topic as rapidly as possible."

On the influence of postage in impeding the progress of literary undertakings, several of the most enterprising publishers have given striking evidence. Mr Parker, publisher to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, says—†

"I would beg to speak of the great inconvenience we receive in the transmission of sheets by the general post; we are obliged to put the author to the inconvenience of reading a proof without cutting it up, or we shall incur the charge of double postage. I am printing two or three works: on one of which the postage, I calculate, would come to 20*l.*, but I am relieved from that by the kindness of a gentleman in one of the public departments, who has arranged with the editor to frank the letters; on another which I am printing I communicate with a gentleman on the Western Circuit. I received one packet this morning, 11*d.*, and there will be 11*d.* for the return packet, that amounts to 7½ per cent. on the compositor's wages. There are two other works I am about to commence, the authors of which are both in Cornwall, and I find that the postage on those sheets will amount to 12 per cent. on the composition; of course I shall devise some means of sending them if I cannot get them franked, for that is an expense we cannot bear."

A learned polyglottist writes to the Mercantile Committee:

"Should a work be printed in Hebrew, Sanscrit, or other learned language, and the author or editor reside at Oxford, a proof sheet, with its cover, is double postage, the author *cuts open* the sheet to read it, it is returned,—treble postage,—a *revise*, with the

\* Ev. 4477.

† Ev. 4934.

first sheet, is sent down and *again* returned. Thus far on each sheet the expense is heavy, and it admits a remedy by parcels, but another grievous inconvenience is created, the printer or bookseller is induced not to send a revise, and trusts to an inferior editor or reader on the spot, whereby errors are made which would have been avoided, had not the weight of postage charges made a barrier. The talents and industry and accuracy of the English scholar are not inferior to a German; and *with light postage* England would take its proper station in Europe as a literary nation. Let us not be contented with our commercial pre-eminence, for should your endeavours be successful English books, now admitted to be the most beautiful, would then have the merit of being the most accurate."

Mr Charles Knight,\* Mr Whittaker,† and others, give evidence to the same effect, and in cases with which we are ourselves acquainted, the expenses of the transmission of single articles have been counted by pounds: though we must admit with Mr Parker that this expense is in a still greater number of cases evaded by franks.

In demanding, however, a low postage for the sake of literature and science, we are pleading in behalf of that which the Government of this country has never yet thought worthy of any fostering care; and if a tender concern is sometimes shown for the morals of the people, it is chiefly when a case has to be made out for the Church, or against beershops, or Trades Unions. But commerce, that is an object to which all interests except that of the all-powerful Squirearchy are accustomed to yield: one half of our legislation is intended, or professes to be intended, for its benefit; and to promote it, and not the revenue, was the avowed purpose for which the Post Office was established. But its exactions now press so heavily upon the trade of the country that many commercial transactions could not be carried on at all without its systematic evasion.

Mr W. M. Christie says ‡ that the present rate of postage is "a heavy burthen on his business by swelling trade charges largely and unreasonably"—he has no doubt § that it "prevents the transmission of small orders." Mr L. F. de Porquet || explains how this takes place: If his correspondents could send an order for one copy of a book, at an expense of 1*d.*, "they would desire me to leave that book with one of their correspondents in London, who generally send them a parcel once or twice a week; but as that note, requesting me to send a three and sixpenny or an eighteenpenny book, would cost me 7*d.* or 9*d.*,

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\* Ev. 3225.

† Ev. 3768.

‡ Ev. 3466.

§ Ev. 3382.

|| Ev. 3930.

they do not send it, so that by that I lose the sale of some thousands in the course of a year. At a *1d.* postage these orders would assuredly be sent direct."

Mr M. Brankston, superintendent of the establishment of Messrs Leaf, Coles, and Co., says—\*

"It is an important thing to a poor tradesman to be able to say to his customer, I have such and such goods shipped by such a steamer: I shall have them by such a day. But they would rather do anything than pay the charge of the Post Office. I know the feelings of our customers generally. There is a feeling of something like disgust at the Post Office charges."

Mr Wright, a partner in Messrs Warren's blacking manufactory, speaks† to the convenience it would be to him to hear daily the progress of his travellers through the various towns and villages, an accommodation of which the high rates of postage deprive him.

Mr R. Pearson, wharfinger, enters into the following particulars as to the suppression of mercantile correspondence by excessive postage:—‡

"One part of my correspondence consists in advising my agents of the shipment of goods; formerly, when we did not care so much about the expense of postage, we used to send those advices every night, now I send them only once for each ship. Another kind of correspondence is the advices of the arrivals of ships; I used to direct the captains to advise upon their arrival: instead of that now I direct my agent to send me a weekly list of arrivals; that is on account of the expense of postage. Another is what I call special advices; the consignees of goods which I shipped, a great many of them desired me to send them special advice of every shipment of goods, if it were considerable, I now send only one. There is a great decrease under those heads; that is independent of my ordinary correspondence; the decrease of that I cannot so easily calculate, it is not so easily ascertainable; but I am quite sure it is very greatly reduced from abstaining from answering questions that are not of great magnitude."

He adds,§

"We have frequently middle-men between the buyer and seller, and are placed in very delicate and difficult situations, as we often find to our cost; if a ship is lost, there is immediately an inquiry made, both by the shipper and consignee, whether the middle-man is in fault. I am often obliged to ship goods under doubtful instructions, which I should not do if I could afford to engage in more correspondence."

\* Ev. 4091.

† Ev. 3906.

‡ Ev. 5412.

§ Ev. 5472.

“You have alluded,” said the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee to a witness,\*

“You have alluded to the inconvenience of a high rate of postage to the smaller manufacturers; can you adduce any particular instance of the effect of the present rates of postage upon them? I can. I know of orders which have been entirely omitted to be executed in consequence of it. I may allude to one which I have in my mind now, dated the 2d of January, which I have been waiting for an opportunity of sending. In that case the goods had been ordered from America; the person so ordering them had occasion to write to another manufacturing town, and they enclosed it in the order for the town in which I reside, and it amounted to so small a sum that the order could not be executed without a loss to the manufacturer and the merchant.

“Then, in point of fact, the order has not been forwarded at all?—It has not.”

But the most striking testimony to the point is from Mr Dillon, the well-known and active partner in Mr Morrison’s house:—

“A case occurs to me (says Mr Dillon) which will show the oppressive nature of the postage between London and Edinburgh: for example—I have a bill here upon Edinburgh for 25*l.*, and if that were our only transaction, or if it were the transaction of a small tradesman, having no other, he must send that bill to a banker in Edinburgh, which would be a double postage; he would receive another bill upon London in exchange, which would be another double postage, and he is bound, by the course of business, to send a letter of advice; that would be five postages of 1*s.* 1½*d.* each, incurred upon a two-months’ bill of 25*l.* In all probability there would be a sixth postage, in acknowledgment to the banker. This amounts to more upon a two months’ bill of 25*l.* than the discount of the bill for the time.”

“I had a general impression (continues Mr Dillon) that the objection to postage operated very strongly indeed to prevent the writing of letters, but I had no idea of the number of cases which present themselves in the course of our correspondence. With the permission of the committee I will read extracts from some letters now before me, which may be taken as samples of the objections entertained by many persons to the expense of postage. The first is a letter dated Shrewsbury, 27th May, 1837:—‘Be good enough to pass the above draft for 20*l.* to my credit, and let some one call at ———, St Paul’s churchyard, to acknowledge the receipt: *our object is to save the postage.*’ The second is a letter dated St Austell, 31st Dec., 1837: ‘Will you be kind enough to cause the order on the other side to be delivered to ———, Cheap-

\* Ev. 2353.

side: *the amount would not be worth a postage to them.*' The third is 'Tonbridge, 3rd July, 1837, with a check: Please indorse the check,' intending this as a receipt, to save the necessity of an acknowledgment. The fourth is a letter dated Cambridge, 1st June, 1837, relative to a bill sent for acceptance, 148*l.* 13*s.* 9*d.* The acceptor adds, 'I had a parcel from you yesterday: *why not save me postage?*' The fifth is a letter dated Marylebone, 1st June, 1837: 'Mr E. M. requests me to say that you may draw on him, to be accepted by me by procuracy of Mr M. in order to *save the expense and trouble of sending the bill to ———.*' The sixth is a letter dated Diss, 2nd June, 1837: 'When you *send* to me have the goodness to *send* me an account of C<sup>r</sup> goods, 9*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*, as I cannot make it correct.' The seventh is dated Belfast, 16th June, 1837: 'Annexed we hand you a bank order for 232*l.* 10*s.* to settle as above. You will please retire our bill to you, due on the 20th, and please *lay it aside* until an opportunity offers of returning it *free of postage.*' The next is dated Jersey, 12th June, 1837: 'The enclosed 30*l.* you will please get accepted immediately, and placed to the credit of our account. In sending the acknowledgment please include our last invoice; as also our statement of account, all on a single *sheet of paper, to save double postage.*' The last I shall adduce is dated Liverpool, 1st Feb., 1837: 'If you can forward me an acknowledgment free, well: if not, do not put me to expense, as I have *no eleven-pences to spare for the dead sea of the Exchequer.*'"

The extent to which smuggling is carried in letters no one, we venture to say, has ever yet dreamt of; smuggling which, in a free country, and where the laws profess to be the embodied and established will of the people themselves, is the mode in which the people express generally the injustice of their own enactments, and by so doing contemn and disgrace alike themselves, their legislators, and their rulers. This vice—one of the most anarchical of all the social vices, and one of which bad laws and bad rule are sufficiently productive—is carried on to illimitable and incalculable extent, by men whose characters receive not the slightest stain from it; and avowed by them, well knowing that there perhaps does not exist a single man in the whole realm entitled to blame them for it, by being himself guiltless. However the universality of the practice and the badness of existing laws may excuse it, our legislators and governors should bear it in mind that this vice, for the existence of which the supporters of the bad laws make themselves responsible, bears the aspect each of them fraught with measureless evil—it is a universal contemning of authority—it is a habitual violation of law, and it is an education in fraud which spreads like a leprosy through every rank and to every member of the community. The laws ought to educate the people to order and obedience; the Post Office



laws educate every man, woman, and child, to evasion and disobedience.

The Post Office authorities themselves declare the existence of this great evil. Mr J. W. Sebright, Post Office surveyor, and Mr Edward S. Lees, secretary to the General Post, Edinburgh, join in saying that all classes, the merchant and the private individual alike, adopt every means of evasion that offers itself, by coach, by carriers, and private hands.

The Postmaster of Liverpool says—

“I am persuaded also that many letters are illegally sent to Liverpool in parcels, in order to be forwarded from this port by ships to places abroad; and this I believe prevails to a considerable extent, for out of the number of ship-letters inwards, received at this office from places abroad, in one year, 370,000 (exclusive of those for Liverpool) are forwarded by the General Posts, whilst only 78,000 are returned through this office to be sent in ship-letter mails outwards, showing that a vast number must find their way to Liverpool through other channels, as the masters of vessels assure me that the number of letters conveyed outwards is quite equal to the number brought inwards.”

The Postmaster of Exeter has “little doubt that more letters within the distance of twenty miles are conveyed illegally than through the medium of the Post Office.”

According to the Postmaster of Dublin, “every species of contrivance that ingenuity can devise is resorted to for the purpose of evading the payment of postage. It exceeds any idea persons in general may have formed of it. In May, 1837, a warrant was issued against Patrick Gill, a carrier, who travelled regularly between Granard and Dublin, and on his person were found fifty-seven letters directed to persons in Dublin, which he had collected on the road.”

Colonel Maberly, the secretary to the Post Office, admits the existence of evasion, but announces a very novel opinion connected with it. He says, “there always must be evasion, inasmuch as the smuggler must always beat the Post Office, whatever rate of postage is imposed.”\* “For the postage cannot be reduced to that price that the smuggler will not compete with us, and at an immense profit.”† There is doubtless truth in this, for there always will be a considerable number of letters which can be delivered for nothing, and also some which may be delivered for less than a penny. This fact is unanswerable against a reduction which shall stop at less than a penny; but the superiority of the Post Office lies in stability, regularity, security, and must also be extended to speed: and if, with a superiority

\* Ev. 2889.

† Ev. 2942.

in all these things, when the contest of cheapness is reduced to farthings and fractions, the Post Office does not beat the smuggler, so as to annihilate his trade as a trade, it will be extraordinary indeed. Besides, Colonel Maberly's argument only goes to show that the price ought to be less than a penny if necessary to defeat the smuggler. We have called his opinion a novel one, because it assumes that in letter-carrying that will hold which holds in nothing else—that a large capital doing business on a large scale cannot compete with a small capital working on a limited scale.

Here are instances which indicate, where complete statement would amount to infinitude, the extent of evasion. At the Jerusalem and South American Coffee Houses letters for all parts of the world are received at three-pence each. There is a ship-broker, in London, known to Mr T. Lawrence,\* who collects letters for North America, and the letters collected for several of the ships have been enough to load a cab. About 4,000 go by each ship without passing the Post Office.† The Messrs Baring “were in the habit of sending 200 letters each week in boxes, from London, to be put on board the American packets at Liverpool.”—(195. 419.)

An American merchant,‡ in 1836, despatched 2,068 letters by the post, and 5,861 by other means. The latter were despatched by carriers, who were paid a penny for each. Some of these carriers make the collection and distribution of letters their *sole* business. They employ little girls and old women to collect the letters, who call three times a week, on what are called “carriers' evenings;” they convey the letters by their own stage-carts or waggons, or travel expressly by the mail or stage-coaches with them.

This system is very extensive in a neighbourhood the population of which is between 3 and 500,000 persons. The same carriers bring back letters. The witness has known of the practice since 1807. The letters do not miscarry—money is inclosed in them, and this mode of transmission is considered perfectly safe. The same system is known to prevail in other towns of similar magnitude. “I made,” says this witness,§ “a calculation some time ago by inquiries from these poor manufacturers, and I found that one of them, when in full work, will earn 40s. a week, and they would receive upon an average 30 orders at 4d. a-piece, if they went through the Post Office, which would be a tax of 25 per cent. upon their earnings—instead of which, in the way they are sent, it is only 6¼ per cent.” A petition to Parliament was talked of, but not adopted—because “they were afraid Parliament would not make a sufficient reduction to meet the evil; they were very well off as they were” (by means of their illegal private post) “and did not

\* Ev. 995.

† Ev. 1043.

‡ Ev. 2251, &c.

§ Ev. 2341.

wish to make complaints about it, unless they thought Parliament would make a sufficient reduction to make it worth their while."

Mr F. Oerton, whose evidence is very explicit on the smuggling in the neighbourhood of Walsall, received seven letters by post out of 117, which he had preserved.\* He "would certainly say that not a fiftieth part of the letters to any of the neighbouring towns were sent by the post."†

Another witness, who deposed to similar practices in his town, being asked "as to the probable number of letters sent in this way as compared with the number sent through the Post Office," thinks they were at least from 15 to 20 to one, or perhaps more.‡

One witness explained to the committee,§ that the coach proprietors in his town conveyed "Free Packets," containing letters to and from London, for the charge of two-pence, in consideration of being employed to carry the larger parcels of their customers. "Another mode," says the same witness||, "of evading the postage among the travelling houses is by printing a number of circulars on one sheet, and having them cut into slips and distributed in a town by some mutual friend; that I have had from a printer who prints the circulars."

Mr Parker, the publisher, avowed that it was a rule in his establishment to avoid postage by all possible means. For 252 letters received he had sent away 912 parcels. In a single post letter there are often many slips into which the letter is cut up, and these slips are delivered to the parties concerned, sometimes six, eight, and ten portions. To enable a letter to bear the postage, commercial travellers are obliged to defer sending orders until they have as many as will fill a letter, and though the practice is inconvenient, the orders of several towns are obliged to be included in one letter—he showed one which contained six orders and nine settlements of accounts. A curious mode of evasion is practised among the poorer Scotch students at the Universities:—

"(5265). There are what are called family boxes, both in Glasgow and Edinburgh; when students come to attend the College, they receive once or twice a week a box from their families, containing cheese, butter, meal, cakes, and so on, which they can have cheaper from their farm-houses than they can purchase in Glasgow, probably also their clean linen; the moment that it is known that any family have a son at the University they make a Post Office of

\* Ev. 5744.

† Ev. 5704.

‡ Evidence, 2707. See also the Evidence of Mr J. Reid (5203), &c., of E. F. on 28th March; of Mr F. Oerton (5681).

§ Ev. 4195, &c.

|| Ev. 4205.

that farm-house. I have known the thing done for the last seventeen years."

The country clergyman, from whose excellent letter we have already quoted, says that, from the town where he resides to the country town is a distance of thirteen miles, the postage is eight pence, and the carrier's charge twopence. "I have," he says, "had my mouth stopped, when I have been protesting strongly against more serious evasions of the revenue laws, as disgraceful to those who practised them, by the question, 'Pray, do you never send letters otherwise than through the Post Office?'"

Mr George Saintsbury, Under Treasurer of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, "believes that the impression on everybody's mind is, that the postage is a thing to be escaped" (5350). Having occasion to address a statement to every parish in the kingdom, he ascertained that the postage would cost at least 500*l.* (5355). But he says—

"In the course of getting those things ready for circulation, it occurred to me that every letter beyond Manchester would cost 11*d.*, that there were of parishes beyond Manchester 500 (or whatever the number, I do not recollect the number now), but that from Manchester they would cost on an average but 5*d.* It did not require a very profound calculation to discover that the sixpences thus saved would even pay for chaise to and from Manchester to put them into the post there and still leave a saving: I immediately made my arrangement, and started from London accordingly. By dint of great expedition I put my own letters into the Post Office at Sheffield, at Leeds, at York, at Manchester, at Liverpool, at Chester, and at Birmingham, and was back again in London in four days, and saved by that means 100*l.*"

Newspapers are an obvious means of evasion. They are written on, pricked, dotted, invisible inks are used, systems of cypher employed, marks are agreed upon, and, since the reduction of the duty on them, the number sent by post has been nearly doubled, that is, the risks of detection have been lessened one half, and the means of evasion made twice as numerous. An estimate or rather a guess may be made on the extent of this evasion from the extent of detection, which of course is not a tythe of it.

The amount of postage charged in Dublin alone, from 6th of July, 1836, to 5th of January, 1838, on newspapers, containing writing or enclosures, amounted to a total of 2,828*l.* 15*s.*, and in the Irish country offices the amount charged on newspapers in the year 1836 was 2,122*l.* 9*s.* 11*d.*, and in 1837, it amounted to 3,196*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.*

The most of our readers will remember advertisements in the newspapers, which are really letters; advertisements in which all the letters of the alphabet appear animated by all the passions of man. Factors address their correspondents by means of circulars in newspapers. "No. 17, You have a remittance this post;" "No. 20, 84 sacks at 18s. are sold;" "No. 27, Yours not yet received;" No. 60, Nothing as yet done in yours." But the most ingenious of these evasions is the telegraph system of addressing newspapers, of which we have been favoured\* with a key, which shows how, having once agreed on a system of signals, Mr Brown of London may correspond with Mr Smith of Edinburgh.

Mr John Smith,  
Grocer, Tea-dealer,  
1 High street,  
Edinburgh.

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

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

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

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

#### EVENTS OF THE MARKETS—

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

Other information is conveyed by Tea-dealer, &c., Tea-dealer and Grocer, Tea-dealer, Grocer, &c.—*eg.* Suppose sugars rise on Monday—the address is Mr Smith, Grocer and Tea-dealer, 1 High street, Edinburgh.

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

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

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

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

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

The abuses of franking have been noticed by Ministers themselves in Parliament. To have a Member of Parliament in a large firm in London is often a saving of two pounds sterling a day, or seven hundred and thirty pounds a year. A Member receives fifteen and sends out ten *double* or *treble* letters each day, which, as the franks will always be used for the most distant letters, and more than two shillings on an average each double letter, gives a result nearer a thousand a year than the sum we have mentioned, and, as they will often cover bills of exchange, each of which would be a double letter, the estimate is not exaggerated. Many bankers, it is said, hire a Member's privilege to frank their letters. The following fact we have on good authority:—Application was made before noon one day at a banking establishment for the payment of a money order. The bankers, without assigning a reason, hesitated, and asked for a delay of an hour. The applicant, inferring that the house was about to stop payment, insisted on immediate compliance with his demand, which compelled the bankers to admit that they had not yet received their letters from the West end, which contained their instructions. A frank may be redirected several times, and thus save several postages. Several of the clerks and functionaries of the Government offices have powers of franking unlimited either by weight or bulk, and haunches of venison have been known to be franked, and one of these, we shall call him the Hon. Franklin Gofree, franked a grand pianoforte to one of his fair cousins.

It was inevitable that a law which everybody violates must be defeated of its object; that a tax which everybody evades when he can, and can evade so easily, must be unproductive to the revenue. Rude and coarse as are the standards by which financiers judge

of a tax, easy as their consciences usually are as to its oppressiveness, it is yet a maxim with them that a tax which does not increase with the increase of wealth and of population, requires to be lowered. The Post Office revenue has remained nearly stationary for the last twenty years.\* The last twenty years! What words are those! It is within those twenty years that the persons capable of writing a letter, or of reading one, have swelled from a small minority to a great majority of our still increasing population: it is those twenty years that have seen, on the one hand, an increase of wandering over the earth, and of everything which tends to separate locally those who have occasion constantly to communicate, and, on the other hand, an extension and multiplication of commercial transactions which hardly took place before in a century, and the whole of which turns upon correspondence as its very pivot and fulcrum. What shall we take as the measure of this? If we take the statistical fact nearest allied to the increase of letters, the increase of public carriages, we find that between 1815 and 1835 the stage coach duty increased 128 per cent. If the Post Office revenue had increased in the same rate, it would now, as Mr Hill remarks, have exceeded three millions and a half. It has remained steady at about a million and a half, while the American postage revenue has during the same period in-

\* Extract from the Returns furnished by the Post Office Authorities (Appendix to Parliamentary Evidence).

Years ended.	Gross Receipts.	Charges of Collection.	Net Receipts.	Rate per Cent. of Collection.		
	£	£	£	£	s.	d.
1811	1,987,404	546,460	1,365,251	27	9	11 $\frac{1}{4}$
1815	2,372,429	675,548	1,598,295	28	9	6
1816	2,418,741	704,639	1,619,196	29	2	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
1821	2,172,875	611,187	1,465,605	28	2	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
1826	2,367,567	636,353	1,632,267	26	17	6 $\frac{1}{2}$
1831	2,301,431	694,254	1,517,951	30	3	3 $\frac{3}{4}$
1833	2,277,274	643,464	1,531,828	28	5	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
1837	2,461,806	704,768	1,645,835	28	12	6 $\frac{1}{2}$

The state of the revenue lately published gives the net receipts of the year ending 5th April 1838, at 1,517,743*l.*, being 70,352*l.* less than that of 1814-15. We have added the rate per cent. of the charges of collection, because, by showing that it has not increased, we dispose of the allegation of the Post Office authorities, that the non-increase of net revenue is to be attributed to the increased charges incurred for the public accommodation.

creased threefold, and the French, in three-fourths of the period, has risen from 23,892,698 francs to 37,405,510.\*

Shall a fiscal system, thus pernicious to morals, literature, science, and commerce, thus impossible to enforce, and thus extensively failing in its mere fiscal object, be persevered in if a change which would remove all the evils can be demonstrated to be feasible?

We are no partial advocates of Mr Rowland Hill's plan, and we should hail any better scheme with still greater satisfaction. But no plan, in the least degree approaching Mr Hill's for completeness or practicability, has yet appeared. It has had to contend against a very strong prejudice, that which it raises up against itself by its own excellence: its news seems "too good to be true." Aware that this was what he had to dread, Mr Hill, in the proportion in which he has been splendid in his promises, has been cautious and accurate in his proofs: and his official adversaries have been always beaten by him when they have condescended to particulars.† We express our conscien-

\* See the 'Annuaire des Postes.' The following facts show the rate of increase:—

Year.	Revenue.	Number of Letters.
1821	23,892,698 francs.	45,382,151
1830	33,727,649 —	63,817,260
1836	37,405,516 —	78,970,561

† A curious instance is that of his conjectural estimate (for conjecture was all that was possible) of the annual number of chargeable letters transmitted through the Post Office. Mr Hill, at first, estimated the number at 88,000,000—afterwards at 80,000,000. This estimate was ridiculed by the Post Office authorities; but as no less than four estimates have since been given by those authorities, each successively advancing on the numbers of its predecessor, and approximating nearer to Mr Hill's, we may expect in time a fifth even surpassing Mr Hill's. On the 30th Nov., 1837, Lord Lichfield stated their number to be 42 or 43,000,000. But this estimate overlooked the twopenny post. In a Post Office return dated 7th Dec., 1837, the number is estimated at 54,634,920: here twopenny post letters are included, but no sooner was the return made than it was discovered that the penny letters had been omitted. Another return, dated 9th Dec. was therefore given, whereby the number is augmented to 58,224,840. Lastly, we have an account of the number of letters actually posted during a week, commencing 15th Jan., 1838, which amounts to 1,313,933, and this, multiplied by 52, gives 68,324,516. All commercial men concur in opinion that this week gives a very low average for the year. The first and last weeks of the month are usually the most busy: and Mr George Moffatt (4361) says, "January is ordinarily a slack month in correspondence. In the last January the inclemency of the weather had broken up all the inland water communications. The canals were all ice-bound and the river blocked for several weeks—there was comparatively little correspondence—trade was com-



tious belief that the plan would be perfectly successful in all that he anticipates from it. That the public would obtain by it almost total relief from postage, and that the revenue, as soon as the change was in full operation, would be as productive, and probably much more productive than at present. It is not necessary for us to go into the details of a plan for which the whole country is simultaneously petitioning: we will rather show what the new evidence before us has afforded in confirmation of Mr Hill's principal positions. Much surprise has been excited by Mr Hill's demonstration of the exceedingly small proportion which the cost of carriage, the only element of expense that depends on distance, bears not only to the postage but to what each letter actually costs to the Post Office, between the moment of receiving and that of delivering. Upon this circumstance rests the justice of having but one rate for all distances, and Mr Dillon, in the following passage,\* places it in a strong light:—

“ The charging postage in proportion to the distance may be fair and proper, or otherwise, according to the circumstance of the case; looking to all the circumstances of the Post Office in this country, I submit that the charge with a view to distance is not fair or desirable. If the question were as to the transit of *two* letters, each sent by hand, then it would be fair that a letter sent to Edinburgh should be charged more than a letter sent to York, because the expense of the man travelling to one place would be greater than that of the man travelling to the other. If the same man had given to him a thousand letters for York, and a thousand letters for Edinburgh, the case would be the same: but if he had given to him two thousand letters indiscriminately, which he had to take to his house and sort, and to divide between York and Edinburgh, it would no longer be true, to the same extent, that he should charge in proportion to the distance; it becomes yet more different if all the letters to all the towns in the kingdom are first to be sorted on one spot, say in London, and despatched in different directions; and if, when they arrived at their destination, they are again to be distributed and delivered. The case is again further altered if the tax, as a source of revenue, is to be laid on each letter. The cost of transit which, in the case of a single letter, was everything, becomes in a more complicated case little or nothing: it may form so small a part of the whole as not to deserve notice as an element in apportioning the price of postage. The charges of which postage is made up are; first, the charge for providing receiving houses held by re-

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pletely at a stand-still, as will appear from the amount received by the customs and excise.” Since then the highest of the four estimates must be much too low, the truth cannot be far from Mr Hill's conjecture.

\* Ev. 3573.

spectable parties ; secondly, for sorting, arranging, and despatching the bags ; thirdly, for the transit of letters ; fourthly, for providing houses or offices, with responsible officers, where the letters may be again received ; fifthly, for sorting the letters for delivery ; sixthly, for the actual delivery by competent parties, at stated times ; seventhly, a tax for the purpose of revenue, which may be considered as a profit on the transaction. Now it is evident that of those *seven* elements *one* only, the *transit*, is affected by the distance which the letter has to be carried ; and that the least intellectual and least responsible as it is the one the most affected in the way of reduction by number and by improvement in the way of arrangement and of science. If the bags of letters were propelled, as it was at one time proposed, through a pipe or tube, still the cost of transit would be little or nothing, and the improvements in the modes of conveyance, and the contract for the conveyance of the bags by mails, and other circumstances, have almost approximated to that state of things so that the cost of transit has become so small as scarcely to be taken into the account. There are many analogous cases in which the mere transit of goods adds little or nothing to their price or value in the market. A book published in London is sold at the same price in London, Dublin, and Edinburgh. Articles of wearing apparel, in the large cities where the means of transport are many and cheap, are sold at the same prices in all the different parts of the kingdom. To show how little the cost of transit sometimes enters into the price of goods, I may mention to the committee, in the way of example, that we buy goods in Manchester, they are conveyed to London, we sell them in London, very often, to dealers resident in Manchester, who carry them back to the place from whence they came, and after the cost of two transits, they will have bought them of us cheaper than they themselves could buy them in Manchester ; and in this instance, the cost of transit, as an element of price, has become absolutely destroyed by the force of capital and other arrangements."

Not only is the sole portion of the expense, which varies with the distance, comparatively trifling—(from London to Edinburgh, as Mr Hill shows, it is only about one thirty-sixth part of a penny)—but even for the same distance it varies from day to day, as much as for different distances. The expense of the mail is the same whatever number of letters it carries : one day that expense may be shared among twenty letters, and each may cost sixpence, another day among two thousand, when the cost would be but an hundred part of the sum. To a less distant place, if it be a place which receives fewer letters, the cost of carriage per letter may be higher than to a more remote one : and so, therefore, on the Post Office principle ought the postage. The Postmaster-General himself has taken the trouble to illus-

trate this by his comparison (made to controvert Mr Hill) between Edinburgh and Louth.\*

The same statement, made with so deep a design of confuting Mr Hill, supplies invaluable confirmation to some of Mr Hill's main points. Lord Lichfield, in the House of Lords, pointed out as the great oversight in Mr Hill's calculations, the omission to take account of the increased number of mails that would be required to carry so great an increase of letters as his scheme required. To impute to Mr Hill any such oversight, was an oversight in Lord Lichfield; but let us look at Lord Lichfield's own facts. The contents of the Edinburgh mail, in the instance taken by Lord Lichfield, were—

	Cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	oz.
Weight of the sacks and bags . . . . .	1	0	9	8
— 2296 newspapers . . . . .	2	2	3	8
— 2 stamp parcels . . . . .	0	1	12	0
— 484 franks . . . . .	0	1	19	15
— 1555 chargeable letters . . . . .	0	1	6	14
	<hr/>			
Total weight . . . . .	4	2	23	13

Of the Louth mail—

	Cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	oz.
Weight of sacks and bags . . . . .	0	0	25	0
— 866 newspapers . . . . .	1	0	14	0
— 365 chargeable letters . . . . .	0	0	8	0
— 108 franks . . . . .	0	0	8	12
	<hr/>			
Total . . . . .	1	1	27	12

Observe how small a portion of the weight of either mail consisted of chargeable letters; and how many times the number of these might be multiplied, without any very formidable addition to the entire weight. The reduction of postage would not increase the number or weight of the stamp parcels, franks, or newspapers; observe also, that the mails contract to carry eight hundred weight. Now, in the instances produced by the Postmaster-General, the Edinburgh mail carried only 4 cwt. 2 qrs. 23 lbs. 13 oz., having still room for 3 cwt. 1 qr. 4 lbs. 3 oz. The

\* He shows (2785) that the carriage of the letters from London to Louth, 140 miles, costs nearly twice as much per letter as the letters to Edinburgh, 400 miles. The carriage to Louth costs 1*l.* 17*s.* 7*d.*—that to Edinburgh, 5*l.*—but there are few letters to divide the 1*l.* 17*s.* 7*d.* and many to divide the 5*l.* If cost of carriage therefore, were to be the criterion of charge, the postage to Louth, at only half the distance, should be double that to Edinburgh. The rule of charging according to distance does not even proportion the demand to *one* item of the expense.

Louth mail carried still less—1 cwt. 1 qr. 27 lbs. 12 oz.—having unemployed capabilities of carrying an additional 6 cwt. 2 qr. 4 oz. Eleven-fold the number of chargeable letters might have been conveyed by the Edinburgh mail that day, and *eighty* times the number of letters by the Louth mail, without requiring additional mails, or occasioning additional expense for carriage. Mr Hill has met with an excellent defender in Lord Lichfield against Lord Lichfield's objections.

A six-fold increase of the correspondence transmitted through the Post Office is considered by Mr Hill, on grounds apparently not to be questioned, as sufficient (at an uniform rate of a penny for each letter not exceeding half-an-ounce) to give the present amount of revenue. Of this six-fold increase, the mere suppression of smuggling would suffice for a large part. Even though no increased number of letters should be written, the evidence has already shown how immense would be the increase of those transmitted through the Post Office. But to doubt that there would be an enormous increase of letters written, would be to resist the experience of every analogous case of reduction,\*

\* The following, among many other instances which might be given of this familiar truth, are cited by the Mercantile Committee:—

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

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

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

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

“In 1783 the duty on coffee was 1s. 6d. per pound, and the revenue yielded only 2,869l. 10s. 10½d.; in 1784 the duty was reduced to six-pence per pound, and yielded immediately 7,200l. 15s. 9d.

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

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

An instance still more in point is the effect of the gradual reductions in the rates of postage on ship-letters. In 1834 the Liverpool letters amounted to 15,318; in 1838, to 63,116. In 1834 the number of Hull letters was 15,797; in 1838, 47,457. Contrast this with the stationary condition of the General Post Office revenue.

and the whole tenor of the evidence before the committee. We give a few specimens of this evidence :—

Mr H. Desborough, secretary to the Atlas Insurance Company, says,\* “ We have 200 proprietors residing in the country,” and there are occasions on which we might wish to address every holder of a policy, “ but we never do address them separately.”

Mr Wright, partner of Messrs Warren, already cited, states,† that with a penny postage he would send 4,000 letters through the Post Office; he now sends 130.

Mr J. Pearson says‡ he should be willing for a few years to engage to pay as much postage as at present.

Mr Parker, the publisher, is asked §—

“ In the case of your own trade, supposing no increase in your annual returns to take place, to what extent do you think your correspondence would increase?”—“ I still say that my communications received and sent out would increase from twelve to twenty-fold.”

“ If the Post Office were to contract with you for your future correspondence, how much should you be willing to contract to pay for it?”—“ I should be very glad to enter with them into a contract to-day, to give them five times as much as I pay now, and to do that for seven years.”

A merchant of Liverpool writes—

“ One of our neighbours would post one hundred letters per month, *all* of which at present go by coach parcels and private hands, and have done so for years.”

Other witnesses give more detailed and explanatory testimony to the nature of the increase which would take place in their correspondence. Mr W. M. Christie|| had, in 1837, 18,000 and upward invoices forwarded into the country: “ we sent only 1,246 by post, or 7 per cent.,” with a penny postage nearly the whole would have been so sent. Mr Charles Knight says ¶—

“ We have a list of 1,860 country booksellers, all respectable people, with whom we should not deal ourselves, for they are for the most part supplied by the wholesale houses, but to whom we should send about the 20th of each month invariably, if the postage were reduced to one penny. I should direct, for example, 1,860 circulars to be sent this month, and should continue them every month during the year as long as I was engaged in my present business; that would give an average of 24,000 letters sent out by our establishment annually for that object. But I will mention to the com

\* Ev. 3991.

§ Ev. 5026.

† Ev. 3877.

|| Ev. 3368.

‡ Ev. 5448.

¶ Ev. 3230.

mittee the desirableness of the means of meeting another class of persons. We publish a work that is having a very large circulation, the 'Pictorial Bible;' it is a Bible with notes, which not being doctrinal, suit every class of the religious community; patronized equally by members of the Church of England, and by Wesleyans, Independents, and so on: that work will be completed in two months from this time. There is no difficulty in obtaining a list of all the clergymen in England; there is no great difficulty in obtaining a very complete list of all the Dissenting ministers,—to all those I should send a circular, announcing the completion of this work, stating the nature and peculiarity of it; that alone, upon a rough calculation, would dispose of 20,000 circulars."

Mr L. F. de Porquet says \*—

"If the postage on circulars (I say nothing about written letters at present) were to be one penny, I should send not less than 25,000 to 40,000 in the course of a twelvemonth; but if it were half that amount, according to the size of the circular, if I could send a circular of a quarter of a page, I should send 100,000 to 150,000 in the course of a twelvemonth. I should not mind contracting to the amount of 100*l.* or 150*l.* a year for the conveyance of those small slips by post; that accommodation would increase my business, I should think, to four times what it is now."

To show the manner in which this multitude of circulars would produce further correspondence, the same witness adds†—

"I was on the continent three years ago; being a perfect stranger, having left it many years ago, I wanted to inform the scholastic world of France that I was at Paris, and that I had upwards of 100 commissions from persons in England wishing to be employed in France as English teachers even without salary. To write to each of those individuals I wished to address would have cost me 90*l.* or 100*l.* in France. I could not afford to send out 5,000 letters, but I found that by paying two centimes I could send a lithographic letter to the very further end of the kingdom, which was Marseilles or Toulon. The profit to the French revenue was, they not only received my two centimes, or two centimes and a half, on 5,000 copies, which were done in forty-eight hours, but those circulars caused upwards of 100 or 200 letters during my stay in Paris, in one month, the respective postage of which was paid by the parties making further inquiries; and it has been productive to the English revenue, ever since, on the average, monthly, of not less than ten to twelve letters, which they are now writing to me in England; and of course they pay part of the postage, which comes into the English revenue."

Mr T. L. Murray says,‡—

\* Ev. 3920.

† Ev. 3933.

‡ Ev. 5785.

"In the institution I am at present establishing, the National Loan Fund Life Insurance, the effect of a reduction in postage would be to increase it, perhaps, an hundred-fold; I can scarcely say how much it would increase it; for instance, I hold in my hand a prospectus, which is a kind of pamphlet, that by means of the Post Office might be transmitted: it is too heavy for a frank. I dare say, in the course of six months, we should dispatch to different parts of the kingdom at least 100,000, and which would lead to much correspondence; that would be a very small portion of what we should ultimately send, looking to a continuance of years."

This gentleman says, that as a question of mere profit, if he had to farm the Post Office revenue, and were to pay not a million and a half, the present net receipts, but two millions a year to Government, he should prefer, for his indemnification and profit, to charge only 1*d.* postage. A Leeds manufacturer paying about 400*l.* postage per annum, expressed to the Mercantile Committee his readiness to join with the other mercantile houses, who pay two-thirds of the entire postage of the place, in guaranteeing to Government those two-thirds during a year's experiment of the penny postage plan for Leeds alone.

We must set bounds to our citations, and close this part of our case with two important, we might almost call them conclusive considerations. One is, the profitableness of the *existing* penny posts; of which, as we have already seen, there are 1556 in England and Wales alone, and which yield a profit of nearly 50 per cent.\* It is true, the greatest distance which letters are carried by any of them is about thirty-eight miles; but distance, we have

\* RETURNS OF THE PENNY POST FOR 1836.

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

It must be remembered that many of these posts had been established so recently as even the very year of the return.

seen, is the least important item of charge; an item which in the transit from London to Edinburgh is only one thirty-sixth of a penny, cannot much affect the profitableness of a penny post.

The other, and still stronger argument, is drawn from the fact that private agencies distribute many periodicals all over the kingdom for a farthing each.

"The cases," says the Post Circular, "of the 'Penny Magazine,' 'Saturday Magazine,' 'Chambers' Edinburgh Journal,' and other cheap periodicals, afford illustrations of the very low rates at which distribution of large numbers may be conducted. The 'Penny Magazine' is distributed weekly in considerable towns, at the houses of its subscribers. It reaches the subscriber for ONE PENNY—which he pays generally after a credit. Out of this penny the following charges take place:—

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

Composition of eight folio pages.

Engravings.

Artists' designs.

Authorship.

Paper, and

Machinery for printing each copy.

Each of these departments bearing its own profit.

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

"If private establishments could and actually did perform this distribution profitably at this cost, besides embarking capital and taking risk, can it be said with any foundation that a GOVERNMENT is unable to execute the distribution of a piece of paper of less size and weight than the 'Penny Magazine,' without embarking any capital, and taking no risks, NOT for a FARTHING each letter, but for ONE PENNY?"

The indirect benefits to the revenue which would follow a reduction of postage are believed to be sufficient to make up the deficiency, should there be one, which we do not believe, caused by the adoption of Mr Hill's plan. The increase of business of all kinds, from the stimulus it would give to activity, would alone ensure, in the opinion of several intelligent and practical witnesses, to the revenue, a sum equal to any loss that could possibly be sustained, even granting the auguries of the Post



Office functionaries to be well founded in that department. It is certain to cause an increase in the consumption of, and consequently in the revenue derived from, paper. Mr Charles Knight\* says that the increased sale obtained by additional publicity in his business alone, which pays 4000*l.* a year of duty on paper, would give the revenue a quarter more, or 1000*l.*

It has been surmised that another part of Mr Hill's plan, the compulsory payment in advance, would be such a check to correspondence as would much impede the realization of the whole anticipated increase. No doubt, if the present immense rates of postage continued to be exacted, the necessity of payment in advance would be a very serious check to correspondence: not so, however, if the payment required were so small a sum as 1*d.* There is ample experience on the point. Payment in advance is not found to check the correspondence of soldiers and sailors. Those two classes are already in the enjoyment of both parts of Mr Hill's Post Office system; a uniform and low penny postage, contingent upon payment in advance. And what is the result?

I conceive, says Capt. J. Bentham,† that the soldiers on an average (how unlike other persons of their rank in life) "send seven letters and a half yearly each." He observes‡ that soldiers appear to appreciate this privilege most highly, and believes that many of them learn to write (expressly for the purpose of writing their own letters) after they have joined their regiments, and zealously attend the regimental schools. The habit of correspondence, he says, makes them much more valuable members of the regiment—it conduces to their respectability—and though they have very few conveniences, and the barrack is not well adapted for writing in, they anxiously avail themselves of the opportunity. He thinks, if their correspondence were subjected to the present rates of postage, not one letter in thirty would be written, certainly not one in twenty.

Uniform payment of postage in advance is the established plan in the presidencies of Bengal and Madras; and although the rate of postage is only one-third less than ours, the advance is not complained of by the residents, nor thought materially restrictive of correspondence.

One of the chief reasons for payment in advance is, that it would expedite the delivery of letters. Every letter now takes, on an average, five minutes in delivery; but as slits in doors

\* Ev. 3238.

† Ev. 4787.

‡ Ev. 4790.

would be likely to become general when the postman had no motive to wait, the knock would be given, the letter left, and he would pass on. When what was called the "early delivery" existed, 570 letters on which the postage was not collected at the time of delivery, were delivered in half an hour; whilst 67 on which the postage was collected, occupied an hour and a half. So that the one delivery was 25 times more expeditious than the other.\*

As to the *mode* of payment in advance, Mr Hill suggests the issue of stamped sheets of paper, or stamped envelopes, or small pieces of paper which may be fastened by a solution of glue to any sheet of paper whatever: and these to be sold by all stationers and post offices. An ingenious mode of preventing the forgery of these stamps has been invented by Mr Dickenson, the paper-manufacturer—specimens of which were circulated with the last edition of Mr Hill's pamphlet. It consists of inserting in the wool of the paper itself parallel fibres of silk, which are discernible whenever the paper is torn: and the expense of preparing it takes it out of the reach of a forger's capital, even should the penny, which is not likely, hold out a sufficient inducement to him. This mode of payment would obviously effect a large reduction in the expenses of the Post Office. "There would be no letters to be taxed; no examination of those taxed by others; no accounts to be made out against the deputy postmasters for letters transmitted to them, nor against the letter-carriers."

We conclude with one word to Mr Spring Rice and the Ministry on their conduct in this matter. This is not a party question, it is not even a political one unless they make it so; and while we can easily imagine the difficulties which stand in their way when a reform proposed in a department of fiscal administration, is opposed by the man they have themselves put at the head of it, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact, that if they continue ill-affected, or indifferent, or inactive, on Post Office Reform, they will afford the Conservatives an opportunity of acquiring a popularity pervading all ranks, and intensest among the poorest, and they will give Mr Croker one grain of truth to be put into his next catalogue of good deeds done by the Tories and left undone by the Whigs. We beg them to remember that no reduction short of what Mr Hill proposes can effect the desired end; a twopenny postage will not try the principle of his plan, because it will not defeat the smuggler, and a union of payment in advance with any rate of

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\* Eighteenth Report of Com. of Rev. Inquiry, p. 621, 622.

postage higher than a penny would probably not call forth the increase of correspondence necessary to compensate the revenue. Any such half measure, if it failed, would be considered as the failure of Mr Hill's plan, and the imperfect experiment would disgust and outrage the views of the whole of the men most active and energetic in pursuing this reform, because they would consider it, though professedly a trial, really a betrayal of the principle they support. Even if Ministers regard merely the revenue itself (and no supposition could on a question like this be more degrading to them, nor further from the real feelings of some of their number), they will look at the revenue after a very narrow and contracted fashion indeed, they will consider a small part, and not the whole, if they do not see that the reductions in the expenses of the Post Office, the increase of correspondence, the additional consumption of paper, and the stimulus imparted to trade of all kinds, will amply enable them to meet the dreaded defalcation. But this is not a matter to be argued solely on such grounds,—Ministers profess themselves, and have represented the Queen, as having much at heart the education of the people,—a uniform penny postage will give motives, strong as the best affections of the human breast, to the poor for the acquisition of elementary instruction: it will waft to the ears of tempted youth the persuasive whispers of parental love and goodness; it will circulate thought, knowledge, friendship, virtue, and by bringing thinkers and friends nearer to each other, promote very greatly the formation of a noble and beautiful civilization among all the people.

M. C.

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REPORT OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT, December 4, 1837.

Sir,—On the 1st of July last the post routes of the United States in operation were, as nearly as can be ascertained, 141,242 miles in extent, and the annual transportation of the mails upon them 32,597,009 miles—viz:

On horses and in sulkeys.....	11,999,282
In stages and coaches.....	18,804,800
In steamboats and railroad cars.....	1,793,024

The increase of routes in operation during the preceding year was 22,978 miles, and of the annual transportation 5,018,620.

From the 1st of January next, the post routes covered by contracts will be at least 142,877 miles in length, and the rate of annual transportation upon them 36,228,962 miles.

The number of post offices in the United States on the 1st of July last was 11,767, showing an increase of 676 within the preceding year.

The number of post offices established within the year was 956, the number discontinued 280, and the changes of postmasters 2,235.

The number of post offices on the 1st instant was 12,089.

The postmasters generally perform their duties with admirable fidelity and precision.

The number of contractors in the mail service during the last year was 1,682. Of these, 430 have been fined more or less for various delinquencies, and the aggregate of fines imposed, and deductions made during the year, is \$41,705 95.

Most of the contractors have always been energetic and faithful, and among the rest there has been, within the last year, a very sensible improvement.

The revenue of the Department for the last year, including an estimate for deficient returns, was.....	4,137,056 59
The expenditures, including an estimate of demands not adjusted, was.....	3,380,847 75

Excess of revenue over expenditure..... \$756,208 84

*The increase of the whole year was 20½ per cent. over the revenue of the preceding year, producing \$228,834 59 more than was estimated.*

Detailed statements, with estimates for the coming year, will be laid before Congress in obedience to the act of 1836.

On the 1st inst. the Department had bank funds .....430,655 57  
Specie in post offices reported subject to draft .....410,662 81

Total funds on hand.....\$841,317 38

In consequence of the failure of Congress to reduce the postages at the last annual session, arrangements have been made to improve the mail service beyond the extent of the *accruing revenue, so as to absorb the surplus*. The career of improvement has been arrested by apprehensions of reduction of revenue, growing out of the general commercial embarrassment: but no reduction of the service contracted for is at present contemplated.

The following improvements have been made in the time of transmitting intelligence within the last two years, viz.

## FROM NEW YORK

In 1835.

In 1837.

To	1 day	8 hours	1 day	0 hours
Washington, D. C.	1	8	1	0
Richmond, Va.	2	13½	1	13½
Raleigh, N. C.	3	22½	2	7
Columbia, S. C.	6	3	3	5
Charleston, S. C.	6	19	3	16½
Milledgeville, Ga.	7	15	3	21½
Montgomery, Ala.	10	3	4	19
Mobile, Ala.	12	12	5	17
New Orleans, La.	13	19	6	19
Wheeling, Va.	3	11	2	8
Columbus, O.	4	16	2	22½
Indianapolis La.	7	14	3	19½
Vandalia, Ill.	11	15	4	15½
St Louis, Mo.	13	10	4	23½
Cincinnati, O.	5	17	3	14
Louisville, Ky.	7	18	4	8
Nashville, Tenn.	9	20	5	6
Huntsville, Ala.	21	22	5	10½

## FROM NEW ORLEANS

To Montgomery, Ala.	3	21	2	0
Huntsville, Ala.	8	5	3	2
Nashville, Te.	10	0	3	18
Louisville, Ky.	13	0	4	17
Cincinnati, O.	14	11	5	17
Columbus, O.	16	9	6	7½
Pittsburg, Pa.	18	5	7	8

These are the results of the Express mails.

The ordinary mails have also been expedited.

## FROM NEW YORK

To Wheeling, Va.	3	11	2	19
Columbus, O.	4	16	3	5
Cincinnati, O.	5	17	4	6
Louisville, Ky.	7	8	5	4
Memphis, Te.	13	20	7	20
Natchez, Miss.	16	19	11	13
N. Orleans, La. by the Western route	17	18	13	4
Utica, N. Y.	1	10	0	23
Buffalo, N. Y.	1	20	1	11
Burlington, Vt.	2	2	1	19
Haverhill, N. H.	2	16	1	22
Concord, N. H.	1	22	1	14
Augusta, Me.	3	9	3	5

Of course the whole intermediate, adjacent, and more remote regions of the Union are benefited by this increase of expedition.

The advancement of the Department in other respects is equally satisfactory.

	In 1835	In 1837.
Post Offices .....	10,770	12,099
Miles of mail routes under contract	112,774	142,877
Miles of annual mail transportation	25,869,486	39,228,962
Revenue .....	\$2,993,576	\$4,137,056

In 1835 the Department was labouring under an extraordinary debt of 600,000 dollars; in 1837, it had a surplus of 800,000 dollars.

Efforts have been made to organize a great mail line from N. York, through Philadelphia, Baltimore, Wheeling, Columbus, and Cincinnati, by land, and down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers, by Louisville, Memphis, Helena, Vicksburg, Natchez, &c. to New Orleans. Between Cincinnati and Louisville a steamboat mail now runs daily; from Louisville to New Orleans it now runs thrice a week under a recent contract, and will run daily after the first year; from Baltimore to Cincinnati the mail has been greatly expedited, and nothing is wanting to complete the plan but a contract with the railroad companies between Philadelphia and Baltimore, of which there is a fair prospect. It is anticipated that when this line shall be in full operation, it will be expedient to discontinue the express mails between Philadelphia and Cincinnati at least, as little can be gained by them; and the great mail will go from New York to New Orleans by this route in about eleven days.

It is hoped the bill relative to the transportation of the mail upon railroads, which passed the Senate at the last annual session, may become a law. It is liberal to the railroad companies, and would probably remove all obstacles to making contracts with them.

For some time to come the mail transportation will be nearly stationary. The post offices will greatly increase. The revenue will rapidly advance as soon as the general embarrassments are at an end. *That of the last quarter was at least nine per cent. over the corresponding quarter of last year;* but the same relative proportions are not to be expected in the coming quarters.

The number of dead letters returned to the Department for the last two quarters has been ascertained as accurately as practicable. For the quarter ending 30th June last, they were over 222,000; and for the quarter ending 30th September last, over 225,000. The average may be put down at 900,000 annually. At 12  $\frac{1}{2}$

cents each, their estimated average postage, the loss to the Department on these letters is 112,500 dollars a year.

Estimating the letters delivered out at the same average rate, it will appear that the whole number of letters delivered from the post offices of the United States during the last year was 29,360,992. For free letters and dead letters may be added at least 3,000,000 more. The number of newspapers, pamphlets, &c. paying postage, conveyed by mail annually, is estimated at about 25,000,000. The dead and free newspapers may be about 4,000,000.

The convenience of the public business, and the security of the books and papers, require that a fire-proof building be provided for this Department.

It is necessary that the clerks provided for in the appropriations of the last annual session be made permanent.

The great increase of the number of post offices, and in the magnitude of accounts from the old offices, together with the multiplication of contractors, render it absolutely necessary to augment the force of the Auditor's office.

I take great pleasure in saying that more faithful, devoted, and efficient public officers than my three assistants cannot be found, and that the clerks generally partake of their spirit.

Some idea may be formed of the amount of business done in this Department, from the fact that the communications of all sorts received in the different offices, excluding the Auditor's office, amount to a daily average of about 860 for the working days, equal to 269,180 a year; the communications sent, to about 470 daily, equal to 147,110 a year; and the cases actually decided by the Postmaster-General, to 48 daily, equal to 15,024 a year.

The magnitude of the work done by the Auditor and his clerks may be estimated from the fact that they examine and adjust the four quarterly accounts of each postmaster, making near 48,000 accounts a year; and the accounts of each contractor quarterly or oftener, making about 7,000 a year; keeping the mass of books required in this service; closing each year the accounts of about 2,000 ex-postmasters, and carrying on the heavy correspondence growing out of these extensive duties.

Herewith is an interesting statement of the First Assistant, relative to mail transportation.

I have honour to be your obedient servant,

AMOS KENDALL.

*To the President of the United States.*

1845

We beg the Post Office authorities to read this Annual Report on the Post Office of the United States, and we trust that their feelings of the impossibility of producing a statement equally satisfactory of our own Post Office will urge them to set about a thorough change. Can we show an annual increase of transport of five millions of miles?—an increase of 676 Post Offices?—an increase of  $20\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. over the revenue of the preceding year? or a *bonâ fide* statement of the actual number of letters? Among the many necessary reforms at the Post Office, the obligation of making an annual report should be one.—There cannot be a better model in all respects than that now printed.

The Select Committee of the House of Commons have ceased taking further evidence, and are engaged in preparing a report. We are glad to say that we believe the feeling is very unanimous in the Committee, and is very much in favour of Mr Hill's plan. The report may be expected by the Public in a few days.

#### POST OFFICE EXPEDITION.

Wrotham is a small market town on the Maidstone road, 25 miles from London. A considerable number of coaches pass through it daily, by means of which letters might be transmitted with great rapidity either to the Metropolis, or to every town or village on the line of road. The mail however travels a different route, and no proper arrangements being made the following is the result:—On Sunday the 10th W. Hickson, Esq., of Fairsea, put a letter into the Post Office at Wrotham, at  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 4 o'clock, directed to a gentleman at Town Malling, five miles distant, on the same Maidstone road. The Post having left Wrotham at the early hour of 3 in the afternoon, and there being no Post on Monday, the letter was not fairly on its way till Tuesday the 12th, when it was first carried to Seven Oaks (seven miles), then transmitted by mail to London, and finally sent back from London to Town Malling, where it arrived on the 13th, charged 7d. Had the same letter been enclosed in a parcel and sent by the guard of one of the Maidstone coaches, it would have reached Town Malling in half an hour.

It will be observed that, notwithstanding Wrotham is such a short distance from London, no letters can be posted there after three o'clock in the afternoon, but in addition to this inconvenience, which is seriously felt in a neighbourhood full of populous villages and gentlemen's seats, there are only five days in the week on which the Post leaves Wrotham. On Saturday, in common with other towns, there is no Post because there is no Sunday delivery in the Metropolis, but on Monday also there is no Post because,



there being no London letters to bring from Seven Oaks, where the mail passes, no one is sent who might take away those intended for London.

HARDSHIP OF POSTAGE ON THE POOR.

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

Let those who have, or have had, happy homes, kind parents, and beloved children, dwell for a few moments on the two cases I will now mention.

“A poor widow in Somersetshire, a pauper, receiving 2s. 6d. per week from the Union, had intimation that a letter was waiting for her at the office, supposed to come from her daughter, who had lately gone into service in London, the cost of which was 11d. The mother could not raise the money, and the post-mistress being afraid to trust the letter out of her hands, it remained until the following week, when the Relieving-officer came his rounds and gave her her weekly pay, when she took up the letter at the cost of *one-third of her weekly subsistence!!!*”

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

### Petitions on Postage.

As the session is drawing to a close, it is highly desirable that no time should be lost in forwarding to members of Parliament those petitions which are ready for presentation. Petitions may be *written on paper of any size or shape*. Care should be taken that the sheet on which the petition is written be signed by one or more names. They may be transmitted through the Post Office directed to any member, if open at both ends. Members of all shades of politics have presented petitions during the present session of Parliament.

#### FORM OF A SHORT GENERAL PETITION FOR REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.

To the Right Honourable the [Lords, spiritual and temporal, or Commons, *as the case may be*] in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned inhabitants of \_\_\_\_\_ in the County of \_\_\_\_\_

SHEWETH,—That the dearness of the present rates of Postage is injurious to the industry of the people, and prevents much correspondence between relatives and friends at a distance from each other, and causes many letters to be illegally sent in parcels and by private hands.

That a great increase would take place in all sorts of correspondence if the rates of Postage were reduced, and that the law would be obeyed, and not broken.

That your petitioners pray your Honourable House to give Mr Rowland Hill's plan of an uniform Penny Postage for all letters payable in advance a fair trial. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Up to the 23rd of June the Petitions for a low and uniform rate of Postage had amounted to 284, with 32,470 signatures. No question has ever taken deeper root or grown more rapidly in the public mind than this of postage. Last session *five* petitions only were presented. A large portion of the present number of petitions is due to the excellent co-operation which this question has met with from the whole Clergy of the United Kingdom. We possess examples of the greatest zeal and best feeling towards it from Ministers of all denominations. The question being quite un-political, all parties have united to promote its success.

We trust to see a still further addition to the number of petitions before Parliament breaks up. No letter-writer should be able to reproach himself with neglect in signing or preparing a petition.

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Printed by HENRY HOOPER, at Beaufort House, Strand, and published by him at 13 Pallmall East, where all Communications and Advertisements are received.—Thursday, July 5, 1838. Agent for the City—R. GROOMBRIDGE, 6 Panyer alley, Paternoster row; and supplied by all Booksellers and News-venders in the United Kingdom.

# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 10.

THURSDAY, MARCH 28, 1839.

Price 6d.

LORD ASHBURTON, a Conservative, and one of the richest Noblemen in the Country, spoke these impressive words before the House of Commons Committee:—"Postage is one of the worst of our Taxes; it is, in fact, taxing the conversation of people who live at a distance from each other. The communication of letters by persons living at a distance is the same as a communication by word of mouth between persons living in the same town."

"Sixpence," says Mr. BREWIN, "is the third of a poor man's income; if a gentleman, who had £1000 a year, or £3 a day, had to pay one-third of his daily income—a sovereign, for a letter, how often would he write letters of friendship? Let a gentleman put that to himself, and then he will be able to see how the poor man cannot be able to pay sixpence for his letter."

## EXTRACTS FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY POSTAGE REPORT.

### EFFECTS OF PRESENT RATES IN OCCASIONING—

#### § 1. Evasion of Postage without Breach of the Law.

The evidence clearly establishes the fact that all classes of the community, each according to the means, direct or indirect, within its reach, use their utmost endeavours to correspond free of postage, and wherever it can be done without breaking the law. Of the lawful modes of evasion, the most direct and obvious is that by private messengers, which, in the case of insurance offices and other public institutions having circulars to distribute, is most extensively resorted to. Scarcely less direct is the use of Parliamentary and official franks; by means of which, Dr. Lardner, the editor of extensive literary works, transmits, as he states, the greater part of his correspondence. Invoices may lawfully be sent in parcels with the goods; and this, it appears, is the mode of transmitting such documents, which is very generally in use among tradesmen, though in many instances it renders them liable, in case of damage or loss, and, to the consignees, is almost universally productive of inconvenience. If it were not for the high rates, those documents would be forwarded by post to an immense extent. Among the less direct means of lawful evasion, are the following. Where a common piece of information is at the same time to be imparted to many, an advertisement in a newspaper, previously determined on, answers the purpose of many letters. The mere transmission of a bygone newspaper is the preconceived signal of the occurrence of a certain event, which is thus made known to the party by whom the newspaper is received; or by a device, precisely analogous to the former, a letter is addressed to the party, which he declines to receive and pay for. By varying the modes of directing the addresses on such newspapers or letters, as many different occurrences may be notified as there have been signals previously agreed upon. A mode of making explicit communications, and evading the writing of letters and payment of the postage, is resorted to by factors in Ireland. They publish printed circulars showing the state of the markets in their own particular trade, which circulars being stamped as newspapers, are transmitted free of post. Their different correspondents are distinguished in the circular by different numbers, and opposite to these numbers are printed the communications which the factor wishes to make to his several correspondents. Another indirect mode in universal practice among printers, booksellers, and publishers, and also very prevalent amongst other classes of tradesmen and mercantile men, is to write a letter to one firm containing passages intended for the information of other firms in the same town or neighbourhood, which passages are to be cut out into slips, and forwarded to those other firms. Exactly on the same principle, when money is due and is to be paid to several tradesmen in the same town, a remittance of the whole sum is made to one house, in order to be distributed amongst the whole.\*

#### § 2. Evasion of Postage in Breach of the Law.

The evidence taken before your Committee has also clearly established the fact, that correspondence otherwise than by post is carried on throughout the country, in systematic evasion of the law, if not in open violation of it, to an extent that could hardly have been imagined, and which it would be difficult to calculate.

It is principally in the neighbourhood of large towns and in populous manufacturing districts, that the illicit conveyance of letters has been reduced most nearly to a system. The distribution chiefly extends to the towns and places in the neighbourhood. Some carriers make it their sole business to collect and distribute letters; they do this openly without fear of the consequences. Children and women are employed by the carriers to collect the letters. Some carriers convey the letters by their own stage-carts; those who get their entire living by it, proceed usually in stage-coaches to the places the letters are destined to. There is a competition among the carriers who go to the same place; and the price for which they deliver a letter is 1d. Walsall is one of the towns where this practice is said to have been prevalent; throughout another district it is said to be universal, and is known to have been established there for

\* Mr. Parker, publisher, states, "A letter coming by post to A., B., or C., contains slips to be sent to other persons in correspondence with the same country dealers."

"On receiving a letter from a correspondent who does business with several persons, we tear off those slips, and send them from one to another. I may have sent as many myself as I have received, or more or less, I cannot tell; it is so much the ordinary practice in business to send and receive in that way. Most of those bear a portion of the post-mark, and show that the letter may have been cut up into six, eight, or ten portions, according to circumstances."

This statement is confirmed by Mr. Knight and Mr. Whitaker, publishers; and M. F. De Porquet and Mr. Wright,

nearly 50 years. This mode of transmitting letters is considered perfectly safe. One house sends in that way 150 letters a week. The average number of letters sent daily throughout the year by a house in the neighbourhood of Walsall exceeded 50; and by that house more than 120 have been sent in one day. Not one-fiftieth part of the letters from Walsall to the neighbouring towns were sent by post.

The illicit transmission of letters is not confined to the neighbourhood of large towns, or to populous manufacturing districts; it extends along all the lines of communication where a constant traffic exists, and the more so in proportion as the conveyance on any line is rapid and frequent.

Mr. Dillon's evidence shows that money is sometimes sent with a request that it may be paid in given portions to various persons.

Mr. Cobden, an extensive manufacturer at Manchester, who was deputed by the Chamber of Commerce of that town, to give in evidence the results of inquiries instituted by him, respecting the means resorted to in that neighbourhood of conveying letters otherwise than by post, says, that the extent to which evasion is there practised is incredible; and that five-sixths of the letters sent from Manchester to London, do not pass through the post-office. One merchant informed the chamber, that in every trip he made to Liverpool, he took or brought back for his friends pockets-full of letters; and that he did not doubt that four-fifths of the correspondence between Manchester and Liverpool were carried on by private hand.

Mr. Thomas Davidson, an extensive manufacturer at Glasgow, deputed on the part of the commercial interests in that city, to give evidence before the committee, stated, from data collected for the information of a local committee, that in the case of five commercial or manufacturing houses in that city, the correspondence was generally transmitted to that transmitted by post in the following proportions; that is to say—

In the case of the first house in point of extent of business,	nearly as . . . . .	5 to 1
Ditto . second . . . . .	. . . . .	18 to 1
Ditto . third . . . . .	. . . . .	67 to 1
Ditto . fourth . . . . .	. . . . .	8 to 1
Ditto . fifth . . . . .	. . . . .	15 to 1

Many of those letters, however, were mere invoices, which might have been sent otherwise than by post without violating the law; though, probably but for the high rates, they would have been sent by post. Mr. Davidson stated, as the result of all the inquiries he had made in Glasgow, that 10 letters were sent by illicit conveyance, for one that was sent by post.

Mr. Brewin, a dealer in hops and seeds at Cirencester, says that the people in that town do not think of using the post for the conveyance of letters. He knows two carriers who carry four times as many letters as the mail does.

Lieutenant Ellis, auditor of a district of Poor Law Unions in Suffolk, says that the numerous letters and communications that pass between clerks of the peace and justices' clerks and the officers of every parish in the kingdom, on subjects of magisterial and county jurisdiction, such as jury lists, lunatic returns, precepts, appointments of constables, overseers, surveyors, &c., and nearly all the correspondence and communications emanating from the mighty machinery of the New Poor Law, and its extensive ramifications, are generally sent by other conveyances than the post.

Most of the other witnesses, including many officers of the Post-office, give evidence of the extent to which evasion is practised.

The means by which letters are conveyed, are chiefly

1. By carriers, often without disguise.
2. By booksellers' parcels.

Mr. John Reid, formerly a bookseller at Glasgow, says that the latter are the means principally resorted to at Glasgow for evading the postage.

Mr. Cobden states that every publisher's or stationer's traveller has his letters of advice forwarded through a bookseller's parcel.

M. De Porquet, a bookseller, states that any one of the trade, by leaving letters in a parcel, with 2d., at any of the larger booksellers, can have his letters forwarded to all parts of the kingdom; but packets of letters are thus conveyed to persons wholly unconnected with the trade.

3. By warehousemen's bales and parcels, and in boxes and trunks forwarded by carriers.

Mr. Dillon, of the house of Morrison and Co. testifies to this practice.

4. By what are termed "free packets," containing the patterns and correspondence of manufacturers, which the coach-proprietors carry free of charge, except 4d. for booking.

5. By "weaver's bags," in the neighbourhood of Glasgow; that is, bags containing work for the weavers,

which the manufacturers forward to some neighbouring town.

6. By "family boxes," as they are termed at Glasgow. A farmer who has a son at the University, forwards to him once or twice a week, a box containing provisions. The neighbours make a post-office of the farmer's house.

7. By coachmen, guards, travellers, and private hands. Mr. Samuel Jones Loyd says, that many documents, notwithstanding a difficulty he alludes to, are yet forwarded to London bankers, by means of private individuals passing through London, or by means of guards and drivers of coaches.

Mr. Brown, merchant of Liverpool, says that parcels containing letters are forwarded to Liverpool by every means that can be conceived; by stage-coaches vans, railroads, steam-boats, private conveyances, special messengers, &c.

[To be continued.]

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

In the House of Lords on March 19th, 1839. The Duke of Richmond, after presenting a very numerously signed petition on postage, is reported in the *Morning Chronicle* to have said "He had always been of opinion that the rates of postage ought to be reduced if they intended to maintain the revenue," but as he had not had as yet an opportunity of reading the voluminous report of the other House of Parliament, he could not pledge himself to the adoption of Mr. Hill's plan.

[This declaration will be joyfully received by the friends of cheap postage, because it gives a sure guarantee that the candour, experience, and kind feelings for the poor, of the duke, after reading the report will make his grace an advocate for the penny post.]

A meeting of the mercantile committee on postage, at which Messrs. Joshua Bates, G. G. de H. Larpent, George Moffatt, Lestoc Wilson, J. H. Gledstanes, D. Colvin, W. Wilkinson, and J. Dillon, were present, was held on Thursday, the 14th ult. at the Jerusalem Coffee-house, when it was unanimously resolved to prepare a short report, exhibiting the results of the late Parliamentary enquiry on postage, and to take measures for calling a meeting of the merchants and bankers of the city of London early in May, upon the subject of the proposed uniform penny postage.—*Times*.

## ADVANTAGES OF A MONOPOLY!

A great number of instances of bad management under the present Post Office system, have been made public by that excellent little journal, the *Post Circular*; but we have seen nothing, yet, to equal the want of management in the manufacturing districts in this neighbourhood. Mr. Wallace, himself, would hardly believe that there are market towns in this country, with a population of from 4 to 5000 each, without a post office, though mails run through daily. But such is the fact; the market town of Tredegar has a population considerably above 4000, and within a circle of three miles round the town of Nantyglo and Brynmawr, there are at least 15,000 inhabitants. The letters for each of these places are sent to Abergavenny, and thence forwarded in the private bags of different iron companies and shopkeepers, who charge, in some instances, as much as 4d. per letter for the accommodation. The mail for Abergavenny to Merthyr passes through these towns, as well as through Llanelli, Beaufort, and Romney; but there is not even a receiving house between Dowlais and Abergavenny, a distance of eighteen miles. At Newbridge, a rapidly increasing, manufacturing and market town, on the Cardiff road, the post office is kept at an inn, nearly a mile from the town, while the free delivery does not extend 300 yards from the office! The towns of Merthyr and Brecon are distant from each other about eighteen miles, but letters from one place to the other are sent through Abergavenny; letters from Brecon are therefore detained a whole day at Abergavenny, as the Merthyr mail leaves before the Brecon letters arrive; thus, if two letters are posted at Brecon in the morning, one for London, distance 170 miles, and another for Merthyr, distance 18 miles, the former will be in London about nine hours before the latter will reach Merthyr. Letters to Merthyr from Builth and Hay are three days on the road in consequence of this arrangement.

The ease with which these evils might be remedied makes the hardship appear greater. If offices were established in the towns among the iron-works, government would incur no other expense than the post-masters' salaries, as there is a mail already on the road; and there is every probability that the profits now derived by private individuals would leave a handsome balance in favour of the revenue. If a mail-cart was started from Brecon in time for the Cardiff mail from Merthyr and to start at its return, the evils above alluded to would not only be obviated, but a post communication in the day would be opened between Brecon and Bristol.—*Silurian*.

WHO WAS RIGHT—THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL, OR MR. ROWLAND HILL?

"Therefore, if it comes to that point, which is right and which is wrong, I maintain that our calculations are more likely to be right than his."—Lord Lichfield's Evidence before the Postage Committee, Par. 2821.

To the Report are appended sixteen pages of exceedingly elaborate Notes, containing some very abstruse calculations for the purpose of determining certain disputed points which arose in the course of the inquiry. The data on which these calculations rest have been selected with so much care and judgment, and every step in the demonstrations is so fully and satisfactorily stated, that the results appear to be absolutely indisputable; at least, the only chance of error is in the data.

As, however, the calculations occupy more space than we could possibly spare, and as, from the frequent use of algebraic symbols, they would probably be unintelligible to the general reader, we shall give the results only; and of these we shall confine ourselves to the more important, referring such of our readers as may be interested in following out an exceedingly beautiful specimen of mathematical reasoning, to the Notes themselves.

With the view of presenting the results as determined by the Committee in a more interesting form, we shall place in parallel columns those to which Mr. Hill on the one hand, and the Post-office authorities on the other, had arrived previously to, or in an early stage of, the inquiry.

AVERAGE RATES OF POSTAGE.

As determined by

Table with columns: Average rates, Multiple Letters being included and counted as simple; The Committee (d.); Mr. Hill; The Post-office. Rows include Packet and ship letters, Inland general post letters, etc.

(a) 1st Report, par. 162. 9 1/2 millions at 1s. each, and 44 millions at 9d. each, give an average of 9 1/2d. (b) 1st Report, page 434. (c) 1st Report, par. 161. Mr. Hill says, he thinks the average is about 6 1/2d.; but his figures show it to be nearer to 7d. In his pamphlet, he estimated this average at 6 1/2d., but treated it in his computations as though it were the average of single inland letters, which is shown above to be almost exactly 6 1/2d.

COST OF CONVEYANCE.

Of all the mail-coaches which leave London, the average weight carried is shown to be 474lb of mail, including bags; the average cost of a trip, 2l. 1s. 4d.; and the average distance travelled, 214 miles.

Table comparing costs of conveyance for chargeable letters, privileged letters, and newspapers, as determined by The Committee, Mr. Hill, and The Post-office.

COST OF DISTRIBUTION.

Without reference to particular mails, the actual cost of distribution, including the receipt, conveyance, and delivery, and all other expenses, is—

Table comparing costs of distribution for chargeable letters, privileged letters, and newspapers, as determined by The Committee, Mr. Hill, and The Post-office.

COST OF DISTRIBUTION COMPARED WITH THE CHARGE FOR DISTRIBUTION.

It is shown that the average cost of distributing general post letters is a little less than the thirteenth part of the average postage charged on such letters, making the tax about 1200 per cent. Mr. Hill estimated the average tax on all letters at between 300 and 400 per cent. (1st Report, par. 107.)

(d) Post-office Reform, 3d Ed. p. 13. Strictly speaking, Mr. Hill has not attempted to determine this average. He calculates the cost of conveyance from London to Edinburgh, and assumes that to be about the average for all well-laden mails.

(e) The Postmaster-General—1st Report, par. 2786. This also is a calculation of the cost of conveyance from London to Edinburgh; which, however, the Postmaster-General declares to be below the average. His Lordship insists on considering the whole expense as incurred in the conveyance of the chargeable letters.

(f) Post-office Reform, 3d Ed. p. 12. Mr. Hill gives this as the cost of distribution between post towns. The averages of the Committee, which are for all places, would of course be somewhat higher.

(g) The Postmaster-General—1st Report, par. 2795. His Lordship, as already stated, considers the whole expense as incurred on account of chargeable letters.

The Post Circular.

LONDON, MARCH 28, 1839.

It is understood the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, recommending a UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE, will be brought before the notice of the house by Mr. Wallace, the Chairman of the Committee, soon after Easter.

The utmost exertions in calling public meetings, getting up petitions, sending deputations to members of the House of Commons, should therefore be used, between this time and then.

We learn from the Times, that the "London Mercantile Committee" intend calling a public meeting of the merchants and bankers of the city early in May.

The labours of the Post Circular to convince all that Rowland Hill's plan for a uniform penny postage, would be profitable to the revenue (no one being sceptical of its unbounded good in all other respects), have been crowned with the greatest success. The Select Committee of the House of Commons, has passed its solemn verdict in favour of the plan in all its main features of a UNIFORM PENNY RATE, PAYABLE IN ADVANCE, BY MEANS OF SOME SORT OF STAMPS. Few such able documents as the report of this Committee have been issued, from the House of Commons and it

makes a glorious finish to the Committee's incessant and unwearied examination of witnesses. The utmost patience, toil, and thought, has been bestowed by the Committee, in making this judgment. Triumphantly have the several points of dispute between the Post-office and Mr. Hill, been settled by the clearest mathematical demonstrations, a summary of which is printed in this day's paper. The boast of Rowland Hill may indeed be great, to find that his plan—"wild and visionary," according to Lord Lichfield, the Postmaster-General; "preposterous and absurd," according to Colonel Maberly, his secretary—is strengthened and upheld by the legislative sanction of a Committee of the House of Commons, which employed the zeal and indomitable perseverance of Mr. Wallace, its chairman; the official authority and aptitude of Lord Lowther (a Conservative Post-office Commissioner, and certainly one not disposed to reckless change), and the philosophical and searching criticism of Mr. Warburton. The force of reason and right seems to have brought about even Lord Seymour, for we do not find his opposition recorded against the resolution that the rate shall be universally one penny, whenever the revenue can afford a temporary risk. We think very highly of this Nobleman's ability, who, being in the position of a Post-office Commissioner, a Lord of the Treasury, and talked over by the Post-office officials, perhaps felt it a duty to appear somewhat as an opponent during the inquiry, and we therefore reckon on generous support from him in future. Elsewhere will be found an account of the divisions which took place in the Committee.

Having rendered due thanks and honour to the Select Committee, we feel bound to record the exertions of other fellow-labourers. The Select Committee justly acknowledge the services of the London Mercantile Committee, and without them, we may confidently say such conclusive and convincing evidence would never have been procured. The difficult task of selecting the evidence was in great measure confided to Mr. W. H. Ashurst, and how skilfully and completely he performed it, the result shows. To Mr. George Moffatt, public thanks are owing for effecting the formation of the Mercantile Committee—a work which involved the gaining not a few proselytes to the startling novelty of a uniform penny postage, among a class proverbial for their prudence and caution in all financial projects—the London merchants. And here it may be proper to introduce the eminent names of those who, regardless of political feeling, and little likely to

throw money away on "visionary schemes," opened their purse-strings and furnished the means of action. The

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED in AID of the MERCANTILE COMMITTEE on POST-AGE were as follows:

Table listing subscribers and amounts for the Mercantile Committee on Post-Age, including names like John Abel Smith, G. G. de H. Larpent, etc.

Lastly let us notice the help which Rowland Hill's plan has received from the public at large. The whole

press with the *Times* in the van have become the advocates of a uniform penny postage, and not a few of the 320 petitions in the last session for a fair trial of the plan (in the previous session there were only five petitions), are the consequence of its admonitions. Postage Committees have been formed in most of the large towns in Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Manchester, &c.—Friendly communications have been established between several Chambers of Commerce and the London Mercantile Committee. Right hearty assistance has been given by the clergy throughout the kingdom to a measure, of such promise to the cause of religion, charity, and morality. Every man of science and literature, every merchant and tradesman, and every poor man who has heard of the plan, may be numbered among its advocates.

With this array of strength—the Report of the Select Committee, the exertions of the commercial classes of the United Kingdom, and the universal demand of the whole people—added to the right and justice of a penny post, it is no idle prophecy to say, that the good cause will speedily prevail against the single opposing voice of the sleepy monopolist of St. Martin's-le-grand!

Every one is puzzled to know why the Select Committee recommended an uniform TWOPENNY rate at all, when they state in their report, that a Penny rate "was the most approved of by the principal part of the witnesses," and "one calculated, in their opinion, at the risk of some temporary sacrifice of public income, to improve, at no distant period, the post-office revenue itself." People are apt to reason thus. The Committee was appointed "to inquire into the Postage rates, with a view to such a reduction thereof as may be made without injury to the revenue," and even keeping their eyes fixed upon the interests of the revenue, surely a penny rate, "likely to improve, at no distant period, the post-office revenue itself," when viewed with respect to the present state of the revenue, must have offered no greater disadvantages than a twopenny rate; for the chances of some temporary sacrifice of revenue, during the transition period, are pretty equal with both rates, and the balance of the evidence is decidedly favourable to the penny rate as the most productive ultimately.

The enigma may be solved, by a little consideration of the divisions which are published in the third report of the Committee. The question of an uniform rate was carried by the votes of Lord Lowther, Messrs. Warburton, Raikes Currie, Chalmers, and Wallace (the chairman), against those of Lord Seymour, Messrs. P. Thomson, Parker, and Thornely. A penny rate, and also a threehalfpenny rate were proposed and lost; but a twopenny rate was carried by the same votes as above stated, with that of Mr. Villiers added to the "ayes," and that of Mr. G. W. Wood to the "noes." Previous to this division, Mr. Poulett Thomson proposed to get rid of the already decided question of an "uniform rate," and pressed an amendment to a division, which was lost. Thus an uniform twopenny rate having been settled, the question seems to have suggested itself to the Committee, how would it work? The nineteen hundred penny posts, and the cases of sailors' and soldiers' letters must have stared them in the face, and created the difficulty, if not impossibility, how they could form part of an uniform twopenny rate. No one would have proposed to increase these penny posts to twopenny posts.—Then, no doubt, came other thoughts, whether a twopenny post would draw invoices, and such like documents,—promised sources of the greatest increase into the post-office, as well as the conviction based on the strongest testimony of illicit letter-carriers themselves, and the best informed witnesses, that a penny postage is almost universally the smuggler's charge. The Committee would no doubt here find themselves in a dilemma; and as they could not revoke their divisions, they must have agreed (and it appears even with the concurrence of the Lords of the Treasury, who did not divide against it), to append to the resolution recommending a twopenny rate, a subsequent resolution, recommending a penny rate to be adopted when the revenue could risk a temporary loss. The meaning of all this, doubtless, is that a PENNY rate is the thing to be carried into execution.

It is a singular fact, that the representatives of several influential trading and commercial interest, (trade and commerce feeling most severely the oppression of high postage), voted against uniformity of rate, and against both a penny, a threehalfpenny, and even a twopenny rate. The principal opposition to an uniform penny post was given by Mr. Poulett Thomson, President of the Board of Trade, representing Manchester, whose chamber of commerce sent a deputy on behalf of the trade of Manchester, to tell its postage grievances to the Committee; by Mr. J. Parker, a Lord of the Treasury, and M.P. for Sheffield, which had likewise deputed a member of its chamber of commerce to the Committee; and by Mr. G. W. Wood, (the would-be vice-President of the Board of Trade,) M.P. for Kendal. It is to be hoped that Manchester, Sheffield, and Kendal, will not be ungrateful of these favours of their representatives.

The frequent presentation of petitions for the adoption of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of an uniform postage, of one penny paid in advance, indicates the extending interest felt on this subject, and ought to induce at least the practical realization of the recommendations of the committee.

By the restrictions on the committee, all objectiveness on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer should be superseded. His official guardianship over the revenue was delegated to its members. They were warned off from whatever proposition might imply even the risk of revenue as forbidden ground. They were not allowed to speculate on merely temporary diminution. It was forbidden them to go astray from the certainty of present proceeds; however attractive the object. Their bond was to disregard, in comparison with the chance of reduction, all public and private advantage, all facilities for commerce or literature, all alleviations of suffering or loss, and all subserviency to mental or moral improvement. Undiminished revenue was the *sine qua non* of their deliberations, the stern sentinel at the gate barring all access; and yet thus "cabbined, cribbed, confined," they have not hesitated to recommend an uniform twopenny postage, to be immediately adopted, with the eventful prospect of its merging in Mr. Hill's original proposition of a penny. In such a case, surely a Chancellor of the Exchequer may find his conscience relieved, and feel himself at liberty to be a man and a legislator, as well as a financier. His work is done for him; his charge is safe and sacred; he may venture to step over the narrow circle of his calculations into the regions of legislative utility; and instead of looking sharp after the cash, he may look kindly on the country, and bestow a costless boon, which all classes would gratefully appreciate.

Such are the sound remarks of the *Morning Chronicle*, in the first of a series of very able articles on the penny postage. Let not the people delude themselves with a quiet belief that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will pay more attention to the Parliamentary report, than to the reports of his post-office commissioners, unless public feeling waxes strong and demandant. Up to this time, Col. Maberly and the post-office have ridden over reports and promises of amendment without end. Nearly two years have passed since Lord Duncannon promised that the experiment should be made with the metropolitan post; and lo! because Col. Maberly said the proposal was preposterous, the Chancellor of the Exchequer suggested some imitation of the plan of stamped covers, which was luckily laughed out of being.

**RAILWAY MAILS.**—A very ingenious apparatus is said to have been erected by order of government, on the railroad from London to Liverpool, for exchanging the letter bags, conveyed by the travelling post-office, without in the least checking the speed of the steam-carriage. The bags are now taken and left, at any rate of speed, however rapid at which the train may be travelling; thus considerably expediting the transit of correspondence, effecting a vast saving in the consumption of steam-power, and, though last not least in importance, getting rid of the liability of serious accidents to the parties employed in exchanging the bags in the old mode. A gentleman of the name of Ramsey, connected with the general post-office, is the inventor of the apparatus in question.

SOUND ADVICE.

What chance is there of effecting the wish of the Parliamentary Committee in establishing a Penny-postage, or even their recommendation of a Twopenny-rate? There is none if the people are quiescent; the reform will be effected, to a certainty and at once, if the people agitate the question; and both history and experience demonstrate that nothing is ever granted by rulers without. This fact, in England at least, is not to be charged against our legislators as a crime, but as a natural circumstance of their position. Cut off, in this aristocratical country, from all familiar intercourse with the people, they know not what to originate for their good, till the public will is unequivocally declared; and, even when the cry is loudest, they are at a loss to distinguish between the clamour of a faction and the determination of the people at large, till it come home to each Member in the still small voice of "You shall, or you shall lose your seat." We repeat, that this is not a matter of crimination, but of fact; and is not a vice in them, but a law of nature. No one can thoroughly and heartily sympathize with another but from experience of a similar state; the robust cannot enter into the varying sensations of the delicate in health; those who have never undergone temptation, cannot appreciate the struggles, or feel for the fall of those who have; nor can any class feel the wants of another of whose necessities they are ignorant. We may tell a member of wealthy Senates, that the postage costs an extensive merchant the rent of a house; that with smaller traders it takes away the salary of a clerk—or their tailor's bill—or a son's clothing; or that, in the genteel family, of refined feeling but narrow means, it cuts off parental, filial, and sisterly communication; whilst it shuts out the poor from necessary knowledge of their means of living, and of the life and welfare of their dearest relations. The Senators listen; they understand the representation as a logical proposition; but they do not enter into it—they do not feel it. With their means and their modes of spending money, they could not do it if they paid for their letters; but they do not pay. The law is made to give the lawmakers immunity; and we see by

the report that it is used to such an extent, that the quantity of correspondence transmitted freely by franks would yield nearly half of the whole receipts from the Post-office.

The next and last question is, how to agitate? At the end of the Supplement is a form of Petition, which cannot be too extensively followed out; for petitions furnish an argument to Parliamentary advocates; they are watched by those who call themselves statesmen; and they are held, in Senatorial conventionalism, to be the legitimate test of public opinion. Petition Parliament, therefore, by all means; but let constituencies do something more, and "petition"—press their Representatives. Let them call public meetings and invite their members to attend, and let them then and there instruct them to support the subject when mooted. Nor let any one be absent or backward on account of his politics. Postage Reform is not a question of politics, but of the pocket, the home, the heart; Tory, Whig, Radical, and even "Precursor," may unite for "a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether." It is not a question of "party or of faction," but one which affects every subject of the empire.—*Spectator*.

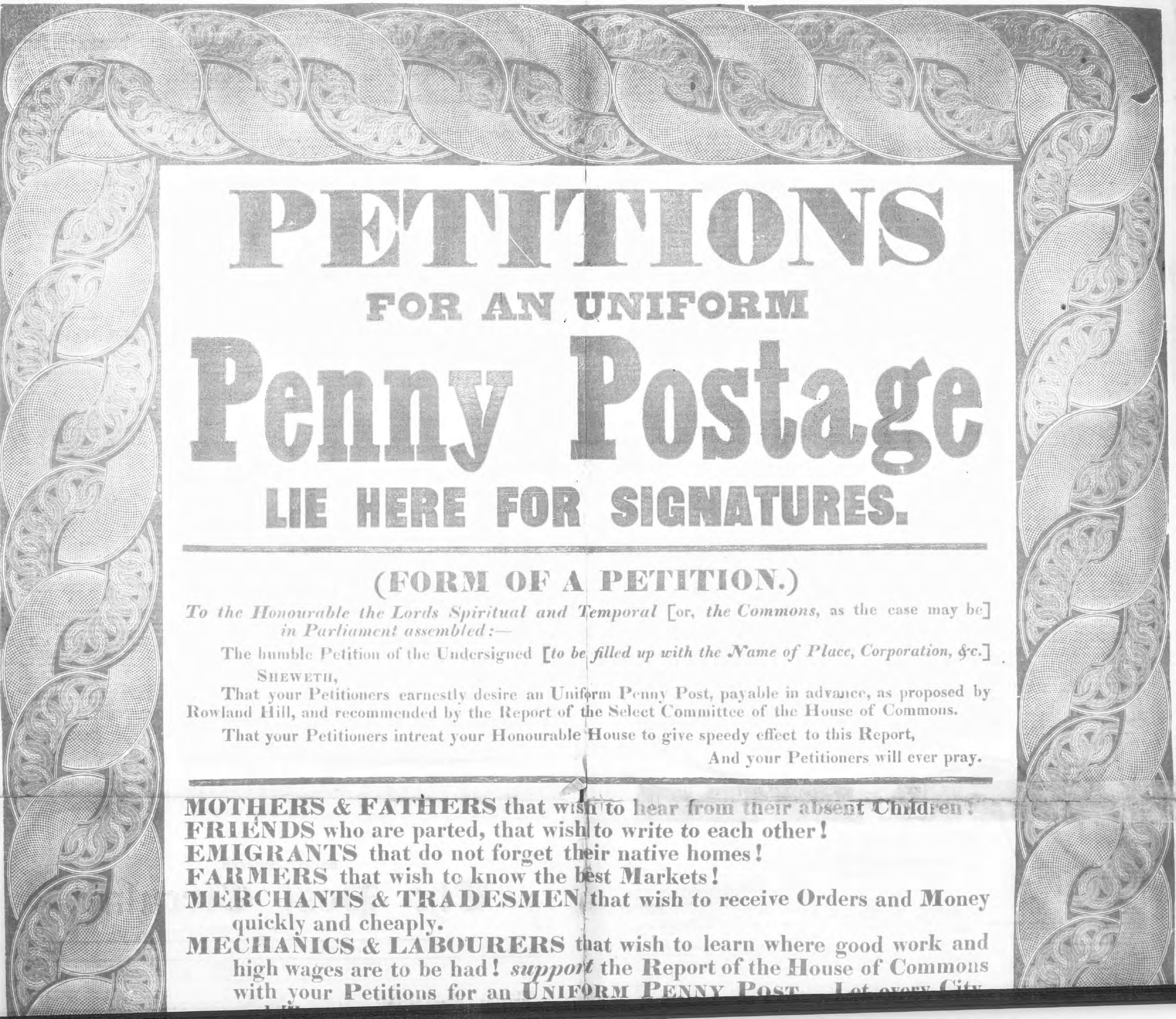
PETITIONS.

The people must be in right earnest about petitioning, if they will have their letters for a penny. We print an abstract of the petitions of last session, hoping that all Town Councils, &c., which sent those petitions, will repeat the process this session. A copy of this Circular will therefore be forwarded to every place, &c., named in this list. In the session previous to the last, the petitions were only five; last session they grew to 320! Let the same proportionate increase take place, and the cause is secured!

To advance this object, we have printed a handsome placard inside the paper. When the contents of the paper have been digested, we trust this placard will be exhibited in the market-place, public rooms, or some shop-window, in a good thoroughfare; and when it has served the turn of one town or village, the Post-office will have the honour of conveying it, gratis, to serve the same good end in another spot, if the possessor will but take the little trouble of directing it to some friend.

ABSTRACT OF THE PETITIONS PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE OF COMMONS LAST SESSION, AND REFERRED TO THE POSTAGE COMMITTEE.—(See the Report for fuller details).

<i>From Town Councils, &amp;c.</i>	
Perth	Kidderminster
Banff	Boston
Aberdeen	Bathgate
London	Leeds
Edinburgh	Cupar (Guildry)
Montrose	Kirkcudbright
Kilmarnock	Southwold
Dumfries	Dunbar
Greenock	Pollockshaws
Anstruther Wester	Devonport
Irvine	Cromarty
Arbroath (Guildry)	Ayr
Nairn	Auchtermuchty
Crail	Worcester
Anstruther Easter	Kirkcaldy
Gorbals, Commissioners of Police, (Glasgow)	Bridport
Cupar, Fife	Dundee
Glasgow	Ludlow
Plymouth	Carlisle
Kingston-upon-Hall	Glasgow
Exeter	Stafford
Kilrenny, Scotland	Macclesfield
Bath	Pontefract
Bristol	Perth (Guildry)
Annan	Lancaster
Diegwall	Bridgewater
Derby	Pittenweem
Nottingham	Paisley
Coventry	Stirling
Haddington	Ipwich
Oxford	Colchester
Liverpool	Dumbarton
Hawick	Kilmarnock
Newcastle-upon-Tyne	Stockport
Sunderland	Peterhead
Auchtermuchty	Norwich
<i>From Merchants, Bankers, &amp;c., and Inhabitants.</i>	
Elgin	Glasgow
Aberdeen	Goadhurst
St. Giles, Camberwell	Settle
Hythe, Kent	Bridport
Wolverhampton	Greenock
Stroatham Parish	Wincauton



# PETITIONS

FOR AN UNIFORM

# Penny Postage

LIE HERE FOR SIGNATURES.

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## (FORM OF A PETITION.)

*To the Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal [or, the Commons, as the case may be] in Parliament assembled:—*

The humble Petition of the Undersigned [*to be filled up with the Name of Place, Corporation, &c.*]

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners earnestly desire an Uniform Penny Post, payable in advance, as proposed by Rowland Hill, and recommended by the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

That your Petitioners intreat your Honourable House to give speedy effect to this Report,

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

---

**MOTHERS & FATHERS** that wish to hear from their absent Children!

**FRIENDS** who are parted, that wish to write to each other!

**EMIGRANTS** that do not forget their native homes!

**FARMERS** that wish to know the best Markets!

**MERCHANTS & TRADESMEN** that wish to receive Orders and Money quickly and cheaply.

**MECHANICS & LABOURERS** that wish to learn where good work and high wages are to be had! *support* the Report of the House of Commons with your Petitions for an UNIFORM PENNY POST. Let every City

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**FARMERS** that wish to know the best Markets!  
**MERCHANTS & TRADESMEN** that wish to receive Orders and Money quickly and cheaply.  
**MECHANICS & LABOURERS** that wish to learn where good work and high wages are to be had! *support* the Report of the House of Commons with your Petitions for an **UNIFORM PENNY POST**. Let every City, and Town, and Village, every Corporation, every Religious Society and Congregation, petition--and let every one in the Kingdom sign a Petition with his name or his mark!

## THIS IS NO QUESTION OF PARTY POLITICS!

LORD AMHERSTON, a Conservative, and one of the richest Noblemen in the Country, spoke these impressive words before the House of Commons Committee:—"Postage is one of the worst of our Taxes; it is, in fact, taxing the conversation of people who live at a distance from each other. The communication of letters by persons living at a distance is the same as a communication by word of mouth between persons living in the same town."

"Sixpence," says Mr. BIRWIS, "is the third of a poor man's income; if a gentleman, who had £1,050 a year, or £3 a day, had to pay one-third of his daily income—a sovereign, for a letter, how often would he write letters of friendship? Let a gentleman put that to himself, and then he will be able to see how the poor man cannot be able to pay sixpence for his letter."



**READER!**--If you can get any Signatures to a Petition, make two Copies of the above on two half sheets of paper; get them signed as numerously as possible; fold each up separately; put a slip of paper around, leaving the ends open; direct one to a Member of the House of Lords, the other to a Member of the House of Commons, LONDON, and put them into the Post Office.

Whiting, Beaufort House, Strand, London.

Leicester  
Banbury, Oxford  
Drogheda  
Bedford  
Cork  
Truro  
St. Agnes, Cornwall  
Sheffield  
Kirkwall  
Quendon, Essex  
Rickling, Essex  
Hitchin, Hertford  
Plymouth  
Liverpool  
Nottingham, Bayswater, London  
Cork  
Dawlish, Devon  
Holt, Norfolk  
Teignmouth  
Barnstaple, Devon  
Wootton-under-Edge  
Halesworth, Suffolk  
St. Austell, Cornwall  
Great Yarmouth, Norfolk  
St. John's, Westminster  
Epping  
St. Columb Major, Cornwall  
Kintore  
Brompton  
Liskeard  
Upton-upon-Severn  
Tavistock  
Southampton  
Alford, Lincoln  
Helston, Cornwall  
Royston  
New Buckenham  
East Hailing  
Dunbar  
Birmingham  
Belfast  
Biggleswade  
Cirencester  
Fermanagh  
Calne, Wilts  
Swanage, Dorset  
Cupar, Non-electors  
Newbury  
Northwold, Norfolk  
Brandon  
Hockwold-cum-Wilton  
Wareham, Norfolk  
Feltwell, Norfolk  
Gooderstone, Norfolk  
Barton, Bendish, and Eastmore  
Didlington, Foulton, and Caldecot, Norfolk  
Methwold  
Downham  
Stoke Ferry  
Boughton  
Reading  
Ennis  
Devonport  
Kilrush  
Methven Parish  
Hereford

From Chambers of Commerce.

Dundee  
Stock Exchange  
Glasgow  
Edinburgh (Company of Merchants)  
Kingston-upon-Hull  
Edinburgh (Chamber)  
Greenock  
Edinburgh  
Liverpool (East India Association)

From Commissioners of Supply.

Renfrew  
Pife  
Aberdeen  
Lanark  
Ross

From a Bank.

Birmingham and Midland.

From Printers & Printing-offices.

London  
Little Pultney st, St. James's  
Rupert st, Haymarket  
18, Princes-st, Cavendish-sq  
Bread street hill  
Clowes' Printing office  
Henry Martin, Halifax Express  
Castle st, Leicester sq  
50, Old Bailey  
Frith st, Soho  
G. Davidson, 16 Serle's pl  
15, Old Bailey  
C. Roworth and Sons, Bell yd, Fleet st  
A. J. Valpy  
21, Took's ct, Chancery lane  
17, Devonshire square, Bishopsgate st  
38, Gracechurch st  
18, Took's court  
2, Robert st, Bedford row  
35 & 40, Threadneedle st

From Mechanics' Institutes.

Bradford  
Liverpool  
Brougham Institute  
Dunbar  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

From Attornies, Solicitors, &c.

London and Westminster  
Kirkcudbright  
London  
Reading

From a Clergyman.

Rev. Wm. C. Wilson, Westmorland

From Fire and Life Insurance Companies.

Thomas Richter, Secretary of Phoenix  
John Richards, Secretary Sun Office  
Jas. Norris, National Life Directors of General Benefit Insurance Company

From Charities, &c.

Anthropological Society  
Royal Vaccine  
Queen Charlotte's Lying-in Hospital  
Phiological School  
Secretary to City of London Lying-in Hospital  
Governors Freemasons' Charity  
Secretary Smallpox Hospital  
Associates Finsbury Dispensary  
Associated Catholic Charities  
Enniskillen Temp. Society

From Tradesmen, &c. in humble life.  
Asbridge

Totals.	
Town Councils . . . . .	73
Merchants, Bankers, &c. and Inhabitants . . . . .	141
Chambers of Commerce . . . . .	19
Commissioners of Supply . . . . .	10
Bank . . . . .	1
Printers & Printing-offices . . . . .	37
Mechanics' Institutes . . . . .	9
Attornies . . . . .	7
Clergyman . . . . .	1
Fire and Life Insurances . . . . .	8
Charities, &c. . . . .	10
Tradesmen, &c. . . . .	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE SELECT COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON POSTAGE.

Moral and Commercial Evils of present high Rates of Postage.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the evidence taken before them abundantly proves that the present high rates of postage are extremely injurious to all classes, both in their individual and social capacity, interfering as they do with their progress in moral and intellectual improvement, and, in some degree, with their physical welfare: also, that those rates, by restricting the transmission of letters of advice, invoices, orders, &c., produce a most serious injury to commerce, and, consequently, to national prosperity: that by checking communication between persons interested in the same object, or engaged in the same pursuit, they tend greatly to restrain the progress of the nation in art and science: that by circumscribing the operations of the different societies instituted for the spread of religion, the advancement of morality, and the promotion of charitable objects, they have an injurious effect on the character of the poorer classes, and also interfere with their domestic comforts: that independently of their more direct effect on the progress and dissemination of knowledge, they tend also, by the obstacles they oppose to the writing and publication of books, to limit and deteriorate education: that they operate to the prejudice of health, by preventing the transmission of medical advice, and of lymph for vaccination: that by occasioning increased expense, or delay submitted to for the sake of avoiding expense, they interfere to a serious extent with legal professional correspondence: that they either act as a grievous tax on the poor, causing them to sacrifice their little earnings to the pleasure or advantage of corresponding with their distant friends, or compel them to forego such intercourse altogether; thus subtracting from the small amount of their enjoyments, and obstructing the growth and maintenance of their best affections: lastly, that they lead to the most extensive violations or evasions of the statutes for the protection of the Post-office revenue, and thus impair that habitual respect for the law which it should be one of the first aims of an enlightened Legislature to secure.

NON-INCREASE OF POST-OFFICE REVENUE.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is mainly owing to the combined operation of high rates of postage, and of the increased and increasing facilities for the illicit conveyance of letters, that after the lapse of the last 20 years, during which population has greatly increased, and trade, commerce, and education, have been widely extended, the Post-office revenue exhibits only a very small increase; and consequently that, even supposing the rates to be regulated without regard to public convenience, and merely with a view of rendering them as productive of revenue as possible, they are at present much too high.

INCREASED FACILITIES.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the additional facilities which have hitherto been afforded to inland correspondence, in the despatch of letters, by the Post-office department, have all tended to the convenience of the public, and in a majority of instances to the improvement of the revenue: that further facilities would be attended with like advantages, and that every reasonable effort, therefore, should be made, by substituting direct for circuitous routes, and by expediting the delivery, to abridge, as far as practicable, the time which must elapse between the despatch and delivery of a letter.

UNIFORM RATE OF POSTAGE.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that that part of the inland postage on letters which consists of tax, ought to be the same on all: that as the cost of conveyance per letter depends more on the number of letters carried, than on the distance which they are conveyed, the cost being frequently greater for distances of a few miles than for distances of hundreds of miles, the charge, if varied in proportion to the cost, ought to increase in the inverse ratio of the number of letters conveyed; but as it would be difficult, if not impossible, to carry such a regulation into practice, and as the actual cost of conveyance (assuming the charged letters to bear the whole expense of the franked letters and of the newspapers) forms less than the half of the whole charge exclusive of tax the remaining portion consisting chiefly in the charges attendant on their receipt at, and delivery from the Post-office. Your Committee are of opinion that the nearest practicable approach to a fair system would be to charge a uniform rate of postage between one post-

town and another, whatever might be their distance; and your Committee are further of opinion that such an arrangement is highly desirable, not only on account of its abstract fairness, but because it would tend in a great degree to simplify and economise the business of the Post-office.

Payment in Advance.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that taking into consideration the whole evidence relating to payment in advance, such an arrangement would greatly simplify the accounts, and expedite the delivery of letters, and, consequently, tend to economise the management of the Post-office: that postage, therefore, if paid in advance, might be reduced to a lower rate than would otherwise be practicable: that the public would prefer a low rate, if collected by means of stamped paper, though restricted to payment in advance, to a higher rate, unaccompanied by such restriction: that in the event of its adoption, however, it would be expedient, in the first instance, to allow an option, whether to pay in advance or not, payment on delivery being made considerably higher than payment in advance.

Stamps.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the most convenient and economical mode of effecting payment in advance would be by means of stamps or stamped paper, to be issued by the Stamp-office, which should have the effect of franking the letters. This arrangement would relieve the Post-office of a considerable portion of its financial accounts, and render more secure the collection of the revenue. The use of such stamps or stamped paper should be made compulsory so soon as warranted by experience.

Weight.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that to regulate the postage charge entirely by weight would be fairer than the present arrangement, and more acceptable to the public; also that it would tend to the prevention of error and fraud; but they are doubtful whether, with the half-ounce gradations proposed by Mr. Hill, it would or would not facilitate the internal operations of the Post-office.

Present Number of Letters, Franks, and Newspapers.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that from an estimate founded on Return, No. 25,—counting double and triple letters as single only,—the number of chargeable letters which now pass through the Post-offices of the United Kingdom in a year, is between 75 and 80 millions, of which about 57 millions are general-post letters. That the number of franks is about seven millions, and the number of newspapers about 44 millions.

UNIFORM RATE OF ONE PENNY.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that so soon as the state of the public revenue will admit of the risking a large temporary reduction, it will be expedient to subject all inland letters to a uniform rate of 1d. per half-ounce, increasing at the rate of 1d. for each additional half-ounce.

Temporary Twopenny Rate.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that prior to establishing the uniform rate of 1d., it would be expedient, in the first instance, to reduce the rates on inland general-post letters to a uniform rate of 2d. per half-ounce, increasing at the rate of 1d. for each additional half-ounce: reserving all the cases of prices current, the letters of soldiers and sailors, and others, where a penny only now is charged, and of such short inland rate as is hereinafter recommended to be charged on a distance of 15 miles.

Penny Postage, embracing 15 Miles.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that considering the strength of concurrent evidence on the evasion of the postage chargeable between neighbouring towns, and also that the present system of penny posts is partial and unequal, a uniform weight of 1d. per half-ounce ought immediately to be established for all distances not exceeding 15 miles from the Post-office where the letter is posted, the payment being made in advance, through the medium of some kind of stamp; and that the charge, when not so paid in advance, should be 2d.

Regulation of Franking.

That it is the opinion of this Committee, that taking into account the serious loss to the Post-office revenue which is caused by the privilege of franking, and the inevitable abuse of that privilege in numerous cases where no public business is concerned, it would be politic, in a financial point of view, and agreeable to the public sense of justice, if on effecting the proposed reduction of the postage rates, the privilege of Parliamentary franking were to be abolished, and the privilege of official franking placed under strict limitation: petitions to Parliament, and Parliamentary documents, being still allowed to go free.



# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 11.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17, 1839.

Price 6d.

LORD ASHBURTON, a Conservative, and one of the richest Noblemen in the Country, spoke these impressive words before the House of Commons Committee:—"Postage is one of the worst of our Taxes; it is, in fact, taxing the conversation of people who live at a distance from each other. The communication of letters by persons living at a distance is the same as a communication by word of mouth between persons living in the same town."

"Sixpence," says Mr. BROWN, "is the third of a poor man's income; if a gentleman, who had £1000 a year, or £3 a day, had to pay one-third of his daily income—a sovereign, for a letter, how often would he write letters of friendship? Let a gentleman put that to himself, and then he will be able to see how the poor man cannot be able to pay sixpence for his letter."

## Extracts from the Parliamentary Postage Report.

### UNIFORMITY OF RATE.

The other ground stated by Mr. Hill, in favour of a uniform rate, is the simplicity that would result from it in all the operations of the Post-office. Colonel Maberly states, "that he is a great friend to a uniform rate of postage, if it can be; but he does not think it practicable. If you could reduce the postage as low as 1d., the charge would then be so imperceptible that he thinks you might maintain it; but if it were above 1d., its not being acceptable to the public would render it impracticable. He is very much in favour of a uniform charge, when it can be adopted, as producing great simplicity in the accounts between the Post-office and their postmasters. Any arrangements which, in the great details of Post-office matters, introduce simplicity, he looks upon as a great improvement." Mr. Lawrence, the Assistant Secretary, likes the idea of a uniform rate; it has been adopted in some degree in the Post-office already; there cannot be the least question it would very much facilitate all the operations of the Post-office. Sir Edward Lees is of the same opinion with Mr. Lawrence; and says, that there is no question it would be preferable to a varied scale of rates. Mr. Banning, Postmaster at Liverpool, says it would be a very great convenience in the operations of the Post-office department; and Mr. Godby, Secretary to the Dublin Post-office, is favourable to it as a principle, and thinks it would remove many difficulties, and accelerate their operations. Mr. Bokenham, Superintending President of the London Inland Office, differs from the preceding witnesses, and asserts "that it is quite as easy to make 20 different taxes [of letters] as to make them all the same."

The precedents for uniform rating probably referred to by Mr. Lawrence, were—1st, the penny posts, in which case 1d. is levied on every letter not exceeding in weight four ounces, without reference to the distance over which it is conveyed or the number of its enclosures; 2dly, the letters to and from soldiers and sailors, which are charged 1d. only, without reference to country or distance; 3dly, the ship-letters sent from the interior to any port, in which case the invariable charge is 1s., 4d. being the rate for inland postage, and 8d. that for the conveyance by ship; and 4thly, newspapers, that is, the penny stamp as a commutation for postage.

### AVERAGE POSTAGE ON LETTERS PASSING THROUGH THE POST-OFFICE.

Your committee estimate that the average general postage charged on each letter, including foreign letters, and reckoning double and triple letters as single, is about 9½d.

That on General Post letters, exclusive of foreign letters, it is about 8½d.

That the average postage on all letters, foreign as well as inland, and including 1d., 2d., and 3d. Post letters, is about 7d.

That the average on all letters, exclusive of foreign, is about 6½d.

Which estimates agree with those made by Mr. Hill.

### PRESENT REVENUE OF THE POST-OFFICE AS COMPARED WITH ITS REVENUE IN FORMER YEARS.

#### 1. Objects for which the Post-office was established.

The declared object for which the Post-office was established, as appears from the Act, the 12th year of Charles the Second, was "the advantage of trade and commerce."

Lord Lowther, in a Report on "prices current," after quoting from the said Act the preceding words, adds, "The direct revenue to be derived from the Post-office was not the primary consideration."

The Commissioners of Post-office Inquiry, now sitting, observe in their Tenth Report, that "The safe and speedy conveyance of letters for the benefit of trade and commerce, was the primary consideration with the Government on the first establishment of a General Post-office; the revenue which it was expected would arise from the exclusive privilege conferred on the Postmaster-General was held to be of minor importance: this principle is recognized in the preamble of the different postage Acts which were passed from the time of the Commonwealth down to the 10th of Queen Ann, when the English and Scottish offices were united under one Postmaster-General."

Such were the objects for which the Post-office was established, and such are the objects which, in the opinion of your Committee, ought to be kept in view in the management of that department.

It appears from the account of the receipts and the gross cost of management of the Post-office for the year ending the 5th of January, 1838, that the cost of management of the Post-office department was 698,632l. 2s. 2d.; the gross revenue, exclusive of repayments, 2,339,737l. 18s. 3d.; and the net revenue therefore, 1,641,105l. 16s. 1d., that is, that the price charged amounts to more than three times the cost, even if the whole expence be placed to the account of letters. Upon this showing, it cannot but be admitted that

the relative importance of the objects in view at the time the Post-office was first established, would appear to have been reversed; for, that which was at first the secondary consideration, the Revenue, can scarcely be regarded in that light any longer, when, owing to the pressing exigencies of the state, a tax is found to have been imposed of at least 256 per cent.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS.

### PORTSEA.

A numerous meeting of the inhabitants of the Borough of Portsmouth, was held at the Society's Hall, Portsea, on Tuesday evening last, the Mayor in the chair, for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning Parliament for a reduced and uniform rate of postage, according to the plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill, and to memorialize the Postmaster-general for relief from the additional penny charged on letters delivered outside the walls, and those addressed to seamen on board the ships and vessels in the port. The Mayor having commenced the business of the evening by reading the requisition calling them together, Lieutenant Walker, R.N., rose to propose the first resolution, in doing which he entered into an exposition of the evil resulting from the present exorbitant rates of postage, and the injustice of demanding an additional penny for delivering letters beyond the Glacis, and for those addressed to seamen, which are not delivered at all, but left at the Navy Post-office till called for. Lieutenant Walker, in the course of his observations, read copies of correspondence which had taken place between him and Colonel Maberly, Secretary to the Postmaster-general, respecting the charge of the additional penny, which was stated by Colonel Maberly to be a usual charge on Penny-post towns. He also read a letter which he sent to the Duke of Richmond, requesting him to present the petition to be proposed at that meeting to the House of Lords, and to support its prayer; and one to Mr. Baring, to request his care of the petition to the Commons. Mr. Baring, in his reply, stated, that being connected with the Treasury, he could not pledge himself to advocate any measure affecting the revenue, although he felt it his duty at all times to take charge of any petitions which his constituents might entrust to his care, whatever his own opinion might be. With respect to the local grievances complained of, Mr. Baring advised an application to the Postmaster-general, or to the Treasury, which he anticipated would cause their being removed, as was the case in the Duke of Richmond's period of holding the office of Postmaster-general; when, in consequence of a representation which he made on behalf of his constituents, the time of arrival of the London mail was arranged at an earlier hour. In the Duke of Richmond's reply, his Grace expressed his readiness to present the petition, but declined to pledge himself to support its prayer until he saw it. He also stated that he had spoken in Parliament in favour of a reduction of postage. A letter was read from Sir G. T. Staunton, stating that he was favourable to the objects sought to be obtained by the petition, but he could not pledge himself to the support of Mr. Rowland Hill's specific plan, till he had more information on the subject. Lieutenant Walker concluded by moving, "That the present charges for transmitting letters being excessive, are injurious to the poor, in preventing their communicating with absent friends; detrimental to the interests of traders, merchants, and manufacturers, and often prove a barrier to the comfort, convenience, and happiness of all classes." This was seconded by the Reverend Mr. Arnot, in a very able speech, wherein he feelingly pointed out the bad effects on the morals and general welfare and happiness of the poorer classes, consequent on the present high rates of postage. The motion was then put from the chair, and carried unanimously. The next resolution was moved by Mr. J. Sheppard, to the following effect: "That it is highly desirable one general rate of postage, as recommended by the select Committee of the House of Commons, be immediately adopted." Seconded by Mr. Cotsell, and unanimously agreed to.

Mr. G. W. Law then proposed, "That petitions, embodying the foregoing resolutions be presented to both Houses of Parliament: that to the Lords to be transmitted to his Grace the Duke of Richmond; and that to the Commons, by F. T. Baring, Esq., and Sir G. T. Staunton, Bart., the Borough members, for presentation; and that his Grace the Duke of Wellington, as Lord Lieutenant of the County, and the members of the Southern Division, be requested to support its prayer."

The petition was then read as follows:—

"To the Honourable, &c. The petition of the undersigned inhabitants of the Borough of Portsmouth, humbly sheweth, — That your petitioners consider the present charge for the postage of letters excessive and unjust, alike to the poor, the trader, the manufacturer, and the merchant; and injurious to the comfort, convenience, and

happiness of her Majesty's subjects. They therefore pray that you will immediately adopt the plan recommended by a select Committee of the House of Commons, for the establishment of a reduced and uniform rate of postage."

This was seconded by H. Gardener, and unanimously carried.—From the Hampshire Independent.

### GLOUCESTER.

A public meeting was held at the Tolsey, on Thursday last, convened by the Mayor, in pursuance of a requisition signed by the merchants of Gloucester, to take into consideration the proposed reduction of postage, as recommended by the Committee of the House of Commons, and to petition Parliament on the subject; also to consider the propriety of removing the Post-office in this city to some more convenient situation, which was numerous and respectably attended. Mr. Shipton was called upon to preside, but shortly after resigned the seat to the Mayor on his arrival at the meeting. After some remarks from Mr. Shipton with regard to the operation of the present system, particularly on the lower classes, Mr. R. Martin read petitions to both Houses of Parliament, and moved their adoption, which was seconded by Mr. Sage, and carried unanimously. Mr. Sage suggested whether it would not be prudent to adopt measures to obtain the signatures of every individual who could write in the city and vicinity. The Rev. J. G. Dowling concurred in this suggestion, and expressed an anticipation that the inhabitants of Gloucester would show the country that they were not unmindful of an object which was daily assuming greater importance as it became more thoroughly investigated. Mr. Sage then moved that the petitions should be taken round to every house in the city, to afford all an opportunity of affixing their signatures. The resolution having been seconded by the Rev. J. G. Dowling, was carried unanimously; and a committee was afterwards appointed to carry the object into effect. Mr. Shipton then moved a resolution, condemning the site of the Post-office, which was carried; and it was agreed to petition the Postmaster-general for the removal of the Post-office from its present situation.—Gloucester Chronicle, 30th March, 1839.

[The proposal that the Petitions should be taken round to every house, is worth the consideration of every public meeting.]

### BRIGHTON.

A meeting of the inhabitants of the Borough, convened by the High Constable, was held on Thursday at the Town Hall,—Mr. J. Bradshaw, High Constable, in the chair,—for the purpose of considering the propriety of petitioning Parliament in favour of a reduction of the postage on letters.

The Vestry Clerk proceeded to read the answers to communications on the subject of the meeting which had been forwarded to both the Borough Members. Capt. Pechell intimated that he would not fail in attending if an adjournment of the House took place on Wednesday evening; and Sir A. Dalrymple replied that, as the Ordnance estimates were to be considered, it would not be in his power to attend, but he would not fail to pay the utmost attention to the resolutions passed at the meeting.

E. Hall, Esq., then briefly moved the first resolution, to the effect that a diminution of the present enormous charge of postage was of the greatest importance to all classes of society, and particularly to the commercial world.

Mr. Holtham seconded the same, which was then put and carried unanimously.

Mr. Thomas Attree said, the resolution which he had to propose was, that it was fully proved, from the report, that the present post-office charges not only interfered with the wants of the public, but led to a systematic evasion and violation of the law.

Mr. I. Bass briefly seconded the resolution.

Mr. G. Matthews considered that, in a commercial country like this, the post-office ought to be more a matter of public convenience than of revenue, and asserted that the evasion of the law on this point took place more among the higher classes than the lower. It was not the poor man who went and asked Members for franks, but gentlemen and respectable tradesmen. He would give a case in point. He had had a friend from Leamington staying with him, and who fortunately happened to drink some of his (Mr. M's) claret. He liked it so well that he sent him an order; and how did they think that this order came? It came under the direction of a Member of Parliament from London, and his (Mr. M's) instructions were, to send his answer back directed to this Member of Parliament in London, and who would send it down to Leamington. (Laughter.) The franking system was a complete telegraph of humbug to save a shilling to men of fortune. He liked every thing straightforward, and hoped the meeting would stick to the first resolution—viz. to have a penny postage. If this was not enough, let them pay more; but as to the revenue, if they wanted that, let a penny more be put on tea or sugar, and that would give it them. (Laughter.)

The resolution was then put and carried.

The Rev. I. N. Gouly moved the next resolution—That the present high rate of postage was unjust and unequal, and fell hard on the poorer classes of society, preventing communication between members of families; which, being seconded by Mr. J. Langridge, was carried unanimously.

Mr. Unwin here gave a striking proof of the inequality of postage. He produced an enormous single sheet, which had been sent from London to the Brighton Mechanics' Institution, and for which 8d. was charged, and then, after displaying its ample contents, drew forth from his pocket a delicate little epistle, a little wee thing, but which, being divided into two parts, was subjected to the charge of 1s. 4d. Mr. Unwin said these two letters should be preserved in the Museum of the Institution as curiosities of the age.

Mr. Dempster moved that petitions in favour of a reduction in the postage be presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Chichester, and to the House of Commons by the Borough Members, and that all the Members of the County be requested to support its prayer.

Mr. D. M. Folkard seconded.

The Chairman here read a letter which had been received from the Earl of Chichester in answer to one forwarded through the Vestry Clerk. It expressed the pleasure the Noble Earl would have in presenting the petition for a reduction of the postage, though he could not pledge himself to support the prayer till he knew its contents. His Lordship added that he had always advocated a reduction of postage to a certain extent, but believed there were some Peers who wished the postage on letters reduced still lower than he thought necessary.

Captain Pechell, M.P., (who entered the room during Mr. Holtham's speech, and was received with cheers) then rose, and said he had done himself the honour of appearing before them that day in compliance with the desire of a large number of gentlemen who had signed a requisition to their worthy High Constable; and, if he had done so at considerable personal inconvenience, he was amply repaid by meeting so respectable a portion of his constituency. It had been most gratifying to him to be able to coincide with the opinions expressed by various gentlemen on this occasion in furtherance of the resolutions just read. With regard to the presentation of the petition, he could only say he would do his utmost, and he believed gentlemen were aware that, when he did give his assent to a measure proposed by his constituency, the day was never too long for him, nor the inconvenience too great; nor was there any thing wanting on his part to carry out their wishes. As upon all other occasions, he would give his attendance and advance the petition as far as lay in his power. (Cheers.)

A resolution for the appointment of a Committee followed, and a Committee was appointed to obtain signatures, &c.—From the Brighton Herald of March 30.

#### PLYMOUTH.

On Tuesday last, a Special General Meeting of the Members of the Commercial Rooms, was held at Freemasons' Hall, to take into consideration the propriety of petitioning Parliament for a reduction in the charge of postage. A considerable number of the members were present, G. Aldham, Esq., Vice President, in the Chair; and after some discussion, during which strong necessity for a change was clearly shown, a petition was unanimously adopted.—From the Plymouth Herald of the 16th March.

#### CARDIFF.

On the 21st ultimo, in pursuance of a requisition of the Mayor of the Borough of Cardiff, a meeting of its inhabitants was held at the Town-hall, for the purpose of forwarding a petition to the Legislature, praying for the immediate adoption of the plan of Mr. Rowland Hill as regards a universal penny postage. The Mayor having taken the Chair, Mr. W. Pritchard, of the wharf, produced the necessary petitions, upon which they were read over, motions made, and questions put *pro forma*, when they were unanimously approved of, and ordered to lie for signature at the shop of Mr. Job James, ironmonger. A vote of thanks was then carried to the Chairman for his ability and services as president on the occasion.—Cambrian.

#### COLDSTREAM.

A public meeting of the inhabitants of Coldstream was held on Friday the 22nd of March, for the purpose of adopting Resolutions and petitioning Parliament in favour of a uniform and low rate of postage, as originally suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill, and recently recommended by a Select Committee of the House of Commons.—Baillie Hatley was unanimously requested to take the Chair, who briefly stated the object of the meeting; after which the Rev. Dr. Thomson addressed the audience at considerable length, and clearly and forcibly pointed out the numerous advantages likely to result from the adoption of the admirable resolutions of the Select Committee on the subject. He paid a well-merited compliment to the Committee for the great care and attention they had bestowed in investigating the subject, and the ability displayed in the framing of their report, which, for the benefit of those who might not have had an opportunity of perusing it, he read to the meeting; and concluded by moving a series of resolutions on the subject. These resolutions were seconded by the Rev. Mr. Goldie, who cordially concurred in the object of the meeting, and in an excellent address brought prominently forward the great importance of having every possible facility afforded for the transmission of letters, at a period when the benefits of education were so generally diffused, and which might be expected to spread to an extent which it would be difficult at present to determine. The resolutions having been unanimously adopted by the meeting, a petition founded on them was read and cordially agreed to; in supporting which the Rev. Mr. Taylor stated his views on the subject with much ability, and urged the necessity of

petitioning in order that an object of so much importance to all classes of the community might the more readily be obtained.

The following are the Resolutions moved by the Rev. Dr. Thomson, and seconded by the Rev. Mr. Goldie:—

1. That whatever is charged for the legal conveyance of letters, above the actual expense incurred, can only be viewed in the light of a tax; and that to tax the interchange of thought, particularly in the expression of affection, in the transmission of information, or in any species of epistolary correspondence, intended to secure intellectual, moral, or commercial advantages, must be oppressive and impolitic in the highest degree.

2. That the various evils resulting from the present rates of postage are well pointed out in the very admirable Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on Postage; and that while not insensible to the extent of these evils in a commercial and literary point of view, this Meeting considers, as especially worthy of attention, the effect of the present system in abridging, or in some instances annihilating, the only species of intercourse practicable in the case of absent friends—and which must be so soothing and every way so beneficial to the members of families, and particularly to the younger branches of them, when separated from one another, and removed at a distance from the parental roof.

3. That a change is the more necessary in this department of our political economy, as the burden at present felt, to some extent by all, presses most heavily on those least able to bear it; since it is a well known, and indeed a universally admitted fact, that the system of *franking*, so often turned to the advantage of the rich, can but in comparatively few instances be expected to be employed for the benefit of the poor.

4. That by the plan proposed of sending each letter under a stamped cover, greater security would be given for the safe remittance of money; and it should be particularly remembered, in reference to this, that the man of scanty means in transmitting twenty shillings, now incurs the same expense with the wealthy individual in enclosing a remittance of twenty thousand pounds.

5. That while, in the original institution of the Post-office, the augmentation of the public revenue was not the object chiefly contemplated, and should not be a primary consideration now, there is reason to believe that the vast increase of letters to be conveyed, were the proposed reduction of postage to take place, would still yield such a sum as not materially to deteriorate, even if it did not, as however is generally believed, rather greatly enhance the amount realized by the Exchequer from this branch of political finance.

6. That the numerous, and almost innumerable violations of the law, in transmitting letters otherwise than by post, would cease to be heard of; and thus one temptation, but too naturally leading many to trifle with the exactions of the Legislature generally, would be happily removed.

7. That the recommendations of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the subject are obviously so rational, and so completely borne out by the fullest, and clearest, and most overwhelming evidence, that were these recommendations not to be carried unreservedly and speedily into effect, the very proposal to appoint similar Committees, with the professed view of improving any branch of political economy, might well be regarded as nothing better than an unworthy attempt—first, to impose on the credulity, and, finally, to mock the expectations and insult the feelings of the community.

8. That at all times, and especially in times like the present, it is of the greatest importance for the Legislature to gratify, when practicable, the national wishes, strongly and nearly unanimously expressed—and it may well be assumed, that few measures could be thought of which would give more satisfaction to all of every grade of political sentiment, or which would more increase the general confidence in our Rulers, than the adoption of the plan for a uniform and small rate of postage, as originally suggested by Mr. Rowland Hill, and now substantially and so judiciously and forcibly recommended by the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

9. That a Petition founded on the preceding Resolutions be presented to both Houses of Parliament,—that to the House of Lords to be presented by the Earl of Haddington, and that to the House of Commons by Robert Wallace, Esq., M.P., for Greenock, and Chairman of the Select Committee on Postage.

N.B. Dr. Thomson is expected to correspond with the more influential members of Parliament, or at any rate to send to them the above Resolutions.

#### DEVONPORT.

##### TOWN COUNCIL.

April 5th, 1839.—Mr. Rees moved a petition to both Houses of the Legislature in favour of a general Penny Postage, (which was unanimously agreed to, and will be presented to the Lords by Lord Ashburton, and to the Commons by Sir E. Codrington.

#### BIRMINGHAM.

##### TOWN COUNCIL.

Mr. Pars moved a resolution that Petitions be presented to Parliament in favour of Mr. Hill's plan of Post-office Reform, which Mr. F. Clark seconded, and it was carried unanimously.

Alderman Hutton recommended to every Alderman to call a meeting in his ward to get up Petitions.—Birmingham Journal, April 6th.

#### GLASGOW.

A meeting of the Merchants, Bankers, Traders, and other inhabitants of the city, convened by the Lord Provost, has been held in the Town Hall. Resolutions for Mr. Hill's plan, recommended by the Select Committee of the House of Commons, were passed unanimously, and Petitions founded thereon agreed to.

#### BOSTON.

On Tuesday last the Town Council of Boston unanimously agreed to petition the Houses of Lords and Commons in favour of Mr. Hill's plan for a uniform penny postage.—Boston Lincoln Gazette, April 4th.

### PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

TUESDAY, APRIL 16, 1839.

Mr. GIBSON asked the honourable member for Greenock whether he intended to bring forward a bill on the subject of postage, based upon the evidence which had been taken before the committee?

Mr. WALLACE said he had some hopes that the immense number of petitions which had been presented in favour of such a measure, would induce the Chancellor of the Exchequer to take the subject out of his hands; but that if the right hon. gentleman would not pledge himself to do so, he (Mr. Wallace) should feel it his duty, as chairman of the late committee, to propose a measure to the house about the middle of next month. (Hear, hear.)—(From the Times Reports.)

#### NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All of our contemporaries are aiding our exertions for an uniform Penny Postage, with excellent effect, but many are unmindful to give us notice of their labours, of which there is a great chance that we may remain in ignorance, if they do not favour us with a copy of their paper, containing postage news. A copy of the Post Circular is sent to every newspaper in the kingdom.—We are quite willing to pay for any newspapers sent to us, if the exchange of papers is not held to be equal. It is only by accident that we were able to welcome articles in the Birmingham Journal, Edinburgh Observer, and Cambrian.

N.B.—Scores of Petitions are presented nightly in both houses of Parliament.

## The Post Circular.

LONDON, APRIL 17, 1839.

"When Rowland Hill's pamphlet becomes generally understood in the country, and the evidence before this Committee known, you will find public opinion raise such a storm in favour of reduction, no ministers can hold their seats without taking off the tax." Such was the prophecy of one of the chief of Liverpool's merchants, Mr. W. Brown; and there can be no difficulty in convincing even Colonel Maberly himself, that it is in a very fair way of being amply fulfilled. A whole number of the *Post Circular* would not contain half the extracts from the press, advocating the adoption of the Report of the Select Committee, which are now lying before us. The storm indeed is raised! Our space compels us to confine our notices to very narrow limits. Verily, postage reform is no question of party politics, when we are able to quote the *Times*, the *Morning Chronicle*, and the *Post*, as fighting its cause in joint harmony. Thus is the question of Postage Revenue dealt with in the

#### TIMES.

To the single objection on the part of the government of danger to the revenue, in that which, by the way, ought never to have been made a department of revenue, we have here opposed the extension of trade—the promotion, in a wonderfully increased degree, of all religious and scientific objects—the eradication of that moral taint, the constant practice of fraud, which the Post-office system has made habitual with all classes of the people—the comfort more especially of the poor, and the certain increase of the happiness, wealth, and civilization of the whole community, by the introduction of the reform now proposed. In such a contest there can be little doubt which side ought to yield; yet we have described it in one respect more favourably for the government than the case will warrant: for it is shown, by innumerable passages of these reports, that the revenue from this source must be endangered, perhaps wholly overthrown, under the continuance of the present monopoly, by those facilities which railroads and steam-vessels, and other modes of quick communication, are gradually introducing; and, further, that a great increase of Post-office revenue is more than probable now, ultimately all but certain, from the immediate adoption of the reform proposed.

On the very day when the above appeared, viz. the 29th of March, do we find another leading article on Postage in the

#### MORNING CHRONICLE.

Men of all politics and all classes must agree in advocating a reduction of the rates of postage to an uniform price, and so small an amount as to make it no drawback that it will be necessary to pay it in advance. The landlord and the manufacturer have here, at least, no ground for quarrel. Here are no jealousies, no rents, no wages to be heightened or diminished; no apprehensions of results can be conjured against the policy of throwing open the trade in letters upon payment in advance of a very moderate fixed duty, so as to enable the public at large to obtain communication with all parts of the country in the quickest possible manner, and at the cheapest possible rate. It cannot injure the revenue much even at the very first; and in all probability it will make the Post-office eventually far more productive than ever it has previously been. The whole nation, without distinction of party or of creed, have a bond of union in asking this boon from the executive. All should unite in demanding that the Post-office should be restored to the use for which it was established—the advantage of trade and commerce; for, from the peer to the peasant, all have a deep and undivided interest in carrying that object into immediate effect.

The next day, Post-office Reform receives the entire welcome of the

MORNING POST.

Of all the reforms which have been imagined or undertaken in these changeable times, the reform of the Post-office system seems to be the one most justified by common sense, and most called for by the circumstances of the country.—It is justified by common sense, for it is as clear as any thing can be, that the present system of taxation on the transmission of letters defeats its own object, if that object be the procuring money for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

But when we look at the Post-office question merely as a question of revenue, we take a great deal too narrow a view of a very great subject. Lord Lowthorpe pointed out in his Report on Prices Current, so far back as 1855, that the declared object of the establishment of the Post-office, as appeared by the preamble of the act of the 12th year of Charles II., which established it, was, “the advantage of trade and commerce;” and he proceeded to lay down the principle, that even now the direct revenue to be derived from the Post-office ought not to be the primary consideration. His lordship might, perhaps, with truth and reason on his side, have gone even further than this; for it may well be questioned whether, in a nation of so much natural and habitual activity as Great Britain, any check, in the form of public tax, should be put upon the communication of the inhabitants with one another. We say this with reference (at present) only to fiscal results. In a greatly extended economic view of the subject, it may very well be doubted whether any particle of tax imposed on the transmission of letters be not, to the general revenue of the country, rather a hindrance than a help. It may very reasonably be doubted whether, in seeking revenue from the Post-office, we are not abstracting the seed, instead of gleaning from the harvest.

And now let us glance at the useful exertions of our provincial contemporaries.

THE ESSEX STANDARD.

A Conservative Journal not only calls upon “every individual—high and low, rich and poor—for support in petitioning,” but solicits that persons residing in country parishes will apply for petitions, which it undertakes to furnish. It also advertises a petition which lies for signature at its office in Colchester.

THE LEEDS MERCURY.

a paper of most extensive circulation and great influence, after noticing that no less than 320 petitions were presented last session for Mr. Hill's plan, says—“We hope ten times as many will be presented during the current session, for the immediate adoption of the uniform penny postage. Every town and village—every public society and institution—every trade, and profession, and class, ought forthwith to send up petitions in favour of this important reform.”

A temporary defalcation of the revenue is thus provided for by the

NORTHAMPTON MERCURY.

in a way which we believe would not find a single opponent in the whole kingdom:

We conceive that the evidence taken before the committee affords strong grounds for anticipating, that no serious diminution of revenue would permanently result from the adoption of an uniform penny postage. But assuming that these hopes should be disappointed, and that the receipts of the Post-office under Mr. Hill's plan should little more than cover the expenses, in what way is the deficiency to be supplied? For ourselves, we should say that we should prefer the reimposition of any one of the taxes which have been remitted during the last twenty years—provided we did not resort again to the immoral course of raising money by lotteries—to the continuance of a scale of postage, proved to be productive of inconvenience to almost every class of the community, and singularly oppressive to the poor. The deficiency might be met for the ten first years by the issue of exchequer bills to its amount. To the increase of the debt, either funded or unfunded, of the nation in time of peace, there are weighty objections. But we think that if such a course be ever justifiable, it would be in a case in which a great national experiment was being made, of which the result would indisputably be to increase very materially the happiness of the poor.

CHESTER GAZETTE.

the reader will find an historical account of postage, drawn up with much antiquarian research and ability.

“It is not,” says this paper, with as much force as truth, “a question of party—it is not a question involving patronage and place; it is a question in which every father and mother, son and daughter, husband and wife, throughout the kingdom, are identified in the strongest possible degree. Mercantile, political, and social interests are all combined in this great question: the merchant and his clerk; the member and his constituent; the tradesman and his assistant; the farmer and his labourer; the manufacturer and his mechanic; the artist, the poet, the philosopher, are all vitally concerned in the reduction of postage; and every person should, if they bear good will towards their neighbours, or entertain one common feeling of humanity, immediately petition for Post-office reform.”

THE LONDONDERRY STANDARD

thus eloquently writes:—

It is a sign of the moral grandeur of the age we live in, and a foretaste of the vast moral results which its success will shower down upon our country. There are few letters of business which do not contain some useful commercial maxim or economical reflection; there is no letter of affectionate inquiry or sentimental tenor, which does not contain some passage worth putting by for perusal at a future period, or fit for selection amongst the flowers of thought,

which fill with fragrance a perhaps otherwise commonplace or barren existence. How infinitely multiplied would these mementos become under the regulation we now advocate! How signal a boon would be thus offered to millions of men and women, in facilitating an expression to distant acquaintances of their respective wants! Oral communication has little of the force of deliberate writing. If, as the late Mr. Coleridge said, words are not things, but living powers, by which things of the greatest importance to mankind are actuated, combined, and humanized, what must be the strength of those powers when diffused in their most perfect form over the face of a great and enlightened nation, in infinite variety and number?

Advocacy not less able than that quoted above, which want of room alone obliges us to acknowledge thus briefly, appears in the

- |                               |                              |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Aberdeen Herald.              | Kilkenny Journal.            |
| Aylesbury News.               | Leicester Mercury.           |
| Ayrshire Examiner.            | Leinster Independent.        |
| Bedford Mercury.              | Londonderry Standard.        |
| Birmingham Journal.           | Longford Journal.            |
| Boston Herald.                | Maidstone Journal.           |
| Bradford Observer.            | Northampton Herald.          |
| Brighton Gazette.             | North Devon Advertiser.      |
| Brighton Guardian.            | Nottingham Journal.          |
| Brighton Herald.              | Plymouth Herald.             |
| Chard Union Gazette.          | Reading Mercury.             |
| Derby Mercury.                | Scotch Reformers' Gazette.   |
| Devonport Independent.        | Scotsman.                    |
| Downpatrick Recorder.         | Sheffield Iris.              |
| Drogheda Argus.               | Sherborne Mercury.           |
| Dumfries Times.               | Silurian.                    |
| Edinburgh Journal.            | Somerset Gazette.            |
| Edinburgh Observer.           | Sunderland Herald.           |
| Fermanagh Impartial Reporter. | Welshman.                    |
| Glasgow Argus.                | Wexford Conservative.        |
| Gloucestershire Chronicle.    | Wiltshire Independent.       |
| Greenock Advertiser.          | Staffordshire Gazette.       |
| Hampshire Chronicle.          | Worcester Journal (Berrows.) |
| Hampshire Independent.        | Yorkshireman.                |
| Kent Herald.                  |                              |

And probably in many other papers, of which we have not yet received copies.

Colonel Maberly is playing with great éclat the part of Mrs. Partington. Every one recollects how the good old washerwoman strove to mop out the Atlantic from her cottage: she mopped and mopped, and yet was unable to conquer the Atlantic ocean. And thus is the worthy secretary of the Post-office employed. The stream of public opinion sweeps through St. Martin's-le-Grand, and up rises the Colonel with his mop to get rid of it! The last twirl this respectable male old lady made, took place a few days since, when she twirled out the announcement that the following reductions of postage would take place:

	d.	d.		d.	d.
	from	to		from	to
Alton	8	7	Linton	8	7
Amersham	7	6	Romney	9	8
Bristol	10	9	Sheerness	8	7
Cranbrook	8	7	Shepton Mallett	10	9
Collumpton	11	10	Southampton	9	8
Droitwich	10	9	Stowmarket	9	8
Hadleigh	9	8	St. Clair	12	11
Halstead	8	7	Thorne	11	10
Hythe	9	8	Tiverton	11	10
Keswick	13	12	Thrapstone	9	8
Liskeard	12	11	Wareham	10	9

When petitioners from Bristol and Liskeard ask for a penny postage, the old lady of the Post-office evidently mistakes their demand to be only for a penny reduction; and so the good creature gratifies them, by taking off a single penny. Believe us, excellent, careful creature, this penny gift will do no good: the public voice will still roar, and roar louder each time; and a penny postage it will finally have, in spite of your innocent moppings.

POST-OFFICE REVENUE.

Quarters ended					Year ended
July 5, 1837.	Oct. 10, 1837.	Jan. 5, 1838.	April 5, 1838.	April 5, 1838.	
356,737	418,006	376,000	369,000	1,519,743	
1838.	1838.	1839.	1839.		
381,000	410,000	365,000	392,000	1,548,000	
Increase 24,263			23,000	28,257	
Decrease . . . .	8,006	11,000			

Let no one reason, because there is an increase of 28,257l. on the year ending 5th April, 1839, that the Post-office revenue is flourishing. The average annual revenue of the six years from 1832 to 1837 was 1,577,846l.; consequently, on comparing this average with the present year's revenue, there is a loss of 29,846l.! Postage revenue goes like the crab—backwards! It may, perhaps, be well for the reader to see the details of this bankrupt-looking business.

Revenue of	Years.	Revenue.	Loss.	Gain.
Year ending	1832	1,531,828	.	16,172
5th April, 1839,	1833	1,553,425	5,405	
1,548,000l.,	1834	1,513,052		35,048
compared	1835	1,564,458	16,458	
with	1836	1,645,835	97,835	
	1837	1,658,479	110,479	

Will ministers follow the advice of the Duke of Richmond, and make a large reduction of postage, in order to save the revenue? The omens of their intentions are quite contrariwise. Mr. Baring, secretary of the Treasury, told his constituents, that he would not pledge himself to any measure of postage reform which would affect the revenue. We cannot believe that a man like Mr. Baring, able to reason, can have read the Postage Report, and say that a penny postage would not benefit the revenue far beyond the present system. Is it creditable or honest for one in Mr. Baring's position to imply that a penny postage would injure the revenue, without his showing the fallacy of the Committee's report, which he was bound to do when he answered the address of his constituents?

ASSISTANCE FROM THE CLERGY.

Perhaps the first petition for an uniform penny postage sent to Parliament from an ecclesiastical body, is that agreed to at a meeting of the Presbitery at Loch Carron, N. B. Such a body rarely petitions Parliament on any subject whatever, and their doing so on this occasion evinces the very lively interest felt in this question throughout the extensive district with which the petitioners are connected. This petition was subscribed by the clergymen of eight parishes. The copy to the House of Lords has been sent to Lord Glenelg.

Petitions.

UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.  
(FORM OF A GENERAL PETITION.)

TO THE HONOURABLE THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL (or, THE COMMONS, as the case may be) IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:—

The humble Petition of the Undersigned (to be filled up with the name of Place, Corporation, &c.)

SHewETH,  
That your Petitioners earnestly desire a Uniform Penny Post, payable in advance, as proposed by Rowland Hill, and recommended by the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

That your Petitioners intreat your Honourable House to give speedy effect to this Report.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS that wish to hear from their absent children!

FRIENDS who are parted, that wish to write to each other!

EMIGRANTS that do not forget their native homes!

FARMERS that wish to know the best Markets!

MERCHANTS AND TRADESMEN that wish to receive Orders and Money quickly and cheaply!

MECHANICS AND LABOURERS that wish to learn where good work and high wages are to be had! support the Report of the House of Commons with your Petitions for a UNIFORM PENNY POST. Let every City and Town and Village, every Corporation, every Religious Society and Congregation, every Scientific and Literary Institution, petition, and let every one in the kingdom sign a Petition with his name or his mark.

READER!

If you can get any Signatures to a Petition, make two Copies of the above on two half sheets of paper; get them signed as numerously as possible; fold each up separately; put a slip of paper around, leaving the ends open; direct one to a Member of the House of Lords, the other to a Member of the House of Commons, LONDON, and put them into the Post-office.

A POSTAGE PETITION FOR SCHOOLS.

We understand many petitions from schools are preparing. This is an excellent step, and we look for numerous petitions from this quarter. It is obvious that nothing would promote education more than free communication between children and parents. How gratified would every parent be, at a weekly report from a son or daughter! and what an admirable index it would give of the child's progress! At the request of many, we print the following, which will serve as the form of a petition for general adoption.

Unto the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal (or Commons, as the case may be), in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned, Pupils of the School of \_\_\_\_\_,

Sheweth,

That your Petitioners wish very much to write often to their parents, relations, guardians, and friends, to tell them of their progress in their studies, of the state of their health, of their wants, &c., but are deterred from doing so by the expense of postage.

That your Petitioners have heard of the plan of a uniform penny postage, and believe that, if carried into effect, it would be a source of great happiness and benefit to them and their friends, in enabling them to write letters as often as they had occasion.

Your Petitioners therefore pray that a uniform penny post may be established.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

N. B. Directions for transmitting Petitions to London may be found in another part of our paper.



The following petition, which states the hard fate of thousands, has been presented.

To the Honourable the Commons in Parliament assembled. The humble Petition of the undersigned Journeymen Printers, residents in the borough of Dover, in the county of Kent,—Sheweth,

That your Petitioners are Journeymen Printers working in Dover, but natives of distant parts of the kingdom, and separated from their fathers and mothers, and sisters and brothers, by a space of several hundreds of miles.

That your Petitioners keenly feel the ties of consanguinity, and earnestly desire to maintain a constant correspondence with relatives, who, though geographically at a distance, are yet near and dear to their hearts.

That your Petitioners feel it to be an expense heavier than their circumstances will allow to maintain this correspondence, as they consider it their duty to pay the postage of the letters they transmit, as well as that of those they receive; and that, consequently, the effect of the high rate of postage, in their case, is to impede the interchange of feelings, which they are confident your Honourable House would rather facilitate than discourage.

That your petitioners, therefore, earnestly pray your Honourable House to give effect to the recommendation contained in the Report from the Select Committee of your Honourable House of Postage, to adopt the plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill for a uniform penny post, payable in advance.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

Unto the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled.

The humble Petition of the undersigned Managers, Performers, and other persons connected with the Theatre Royal, Aberdeen,—Sheweth,

That your Petitioners have seen with great satisfaction, that a committee of your Honourable House has approved of the plan of Post-office reform, proposed by Rowland Hill, Esq.

That the present system of Post-office charges presses with peculiar severity on your Petitioners; the nature of the engagements between managers and performers leading to frequent correspondence, the cost for the transmission of which neither party can well afford.

That performers, being generally employed in different parts of the country, at different seasons, are, for a considerable length of time, separated from relatives and friends, with whom they would wish to keep up a constant correspondence, but that, in consequence of the present high rate of postage, that correspondence is virtually prohibited.

That your Petitioners, like other classes of the community, are often under the necessity of doing violence to their own feelings, and injuring the Post-office revenue, by carrying on correspondence otherwise than by post.

May it therefore please your Honourable House to take measures for establishing immediately the system of uniform penny postage, as suggested by Rowland Hill, Esq., and approved of and recommended by a committee of your Honourable House.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

The inhabitants of the village of Littlehampton are about to petition Parliament for the benefit of the uniform two-penny post, as also those of Angmering.

A gentleman in the parish of Funtington, has recently taken the hint, recommended in the Spectator newspaper, of writing out a short petition to each House of Parliament; which he carried round his neighbourhood, and had it universally signed, in favour of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of penny postage; it was signed by four clergymen and two magistrates, and every one expressed a hope that such a measure would be effected, in order to render more facile the means of social intercourse: the above petitions have been presented to Parliament by the Duke of Richmond, and his brother Lord G. Lennox, and it is referred to as an instance of the facility with which petitions can be got up. A copy of such a petition will be found in another part of the paper.

ARUNDEL, March 23. The petitions to both Houses of Parliament, from the Mayor, Town Council, and inhabitants of this Borough, for a uniform penny post, have been lying for signatures at the Town Hall this week—in a few hours after notice had been given, the parchments were nearly filled, so great is the feeling of the people in this town for so desirable an object.

UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.—“It is absurd to talk of letters being conveyed from one end of the kingdom to the other for a penny,” said a professional gentleman in this town to the writer. “Have you read Rowland Hill's pamphlet?”—“No,” was the reply. “Then is it not absurd in you to condemn that which you acknowledge you have not investigated? Read that pamphlet, and I will answer for it you will think it much more absurd to charge elevenpence for a letter from London, when the letter can be conveyed for a penny, and afford a halfpenny profit.”—Bradford Observer.

A CASE FOR COL. MARELLEY'S SCEPTICISM ABOUT INCREASE AFTER REDUCTION.—At a recent meeting of the Society, formed for the purpose of facilitating the free admission of the public to National Monuments, it was stated, that since the reduction of the charge for admission, the number of visitors to the Tower had increased from 9340 to 35,000 during the year, which had given an increased annual income of 1800l.; but of this more than two-thirds, or 1300l., went into the pocket of government. In this case the price of admission was reduced from five or six shillings to two shillings, and a fourfold increase of visitants has taken place. Sight-seeing is a matter of pleasure, and unlike letter-writing, which, for the greater part, is a matter of business or necessity. We boldly assert, that this case alone would relieve any unprejudiced mind of fears for a loss of the revenue from the adoption of a penny-post.

ROBERT WALLACE, ESQ., TO HIS CORRESPONDENTS.

To the Editor of the Post Circular.

SIR, Permit me once more to avail myself of your columns, to express to the numerous parties who do me the honour of intrusting their petitions for penny postage to me for presentation, and very generally accompany them with letters, intimating the nature of the petition, the number of persons who have signed it, and other acceptable and useful information, that I regret exceedingly its being entirely out of my power to acknowledge the receipt of all such petitions and letters. In the first place, I may state that I am allowed to receive fifteen franks daily, while ten only can be sent away; thus diminishing the power of replying in postage-free letters to the extent of thirty-five weekly.

I therefore trust that no offence will be taken by those who do not receive acknowledgments or replies; the more so, as I make it a rule never to omit communicating with those, on receiving petitions, when these are not forthcoming.

For instance, yesterday's post alone brought me fifteen general post letters, nine of which related to postage petitions, besides eight newspapers, also containing notices of meetings, or petitions in favour of Mr. Hill's plan of universal penny postage. The petitions referred to have all been received. I cannot, in justice to other business and a large correspondence, acknowledge the receipt of so many petitions and newspapers, relating to one subject only.

In reply to repeated inquiries respecting proper persons to intrust with postage petitions, I beg to recommend parties to send them to such noblemen and commoners as they generally confide in; for it happens most fortunately that the reduction of postage is a question quite free of party feeling, and therefore it will be rather advantageous than otherwise to send petitions on that subject to members of both houses of Parliament, without any reference whatever to the party in the state they may belong to.

I am, sir, your obedient servant,

ROBERT WALLACE.

The residents of St. Peter's parish have taken up this important question, and petitions are in course of signature. A petition for a uniform penny postage is in preparation for the signatures of the inhabitants of Ludlow.—Worcester Journal.

REDUCTION OF POSTAGE.—The solicitors in Wakefield have petitioned Parliament in favour of Mr. R. Hill's plan for penny postage. We recommend the “fair sex” to petition her Majesty on the same subject.—Leeds Intelligence.—[This is a good point. We have heard it remarked, that the ladies alone would “save the revenue” in this matter.—Ed. of the Times.]

Postage Reform is not a question of politics, but of the pocket, the home, the heart: Tory, Whig, Radical, and even “Precursor,” may unite for “a long pull, a strong pull and a pull altogether.” It is not a question of “party or of faction,” but one which affects every subject of the empire.—Spectator.

ESSENTIALS

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SUBSCRIPTION for the PROMOTION of the UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.

During the last session of Parliament, a committee of the mercantile interests of the city of London was formed, with the view of laying evidence of the effect of the present rates of postage before the Parliamentary Committee. The labours of this committee are acknowledged by the Parliamentary Committee to have proved eminently useful. Upon the evidence chiefly produced by them, the Parliamentary Committee reported the following conclusions to have been proved:

“The fact of postage being evaded most extensively by all classes of society, and of correspondence being suppressed, more especially among the middle and working classes of the people; and this in consequence, as all the witnesses, including many of the Post-office authorities, think, of the excessively high scale of taxation.”

“The fact of very injurious effects resulting from this state of things to the commerce and industry of the country, and to the social habits and moral condition of the people.”

“The fact, so far as conclusions can be drawn from very imperfect data, that whenever on former occasions large reductions in the rates have been made, those reductions have been followed in short periods of time by an extension of correspondence proportionate to the contraction of the rates.”

“That the only remedies for the evils above stated are a reduction of the rates, and the establishment of additional deliveries, and more frequent despatches of letters.”

“That, owing to the rapid extension of railroads, there is an urgent and daily increasing necessity for making such changes.”

“That any moderate reduction in the rates would occasion loss to the revenue, without, in any material degree, diminishing the present amount of letters irregularly conveyed, or giving rise to the growth of new correspondence.”

In place of the present rates of postage, the Parliamentary Committee have recommended the plan of Mr. Rowland Hill, which was especially referred to their judgment. This plan is—

“1. That all letters not exceeding half an ounce in weight should be conveyed from any one place in the United Kingdom to any other, for the charge of 1d.

“2. That all letters exceeding half an ounce in weight should be subject to an additional penny for every additional half-ounce.

“3. That such postage should be paid in advance.

“4. That the postage should be collected in advance, by the sale of stamped paper or stamped covers; and that in order to facilitate obtaining stamps in any distant place, every keeper of a post-office shall have them constantly on sale.”

Though the plan of an UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE is well understood in the great towns, the country at large still remains in comparative ignorance of it. To remove this, and publish at large the infinite blessings which this great measure would confer on every class of the community, how greatly it would tend to the spread of religion, education, and science—to the maintenance of family affections, and to the benefit of commerce and trade, it has been resolved to appeal to every letter-writer of both sexes in the United Kingdom, to assist in this benevolent and wholly unpolitical object, by subscribing, and inducing friends to subscribe, any sums from one shilling upwards.

The funds subscribed towards the objects of the Mercantile Committee were as follows:

Table with 2 columns: Name and Amount. Lists various subscribers like J.S. Wells & Son, Hanbury, Trueman & Co., etc., with amounts in £ and s. Total sum at the bottom: £742 15.

Disbursed in carrying on an extensive correspondence over the whole kingdom, in promulgating the proposed plan of an uniform post, by means of pamphlets, &c., in reprinting the Postage Report, &c., and in procuring the evidence and attendance of witnesses before the Parliamentary Committee.

The subscriptions proposed to be raised are for the purpose of continuing the three former of these operations.

The subscriptions will be advertised, from time to time, in The Times, Morning Chronicle, Post Circular, and other papers.

Subscriptions received by Messrs. Smith, Payne, and Smith, Bankers to the Mercantile Committee; by Mr. George Moffatt, Honorary Treasurer, 28, Fenchurch-street; Mr. William Ashurst, 137, Cheap-side; and Mr. F. Lindsay Cole, 101, Fenchurch-street; and a local Treasurer to be appointed in each county.

Printed by HENRY HOOPER, at Beaufort House, Strand, and Published by him at 13, Pall Mall East, where all Communications and Advertisements are received.—Wednesday, April 17, 1839. Agent for the City—R. GROOMBRIDGE, 6, Panyer Alley, Paternoster Row. And supplied by all Booksellers and News-vendors in the United Kingdom.



# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 12.

TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 1839.

Price 6d.

LORD ASHBURTON, a Conservative, and one of the richest Noblemen in the Country, spoke these impressive words before the House of Commons Committee:—"Postage is one of the worst of our Taxes; it is, in fact, taxing the conversation of people who live at a distance from each other. The communication of letters by persons living at a distance is the same as a communication by word of mouth between persons living in the same town."

"Sixpence," says Mr. BARWIN, "is the third of a poor man's income; if a gentleman, who had £1000 a year, or £3 a day, had to pay one-third of his daily income—a sovereign, for a letter, how often would he write letters of friendship? Let a gentleman put that to himself, and then he will be able to see how the poor man cannot be able to pay sixpence for his letter."

## Report of the London Mercantile Committee for the Reduction of Postage.

Joshua Bates, Esq.—D. Colvin, Esq.—F. Lindsay Cole, Esq.—John Dillon, Esq.—William Ellis, Esq.—J. H. Gledastanes, Esq.—G. G. H. De Larpent, Esq.—George Moffatt, Esq.—James Pattison, Esq., M.P.—John Travers, Esq.—W. A. Wilkinson, Esq.—Lestock P. Wilson, Esq.—Smith, Payne, and Smiths, Bankers.—George Moffatt, Esq., Treasurer.

The Sub-Committee have to report that the inquiry of the Select Committee of the House of Commons into Mr. Rowland Hill's plan:—"That all letters passing from one post town to another be charged one penny for each half-ounce, to be paid in advance, through the medium of stamped covers, or stamped paper,—has resulted in the production of a Parliamentary Report, and Recommendations of most essential service to Postage Reform.

The Report of the Parliamentary Committee shows:— That "on the management of the Post-office, and the regulation of the postage rates, depends, in a great measure, the entire correspondence of the country; and in that correspondence is involved whatever affects, interests, or agitates mankind: private interests, public interests; family, kindred, friends; commercial business, professional business; literature, science, art, law, politics, education, morals, religion. Every rank and class has an interest—more or less immediate—in the safe, speedy, and economical transmission of Post-office communications."

That the evasion of the law, and the suppression of important correspondence has been proved to a greater extent than was previously imagined.

That the attempt to render the Post-office Revenue more productive by high instead of low rates of postage has been manifestly unsuccessful.

That, comparing the Post-office Revenue for the six years ending 1837, with that of the six years ending 1820, there is an annual increase of 2323*l.* only; whereas an increase in the ratio of population would have given 500,000*l.*, and an increase in the ratio of the stage-coach duty, would have produced 2,000,000*l.* annually.

That the present rate produce:—

- 1st. An almost universal evasion of postage; and
- 2nd. The suppression of correspondence to an enormous extent.

That letters evading the Post-office are sent in almost every conceivable manner, by carriers, whose sole business it is to collect and distribute letters; by warehousemen's bales and parcels; by public carriers' boxes and packages; by booksellers' parcels; by stage-coaches, steam boats, and railroads; by drivers, guards, and agents of coaches, cars, and other public vehicles; by special messengers, private conveyances, &c.

As to Manchester and Glasgow, important statistical details are given, showing that four-fifths and five-sixths of the letters sent, do not pass through the Post-office. The same practice is shown to prevail generally, and from one town not one fiftieth of the letters sent to the neighbouring towns, pass through the Post-office.

That "every species of contrivance, that ingenuity can devise, is resorted to for the purpose of evading the payment of postage, and that it exceeds any idea persons in general may have formed of it."

"That correspondence, otherwise than by post, is carried on throughout the country, in systematic evasion of the law, if not in open violation of it, to an extent that could hardly have been imagined, and which it would be difficult to calculate."

That the suppression of correspondence to a vast extent, is clearly established; and the injurious effects of such suppression, on trade, science, education, and particularly on the poor, are most forcibly pointed out.

That it is only by largely reducing the rates of postage, and not by strong legal powers, that evasion can be checked and correspondence extended.

That the Post-office "must recommend itself to the public, and secure to itself a virtual monopoly, by the greater security, expedition, punctuality, and cheapness, with which it performs its office, of transmitting letters."

That upon the chargeable letters the cost of transit is at present only the two-elevenths of a penny,—i. e. less than a PARTING PER LETTER, that being the only portion of the whole charge which is affected by the distance which the letter has to travel; thus establishing the important fact, that the difference in cost between a letter going from London to Barnet, and one going from London to Edinburgh, is "not expressible in the smallest coin we have."

That the chargeable letters are only three-fifths in number and but one-fifth by weight of the whole mail.

That the present mail-coaches could, on the average, carry THIRTY-SEVEN TIMES the present number of chargeable let-

ters; and therefore, that a large increase in the correspondence will not occasion any thing approaching to a proportionate increase in the expenditure.

That a six-fold increase in the correspondence would, at a penny postage, nearly preserve the present revenue; and the average anticipation of the witnesses gives a ten-fold increase.

That PRE-PAYMENT is desirable, because economical and just: economical, because instead of being collected as now, by an expensive agency, in EIGHTY MILLION OF SMALL SUMS,\* from every town and nook of the United Kingdoms, it will be carried beforehand in large sums to the stamp-office: just, because all will be protected against the infliction of paying for anonymous, or, to them, unimportant communications: each will be compensated for franking his own, by receiving the letters of others free, and one great check to the communications of benevolence, friendship, and courtesy, will be removed.

And finally, the Committee report, "That so soon as the state of the public revenue will admit of the risking a larger temporary reduction, it will be expedient to subject all inland letters to a uniform rate of one penny per half-ounce;" but, "That it would be expedient, in the first instance, to reduce the rates on inland General-post letters to a uniform rate of two-pence per half-ounce, increasing at the rate of one penny for each additional half-ounce."

The plan proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill is thus shown to be practicable; and the opinion formed by the Mercantile Committee—of its high importance to the commercial and trading world,—has been sustained by a fulness of evidence surpassing by far the degree in which they expected it could have been immediately produced.

It is to be feared that those members who voted for the resolution to adopt two-pence in the first instance, were not so fully aware as the Mercantile and Trading community of the great importance of the difference between one penny and two-pence upon the trifling profits on small orders. And in passing this resolution they do not appear to have adverted to the fact, that for one large and important operation in commerce, there are hundreds of small operations in trade requiring communications between the parties to each transaction, nearly the whole of which, with an immense number of Circulars, will be shut out from the Post-office, at a twopenny rate: thus excluding the most numerous class of its customers, which is manifestly unwise, when the cost of transit is so little, and the same ground must be gone over, and many of the same persons called upon, to deliver the smaller number.

It is upon the activity of those who are in immediate contact with the consumer that the larger operations of commerce are dependent; and all facilities given to them, tend directly and most importantly to the increase of national wealth.

The affluent in general are not aware of the difference to the poor between one penny and two-pence, and how effectually it tends to suppress the use of an article which they greatly desire, and which it is of the highest interest to society they should be encouraged to use.

It is evident that an increase in the number of letters would be attended by only a trifling increase of expense; because a large portion of the increase would be deliverable at the same houses—the whole delivery would be within the same distances—no cash would have to be collected—there would be no marking the rate of postage with pen and ink—and there would be no candle scrutiny, to ascertain its liability to double postage, or tempt the Inspector.

Your Sub-Committee are of opinion, and this opinion they express with much confidence, THAT THE SAFE PLAN FOR THE REVENUE, IS TO REDUCE POSTAGE AT ONCE AND UNIVERSALLY TO ONE PENNY; AND THAT ANY OTHER RATE CAN HARDLY BE VIEWED AS A FAIR TRIAL OF MR. ROWLAND HILL'S PLAN; and they concur in the opinion expressed by the Parliamentary Committee, that his plan would "greatly facilitate all commercial transactions, improve the general revenue of the country, and thus probably compensate for any small diminution in the revenue of the Post-office." They would add, however, that they do not believe that there would be any diminution in the revenue, but on the contrary, that it would be ultimately largely increased; and they rather concur in the belief expressed in another part of the report, that by Mr. Hill's plan "there would be immediately on its introduction a very great, and at no distant period a vast and incalculable accession to posted correspondence."

Your Sub-Committee cannot conclude without acknowledging the great assistance received from the gentlemen who were examined before the Committee of the House of Commons, and reporting to you the important services rendered by the Chambers of Commerce and Mercantile

\* This, in round figures, is the number of letters passing through the Post-office annually.

Firms in nearly all the cities and large towns in the kingdom, particularly by those of Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh, and Glasgow; and by the zeal and intelligence of their Solicitor, Mr. W. H. ASHURST.

All which your Sub-Committee report.

The Committee will consider themselves obliged to any gentleman or society who will reprint and circulate this or any document issued by them on this subject.

[The above report was adopted unanimously at a meeting of the Mercantile Committee, held at the Jerusalem Coffee House, 29th April, 1839, Joshua Bates, Esq., in the chair.]

PUBLIC MEETINGS, Reported in No. 11 of the Post Circular.		
Place.	Character.	Chairman.
PORTSMOUTH.	Inhabitants.	The Mayor.
BRIGHTON.	.....	High Constable.
PLYMOUTH.	Chamber of Commerce.	Vice-President.
CARDIFF.	Inhabitants.	The Mayor.
COLDESTREAM.	Inhabitants.	The Bailie.
DEVONPORT.	Town Council.	The Mayor.
BIRMINGHAM.	.....	The Mayor.
GLASGOW.	Merchants, &c.	Lord Provost.
BOSTON.	Town Council.	The Mayor.

Since our last publication, we have received notices of the following meetings:

HULL.	Chamber of Commerce.	
GREENOCK.	Town Council.	The Provost.
MANCHESTER.	Town Council.*	
MANCHESTER.	Chamber of Commerce.*	J. Smith, Esq.
HULL.	Town Council.	
ELGIN.	Merchants, &c.	The Provost.
ABINGDON.	Inhabitants.	
SUNDERLAND.	Town Council.	
BERWICK.	Inhabitants.	The Mayor.
DUNSE.	Inhabitants.	
KIRKALDY.	Magistrates, &c.	The Provost.
DINGWALL.	Town Council.	
CUPAR, G. Fife.	.....	
NAIRN.	.....	
INVERNESS.	Town Council.	
DUMBARTON.	.....	Provost
HADDINGTON.	.....	
ARUNDEL.	Inhabitants.	Mayor.
DUNDEE.	Town Council.	
PAISLEY.	.....	Provost.
RICHMOND (York.)	.....	Mayor.
EXETER.	.....	
LIMERICK.	Chamber of Commerce.	
ANSTRUTHER	.....	
EASTER	Inhabitants.	
SANQUHAR.	Town Council.	
NORWICH.	Town Council.	Mayor.
BEDFORD.	Inhabitants.	Mayor.
BIRMINGHAM, St. Peter's Ward.	Inhabitants.	Alderman Hutton.
ABERDEEN.	Incorporated Trades.	Convener Tapp.
CARLISLE.	Town Council.	Mayor.

\* Want of space compels us to postpone accounts of these important meetings, which will appear in our next. A Post-office Reform Committee has been established in Exeter.

## PARLIAMENTARY PROCEEDINGS.

Petitions to both Houses of Parliament are flowing in, night after night, from all parts of the kingdom, from all classes of the community, Clergymen, Solicitors, Operatives, Religious and Scientific Societies, Mechanics' Institutes, &c.

In the House of Commons on Tuesday the 23rd ult., upwards of sixty-seven petitions were presented. Upon Mr. Scholefield presenting the Birmingham Petition, the Speaker was understood to say that if any other honourable member had petitions to present on the subject of postage he wished he would bring them up. A great number of members on both sides of the house instantly rose with petitions in their hands, and advanced in a crowd to present them at the table, amidst loud cheering on all sides. "No description was given of the petitions by the honourable members, so that it is impossible to enumerate them. We did not observe the right honourable gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his place at the time."—(Morning Chronicle.)

Upwards of 109 Petitions to the Commons were presented on Wednesday evening, the 24th ult., 36 on Thursday, the 25th, 38 on Friday, 26th, and 32 on Monday the 29th.

We shall shortly print a list of those places, &c., which have petitioned.



**GREAT WEIGHT AND NO PRICE! LITTLE WEIGHT AND ALL PRICE!!**

This sketch—an exact representation of the contents of the Edinburgh mail on the 2d of March, 1838—has been designed for the particular instruction of the Postmaster-general, who, notwithstanding he stands at the head of the Post-office class, has shown that he is at the bottom of it, in respect of knowledge of the rudiments of his business. His lordship, if the *Mirror of Parliament* speaks truly, declared in the House of Lords, on the 18th of December, 1837, that “if the number of letters under the uniform penny post be increased twelfefold, the mails will have to carry twelve times as much in weight; and therefore the charge for transmission, instead of 100,000*l.*, as now, must be twelve times that amount.”

Lord Lichfield never asked himself what makes the “weight” of the mail;—and, besides confounding the “letters” as the “whole weight,” when only a part, and the least part, he assumed that the mails were all filled, and that the cost would be twelfefold. We pray the Postmaster-general to study our sketch, in which we have placed the letters on the top of the mail, the better to contrast them with the newspapers, their usual place being in the hind boot. Is the bag of 40 lbs. of letters the whole weight of the mail? Does the total weight of newspapers, stamps, franks, and letters, which, with that of their bags, is 531 lbs., exceed the whole weight of a single mail, stated by the superintendent of the mails to be 1680 lbs.? On the contrary, are there not 1149 lbs. weight to spare? and will twelve times, or even twenty-four times, the little bag of letters of 40 lbs.

fill up this spare weight of 1149 lbs.? Alack! alack! his lordship has to learn the A B C of his craft, besides the four simple rules of arithmetic!

Lest it be supposed that the Edinburgh mail is not a fair sample of the other mails, the five first other cases are taken from the Post-office returns:

Mail.	Date when weighed.	W of Bags	W of Letters & Franks	Weight of Newspapers	Total Weight	Weight to spare.	Letters might increase, without overloading	Postage charged on Letters only.	Cost of carrying Newspapers, Franks, & Letters
		lb.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.	lbs.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Louth	3 Mar	25	16	120	161	1513	95 fold	14 18 2	2 0 9
Brighton	22 do.	39	75	147	261	1419	20 fold	49 7 3	0 9 9
Bristol	23 do.	61	79	387	527	1153	15 fold	68 9 8	0 18 0
Hastings	3 Apr	33	22	109	164	1516	70 fold	25 8 5	0 15 4
Stroud	5 do.	17	10	56	83	1597	150 fold	11 8 0	1 4 6

The whole of the thirty-two mails going out of London were weighed, and the average weight of each was found to be 463 lbs., divisible in these proportions:

	POUNDS WEIGHT.	PER CENTAGE.
Bags.....	68	14
Letters, Franks, &c.	91	20
Newspapers.....	304	66
	463 lbs.	100

2192 lbs. are the total weight of all the chargeable letters, franks, and parliamentary papers, carried by all the thirty-two mails. Half only, or 1096 lbs., are chargeable letters; consequently, the chargeable letters of all the mails out of London are 684 lbs. less than the weight which a single mail is able to carry.

**NOTICES.**

Will the *Manchester Times* oblige us with a copy of its paper, which gave an account, about two months ago, of Mr. G. W. Wood's delinquencies in the Postage Committee?

Mr. M'Colloch's objections answered in our next. The *Guernsey Star* inquires, “what mode the inhabitants of the island ought to adopt, to be included in the proposed regulations for a reduction of postage?” Petition the Privy Council, as they are stated to regulate and control their fates.

We shall be happy to send a cast of the wood-cut for insertion in any country paper, at the payment of the cost price of the stereotype, five shillings.

Mr. Wallace, M.P., being temporarily absent from London, the Postage Petitions forwarded to him will be presented by other members.

We must warn the Public against signing Printed and Lithographed Petitions. Printed will not be received; and even Lithographed are thought coolly of, at least, if not rejected.

**The Post Circular.**

LONDON, APRIL 30, 1839.

We have received the very gratifying news, that the principle of a low uniform rate of postage has gained so many friends abroad, that the introduction of the plan into France and America is under the serious consideration of the administrators of the post departments in those countries. It would be little creditable to our government that France and America, whose postage revenues, unlike ours, have increased progressively for many years past, should be convinced of the practicability of the plan, and outstrip us in the race for adopting it.

**ROBBING PETER TO PAY PAUL.**—A curious illustration of the absurdity of the present high rates of postage is found in the fact, that government departments not privileged to frank actually send small parcels by coach, and pay carriage for them, in order to avoid a heavy postage account; although their payments for postage are merely so many transfers from one government pocket to another!

The Uniform Penny Post, recommended by the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, is to be PAID IN ADVANCE; the mode as follows:

A stamped cover, like the specimen, or a small stamp, like a medicine stamp, (a dozen or quire at a time, if it please you), may be bought at any stationer's, post-office, or any convenient shop, either for a PENNY, if the letter weighs only half an ounce; or for TWOPENCE, if it weighs one ounce; THREEPENCE for one ounce and a half; FOURPENCE for two ounces, and so on; one penny for each additional half-ounce. Thus, in such a cover as the specimen, which costs a penny, ANY THING whatever, not weighing half an ounce, would be carried FREE to any part of the United Kingdom.

Some apprehensions are entertained that the vast consumption of the Post-office stamps will tempt to the forgery of them. The way to prevent forgery seems to be to create those difficulties, which are only conquerable with great mechanical ingenuity, and an outlay of large capital.

**THE BLUE STAMP**

Annexed would occasion very considerable difficulty to the forger, were he to attempt to imitate it. A plate of this description having been produced, any number of facsimile plates can be made from the original plate, so that numerous impressions may be taken at one operation;

the plates being so adjusted to admit of large sheets of paper being impressed at once, and those sheets cut up to the proper dimensions, in the usual manner practised by printers, would give any required number of envelopes; the original plate would at all times be preserved, to make fresh plates from, as those in use were worn out.—(See Mr. C. Whiting's evidence before the Parliamentary Committee.)

The Compound Plate, which is given merely as an example of a more intricate mode of printing, presents still greater security. It is a specimen printed on the same principle as that used both at the Excise and Stamp Offices, and was the invention of the late Sir W. Congreve, Bart.; and, as a proof of its efficiency, it may not be uninteresting to state, that from eight plates the Excise Office have printed all their paper permits for nearly 14 years, without a single forgery; and probably as many as 50 millions of permits were taken from these plates. The Stamp Office has had but one set of plates in use for 14 years, from which all the medicine stamps have been struck off, used during that time, say 140 millions; and they have had no forgery committed on them in this country.

As to speed of execution—about 1000 impressions per hour can be well printed from one plate only; and one plate is capable of enduring many millions of impressions—say 10,000,000, without any very material deterioration, if carefully adjusted, in the first instance, to the machine by which they are printed, and if the paper on which they are printed be not too harsh in its texture, and free from grit. The machines necessary to print them are compact, and not at all complicated in their operation; for a steam-engine of two horse power, four boys, and two men, would be sufficient to produce 100,000 stamps per diem of ten working hours, presuming there were only five plates to each of the two machines. For the smaller stamps, there might be as many as twenty or thirty plates to each machine.

As regards the difficulty of the execution of the plate, but little need be said; for there is nothing more absurd than to suppose what can be effected by one man or men is not to be accomplished by others, when the process is purely mechanical. But thus much may be fairly and confidently stated—that if any body of individuals, willing to test this matter, were to subscribe, and direct that one or two respectable engravers should make a plate precisely similar to the specimen, so that the eye would be easily deceived, and report the expense and difficulties of the proceeding, they would be found such as to render any attempt on the part of the forger too hazardous for him to risk the almost certain chance of discovery. It may, therefore, be most confidently stated, that any impediments to the adoption of this plan, so far as the fear of forgery is concerned, may be fully and decidedly dismissed.

But if such a stamp be combined with any peculiar paper, also requiring the use of machinery in its manufacture, (which involves an outlay of great capital), forgery may be completely guarded against.

A forger could not produce this stamp, on a paper expressly manufactured by order of the government, in sufficient numbers to be profitable, (were he able to secure a safe market for them,) for less than an outlay of several thousands of pounds.

He must first learn how to engrave the stamp; then possess a very complicated machine to engrave it. He must possess a costly machine to print it. He must also command a paper-mill, with other very costly machinery, to make the paper. And, lastly, possessing all these, he is at the mercy of not less than a dozen persons absolutely necessary for these several processes, any one of whom may inform against him.

**Petitions.**

**UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.**

(FORM OF A GENERAL PETITION.)

TO THE HONOURABLE THE LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL (OR, THE COMMONS, as the case may be) IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED:—

The humble Petition of the Undersigned (to be filled up with the name of Place, Corporation, &c.)

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners earnestly desire a Uniform Penny Post, payable in advance, as proposed by Rowland Hill, and recommended by the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons.

That your Petitioners intreat your Honourable House to give speedy effect to this Report.

And your Petitioners will ever pray.

MOTHERS AND FATHERS that wish to hear from their absent children!

FRIENDS who are parted, that wish to write to each other! EMIGRANTS that do not forget their native homes!

FARMERS that wish to know the best Markets!

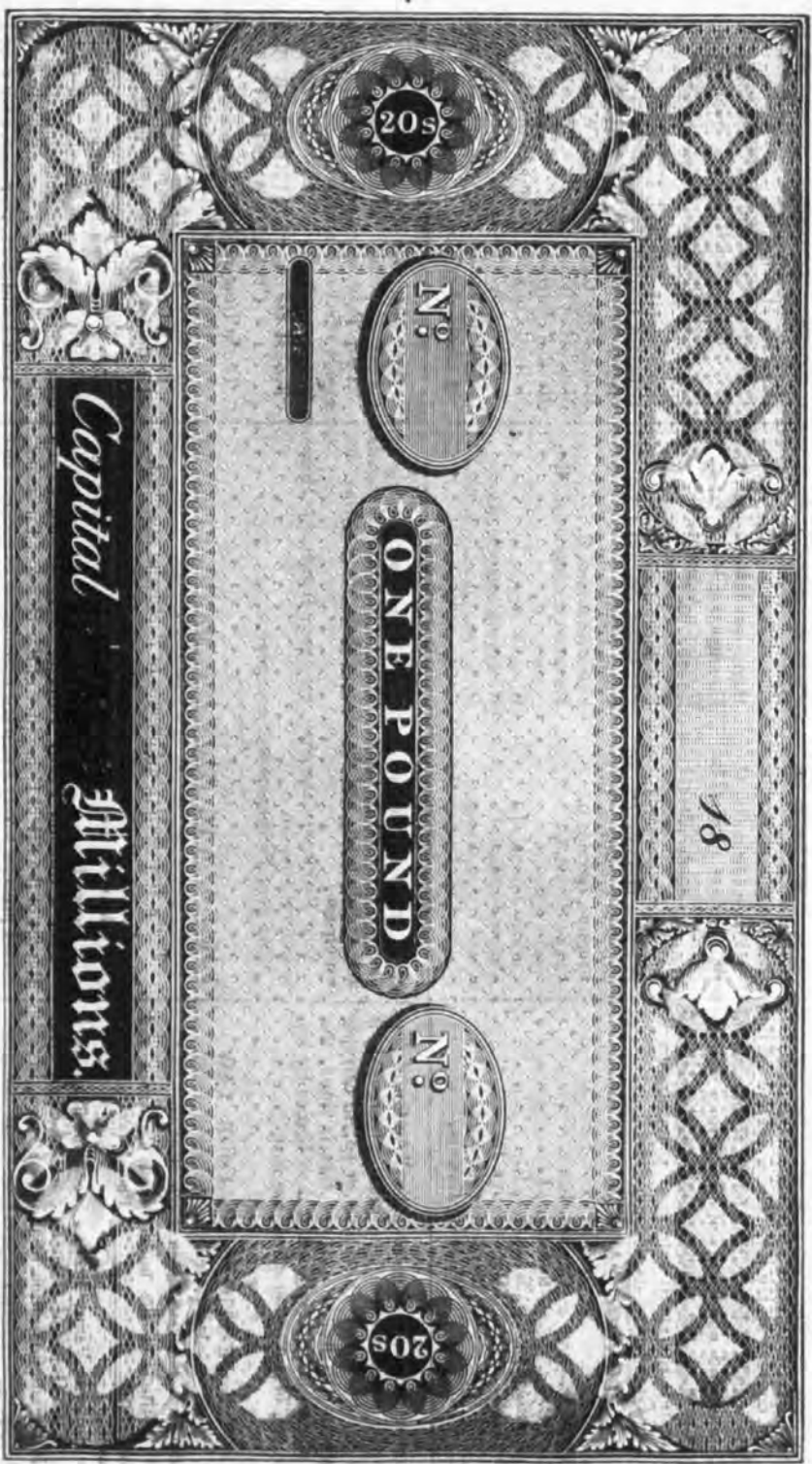
MERCHANTS AND TRADESMEN that wish to receive Orders and Money quickly and cheaply!

MECHANICS AND LABOURERS that wish to learn where good work and high wages are to be had! Support the Report of the House of Commons with your Petitions for a UNIFORM PENNY POST. Let every City and Town and Village; every Corporation; every Religious Society and Congregation; every Scientific and Literary Institution, petition, and let every one in the Kingdom sign a Petition with his name or his mark.

**READER!**

If you can get any Signatures to a Petition, make two Copies of the above on two half sheets of paper; get them signed as numerous as possible; fold each up separately; put a slip of paper around, leaving the ends open; direct one to a Member of the House of Lords, the other to a Member of the House of Commons, LONDON, and put them into the Post-office.

The other Stamp is introduced, in order to show how another mode of Printing may be used, for the purpose of increasing the difficulties of imitation. Thousands on thousands of impressions have already been taken from this Plate.



A merchant might send or receive an INVOICE, or ORDER for goods.

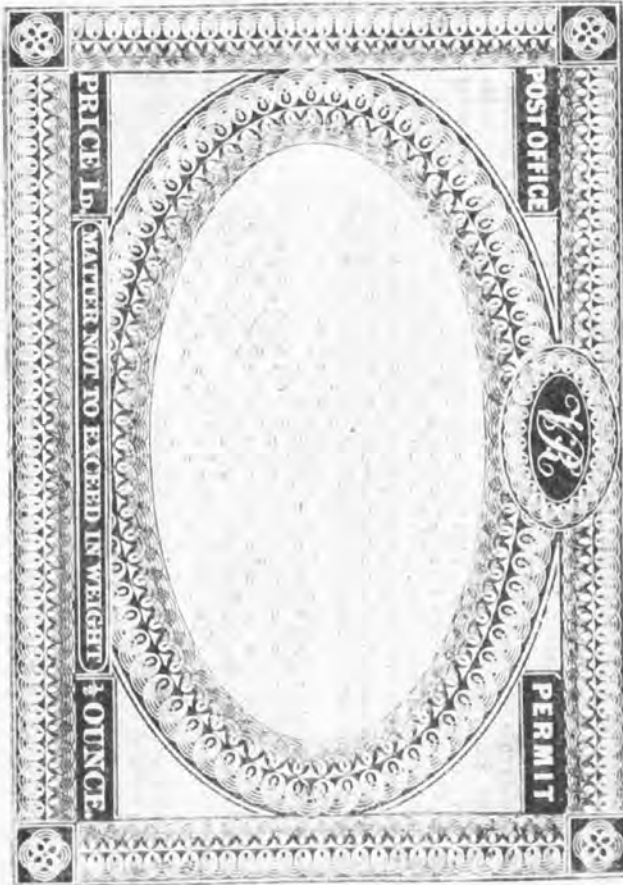
A broker, tradesman, &c., a sample of any produce, not weighing half an ounce—of coffee, tea, sugar, spice, indigo, flax, cotton, cloth, wheat, hops, beaver, &c.

A young lady—a watch-ribbon, a miniature, or a locket of hair; or a shoe, pair of gloves, or a dried plant; or a piece of lace, silk, muslin, velvet, &c., of the last new pattern; a new song, &c.

A son—a sovereign to his widowed mother, to save her from an union workhouse.

A naturalist—specimens of minerals, plants, insects, &c.

Sir Robert Peel's last speech, or the Rev. Sydney Smith's last pamphlet, or Nicholas Nickleby, could be sent from Truro to Falmouth for fourpence, if it should happen to weigh two ounces.



Sermons, policies of insurance, wills, proof-sheets, physic, law-deeds, jewellery; a razor as a sample to Sheffield; buttons or buckles to Birmingham; a pattern of cloth to Leeds; pattern of calico to Manchester; pattern of silk to Macclesfield; a shoe to Northampton; pattern of carpet to Kidderminster; sample of ore from Cornwall; specimen of type from Glasgow, &c., might also pass under a proper stamp.

To save paper, you might write your letter, or print your circular, on the back of the stamp itself.



## ONLY A POSTAGE.

[A TALE ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE EFFECTS OF HIGH POSTAGES.]

It was a sad day when Rose Maydew left her father's cottage. There were tears on the cheek of her mother, and a cloud on the old man's brow, for though they both strove to look cheerful, they could not disguise their grief, which was too strong to be put aside. There is so much in the world to fear when the eye of parental carefulness is withdrawn, that we may well feel apprehension for the young wanderer, and mingle tears with prayers for his safety. "God prosper thee," said the old man, as he kissed the cheek of the trembling girl—"God prosper thee, and guide thee right—'tis a hard world"—and his tears choked his voice as he strove to give utterance to his blessings. "Good bye, Rose," said the mother, speaking through her tears, "good bye, be a good girl—a good girl, Rose, for if thee art not good, though thou wert clad in gold and velvet, I would not own thee for my child. And mind, Rose, and write when any trouble presses thee, for thou wilt find none in the world who will counsel and guide thee like thy parents." And thus with kind words and tears the time passed on till the coach drove up that was to take the weeping girl to the large city; and many a caution that had been forgotten till then was said, as the little packages were put on the vehicle, till the driver quite lost his patience, and declared he would not wait any longer if they kept him fussing there. "Good bye, good bye, write to us," were the last words Rose heard, as the coach hurried away from the quiet little village in which she had lived so long. The poor girl looked around bewildered as new faces and fresh objects met her view, till her bosom became too full, and she hid her face in her hands and wept bitterly.

Months passed on after this scene, and these had brought letters from Rose who was well and happy. She spoke of the splendour of London—of her fellow-servants, who were all ladies and gentlemen themselves—of rich dresses and jewels—of carriages, and many other things that to her were grand and beautiful. The mother smiled when she read of these things, but a cloud would pass over the brow of the old man. Why did he frown?

"I have earned 6s. 6d. this week," said old Maydew, as he threw himself in a chair in his humble little cottage one Saturday night, after a week of toil—"6s. 6d.—there are ten of us to be fed!" And the old man stamped his foot on the earth, as though he would crush the thoughts that arose in his breast.

A moment after there was a slight pressure on his shoulder—he looked up, and his wife leant over him—"Come, John," she said, "you must not be so down-hearted—better times will come, be sure, and I have good news for you; Master Haller has just been here, and says that there is a letter at the post-office from Rose—our dear Rose—now think of that." But, strange to say, no sign of pleasure was discernible in the features of old Maydew, on whom the intelligence his wife had conveyed with so much pleasure seemed to pass unheeded. He preserved the same moody position he had at first taken, with his eyes bent firmly on the ground. The heart of the woman became full as she regarded him, and she burst into tears—"God forgive us, John, I did not think it would come to this!" A moment of silence ensued, broken only by the inward sobbings of the female. At length a loud knock was heard at the door, and, with eyes still streaming with tears, the woman rose to open it. It was the postman.

"Here is a letter for you, Mrs. Maydew—it is from London, and there is ninepence to pay."

The outstretched hand of the fond mother was reluctantly withdrawn—ninepence—she had it not. She turned to look at her husband, but he did not move. She thought of her children—they wanted bread—"I cannot take it to-day—to-morrow, perhaps—not to-day." "Oh," said the man, as he put the letter into his bag again, "no brads—no trust at this shop," and he walked away, whistling a tune. It was a gloomy night that at old Maydew's cottage, and when the aged pair laid their heads on their pillows, it was not to sleep.

The next day came—another and another, but still the letter remained unclaimed, and at the end of a week the postmaster scribbled some words on the back of it, and returned it to London.

How soon does guilt usurp the place of innocence! and since Rose Maydew had left her father's cottage she had tasted of that cup whose inheritance is shame and sorrow. From the expense attendant on a letter, her communication with home had been limited, and little opportunity had been afforded her to receive that good counsel which cannot be too often repeated. Young and inexperienced, was it wonderful that she should fall—that she should have been allured in wiles which her innocence dreamt not existed,—that she should have learnt only her error when redemption was too late! Yet, when the fatal truth did burst upon her, it came not to a scornful heart—she felt the burden of her shame and bent down beneath it. Her fault had been that of an instant, but to purchase pardon years of penitence to her mind would have been too few. But there was one tribunal that, next to that of her God, she dreaded to approach—her mother, her father, so stern in their ideas of virtue—could they, would they forgive her? It was long before she could summon up her resolution, but at length she did; and in the drear midnight, when all save her slept, penned a letter—one of a penitent and contrite heart—praying forgiveness. The writing was blotted in many parts with tears—tears of humility and sorrow; but, when all was over, the poor lost girl felt as though a heavy burden had passed from her bosom.

Still with an anxious and throbbing heart did Rose Maydew await each returning post that should bring back the pardon. Hope whispered would not be denied. But days past, and brought no letter—a week, and still no letter,—then did hope part from the poor girl's heart—she felt that her fault was too great for pardon, even from those who had most loved her, and she whispered to herself that death were preferable to such a degraded state of existence.

"I have been down to the post-office this morning, John, to get the letter the postman brought the other day, but they say it is sent back to London, and Rose has not written since—poor girl, I wonder how she is. I should like to write to her every day. I should always find something to say; but postages are all so dear—suppose they were only a penny, now what a thing it would be for us poor people. Now, you see, to have a letter we are forced to go without a meal or two, which is a hard thing for the children, though I would go without a dozen myself to hear from her. I hope we shall soon have another letter."

But time passed, and there came no letter to old Maydew's cottage, till the impatience of the family knew no bounds. At length, one morning, the sound of the postman's voice was heard at the door. He brought a letter, but at the first glance the eye of the mother detected that it was not the handwriting of her child. Her heart grew sick as she gazed upon the stranger epistle—a deadly apprehension came over her, and she sunk senseless on the ground. The hand of a neighbour opened the letter, and found the worst fears of the mother realized. It was from a London police-office, and contained the particulars of a young female, whose body had been found in the river a few days previously. From a letter found on the bank near the spot where the body was discovered, a clue had been obtained to the name and friends of the deceased.

A copy of this letter was forwarded, which stated that driven on by remorse, and believing herself disowned by her parents, on whose good name she had brought down shame, Rose Maydew had hastened to rid herself of an existence grown hateful, and praying that God in his infinite mercy might pardon her weakness and crimes.

"What a pity," said old Maydew's next door neighbour, when he had finished telling the sad story to a crowd of curious listeners, "what a pity her mother had not enough money to pay for the letter."

"Nay, Master Martin," said old Price, the blacksmith, who was politician for the village as well as farrier, "rather what a shame it is postages should be so high—now if we had a penny postage"—"Ah," interrupted a host of voices—"if we had a penny postage."

"Yes," continued old Price, looking round with the air of one who knows his words bear authority—"then this would never have happened."—From the Brighton Herald.

## ARRAY OF POSTAGE FORCES.

The Uniform Penny Postage can boast of the following display of advocates. Safely, indeed, may we corroborate the statement of the *Examiner* of last week, that "on no subject within our recollection has there been so general an agreement, as upon Mr. Hill's plan for a penny postage." We have only to repeat the words of the *Times* of the 16th ult., that "Such is the degree of conviction which it has carried to all who have bestowed any thought upon it, that the only question is—and it is asked universally—will these ministers have the honesty and the courage to try it? On a review of the public feeling which it has called forth, from men of all parties, sects, and conditions of life, it may well be termed the cause of the whole people of the United Kingdom, against the small coterie of placeholders in St. Martin's-le-Grand, and its dependencies."

## LONDON PAPERS.

<i>Times</i> , C.	<i>Sun</i> , L.
<i>Morning Chronicle</i> , L.	<i>Courier</i> , L.
<i>Morning Post</i> , C.	<i>Spectator</i> , L.
<i>Morning Advertiser</i> , L.	<i>Examiner</i> , L.
<i>Morning Herald</i> , C.	<i>Conservative Journal</i> , C.
<i>Globe</i> , L.	<i>Gardeners' Gazette</i> .
<i>Standard</i> , C.	<i>Shipping Gazette</i> .

*Atlas*, L.  
*Weekly True Sun*, L.  
*Athenæum*.  
*Weekly Dispatch*, L.  
*Planet*, L.  
*Watchman*.

## COUNTRY PAPERS.

*Aberdeen Herald*, L.  
*Aberdeen Journal*, C.  
*Aylesbury News*, L.  
*Ayrshire Examiner*, L.  
*Bath Journal*, L.  
*Bedford Mercury*, L.  
*Berkshire Chronicle*, C.  
*Birmingham Journal*, L.  
*Bolton Free Press*, L.  
*Boston Herald*, C.  
*Bradford Observer*, L.  
*Brighton Gazette*, C.  
*Brighton Guardian*, L.  
*Brighton Herald*, L.  
*Bucks Herald*, C.  
*Bucks Gazette*.  
*Carlisle Journal*, L.  
*Carlisle Sentinel*, C.  
*Chard Union Gazette*.  
*Cheltenham Looker-On*, C.

*New Bell's Weekly Messenger*, L.  
*Social Gazette*.  
*Colonial Gazette*.  
*Cleave's Weekly Gazette*.

*Chester Gazette*, C.  
*Cinque Ports Chronicle*, (Hastings) L.  
*Derby Mercury*, C.  
*Devon Advertiser*, L.  
*Devonport Chronicle*.  
*Devonport Independent*, L.  
*Downpatrick Recorder*, L.  
*Drogheda Argus*, L.  
*Dumfries Times*, L.  
*Edinburgh Journal*, C.  
*Edinburgh Observer*, L.  
*Essex Herald*, L.  
*Essex Standard*, C.  
*Fermanagh Impartial Reporter*, C.  
*Glasgow Argus*, L.  
*Glasgow Chronicle*, L.  
*Gloucestershire Chronicle*, C.  
*Greenock Advertiser*, L.

*Guernsey Star*, L.  
*Halifax Express*, L.  
*Hampshire Chronicle*, L.  
*Hampshire Independent*, L.  
*Hereford Times*, L.  
*Hull Journal*, L.  
*Kendal Mercury*, L.  
*Kent Herald*, L.  
*Kilkenny Journal*, L.  
*Lancaster Guardian*, L.  
*Leeds Mercury*, L.  
*Leeds Times*, L.  
*Leicester Mercury*, L.  
*Leinster Independent*, L.  
*Liverpool Chronicle*, L.  
*Liverpool Mail*, C.  
*Liverpool Mercury*.  
*Londonderry Standard*, C.  
*Longford Journal*.  
*Maidstone Journal*, C.  
*Manchester Guardian*, L.  
*Manchester Times*, L.  
*Manx Advertiser*.  
*Midland Counties Herald*.  
*Northampton Herald*, C.

And probably many others, of which we have not yet received copies.

Wherever petitions are prepared, it will be found that the number of signatures will be greatly increased, if any one will take an hour's trouble or so, in carrying them from house to house. Unless this is done, the signatures of all who are confined at their homes by business, sickness, or any other cause, are lost.

## FORM OF A PETITION FOR POOR LAW UNIONS.

To the Honourable the Commons in Parliament assembled.  
 The humble Petition of the undersigned Chairman and Guardians of the Poor Law Union, Sheweth,

That the Uniform Penny Postage, recommended by a Committee of the House of Commons, would be of great advantage in the administration of the Poor Laws, in facilitating audit notices; correspondence between the guardians and parish officers; orders for overseers; summonses for special meetings; papers touching the sale of property, emigration, migration, &c.; loans to paupers, settlement

cases, orders of removal, &c.; and would be a great help to paupers, by enabling them to write for assistance to friends able to help them, and thus relieve them from entering the workhouse.

Your Petitioners, therefore, pray your Honourable House to adopt the report.  
 And your Petitioners will ever pray.

## FORM OF A PETITION FOR MANUFACTURERS AND WORKMEN.

To the Honourable the Commons in Parliament assembled.  
 The humble Petition of the undersigned Proprietors and Workmen of the Factory at Sheweth,

That a Uniform Penny Postage, recommended in the Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, would promote a very extended distribution of samples and patterns, orders, invoices, &c., whereby the business of your Petitioners would be vastly assisted; and that it would give to thousands of the people the happy means of writing

to their friends, as often as their feelings prompted, which the present postage rates prevent.

Your Petitioners pray your Honourable House to give speedy effect to this measure.

## FORM OF A PETITION FOR RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

To the Honourable the Commons in Parliament assembled.  
 The humble Petition of the undersigned, &c. Sheweth,

That a Uniform Penny Post would be very beneficial to all religious and charitable institutions, and especially to that of your Petitioners.

That it would afford most essential aid in making known the utility of such institutions, and would greatly facilitate their opportunities of communicating with their influential members, committees, and subscribers.

Your Petitioners, therefore, pray your Honourable House to give the plan of a Uniform Penny Post, payable in advance, a fair trial.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.



# The Post Circular.

OR, ADVOCATE FOR A CHEAP, SWIFT, AND SURE POST.

No. 14. 13.

FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 1839.

Price 6d.

## Parliamentary Proceedings.

### MINISTERIAL ADOPTION OF THE UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, Friday, May 31.

Mr. WARBURTON.—I wish to put a question to the noble lord the Secretary of State for Home Affairs. The other night, on the subject of the postage, the Chancellor of the Exchequer made an announcement of his intention to move a resolution founded on the report of the Committee of the House of Commons on the subject of postage. Now, that committee had reported in favour of a twopenny rate of postage, but at the same time stated their opinion to be in favour of a penny postage, and that they would so have reported had the order of reference to them allowed them so to do. I wish, therefore, to ask the noble lord what is the nature of the measure which Government intends to recommend, whether in favour of a twopenny or a penny rate?

Lord J. RUSSELL.—The hon. gentleman, sir, says very truly, that some misunderstanding has arisen from the statement made by my right hon. friend, which was a very short statement, and did not enter into any details. The intention of the Government is to propose a resolution which will be in favour of a uniform penny postage. (Loud cheers on all sides.) In stating this I think it is right to add, that the plan will be in conformity with that which has been proposed by the committee as likely to be the most beneficial one; \*but as the plan will take a considerable time, at least some months, in preparation, all that will be proposed will be a resolution to adopt a certain plan, and to make good any deficiency of revenue which may occur in consequence of its adoption. The whole question is one on which I do not at present wish to enter. It is a very great and large experiment, but the adoption of it will have at least this advantage, that it will confer a very great benefit upon the middle and working classes. (Loud cheering.)

\* We were present when this announcement was made, and have adopted the report of the *Morning Post* as being most correct. Other reports give "a plan, to be in conformity with what would be most likely to be beneficial to the country, would necessarily take some months to prepare."

### THE DUKE OF RICHMOND'S ADOPTION OF MR. HILL'S PLAN.

HOUSE OF LORDS, Monday, June 3.

Petitions praying for a uniform penny rate of postage were presented by several noble lords, and by the Duke of Richmond; who proceeded to say, that he was anxious to call the attention of the house, and particularly the attention of her majesty's ministers, to the subject of the penny postage; because it appeared to him that their lordships would not have an opportunity to make any alteration in the measure which, as he understood, was about to be brought before the other house. What he asked of ministers was, that if they brought forward a plan for a uniform postage at all, they would bring forward Mr. Hill's plan of a penny rate, and not one of twopenny, as was recommended in the report of the committee of the other house. (Hear, hear.) He felt perfectly certain, that if the measure were to be put in execution, it ought to be on the more liberal footing of a penny rate, or there was danger that the plan might prove detrimental to the revenue. (Hear, hear.) It was, in his opinion, highly improbable that the numbers of merchants and others who were accustomed, as appeared by the evidence before the committee, to defraud the Post-office, by sending letters by private hands, would continue the practice when the rate was reduced to 1d. But in the measure there ought to be nothing to prevent any individual, if he liked, from not sending his letter in a penny cover, because in various parts of the country, and under circumstances which might easily be imagined, it might be difficult to obtain the stamped paper in time; and he (the Duke of Richmond) would suggest, therefore, that every one who thought fit should be at liberty to send letters without a penny stamp, but that such letters should all be charged one uniform rate, to be paid on delivery. A great many people seemed to think that all letters whatever were to be embraced in the uniform penny rate; but those persons were much mistaken, for all the foreign and colonial letters—in fact, the whole of British correspondence with the rest of the world, must go through the Post-office; because, if it did not, we should have to pay the postage here, and should not get it back again. Another point he wished to mention was the practice of official franking. Of all the gross and glaring abuses of the Post-office, there was none so gross or so glaring as that of official franking. This he was decidedly of opinion ought to be got rid of. He could not see why the Treasury, under the proposed plan, should not purchase the necessary quantity of stamps for the use of the various offices, now exercising the privilege of franking, and let that amount appear in the usual accounts, by which means it would be seen how much was wanted for these purposes. If the Government

elects to adopt Mr. Hill's plan of a penny rate, he (the Duke of Richmond) was not certain whether it would not be a good plan to allow persons who wrote upon a penny stamp to send their letters by any coach, steam-vessel, or other conveyance; because if the revenue got the penny, that was enough, and the Post-office did not want the trouble of the carriage.

### LORD MELBOURNE'S DECLARATION TO CARRY OUT THE PENNY POSTAGE PLAN THIS SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS.—Tuesday, June 25.

The EARL OF RADNOR, in presenting upwards of forty petitions from Jersey and other places in favour of penny postage, wished to take the opportunity of putting a question to his noble friend. Great anxiety was felt in the city of London and the manufacturing districts to know the plans of the government. The resolutions to be proposed in the House of Commons not having been declared, and there having been no application for a bill, the petitioners were afraid that no bill would be brought in in the course of the present session, and that, though it appeared the government meant to put the plan in execution, they would not have the necessary powers, and that therefore the plan would be deferred for a year, or a year and a half. Was this so?

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE, in answer to the question put to him by the noble earl, said that undoubtedly it was the intention of her Majesty's government to carry out the plan. Seeing that the plan was recommended so strongly, and that its benefits were so generally admitted, it was intended to carry it into effect with all practicable speed. (Hear.) To make so great a change, however, a long preparation was absolutely necessary; but he had understood that his right honourable friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had, in another place, given notice of his intention to bring the matter forward at no distant date. The House and the public would then be put in possession of the intentions of government on the subject. It would be more convenient to wait till that time, and not to enter into any details upon the present occasion. Her Majesty's government meant, certainly, to adopt measures during the present session for giving to the Post-office all the powers, not now given by the Post-office Acts, for making proper regulations for carrying out the plan. (Cheers.)

The EARL OF RYON wished to know whether the alteration was to be contingent on the loss which might be sustained by the revenue being made up? He had understood that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made the change contingent on this.

VISCOUNT MELBOURNE: Most certainly.

## The Post Circular.

LONDON, JUNE 28, 1839.

The delay of bringing forward the great measure of Postage Reform to so late a period as the 5th of July, coupled with the rumours of a speedy termination of the session, had created great anxiety to learn, and we are sorry to say some distrust of, the intentions of the government. Every one saw that mere resolutions would not give effect to the measure, and that a bill was absolutely essential—that, in fact, resolutions only, interpreted most charitably, meant a delay of twelve months or more. All doubt on these points is now dispelled by the explicit statement of the prime minister. Lord Melbourne, whose friendliness to Penny Postage throughout no one could question, has publicly pledged "*Her Majesty's government certainly to adopt measures during the present session for giving to the Post-office all the powers not now given by the Post-office Acts, for making proper regulations for carrying out the plan.*"

For the last time, therefore, we trust, we appeal to all the able and hearty friends of the Postage cause, and especially the Press, throughout the kingdom, to help in securing the passing of the bill this session of Parliament. To do this every member of the House of Commons should be urged by his constituents to be present on the 5th of July in his place in Parliament, to support

the bill necessary for carrying out the ministerial resolutions. The Post-office Acts already existing, enable the Postmaster-general to make all the necessary reductions, and to regulate payment in advance, and fresh powers only will be required to issue stamps, and regulate the charges by weight.

*Let there be one more strong pull, and the measure will be safely landed amidst the cheers and rejoicings of a whole people.*

The following notice, as appears in the Votes of the House of Commons, was given on Tuesday, 18th June, 1839.

Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Resolution respecting Postage of Letters, and to make Financial Statement (in Committee of Ways and Means), Friday, 5th July.

The Mercantile Committee, desiring to be quite satisfied about the necessity of an Act of Parliament, sought an opinion from Mr. Serjeant Wilde, and received the following:—

### COPY—OPINION OF MR. SERJEANT WILDE.

I have perused the existing Post-office Acts, and also considered the plan in agitation for imposing a uniform rate of postage depending upon weight, and to be raised by the issuing of stamps and I think it perfectly clear, that such plan cannot, with reference to the existing laws, be legally carried into effect under the authority of resolutions of the Houses of Parliament, or otherwise than by an Act of Parliament.

Among the insuperable difficulties which cannot be overcome by resolutions of the Houses of Parliament, it will be found that the public cannot be compelled to use Stamps, nor can the intended variation in the rates of postage be enforced.

An Act of Parliament will be found indispensably necessary.

(Signed,) THOMAS WILDE.

Serjeant's Inn, Temple,  
25th June, 1839.  
[There need be no compulsion for using stamps in the first instance.—Ed.]

Just a year has passed, and our prophecy that his h postages were doomed to end, is about to be fulfilled! Faith was strong in us, that uniform penny postage would triumph, or we should never have taken up its cause. And its triumph tends to uphold our comfortable belief, that a thing which is no sham, but substantially good, is sure, sooner or later, to make its way in the world. We have always thought no measure whatever has been proposed, since printing was invented, which tended so much to advance all the interests of mankind, as Rowland Hill's invention of a uniform penny post. It is just giving the world (for the whole civilized world will get the plan—France, Prussia, Belgium, America, already cogitating thereon) the licence to speak freely to one another. It is the removal of a tax described by one of the most humane men, and deepest thinkers of the present day, "a tax on deliberate speaking—on the deepest want and most indefeasible right of man; a tax, as it were, on the act of living (for man's life is but an utterance of himself); a tax fit for Turkey and a Sultan's divan, than for England and its legislature."

Welcome, indeed, was Lord John Russell's removal of the doubts created by the first notice of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to every man, woman, and child in the kingdom. The uniform penny postage was a godsend to the popularity of any minister; and we cannot but congratulate the present administration, as, indeed, we should any other, upon the happy accident of their having the opportunity to adopt it. The people together with the *Post Circular*, have hitherto viewed this question, to use the words of Junius, "not as the cause of faction or of party, or of an individual, but the common interest of every man in Britain;" and we believe they will thank the Melbourne ministry for this act, just in the same spirit as they would thank a Peel ministry. The *Times* of Friday, May 31, declared, "into such a question it would be utterly repugnant to reason and common sense, to allow party feeling for a moment to enter;" and the *Standard* of the Wednesday previous, promised "the hearty concurrence of the conservatives

\* See No. V. of the *Post Circular*, 24th April, 1838.

to a practical measure like the Penny Postage." It is an unmixed good for all, and so should be acknowledged by all. Let all then, conservatives as well as liberals, join in thanking the ministers for this act of great grace.

We direct attention to the very satisfactory and welcome statement of the Duke of Richmond.

The following high and well-merited compliment was paid to Mr. Wallace and the select committee on postage, by the *Times* of Friday, May 31.

"Altogether, we regard this Post-office inquiry as one conducted with more honesty and more industry than any ever brought before a committee of the House of Commons."

The City meeting to have been on held Friday, May 31, was postponed by an announcement as follows:

**REDUCTION OF POSTAGE, MEETING POSTPONED.**—A communication has been made to the Mercantile Committee on Postage, that Her Majesty's Government intended to adopt a UNIFORM PENNY POSTAGE: but the Chancellor of the Exchequer having merely announced "that in the course of a fortnight he hoped to have it in his power to propose a resolution upon the subject of the Postage of Letters, founded upon the report of the committee which sat last year"—the Mercantile Committee beg to inform the public, that the meeting of merchants, bankers, &c., intended to have been held at the EGYPTIAN HALL, on Friday, 31st inst., is postponed until the proposed measure is laid before Parliament.—By order of the Committee,  
GEORGE MOFFATT, Treasurer.

JERUSALEM COFFEE-HOUSE, 29th May, 1839.

Up to the 25th of June, the Postage Petitions, praying for Rowland Hill's plan, presented this session to the House of Commons, have exceeded 1750 in number. Petitioning should not relax, because though Ministers are pledged, the House of Commons has not pledged itself.

We hasten to assure the *Liverpool Mercury*, that we did not overlook the suggestion which it published in June, 1838, of farming the postage revenue. It was very gratifying to perceive, that an idea which had been much talked of, though not very publicly discussed,\* should have sprung up in a place of so much commercial importance as Liverpool.

This respected and able fellow-labourer in postage reform, will doubtless admit, that such a proposal could hardly have been discussed in the *Post Circular*, unless, at the same time, means existed for elaborating it. It would have given an almost fatal blow to the cause, to have made such an offer, without being fully prepared for its acceptance, and hence our silence. We felt that the full convictions necessary to prompt men of admitted influence, to embark in such a scheme, had yet to be matured; but the public declaration to Lord Melbourne, by the Treasurer of the Mercantile Committee, set the question at rest about the practicability of establishing a Joint Stock Company for farming the postage, and proved that these convictions in reality existed. We had long ago heard opinions expressed by the highest authorities, that a Penny Postage Company would be one of the most lucrative speculations of the day; and strange, indeed, would it be were it not so, when the necessity for letter-writing is next only in demand to that of speaking; and when every penny letter would certainly yield a profit of 75 per cent.

From the same paper we copy the following suggestion, which it seems is about to be very generally acted upon:

If, as we now confidently anticipate, Mr. Rowland Hill's project should be adopted, our countrymen will be lamentably deficient in gratitude if they do not show their sense of the important obligation in some signal and general tribute to the man by whose penetration and perseverance they will so amply profit. One of our friends has proposed that a PENNY SUBSCRIPTION should be set on foot for the purpose of raising a fund worthy of the occasion, and in our opinion the suggestion is an excellent one. There is scarcely a man, woman, or child in the country who will not be a gainer by the change, and a penny subscription for the purpose of raising a fund to provide some splendid testimonial of gratitude to Mr. Rowland Hill would probably produce many thousand pounds.

In our next we shall give further specimens of the grateful feelings of the people towards Mr. Rowland Hill.

\* The first time this suggestion appeared in print, was, we believe, in a letter to the *Times* newspaper, 20th April, 1838.

### Public Meetings.

#### MANCHESTER.—CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

A special general meeting of the "Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Manufacturers" was held at their Offices, Town Hall Buildings, on Thursday last, 18th April, "to consider the propriety of petitioning the House of Commons for the adoption of the uniform penny rate of postage, proposed in Mr. Rowland Hill's plan of Post-office Reform." About thirty members were present. J. B. Smith, Esq., president of the chamber, took the chair.

Mr. Alderman Cobden rose to move, "That in the opinion of this meeting a petition in favour of a uniform rate of penny postage should be forthwith presented to the House of Commons." Gentlemen present were aware that last year the chamber had presented a similar petition, and had also sent up some valuable information. Since then the report of the select committee of the House of Commons had been published, drawn up with extraordinary care, he believed by Mr. Warburton, who had given a great deal of time and attention to this very valuable document. The committee recommended a uniform penny postage; but that, as soon as possible, a twopenny rate should be adopted, in order to avoid the loss which it was supposed the revenue would sustain from the adoption of Rowland Hill's plan. He was strongly of opinion, that the revenue would be more diminished by a twopenny postage than a penny one; and he was convinced that the whole success of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan depended upon the adoption of a penny rate; for no rate would put down the present widely-spread illicit transmission of letters. Since the chamber last met, he believed greater progress had been made in public opinion by this question than by any other. He believed, so far as the newspaper press was concerned, all parties advocated the plan. He did not know a single individual of any weight or authority who had ventured to oppose it, with the exception of Mr. McCulloch, who, in the supplement to his dictionary, had offered some objections to this plan, which he (Mr. Cobden) would read, as the name of Mr. McCulloch carried with it very great weight. He said—

"At present, a letter-carrier receives a number of letters, the postage of which amounts to a certain sum; and he must either bring back that sum or a portion of it, and undelivered letters making up the deficiency. But if he have merely to deliver paid letters, it is difficult to see what security can be had for the careful performance of his duty."

Now, it would be perceived, that, in presenting this difficulty, Mr. McCulloch had taken for granted the impossibility of finding men of moral probity and conscientious character to take the office of letter-carriers. He (Mr. Cobden) really thought this assumption was altogether unfounded, and quite inconsistent with the character of our countrymen. If Mr. McCulloch's opinion were acknowledged to be correct, there was an end to all chance of transacting the ordinary business of life; since, if men could not be found to fulfil their duty without a check, what became of nine-tenths of the duties which we entrusted to paid servants! But Mr. McCulloch went further, including not only letter-carriers, but the receivers of letters:—

"But supposing the letter-carriers to be as cautious and attentive under the proposed system as at present, still the safe delivery of letters would not be secured. Few persons will receive letters, paying 6d. or 1s. each for them, unless they really believe they are the parties for whom they are intended; but if they got them for nothing, they would be infinitely less scrupulous."

Now this seemed to impute that not only letter carriers, but the whole community, were so devoid of all principle, that unless men could get sixpence by it, they would not be honest; that if a letter was left for him, which in reality belonged to some one else, as the letter was paid, and he should not get the postage returned, he would not do an act of justice by returning the letter to the post office. It appeared to him that those two assumptions were as groundless as they were unjust on the part of Mr. McCulloch, and they were very like bringing an accusation of criminality against a whole country. It was Burke, he believed, who declared that he did not know how to draw up an indictment against a whole people; and if Mr. McCulloch had here brought an unfounded charge against a whole people, he thought they were at least entitled to an apology from him. But he went on to say, that—

"In a place like London, where there are thousands of persons of the same name, mistakes as to the delivery of letters are even now constantly occurring; and the fair conclusion seems to be, that, under the proposed plan, they would be incomparably more numerous, and that they would render its adoption, how advantageous soever in other respects, all but impracticable."

This just meant that, because a certain number of persons would be blockheads enough to address their letters improperly, and consequently their letters fell into wrong hands, the great bulk and mass of the people were not to have the benefit of Mr. Rowland Hill's penny postage. These objections of Mr. McCulloch's had been referred to by one or two of the London ministerial papers; and he was sorry that Mr. McCulloch, who was looked upon as a high authority in matters of fact, should have made such objections, which would certainly lead him (Mr. Cobden) to doubt that writer's infallibility.

Mr. Alderman Kershaw seconded the motion, and expressed his sentiments on the subject, which were generally to the same effect as his observations at the meeting of the Manchester Town-council, which will be found reported in another column. His conviction was, that nearly one-sixth of all the letters at present written, and that would pass through the Post-office if the rate of postage were reduced, were transmitted, at present, through the medium of friends or others, going to the place of their destination. Others were systematically employed as private letter-carriers, and they took a very large amount of letters. Then let them consider the present suppression of correspondence, owing to the high rate of postage. When persons could not get their letters conveyed otherwise than by post, they frequently refrained altogether from correspondence upon some subjects and with some quarters. The twopenny postage proposed by the Select Committee would in his opinion be a complete failure; for in a great majority of instances it would be an effectual bar to a large amount of

correspondence which would inevitably take place, if the postage were only a penny. The various ways in which the payment of postage was evaded were very numerous, and amongst them was one which was adopted by the poorer classes to a very great extent,—the sending of old newspapers, with some agreed-upon and understood mark or signal in the superscription. The question was one which should not be regarded merely in a commercial or fiscal point of view, but should be looked at as affecting the social condition of the large mass of society. He believed that few had an adequate conception of the extent to which correspondence was prevented amongst the working classes by the high rates of postage; and he believed, if the truth were known, it would be possible to show, that if the postage were reduced to a penny, the letters sent through the post by the working classes alone, would increase in number fifteen or twenty fold. As to public institutions and offices despatching an immense number of circulars, it would be obvious, were the postage reduced to a penny, these circulars and notices would all go through the post. In short, a penny postage would entirely put a stop to the transmission of circulars otherwise than by post. He thought that, besides looking at the question as one of revenue, they would all admit that, in a moral and social point of view, the present system was full of impolicy. The want of uniformity in the present charges was not the least of its evils. He knew one place whence a letter might be despatched 20 miles in one direction for a penny; whereas, if it went only 12 miles in another direction, the charge was fourpence. And these anomalies were neither few nor inconsiderable in amount. The beneficial effects of a universal penny postage could not be over-rated. Was it right that fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters, should be prevented corresponding with each other, as was in too many instances the case from the present excessive rates of postage?—The Chairman observed, that the Select Committee had anticipated some of the objections of Mr. McCulloch; for they stated that there had been no evidence offered to them which could lead them to suppose, that post-paid letters were not delivered with as great regularity as those which were unpaid.

Mr. Benjamin Pearson thought it was very important that there should exist no impression that there was less security for the transmission of money by Rowland Hill's plan than by the present. His opinion was that the security would be incomparably greater than now; because the postage being so small a charge, parties would always first advise of their intention to remit on such a day, and then, if their correspondents received no remittance or letter, they would make immediate application to the Post-office, and thus detection would be much easier and more speedy. —The motion was then put from the chair, and passed unanimously.

Mr. Thomas Boothman, jun., secretary to the chamber, then read the draft of the petition.

Mr. James Fernley moved, "That the draft now read be adopted as the petition of the chamber; be signed by the chairman, on behalf of the meeting; and forwarded to Mark Phillips, Esq. M.P., for presentation; and that the Right Hon. C. P. Thomson, and all the members within the county, be requested to support the prayer thereof."

Mr. J. G. Frost seconded the motion.

Mr. T. H. Williams said that great interest was felt in this subject in many quarters. He knew that petitions were now in a state of forwardness from different literary institutions in Manchester in favour of Rowland Hill's plan. One of the leading literary societies in this town, comprehending within it some of the most intelligent and enlightened men in the town, had got up and signed a petition in favour of that plan. The Athenæum, one of the largest of our institutions, containing perhaps as intelligent a body of young men as any institution in the town, had also, in signature, a petition in support of the adoption of that plan. The Chorlton Lyceum, an institution for the self improvement of working men, containing nearly 1,400 members, chiefly workpeople in mills, factories, &c., were now signing a petition in favour of Rowland Hill's plan; and, he could say from his own knowledge, being chairman of the committee of that institution, that an intense interest was felt by the working men on this subject, and that they signed with the greatest avidity. The Ancoats Lyceum, a similar institution for working men, and the Salford Lyceum, were sending petitions on this subject; and all this showed that both amongst the mercantile and the working classes, thinking men felt a strong interest in this question.

The Chairman said he heard with pleasure of the deep interest which the working classes were taking in this question, which certainly had a deeper interest for them than for any other class. He knew, from his own inquiries, the great difficulty that household servants had in corresponding with their parents, from the cost of postage; and no doubt the correspondence of that class would be immeasurably increased by a penny postage. He hoped also that with reform in the postage would come reform in the post office, which hitherto seemed to be conducted more for the convenience of postmasters than for that of the public. Amongst many plans which might be adopted for the increased convenience of the public, was one for facilitating the sending of letters abroad by foreign ships. Gentlemen in the foreign trade knew very well that if they had letters to send to Liverpool (or any other port) to be put on board foreign ships, they were obliged to send those letters in parcels to some correspondent, who had to put them into the letter bag. Now supposing every vessel was by law obliged to leave a letter-bag at the post-office till the time of her sailing, how easy it would be to send letters from inland towns through the post, addressed "By the *Isabella* from Liverpool.—To such a house, New York."—Then on the letter reaching the Liverpool post-office, it would be instantly put into the *Isabella's* letter-bag. But now persons were obliged to send their letters

a day before hand, in order to ensure their correspondents receiving them; and by such a plan as this much inconvenience and expense would be saved.

Mr. Alderman Callender, before the motion was put, wished to throw out a hint on the propriety of having a town's meeting on the subject. The present rate of postage had been well described by Lord Ashburton as "a tax on the conversation of people who live at a distance from each other." It was hard that we could not talk with absent friends, or do good to each other, without being taxed for it; and, as London was going to move in this matter by a large public assemblage, before Mr. Wallace brought on his motion, he hoped the town of Manchester, not a portion of it, but a town's meeting, would at any rate complete the agitation (if he might call it so) on this very important subject.—The motion then passed unanimously.

Mr. Smith left the chair, which was taken by Mr. Alderman Kershaw; and, on the motion of Mr. P. F. Willert, the best thanks of the meeting were given to the president for his able conduct in the chair, after which the proceedings terminated.

*From the Manchester Guardian, 20th April, 1839.*

## MANCHESTER.

### TOWN COUNCIL.

Mr. Alderman Tootal, in bringing forward the motion of which he had given notice, described Rowland Hill's plan. He considered this question of very great importance, not only to themselves as mercantile men, but to all classes of the community. It had engrossed a great deal of attention; and he hoped he was not travelling out of the line of his duty in seeking to bring it before the council for consideration. The oppressive nature of the tax was felt through almost every grade of society:—to the commercial part of the community it was very oppressive; on the poor it operated almost as a total prohibition of epistolary correspondence; and amongst all classes it engendered a desire to evade rather than to obey the laws. Besides, as a tax, contributing to the revenue, it appeared for more than twenty years to have stood still, if not to have slightly fallen off. He then produced various statistics in support of this statement. It appeared then, that, during the last twenty years, the absolute revenue derived from the post-office had slightly diminished; whereas, if it had kept pace with the growth of the population, it would have increased 507,700*l.* per annum; and if the extension of education, and the increasing trade and prosperity of the country were taken into account, there could be no doubt that the real deficit was even much greater. The revenue of the post-office, in 1820, was, in round numbers, 1,479,000*l.*; whereas, at the rate of increase of the stage-coach duty, it ought to have been 1,946,000*l.*, or 466,000*l.* more than it was. In 1830, the revenue from the post-office was 1,517,952*l.*; but at the same rate, it would have been 2,990,000, or 1,472,000*l.* more than it really was. In 1835, at the same rate of increase, there would have been received more than there actually had been in that one year, by upwards of two millions. In support of this view of the case it may be stated, that, in France, where the rates of postage were less exorbitant than with us, the gross receipts were said to have increased from nearly 24,000,000 francs (960,000*l.*) in 1821, to 37,000,000 francs (1,480,000*l.*) in 1835, or fifty-four per cent in fourteen years. The American post-office exhibited the same results as the one which he had quoted; therefore he thought that had the charge through our post-office been reduced to the same proportion as in France—looking too, at our enormous population, our great commercial intercourse, the increase of education amongst the people, and the desire for communication amongst them,—he thought they must all be satisfied that the number of letters actually written must have greatly increased. How had they been transmitted then?—for that they had not gone through the post office was evident, or the revenue would not have stood still. Every gentleman knew—at least he knew practically—that the postage was evaded in consequence of the very heavy charge for the transmission of letters through the post-office. Perhaps he might mention an inquiry to which he was a party last year. The directors of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce "participating to the full extent in the general conviction, that the present rates of postage are excessive and unjust, as well as injurious to the interests and social happiness of the people, determined to call a special general meeting of the chamber to consider the subject, which was accordingly held on the 22nd of March last (1838). Resolutions were agreed to at that meeting in favour of a petition to the Commons for the adoption of the plan of post-office reform proposed by Mr. Rowland Hill, and for the appointment of a committee to collect facts illustrative of the subject, to be laid before the committee of the House of Commons then sitting. The petition was presented accordingly, and a committee was formed, which addressed a series of questions to such commercial firms, and to such individuals in Manchester, as appeared most likely to furnish the information wanted. These questions were as follows: 1. What number of letters (invoices and circulars included) do you send weekly by post? 2. How many otherwise than by post? 3. How many do you avoid writing on account of the expense of postage? 4. What number would you send by post, were the rate of postage to all parts of the United Kingdom reduced to the uniform charge of one penny per letter, with more frequent transmissions? or would your number be increased at all? 5. State any other circumstances which occur to you relative to the present rates of postage. About 400 of these circulars were issued, and answers were received from 81; the general result of which was, that, although one or two parties replied that they neither evaded postage nor avoided writing letters on account of postage, yet a vast majority stated that they did so, and that all possible means were devised to avoid the expense. The pro-

bable increase in the number of letters, which these returns gave reason to expect from a reduction to a uniform rate of one penny, according to Mr. Hill's plan, was about six-fold the number at present entrusted to the post-office; and when it is considered that these results arise from a calculation of a correspondence already existing, and do not in any way relate to that correspondence which the proposed reduction would call into existence out of those classes which are now debarred from using the post-office, there seems to be little doubt, that the estimate of increase contemplated in Mr. Hill's pamphlet will be fully borne out. The committee laid the result of their inquiries before the select committee of the Commons on postage, through Richard Cobden, Esq., who was examined before that committee. It will be known to the members of the chamber, that the select committee of the Commons closed their labours with a report, in the last days of the session, recommending a partial adoption of Mr. Hill's plan, by establishing a uniform rate of two-pence per letter for the present; but no general change has yet taken place in the charges of the post-office.

As to the correspondence already existing, his (Mr. Tootal's) own opinion was, that, if every letter now written was transmitted through the Post-office, the revenue derivable from the Post-office would equal its present amount. It was quite impossible that an enormously increased number of letters would not be written, if the postage were only 1*d.*; and in this opinion he was borne out by the inquiries which the sub-committee made. The Chamber of Commerce were not singular in arriving at that conclusion; for during a number of years, select committees of the House of Commons had been appointed to inquire into the revenue from this source, and also on the subject of the Post-office; and the conclusion of the Chamber of Commerce was fully borne out by all the reports of these committees; and there was not a single recommendation of the present system from any public body that had inquired into the Post-office question, either appointed by the House of Commons, or by some local body. They all arrived at the same conclusion—that from this excessive taxation the revenue was lessened, fraud patronized, and pecuniary rewards offered to those who evaded the laws.—The select committee of the House of Commons had made its report, which was ordered to be printed in August last. They had examined a great number of witnesses; and he was not sure that every one, but almost every one not in the Post-office establishment, agreed in recommending the adoption of Mr. Rowland Hill's plan. Sir Edward Lees, was at the head of the Post-office in Edinburgh, who seemed to have paid great attention to the subject, and to have given his opinion very freely before the committee, and made a written report, which the select committee had adopted as their own. He thought, after what he had stated, that he should receive the support of the council to the proposition, that a petition be sent from it to the House of Commons, praying that the plan proposed by Rowland Hill be adopted.

The Town-clerk then read the petition.

Mr. Alderman Cobden seconded the motion with great pleasure. It had been just suggested to him, that something might be inserted in the petition as to the moral effects of such a change, and probably all present participated in such sentiments; but it should be borne in mind that this question was one connected with revenue: that this plan was only to be carried into effect if it did not materially impair the revenue; and a 2*d.* postage had been recommended as best, on this account. He thought the best thing they could do to accomplish this great measure was to show, not its moral effects, which all admitted, but that the adoption of a penny postage was the best way to maintain the revenue. He thought that from Manchester he had presented some important facts bearing on this point. If gentlemen would lay before the committee a few facts gleaned out of their own business, he was inclined to think, and sorry to say, that those facts would influence the legislature, at all events they would the Chancellor of the Exchequer, more than any of these moral effects that could be stated. In his (Mr. Cobden's) own business, he found, and he had taken some pains to ascertain the fact, having watched it for the last twelve months, his own correspondence would have been tenfold if there had been only a penny postage. If there were facilities for sending invoices by post at a penny, he believed the custom of sending them in parcels would be altogether abandoned. He saw gentlemen round the table whose concerns were in the habit of sending a hundred parcels a day, all of which contained what would be a letter, if there were a penny postage; and, from his own experience, he was sure people would soon be obliged, in that event, to send their invoices by post; for it would soon be a custom of trade, if any invoice be not sent by post, and the parcel be lost, the loss to fall on the sender, and not on the receiver. Very recently he discovered the loss of a parcel worth 25*l.*, sent to Plymouth four months ago. The draper did not know that it had been sent; but when his (Mr. Cobden's) traveller went there, four months afterwards, the non-arrival of the parcel was discovered. Now the value of that parcel was 6,000 pence; and the loss of that parcel, if saved, would have paid for 6,000 stamp covers, to send through the post as many invoices of goods to the amount of probably 100,000*l.* A short time back, a swindler came to Manchester, and obtained parcels of goods from various houses, representing himself as in the employ of a draper in Norfolk. The parcels he ordered were sent from time to time to his inn; and he remained in the town for a week after the first was obtained, and yet was not detected. Had there been a custom of sending invoices by post, information would have been received of the true nature of his transactions, and detection would have followed as a matter of course. He thought that, besides the increased revenue from this source (invoices), there was another which was

not sufficiently contemplated, especially in this neighbourhood,—the immense correspondence of the working classes. Now, if a working man wanted employment, or what was called "a shop," he would walk ten, twenty, or five and twenty miles, on the mere chance of finding one. It was not unusual for half a dozen persons to present themselves at the gates of his concern at Sabden, each wanting "a table." On inquiry, he found that some of these had come twenty-five miles upon the mere chance of getting employed. Had the means of correspondence between one town and another been accessible, it was obvious that information would be flying about as to where work could be had; where work was not to be obtained; where the best wages were paid, &c.; and this correspondence would be of incalculable advantage to the working classes, while it would be a new source of revenue. But what was the fact at present? Correspondence to this class was utterly prohibited; for a man out of employment would have to pay in postage what it would take two days' work to earn. Then again there were no provisions made at present for such correspondence other than in towns. At Sabden, with a population of 1,500 persons, there was no post office, or anything that served as one. The people there were as much isolated in this respect as if they lived at Timbuctoo. Why should they not have (and under a 1*d.* postage system they would have) a post-office as well as a chandler's shop, a baker's or a beer-shop? He cordially seconded the motion.

Mr. Alderman Brooks said, he saw his friend, Mr. Alderman Cobden wanted people to make confessions. Well, he for one would confess that he cheated the revenue every day but Sundays; that he always studied to do so; and that he never sent a letter by post if he could send it a cheaper way. (Laughter.) With respect to the poor, it was amazing how little they knew of their friends at a distance—they hardly ever corresponded. Three weeks ago his servant man lost a sister near Hull, and he asked for leave to go into Yorkshire; and then it appeared that the people had never thought of writing while she was ill, but only wrote when she was dead. And this was very common when people married; the ring, and banns, and fees cost so much, they had no money to spare to write and pay letters; and he knew a great many instances of work-people, who never heard of their distant relations but when they died. He repeated that he was one of those guilty persons who regularly cheated the post-office.

Mr. Prentice said, although he did not cheat the revenue upon system, he had made a calculation by which he found that he should send by post one hundred letters weekly more than he did if the postage was reduced to one penny; and the moment that reduction was made, he should add to his present business another, which would occasion him to send another hundred letters weekly. There was a peculiar propriety in Manchester moving for this reduction of postage; for this town was peculiarly situated. Probably not one in ten of the present residents of Manchester, of forty-five years of age, was a native of the place. In that council, how many of its members were natives of Manchester? The town had grown from little better than a village, since 1780; and almost all its principal manufacturers and merchants came from a distance. There were in the town from 30,000 to 40,000 Irish, and 3000 or 4000 Scotch; and of the great majority of these, it might be said that all intercourse with their relations was cut off by this wicked and oppressive tax. (Hear, hear.) Think of 30,000 or 40,000 Irish—a people of exceedingly warm affections towards their kindred—all cut off from communication with their distant relatives, except what they could obtain by cheating the revenue! Only think of the luxury of affording to 30,000 or 40,000 poor people in this town only, the privilege of keeping up intercourse with their distant friends and kindred! He had seen the devices of the Scotch population here, to maintain communication with their friends in Scotland; for a postage of 1*s.* 6*d.* was a great deduction from the wages of even a skilled workman. About five hundred copies of his newspaper, after being read in Manchester, were sent weekly to the southern counties of Scotland; and the senders had all some agreed-on means of communication either by some peculiarity of the address, some additional name, or some understood mark, to imply that John is ill, or Mary better, or Jane arrived. The post-office people never could detect all this, because the marks were known only to the parties sending and receiving the papers. Others bought newspapers, and sent them off to their friends directly, without looking at them, just to let them know, by the handwriting of the address, that they had arrived in Manchester. Some of his Scotch friends did not even incur the expense of four-pence; for they obtained an old London paper, just to show their friends, by the writing of the address, that the sender was well. Think of the absurdity and wickedness of a law which compelled a man, instead of an affectionate epistle, to send his aged mother a newspaper, in order that she might have the pleasure of seeing her own name in the writing of her son upon the back of it. Since he came into the room, he had been thinking it exceedingly possible that his calculations, instead of two hundred additional letters weekly, might stretch out to four hundred.

Mr. John Mayson thought the advantages of a penny postage could hardly be over-rated; but the most prominent consideration in his mind was the benefit to accrue from it, as respects the social improvement and happiness of the great mass of the people. He should be glad, therefore, if some opinion as to the moral effect of the measure were expressed in the petition.—Mr. James Hampson was glad to see capitalists looking about them, and, in this and other ways, seeking to ease their expenditure, without touching the wages of their workpeople. He thought the revenue was not likely to be injured, but much more likely to be benefited, by this plan of a penny postage.

Mr. Alderman Kershaw could not give a silent vote on a

question so extremely important in every point of view. He was not only persuaded of the great amount of pleasure to be derived by an immense number of persons who would begin to be correspondents, but also that the revenue would not suffer by the adoption of this plan. Indeed, he had a firm conviction that, instead of being lessened, it would be considerably increased, by the penny postage. He believed it would be a stimulus for those who at present scarcely knew how to write, to learn to do so; and he believed it would be one of the greatest pleasures which the poorer part of the population could by possibility derive, if they had the means of communicating with their distant friends at the cost of only a penny. If convinced that the revenue would not suffer, then he thought they were bound to do every thing in their power to accomplish this great object. But even supposing it did suffer a little at first, he was confident that it could not be permanently lessened, but that, on the contrary, it would be considerably increased. Mr. Alderman Cobden had suggested to him one idea, viz. that so convinced was he that the revenue would not be ultimately lessened,—that if a joint-stock company were formed for the purpose of farming the Post-office, he should be one to take a number of shares.—(Mr. Cobden: To guarantee the present amount of revenue for twenty years.)—He thought there could be no reasonable doubt that the number of letters would increase, not six fold, but ten fold. In their own establishment, where they now sent one letter by post, they should send at least ten, if there were a penny postage.—He had been astonished and surprised at the various ways in which the payment of postage was evaded, and, consequently, at the manifold sources of revenue to accrue, if an universal penny postage were established. He held it to be certain that a twopenny postage would be a complete failure; that any thing above a penny could not answer the purpose; and that a penny postage would answer the purposes of the revenue, and be in every respect a desirable advantage in this great country. He was only surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the select committee, with the evidence before them, could come to any other conclusion; for to him it seemed obvious, that not only would there be no falling off, but that there would be a positive increase in less than five years.

Mr. Samuel Stocks would just observe, that the increase of revenue, from the greater consumption of paper alone, would go towards making a large item, in maintaining the revenue from postage at its present amount.

Mr. Alderman Burd said, that with a penny postage, instead of sending invoices down to travellers at their inns, the commercial houses would invariably send them by post to the principals.

Mr. Eveleigh said, that all houses employing travellers sent circulars, advising of the coming of their travellers, and these circulars they always endeavoured to get conveyed by friends; but if there were a universal penny postage, all of them would regularly advise their customers by post.

Mr. Henry Day said, that the intercourse amongst Mechanics' Institutions, Lyceums, and men of science generally, would be greatly facilitated and extended by a penny postage; and it was impossible the advantages in this point of view could be over-rated.

Mr. Thomas Hopkins could not give a silent vote. By affording the means of a more extensive, rapid, and cheap communication, we should greatly increase the productive power of the country, and enable it the better to bear its other burdens. It had been considered by men who had paid attention to the subject, that in large towns, where the people had ready means of communicating with each other, labour was more productive, and there was a more perfect co-operation, which rendered the exertions of every individual more effective. If, from bad roads or other causes, the communications between Manchester and London were only twice or thrice a week, would it be possible for this country to produce any thing like the amount of wealth it now does? He repeated that the means of communication between one part of the country and another was a powerful instrument in producing the means of wealth; and a penny postage, he believed,—and nothing above that would do—would carry that co-operation much further than it had ever yet been carried; all parts of the kingdom would work together more completely; and the combined labour of the country would then be a more extensive, and more complicated perhaps, but still a more powerful and effective machine, carrying the work of improvement much further. Then, in a country like this, where so many and frequent alterations were taking place in various trades and manufactures, where labour was so much divided and subdivided, there would always be a number of work-people out of employ; and if they had ready means of learning where they might obtain work, the probability was, that not only, as Mr. Cobden had said, would they lose less time in seeking work, but the number of persons out of work would be materially reduced, and, consequently, a greater proportion would be actually employed; persons would be a less time out of work, when there was any derangement in their business; for information would fly to and fro through the post, and they would soon learn where they might obtain other employment. He must just advert to the important moral effects that would arise from bringing the whole of the labouring population into the practice of communicating with their friends at a distance. He did not know any indirect means of promoting the spread of education, likely to be so effectual, as leading people to the practice of writing letters. It taught them to think; for a man or a woman could not sit down to write a letter without attempting to think more clearly than when conversing or performing the ordinary business of life. The very effort to write a letter must improve the mind; and all friends of education for the people should be anxious that they might be led into the way of educating themselves.

Mr. G. H. Winder, as a shopkeeper, would observe, that the post communication of that class was very scanty indeed. If a shopkeeper wanted an article, he wrote to one house for it; and if he could not there procure it, he did without it; for often the amount of postage would exceed the value of the article; and very often, from this consideration, he dispensed with the article, rather than give an order at all through the post-office.

The motion for the adoption of the petition, as verbally amended, was then put by the Mayor, and passed unanimously.

[A list of the Public Meetings on Postage will be given in our next.]

#### DEPUTATION TO LORD MELBOURNE.

A deputation from the City of London Uniform Penny Postage Committee, attended by Mr. Warburton and about 150 other members of the House of Commons, waited on Lord Melbourne, on the 3d of May last.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer and Mr. F. Baring were present at the interview.

Mr. Warburton stated that he had been requested to introduce the deputation in the absence of Mr. Wallace; and then in a very clear and forcible manner represented the objects of the deputation. They were there to evidence to his lordship the strong interest felt by their several constituencies, and by the commercial and trading interests, for the adoption of this measure. The Parliamentary Committee had been assisted by a committee of merchants, who had been able, from their high respectability and great influence, to produce a great body of evidence in support of the proposal, and showing its vital importance to the commercial and trading interests of the country. He pressed this matter upon his lordship's attention on its own merits, as well as from a conviction that it would be felt and received from the highest to the lowest as a boon, if conceded now. To the poor he might say in particular it would be an invaluable concession, and one that would be received, from whoever should concede it, as a highly popular measure. If he might be pardoned for making the observation upon such an occasion, he would say it would be a concession so wise, that it would be well calculated to make any government justly popular, and he would strongly urge it as a measure which a Liberal party had a just right to expect from a Liberal administration. There was no measure that could be immediately granted, the benefits of which would be so extensively felt, or that would be so well calculated to remove, in a considerable degree, that discontent which it could not be denied or disguised now existed. As to the revenue, that was a consideration not to be overlooked or lightly considered, and it had been well considered by the Parliamentary as well as the Mercantile Committee. The returns of the advertisement duty for five years before and the five years next following the repeal showed that the reduction of the duty slight as that reduction was, compared with the reduction now proposed on postage, had converted a slightly decreasing return into an increasing product; it had increased, and in the last year, 1838, was still increasing. He then referred to the importance of the testimony of Sir Edward Lees, the Post-office Secretary for Scotland, and said the result of the whole in the minds of those who had maturely and fully considered the matter was, that a penny postage for the whole of the three kingdoms was the only safe sum in a fiscal point of view.

Mr. Travers, as one of the London Mercantile Committee, could assure his lordship that this matter had been maturely considered by men of great commercial experience, and that the conviction was general that the revenue would be safe at a penny, but that twopenny would not yield the great results commercially which a penny, in his judgment, would certainly yield. He would assure his lordship that the concession would not only enable merchants and traders to do their business much better, but also greatly enlarge the quantity done. The increase to the general revenue from that would not escape his lordship. But one grave and serious evil would not be removed by a two-penny rate—that was evasion and smuggling. His lordship could have no adequate idea of the extent to which the present heavy rates forced the smuggling practice upon all—not the smaller traders only—he did not except himself; and though he was not to be classed among the highest or the lowest, those of greater as well as those of less extensive commercial importance were driven to this practice, and a penny only would, by removing the cause, remove the effect, and bring this large class of correspondence into the Post-office.

The Attorney-General represented in very strong terms the sentiments of his constituents in Edinburgh in favour of an uniform penny postage, and that the feeling there was not limited to political party, but was general and intense.

Mr. Mark Philips then stated several important facts relative to the extent of the evasion forced upon the commercial and trading interests of Manchester and Liverpool, showing the impossibility of preserving the correspondence of the country to the Post-office unless this plan was adopted.

Mr. O'Connell, from a distant part of the room, which was densely crowded, stood upon a chair, and said: One word for Ireland, my lord. My poor countrymen do not smuggle, for the high postage works a total prohibition to them. They are too poor to find out secondary conveyances, and if you shut the post-office to them, which you do now, you shut out warm hearts and generous affections from home, kindred and friends. Consider, my lord, that a letter to Ireland, and the answer back would cost thousands upon thousands of my poor and affectionate countrymen considerably more than a fifth of their week's wages; and let any gentleman here ask himself what would be the influence upon his correspondence if, for every letter he

wrote, he or his family had to pay one-fifth of a week's income.

Mr. Hume then produced some statistical details, confirming Mr. Warburton's conclusions.

Mr. Moffatt, the treasurer of the London Mercantile Committee, said that if government felt any doubt about the ultimate safety of the revenue, and had no difficulty in farming it out, there would be no difficulty in London in finding a body of high mercantile character to carry out the plan proposed, with the same security to the public for safe conveyance, and not to exceed the charge proposed of one penny; and also to secure to the government the full amount of revenue which is now derived from the post-office department.

Lord Melbourne said that the able manner in which the subject had been brought under the attention of her Majesty's government by Mr. Warburton would secure for it the most serious attention, if its own importance did not. It was one of great moment in a commercial, literary, and social view, and he could not but feel for those interests which had so ably been brought into view, by the gentlemen who had spoken, and particularly for those which had been so feelingly expressed by the honourable member for Dublin. It would be obvious to all present—indeed they had shown it was present to their minds—that the revenue must, for the safety of all, be provided for and made safe; and that was a consideration, he might say, nearly as much to be borne in mind by the gentlemen of the House of Commons, so many of whom were now present, as of her Majesty's government. Of course, the deputation would not expect him to express any opinion on his occasion; but they might rely upon the subject receiving that attention its importance and the many interests connected with it demanded. The government had already discussed it—they had come to no adverse conclusions—they would further consider it, and could not fail to give a very careful consideration to the statements which had been made at that interview.

The deputation then retired.

[We insert the reports of the Manchester Meetings and the Deputation to Lord Melbourne, in order to preserve a history of the most important steps in the progress of the Penny Postage.]

#### Extracts from the Parliamentary Postage Report.

##### STAMPS.

Taking into consideration the whole evidence relating to payment in advance, and to the use of stamps, your Committee are of opinion, that payment in advance would tend to simplify the Post-office accounts, and to expedite the delivery of letters; but that by far the most convenient and economical mode of effecting payment in advance would be by means of stamps to be issued by the Stamp-office, which should have the effect of franking letters: that by this arrangement the Post-office would be relieved of the greater part of its accounts with deputy postmasters and other officers, for money received; and that great additional security would be thus afforded to the collection of the revenue: that, consequently, postage, by this arrangement, might be reduced to a lower rate than would otherwise be practicable; that the public would prefer paying a low rate in advance, to paying a high rate on delivery; that it would be expedient, in the first instance, to allow an option whether to pay in advance or not, the rate of payment on delivery being considerably higher than that for payment in advance; and, lastly, they are of opinion, that, with the exception of foreign and ship letters, payment in advance, by means of stamps, should be made compulsory, as soon as warranted by experience. An incidental advantage would result from the use of stamps. Any one might be permitted to send letters through channels not provided by the Post-office; and thus one motive to the breach of the law would be removed.

##### POSTAGE SUBSCRIPTIONS.

AMOUNT Advertised in No. 11 of the	£.	s.
Post Circular	742	15
Atlas Fire Insurance	10	0
R. W.	5	0
H. W.	20	0
J. H.	5	0
P. C.	5	0
C. V.	5	0
R. C.	5	0

##### MANCHESTER SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Edward Loyd, Esq.	5	0
St. Benjamin Heywood, Bart. and Co.	5	0
Gardner, Atkinson, and Co.	5	0
Samuel Brooks, Esq.	5	0
John Brookes, Esq.	5	0
Leese, Kershaw, and Co.	5	0
Hargreaves, Dugdale, and Co.	5	0
Bradbury, Doncaster, and Co.	5	0
Wright and Lee	5	0
Henry Forth, Esq.	5	0
Horriks, Jackson, and Co.	5	0
H. Bannerman, and Sons	5	0
Callender, Bickham, and Co.	5	0
Richard Cobden, and Co.	5	0
Townend and Hickson	5	0
J. and N. Philips and Co.	5	0
S. Fletcher, Burd, and Wood	5	0
J. and B. Pearson	1	0
James Lord, Esq.	1	0
J. C.	2	0
Thomas Ashton, Esq.	3	0
H. Newbery, Esq.	2	2
H. and E. Ashworth	2	2
Leo Schuster, Esq.	2	2
Hegan, Hall, and Co.	2	0
H. and E. Tootal	2	0
Wm. Harter, Esq.	1	0
Wells, Cooke, and Potter	2	0